

The Holy Spirit & Spiritual Gifts



I. THE SPIRIT GIVES GIFTS TO EVERY CHRISTIAN TO HELP THE BODY GROW AND TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS

A. **The Bible Teaches That *Every* Christian Is Given at Least One Spiritual Gift** -- 1 Corinthians 12:7a,11.

B. **The Bible Teaches That These Gifts Are Given For 3 Purposes:**

- Equipping believers to share the good news -- Matthew 10:19,20; Luke 4:18; 1 Corinthians 2:13.
- Authenticating (proving) the gospel message -- Hebrews 2:3,4.
- Equipping believers to serve other believers -- 1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:26.

C. **Spiritual Gifts Are Sovereignly Given and Determined by the Holy Spirit** -- 1 Corinthians 12:11.

D. **Spiritual Gifts Are Not The Same As Natural Talents:**

- Spiritual Gifts Benefit Man's Spiritual Nature -- It is true that talents such as musical ability, artistic skill or athletic coordination are also gifts from God. But they are gifts on a physical or social level only and are given to benefit mankind in his "natural" life. Spiritual gifts, on the other hand, are given to benefit the realm of the spirit of man, the realm of an individual's relationship to God.
- Only Christians Have Spiritual Gifts -- Talents, obviously, are distributed to men and women quite apart from any reference to their spiritual condition. But only Christians have spiritual gifts, because they are given only to those in whom the Spirit of Christ has come to live (1 Corinthians 12:7).
- It is Quite Possible for a Christian to Have a Talent, but Not to Have the Corresponding Spiritual Gift. -- Suppose you had a talent for teaching, but lacked the



spiritual gift of teaching. If this is the case and you were asked to teach a Sunday school class, you would be quite capable of imparting considerable information and knowledge of facts, but your teaching would lack the power to advance your students spiritually. For another example, we have all been treated to the painful experience of listening to a Christian sing without exercising any spiritual gift. We find our hearts left cold and unmoved by a technically excellent performance, but without spiritual power.



- Conversely, It is Quite Possible For a Christian to be Given a Spiritual Gift That Has Absolutely Nothing to Do with Any Natural Inclinations or Talents He or She Possesses. -- For example, it was not necessary for the Acts 2 disciples to have a natural talent for languages before they spoke in tongues.

II. WHAT GIFTS DOES THE SPIRIT GIVE?

A. **Romans 12:3-8** Mentions The Following Spiritual Gifts:

1. Prophecy
2. Service
3. Teaching
4. Exhortation
5. Giving
6. Leadership
7. Mercy



B. **1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27-30** Adds (Without Repeating Those Already Listed from Romans):

8. Wisdom
9. Knowledge
10. Faith
11. Healing
12. Miracles

13. Discerning of Spirits
14. Tongues
15. Interpretation of Tongues
16. Apostle
17. Helps
18. Administration

C. **Ephesians 4:11,12 Adds** (Again, Without Repeating Any of the Above):

19. Evangelist
20. Pastor-teacher

D. **Other Possible Spiritual Gifts** (Not Listed Above):

21. Celibacy (1 Cor. 7:7)
22. Hospitality (1 Peter 4:9,10)
23. Voluntary Poverty (1 Cor. 13:3)
24. Martyrdom (1 Cor. 13:3)
25. Craftsmanship (Exodus 35:30-36:2)
26. Music (1 Chron. 16:41,42; 2 Chron. 5:12,13; 34:12)
27. Physical Strength (Judges 14:5,6)



III. HOW DO I DISCOVER MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

- A. **Pray and Ask God to Show You** - Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Now about spiritual gifts, I do not want you to be ignorant" (1 Corinthians 12:1). It is God's intention for us to understand and know how He has gifted us.
- B. **Study the Biblical Possibilities** - Begin with the Scripture passages listed above and then use a concordance or cross references to find other passages regarding the spiritual gifts.
- C. **Watch How God Is Using You (Check Results)** - There are a number of good

spiritual gift inventories available to help you identify how God is using you. Since Internet change frequently, we recommend you use an Internet search engine like Google and type in "Spiritual Gift Inventory" or "Spiritual Gift Discovery Tool."

- D. **Counsel With Others** - It has been our experience that many times other people who know you and have served with you can easily identify what your spiritual gifts are. Talk to your pastor, to Christian friends who have served with you, and to your family. "For waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisers" Proverbs 24:6.
- E. **Try New Ministries** - One of the best ways to discover if you have a gift in a certain area is to actually put yourself in a situation that requires that gift. Stretch yourself.
- F. **Expect Confirmation From the Body** - Spiritual gifts will be recognized by the Body of Christ, because spiritual gifts (properly exercised) edify the Body of Christ. They bring blessing to God's people and extend God's kingdom.

IV. DOES NEW LIFE CHURCH BELIEVE IN MIRACULOUS GIFTS?

Does God still give the miraculous gifts of tongues, interpretation of tongues, miraculous healing, and prophecy to Christians today?

Many excellent Christian teachers (for example Charles Swindoll, R.C. Sproul, John MacArthur, Bill Gothard) answer 'No' to this question. They would say that God does not give "miraculous sign gifts" to Christians today. "Those gifts were only for the time of the Old Testament and Jesus and the apostles."

Why do these men hold such a view? What Scriptures or reasons do they give against the use of the miraculous gifts such as tongues or prophecy today?

People who believe that the miraculous gifts have ceased usually adopt one of two arguments:

A. The First Argument:

They would say, "The miraculous gifts were only



We realize that all spiritual gifts in one sense are "miraculous," since they come by divine grace from God the Holy Spirit. We are using language typically used by those who believe certain gifts have ceased (a view called "cessationist"). They usually refer to the gifts of tongues, interpretation of tongues, miraculous healing, and prophecy as "miraculous sign

for the time of the apostles to authenticate (prove the truthfulness of) the apostle's message. The



gifts."

Bible teaches that this was the purpose of the miraculous gifts. Read Hebrews 2:3-4. Once the gospel was firmly established in the Roman empire and the apostles died, these gifts ceased. They were no longer necessary."

Some Problems with this Argument:

1. Authentication of the gospel message was definitely one of the purposes of the miraculous gifts, but it is only-one of the purposes. We are also told in other places in Scripture that spiritual gifts are given to serve the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:26), to equip people to share the gospel (Matthew 10:19,20; Luke 4:18; 1 Corinthians 2:13), and to show God's compassion and concern for His people (examples: Matthew 14:13-14; 20:29-34; Mark 1:40-42). Surely these needs still exist.
2. The "miraculous" gifts were not just the possession of the apostles in the Bible. Other non-apostles also were given miraculous gifts by the Spirit. (Take for example Luke 9:49-50 or Philip's use of the gifts in Acts 8:6,7,13).
3. The Scriptures don't seem to make any distinction between what we call the miraculous gifts and the other "less" miraculous gifts. Note that they appear mixed together in Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28. If we are going to deny the operation of "miraculous" gifts in this day, then it seems logical to deny all the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in these passages (not just some).

B. The Second Argument:

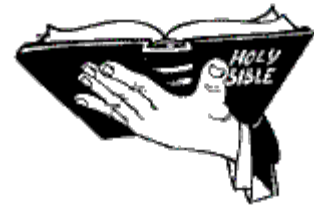
People who use this argument say, "The Bible actually tells us that miraculous gifts will cease. Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. It is clear that this passage predicts the gifts of prophecy and tongues will not continue. In verse 10, Paul says that once the perfect comes, tongues will cease. What could be more perfect than the Bible? When the last New Testament book was written the need for supernatural revelation ended. At that time prophecy, tongues and the other miraculous gifts ceased."

Problems with this Argument:

1. Where do we get the idea that the "perfect" is the Bible? This seems to be reading something into verse 10 which isn't there. It ignores the context. A completely reasonable interpretation for "perfect" would seem to be found in verse 12. The "perfect" is (not the completion of the Bible, but) when we see God "*face to face*" and "*we know fully*." This happens upon our death or at the time of Christ's second coming. This is the time that the imperfect will be done away with (v. 10). There won't be any need for spiritual gifts in the presence of the Lord.
2. If tongues and prophecy ended when the Bible was completed (as these men say verse 8 teaches), then so did "knowledge" according to the same verse!

I suppose that it is theoretically possible that all the miraculous gifts have ceased in this present day and age. The Spirit is the one who determines what gifts are given and who receives them (1 Corinthians 12:11), so if He wished to stop giving miraculous gifts, He certainly could. What man can say that the Spirit *must* give miraculous gifts to Christians in the 21st century?

However, nowhere does the Bible teach that miraculous gifts will cease in a later age. The Bible seems to be totally open on the question. It is the position of New Life Community Church that we need to be as open as the Bible is. Paul himself told the Thessalonians not to quench prophecies, a miraculous gift (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22). He wrote the Corinthians to "*be eager to prophesy and do not forbid speaking in tongues*" (1 Corinthians 14:39). His only caution was that things should be tested rather than just gullibly accepted (v.29) and "*everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way*" (v.40). That still seems to be good advice to us.



See:

- There are a number of good, free spiritual gift discovery tools on the Internet. Since their links change frequently, we recommend you use an Internet search engine like Google and type in "Spiritual Gift Inventory" or "Spiritual Gift Discovery Tool."
 - [The Baptism and Filling of the Holy Spirit](#)
 - [The Holy Spirit](#)
 - Alan Marshall has a wonderful essay on [Tongues of Angels?](#)
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