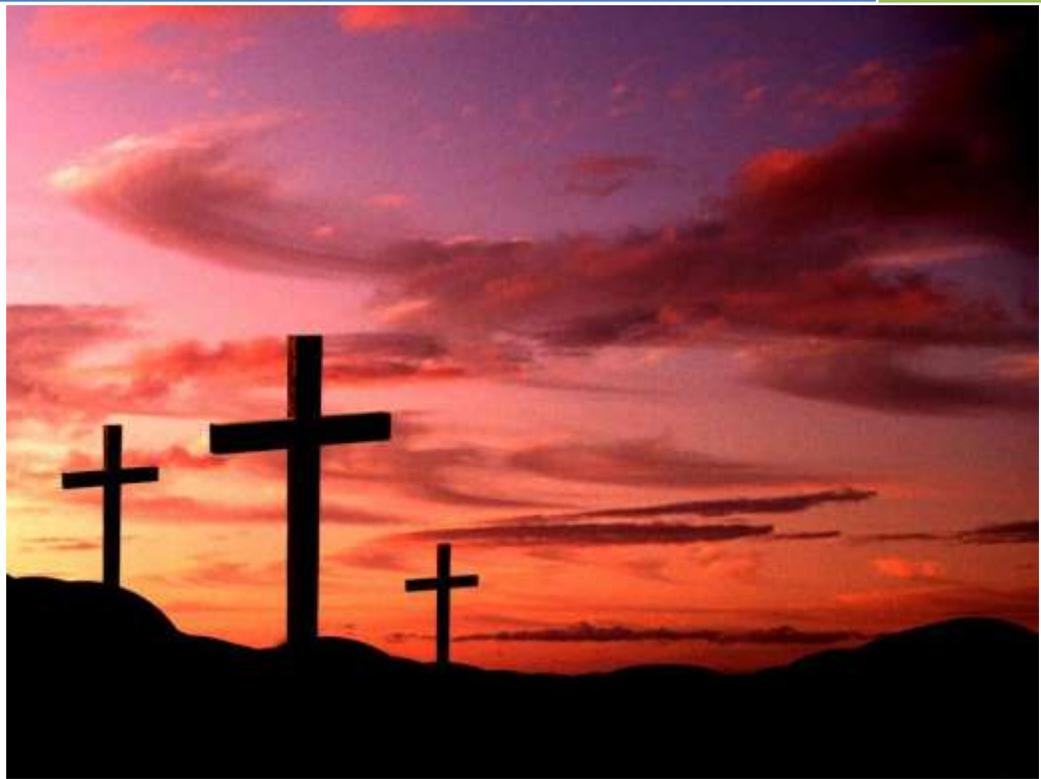


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The Gifts of the Holy Spirit



Lynn Gledhill

Fernridge Faith Center

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Introduction to the gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit moves in the life of the believer to equip him/her in the service of God. Understanding the gifts of the Holy Spirit is important, because we live in a supernatural world and the gifts allow us to have an impact in this world. However, the problem is that not every person who has the “Guarantee” of the Holy Spirit uses the gifts of the Spirit.

Scripture promises a gift of the Spirit to everyone who has come to Christ; but using the gift is conditional. In the same way as when we receive gifts from others; we can appreciate their gifts or disregard them. Those who disregard the gifts of the Holy Spirit lose the benefits of what God had for them to do. Therefore, it’s important for us as believers to find out what gifts Gods’ Spirit has given us.

For this reason it is important for us to understand what the “Gifts” of the Spirit are and what they are not. We also need to understand how the gifts of the Holy Spirit work and how they can be developed.

What a Gift is not

We must understand the distinction between the *Fruit of the Spirit* and the *Gifts of the Spirit*. The fruit of the spirit is the result of the Spirit filled life, as opposed to living in the flesh. When we come to Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within the believer. When we submit to the Holy Spirit, we receive a life, which bears the fruit of the spirit. This goes for every believer; we should all bear the fruit of the Spirit, all the fruits. The closer our walk, the more like Christ we become.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Galatians 5:22-23a

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Longsuffering
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control

The Spirit however equips the saint to serve, by giving him/her gifts for service. First Corinthians chapters twelve through fourteen deals with the gifts of the Spirit, chapter thirteen refers to the fruit of the Spirit, which is *love*. Its important to put the right perspective on the gifts and the fruit. Using the gifts of the Spirit without the fruit of “Love” is in vain, this is the point Paul makes. Paul contrasts the gifts of the Spirit with the fruit of the Spirit “Love”.

29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

I Corinthians 12:29-31

Here Paul refers to a “*more excellent*” way, which is living in the Spirit, letting the gifts of the Spirit flow out of a life filled with the fruit of the Spirit.

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

I Corinthians 13:1-2

Paul compares having the gift of tongues without “Love”, a fruit of the Spirit, to a clanging cymbal. Someone might have a gift of the Spirit, but that same person could be in the “flesh”. For example, a person could have fallen, from a state of being *spirit filled* and still exhibit the “gift of teaching” but that gift could be driven by personal effort as opposed to the Holy Spirit.

Manifestations of the “Spirit” or “Flesh”?

As we will see, the purpose to the gifts are to equip the church, if the person who has the gifts of the spirit, but not the fruit, questions should be raised, whether they are operating in the flesh or the spirit. The purpose of the gift is for the church, not for individual glory or praise. Individual glory or praise feeds our old nature, because we are taking credit for another’s work, the work of the Holy Spirit. The purpose for the gifts of the Spirit is clearly for the common good of the church, to build up the body of Christ.

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

I Corinthians 12:4-7

Since many of the gifts have an outward demonstration, it is possible for some to lay claim to spiritual gifts, when they are actually operating in the “flesh”. If there is a lack of “Fruit” then, we need to ask is the manifestation of the “gift” from the Spirit or the Flesh. Work done under the power of the “Flesh” does not reap eternal reward, but is burned at the “Bema” seat of Christ^[1] (2 Cor. 5:10). We should therefore strive to test the force behind our gift. Is it flesh or spirit?

3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?.....

11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

I Corinthians 3:3,11-15

Testing our gifts

We should strive to flourish under the power of the Holy Spirit, rather than our own strength. For this reason, we should examine the “gifts” we have. We should make sure they are from the Holy Spirit and not our own will and determination. If we don’t have the fruit of the Spirit, but have the fruit of the flesh, then we really need to question, the source of our “gift”.

On the other hand, if we are in the “Spirit”, then the progression of the Spirit is for the body, the church to receive the benefit. Therefore the Holy Spirit has a gift prepared for us, to serve and help the church advance the Kingdom of God.

Evaluating our "Gift"	
<p>Do I have fruits of the Spirit in my life?</p> <p>Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering... Where do I stand with the Spirit of God, Do I have the fruit of the Spirit in my life?</p>	
<p>Do I have a "Calling" from within?</p> <p>Is my calling from God, or am I working out of my flesh?</p>	
<p>Is there visible evidence of the Holy Spirit is at work?</p> <p>Are lives being impacted in my ministry?</p>	
<p>Do I need to be persistent in my ministry?</p> <p>Is God molding me into the worker he needs, and I am just not patient enough? Do I need to pray for patience and spend the time developing my "Gift"</p>	
<p>Am I in the right place?</p> <p>Has God called me to another area, another aspect of ministry. Do I need to teach adults instead of kids, or kids rather than adults?</p>	
<p>Is God vindicating Himself?</p> <p>Is the purpose of my ministry to proclaim a message, which would be rejected! Amos declared a message to those who did not want to hear it.</p>	

Gifts and offices in the church

The Holy Spirit gives gifts for the church body, however, that does not mean everybody in that office has the gift of the office. Again, this is why we are to try the gifts, making sure they are from the Spirit.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 8 Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, 9 holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. 10 But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless.

1 Timothy 3:2-10

Notice how Paul links the fruit of the Spirit with the Gift and the office.

What are the Gifts of the Spirit?

There are a number of lists of the gifts of the Spirit, in the New Testament. Here are four of the lists, which describe the gifts of the Spirit and the purpose behind the gifts. In each case, the gifts are for the building up of the church.

Gifts are promised to all believers, the Greek word for “gift” is **charisma** *Charisma*, the word “grace” is derived from the same root. Another point Paul makes is that “gifts” can be sought after, which means even though you might not have a gift, you can seek it and pray for it. In 1 Corinthians 12:31, Paul instructs us to *earnestly desire* the best gifts. The Greek word for “earnestly” is **zelo** *Zeloo*, meaning to be the object of zeal, to jealously seek after. We can ask God to give us a gift, even if we don’t have it, for the building up of the church.

In Romans, we are called to be faithful to the gift given us. Not everybody has the same gift, but God distributes the gifts among the body, that we may all have a part in building up the body. In Romans 12:6-8, Paul lists seven gifts, now within these gifts there would fit a lot of subcategories. He lists,

- Prophecy
- Ministry
- Teaching
- Exhortation
- Giving
- Leading
- Compassion (Showing Mercy)

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Romans 12:6-8

In each gift, we are to pursue it with our heart, being led by the Spirit. For the benefit of the body of Christ, the church, there are differences in the various gifts. Each of us should look after our own gift, how we can develop it, so we can be a greater blessing. One point Paul stresses is the diversity of gifts, the list he gave is general.

For example, someone might feel called to develop and disciple young Christians. By developing young Christians, into dynamic believers, several gifts of the Spirit are utilized, such as *teaching*, *exhortation* and *leading*. Scripture demonstrates, God gives to and develops those who are sincere in heart. If we really want to please God, and seek after doing His will, God will give us the equipment and resources to complete the task.

However we are sometimes like Israel afraid to enter the Promised Land, we put too much confidence in our own abilities rather than the "Power" of the Spirit. Therefore, we don't attempt something, because we feel we are just not capable. Well, maybe we aren't capable, that is the point, but God is capable. When we accomplish things beyond our abilities God, gets the credit, we are just along for the ride.

Amos makes this point in the Old Testament, he was just a shepherd and fig tree farmer when God called Him. Did he have the ability to present God's message boldly to Israel? No, he didn't, he himself says, *I was no prophet*, it was God who gave him the ability. So like Amos, God could be calling us to reach beyond ourselves.

14 Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: "I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheepbreeder And a tender of sycamore fruit. 15 Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, And the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.' 16 Now therefore, hear the word of the Lord: You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel, And do not spout against the house of Isaac.' Amos 7:14-16

In I Corinthians 12 Paul is more specific on the list of gifts than in Romans 12, where he lists several gifts, some of which have been controversial in churches, included in this list are:

- Word of Wisdom
- Word of knowledge
- Faith
- Gifts of healing
- Working of miracles
- Prophecy
- Discerning spirits
- Different kinds of tongues
- Interpretation of tongues
- Apostles
- Prophets
- Administration

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of

tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. 12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.
I Corinthians 12:4-14,28-31

Ministry is a gift, its a calling from the Lord. In Ephesians, God has appointed people in His church to administer the Church, to build up the body and equip the saints. Paul lists these "Gifts", which can include many aspects of the body.

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;
Ephesians 4:11-13

10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. I Peter 4:10-11