

The Holy Spirit & Spirituality: Lesson 8

# The Holy Spirit & The Gifts Of The Spirit

**Memory Text:** “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

**Setting The Stage:** Atticus Seng had his bicycle stolen, twice in one month, from outside his Fresno, California elementary school. The second time it happened, the story of the unlucky 9-year-old boy and his two stolen bicycles made the local news; and the segment captured the attention of students from Fresno High School.

Teenagers there decided to raise money to buy Seng a new bike. In a short amount of time, the teens raised \$360 from other students and teachers by going classroom to classroom. A group of the participating high schoolers presented Seng with the new mountain bike at his elementary school, and his parents say that he and they were truly overwhelmed by the generosity and kindness of the local teens.

Seng and his parents were so moved by the high schoolers acts of kindness that they decided to “pay it forward.” They donated money in the amount of the cost of the new bicycle to a nonprofit organization that provides bikes to children who would not be able to otherwise have them. The \$360 provided bicycles and helmets to three other deserving children.

No one I know would turn down a nice gift. In this instance the gift given turned into a gift that kept giving and benefitted others. While I enjoy receiving gifts, I prefer to give them if I can afford them. In the heart of the giver we see a small glimpse of the incredible munificent and beneficent heart of God. He is the best Giver of all. It was John who recorded Jesus as saying, “For God so loved the world that He gave...” (John 3:16)

Someone wrote: “A wise lover values not so much the gift of the lover as the love of the giver.” (Thomas Kempis) The best gift God gave to us was His Son. He gave Him for keeps, not to take Him back. But if that gift wasn’t enough, God’s word assures us of the following: “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)

God’s nature is to shower His children with gifts; not to spoil us, but to benefit us. He’s like a parent who enjoys providing good things for their children. “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13) These verses tell us that it is through both the gift of His Son and the gift of the Holy Spirit,

that God provides further gifts for His children. This lesson will take a closer look at the benefits and importance of spiritual gifts.

## **Sunday / The Fruit Of The Spirit & The Gifts Of The Spirit**

1 Corinthians 12:1, 31; 13:2; 14:1; John 3:3, 5

What is the evidence that a person has received the Holy Spirit? Is it the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit in the life or the revealing of the fruit of the Spirit in the life? Galatians 5:22, 23 tells us that a person who is being led by the Spirit manifests the evidence of such by a life of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, patience, meekness, and self-control.

What is the difference between the fruit of the Spirit and gifts of the Spirit? The fruit of the Spirit is living a Christ-like life through the power of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are for equipping believers for ministry who have been born again.

What is more important for a Christian to have, the gifts of the Spirit or the fruit of the Spirit? Both are important as the Bible speaks of the importance of both (see 1 Corinthians 12:1, 31; 14:1) But of utmost importance is the knowledge that we have been born again, for without such we will not see the kingdom of heaven and the evidence of this is the fruit of the Spirit revealed in the life.

**John 3:3, 5:** “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’”

The gifts of the Spirit have nothing to do with our receiving salvation and the evidence that we have done so. But there is a purpose for the gifts of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 13:2 says that we can have the gifts, but without love (a piece of the fruit of the Spirit) we are nothing. The idea of love is not only intimately connected to the list of gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, but also to the lists found in Romans 12 (see vv. 9, 10) and Ephesians 4 (see vv. 15, 16). I suspect Paul wants each believer to know the vital importance of love over the spiritual gifts, the need to allow love to refine and shape those gifts, and the significance of a love motivated ministry.

## **Monday / God, The Sovereign Giver Of The Spiritual Gifts**

Ephesians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 14-31

Earlier we noted that the gifts of God come through the Person of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:32; Luke 11:13). We see this again in the following two passages:

**Ephesians 4:7, 8:** “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.’”

**1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11:** “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

Jesus grace secured the right to give us gifts. But it’s the Holy Spirit who distributes them to members of the church as He wills.

What is a spiritual gift? A spiritual gift is a unique, God-given ability for service. Unique because not every believer has the same spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12: 29-31). God-given because the Holy Spirit gives them at His discretion. So there’s no need to complain or try to be more than you are (Rom. 12:3, Eph. 4:7-11, 1 Cor. 12:11). Abilities: Natural talents and abilities are given at birth, whereas spiritual gifts are given at the new birth (Acts 2:4). We’ll talk about “service” in tomorrow’s lesson.

## **Tuesday / The Purpose OF The Spiritual Gifts**

Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10, 11

What is a spiritual gift? A spiritual gift is a unique, God-given ability for service. Service: They are not to bring glory to the possessor of gifts, but too the glory of God in service toward mankind in the building up of God’s kingdom (1 Pet. 4:10).

We can be multi-gifted, but no believer has all gifts. A helpful concept to help determine multi-giftedness is your gift-mix and gift-cluster. Gift-mix is a term that describes all your spiritual gifts. Gift-cluster describes a clearly dominant gift that is supported by the other gifts in the cluster. For example, your gift-mix might consist of the gifts of leadership, administration, evangelism, teaching and helps. Your gift-cluster will contain one single, dominant gift – in this case evangelism – which is supported by the other four gifts.

So what are the gifts? Prophecy, Serving, Helping, Teaching, Encouraging, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Pastor, Apostle, Missionary, Evangelist, Wisdom, Knowledge, Discernment, Healing, Miracles, Faith, Administration, Hospitality, Craftsmanship, Tongues, Interpretations (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10, Eph. 4:11; Ex. 35:31, 32, 35).

What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? “The spiritual gifts were clearly given for service, not for our sanctification. They are not miraculous tricks that satisfy our curiosity, nor are they given as an antidote to boredom. Often we think about the gifts of the Holy Spirit in terms of fulfilling our spiritual needs or as empowering us in our walk with God. The result is a view of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that is more

Christian-centered than Christ-centered. It is more focused on us than God.”  
(Sabbath School Bible Study Guide, p. 67)

**Ephesians 4:11-16:** “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 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; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

**1 Peter 4:10, 11:** “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 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.”

What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? 1) To equip the saints for ministry; 2) To build up the church and make it spiritually strong; 3) To bring unity among God’s people; 4) To keep the church in the truth; 5) To glorify God.

When the various parts of the body fulfill its part, the whole body benefits. Not one body part is insignificant and unimportant to the whole. What happened if the ear didn’t know what it was suppose to do, or your leg, or worse yet, your heart? Yet there are members of Christ’s body who don’t know what role they are to play in the body, and as a result the whole suffers.

Paul addresses that concern, but he shows that the problem may not just have to do with not knowing what the gift given is, but not employing that gift, either because of feelings of insignificance, feelings of inadequacy, or feelings of jealousy (see 1 Cor. 12:12-20).

In His love, God has given to each member of His church body at least one spiritual gift that enables that member to accomplish a vital function. Just as what each organ does is vital to the human body, the successful completion of the church’s mission depends on the functioning of each of the spiritual gifts given to members. What good is a body without a heart, or how much less efficient is it without eyes, or a leg? If its members withhold their gifts the church will be dead, or at the very least blind, or incapacitated.

Do you know your gift? How can you know what your gift/s is/are? Here are seven steps to knowing what gift God has given you: 1) Prayer; 2) Study; 3) Analysis; 4) Experience; 5) Fulfillment; 6) Confirmation; 7) Fruit

### **Wednesday / The Gift, Then & Now**

1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:12, 13

“There are some Christians who think that the spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament were restricted to the times of Jesus and the apostles. They argue that, with the death of the first apostles, the special spiritual gifts also have ceased to be present in the church. In support of such a view, they quote 1 Corinthians 13:10, where the apostle Paul states that “when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away” (NASB).” (Sabbath School Bible Study Guide, p. 68) Is this the case?

**1 Corinthians 13:10:** “But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.” Because the “perfect” has not come, then the “part” has not been done away.

**Ephesians 4:12, 13:** “For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 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.” Because we are still doing ministry and need edification, because we have not reached the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, we still need spiritual gifts.

**1 Corinthians 1:4-8:** “I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

According to Paul, if we do not have the gifts of the Spirit then we come short of what we need in finishing God’s work. And because we will witness a greater manifestation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit today than on the day of Pentecost, we can expect that the gifts will still be in vogue to aid in the accomplishment of the task God has assigned His church to do prior to Jesus’ return.

### **Thursday / The Holy Spirit & The Gift Of Discernment**

1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:29; 1 John 4:1-3

Discernment: To know the difference between a true manifestation of the Spirit and a false manifestation of the Spirit we need discernment. Oxford Dictionary: “perceive or recognize”, “distinguish”, “having good judgment”, or “the ability to judge well”.

The word “discerns,” and its equivalent occurs 28x in the Bible (KJV). It is used in the sense to scrutinize, or to look intently at something so as to become acquainted with it (Gen. 31:32), to express the idea of hearing intelligently (1 Kings 3:11), to mean to know or ascertain by seeing (Ezek. 44:23), and to separate mentally, or to distinguish (Prov. 7:7).

**1 John 4:1-3:** “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”

“We are warned that there are demonic powers seeking to mislead the church and that there are devilish reproductions of the genuine gifts of the Spirit, such as false teachings, false prophecy, lying visions, counterfeit tongue-speaking, occult healing powers, misleading signs and wonders, et cetera. Some who accept the validity of the spiritual gifts even today, however, have placed a special emphasis on some spiritual gifts and have given unwarranted prominence to the presence of special signs and wonders. It is interesting that Paul lists the gift of discernment immediately after he mentioned the gift of ‘effecting of miracles’ and the gift of ‘prophecy’ and before he mentions the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 12:10, NASB).

“In order to preserve the church in truth and unity and to safeguard the members from following false prophets and being deluded by false signs and miracles, God gives the church the gift of discernment. Biblical maturity, knowledge, and faithfulness to God’s Word in belief and practice are needed to make proper evaluations. The basis for all discernment, however, has to be the Word of God. Only through testing everything by the Word can we know for sure whether what we are hearing or seeing is truly from the Lord or, instead, from somewhere else.” (Sabbath School Bible Study Guide, p. 69)

*“The man who makes the working of miracles the test of his faith will find that Satan can, through a species of deceptions, perform wonders that will appear to be genuine miracles. . . . Let not the days pass by and precious opportunities be lost of seeking the Lord with all the heart and mind and soul. If we accept not the truth in the love of it, we may be among the number who will see the miracles wrought by Satan in these last days, and believe them. Many strange things will appear as wonderful miracles, which should be regarded as deceptions manufactured by the father of lies. . . . Men under the influence of evil spirits will work miracles.”* (Selected Messages, book 2, pp. 52, 53)

**Appeal:** When we respond positively to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to know Christ intimately, the Holy Spirit imparts gifts, or a unique, God-given ability for service, to each of us according to His will, in order to build up the body of Christ, to serve the community at large, and to glorify God. Do you know what your spiritual

gift/s is/are? Are you employing them in the service of God? Are you a contributing member or are you just here for the ride? God's service needs you fully involved. Won't you give your best for Him?