

SPIRITUALS

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Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:1, “*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.*” Paul then continues to describe the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

It was through the operation of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit that God made Jesus known to the world. “*Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside*” (Luke 4:14, NIV). Reading through the four gospels of the New Testament we see that Jesus possessed all nine gifts of the Holy Spirit as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. However, Jesus also employed abilities not listed in this reference. “*When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?”*” (Matthew 13:54, NKJV). Here three abilities are mentioned; teaching, word of wisdom and working of miracles. Teaching is not one of the nine spiritual gifts whereas wisdom and working of miracles are.

Paul referring to Psalms 68:18 wrote, “*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”*” (Ephesians 4:7-8, NKJV). In this verse the word gifts comes from the Greek word “*dórea*” which when translated into English is “*gratuity*.” It implies something that is given to someone though not required, or literally, an outright gift. This scripture says two very important things to keep in mind as we look further into the subject of spirituals.

1. The Holy Spirit is the one that gives spiritual gifts (spirituals), and they are given by His sovereign will. “*It is the same and only Holy Spirit who gives all these gifts and powers, deciding which each one of us should have*” (1 Corinthians 12:11, Living Bible).
2. It is through God’s grace, or His unmerited favor, that He opens our hearts to the message of salvation. So it is with the bestowing of spiritual gifts. God is the ultimate judge deciding if and when we are ready to receive our gift or gifts. We do not pick and choose our gift or gifts.

The North Battleford revival of 1948 was born on the wings of much prayer and fasting, leading to a new level of liberty in prophecy. Here is one of the early prophecies:

“Take the shoes from off thy feet, for the ground on which thou standest is Holy Ground. For behold I am about to do a new thing in thy midst. Thou shalt not write letters or tell thy friends and relatives and if thou doest, then thy days shall be numbered. I will at this time restore to the Church the nine gifts of the Spirit and they shall be received by prophecy and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. I will indicate from time to time, by my Spirit, they that are prepared and should be called.”

Looking back we realize that the impartation of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit to God’s church was the springboard that launched this present move of the Holy Spirit into existence. Since this prophecy came forth, the restoration and operation of spiritual gifts (spirituals) has provided more direction and revelation of the truths of His church and God’s kingdom than any other single event since the decline of His church during the dark ages. It is this principle truth that distinguishes this present move of the Holy Spirit from Christendom today and bringing an end to the one-man ministry. No longer will the outcome of His church be determined by one man’s abilities and popularity.

The reason that God restored spiritual gifts (spirituals) is so the saints of God can be established on the foundation of the kingdom of God and become functioning members of the body of Christ, His church. Writing to the saints in Rome, Paul wrote: *“For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established...”* (Romans 1:11, NKJV). Just as a wise builder’s first step is to lay a sound foundation before constructing a house (see Luke 6:48), God has laid the foundation and, *“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone”* (Ephesians 2:19-20, NKJV). Glory to God.

There are a number of points in the quoted prophecy stated earlier that are important to keep in mind and are as follows:

1. Clearly when entering a meeting place in anticipation of the Holy Spirit imparting gifts to the saints of God, we must be very reverent. This is a holy occasion as a presbytery acting as God’s spokesmen, speak not from their human minds but prophecy the very words of God.
2. Though laying on of hands and prophesying spiritual gifts is always done in public, typically a local church service, the recipient should not boast about what God

has revealed to them. If an individual is faithful in ministering according to the gifts bestowed, God will be glorified, not the individual. *“... I will not give my glory unto another”* (Isaiah 48:11, NKJV).

3. God spoke through prophecy that He was going to do a new thing, and He did. He restored gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church, and today we continue to witness God’s fulfillment of that promise.
4. God gave clear instructions regarding how spiritual gifts were to be given. It is to be done by prophecy and the laying on of the hands of a presbytery of elders (note the ‘s’, indicating a plurality of two or more traveling elders and possibly deacons).
5. The Holy Spirit will indicate who is prepared and ready to receive their gifts. It is not the individual’s choosing.

This is the pattern that has been followed by the traveling brethren since the prophecy was spoken in February 1948. We thank God that he continues to vindicate this wonderful promise to His church in this day.

The nine gifts of the Holy Spirit outlined in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 differ from natural talents in that they do not depend on one’s personal talents or abilities to operate them. They are Holy Spirit-inspired and thus rely on the anointing of God to function. We are not born with the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit; they are Holy Spirit-imparted. It is therefore vital to understand and remember that the underlying inspiration to operate one’s gifts comes only by dwelling in the realm of the Holy Spirit. *“Don’t get your stimulus from wine (for there is always the danger of excessive drinking), but let the Spirit stimulate your souls. Express your joy in singing among yourselves psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making music in your hearts for the ears of God! Thank God at all times for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Ephesians 5:18-20, Phillips).

God determines the gifts a person should have based on where He places them in the church.

“Now God gives us many kinds of special abilities, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service to God, but it is the same Lord we are serving. There are many ways in which God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work in and through all of us who are his. The Holy Spirit displays God’s power through each of us as a means of helping the entire church” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7, Living Bible). Verse 7 in the NKJV version reads as follows: *“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.”* Manifestation means an action embedding something, a revealing or making public, an outward visible expression or a shining forth. It is through the shining forth of the Spirit of God through individuals by the gifts given that God reveals His will and purposes to the body of Christ. Glory to God.

Often when an individual is prophesied over for spiritual gifts, mention is also made of how God will employ their natural talents in serving the Lord. These natural gifts, as previously mentioned, are part of one's human personality, natural disposition, persona and refer to the talents with which one is born. They are different from the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. To develop natural talents, one has to practice the skill. You may be musical, but to play an instrument skillfully, you must practice playing the instrument. However, this is not so with the nine spiritual gifts. Immediately after receiving your spiritual gifts, you can begin to use the gifts when directed by the Holy Spirit. It is the combination of the nine spiritual gifts and natural gifts consecrated by the Holy Spirit to His service that enables our ministry in the church.

The Scriptures also mention various ministries that are necessary in the church and which are also often revealed in the prophecies made over a person. Here are some examples of ministries mentioned in the Scriptures and which are active in the church. They are not listed as part of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit:

1. Ministry of prayer and intercession
(Jeremiah 27:18, Romans 8:26, 1 Timothy 2:1)
2. Ministry of preaching and teaching
(Roman 12:7, 1 Peter 4:11)
3. Ministry of exhortation (Romans 12:8)
4. Ministry of giving (Romans 12: 8 & 13)
5. Ministry of showing mercy (Romans 12:8)
6. Ministry of hospitality (Romans 12:13 and 1 Peter 4:9)
7. Ministry of helps (1 Corinthians 12: 28)
8. Ministry of administration and/or management
(1 Corinthians 12: 28)
9. Ministry of leading a worship service in praise, hymns, spiritual singing and playing instruments in the Spirit
(1 Chronicles 6:31 and 25:1).

Serving For God's Glory

The Apostle Paul writing to Timothy encouraged him to not neglect the gifts given to him by the presbytery, 1 Timothy 4:14. This means we are not to ignore, forget, slight or belittle the given gifts but to value and treasure them and then employ them for the benefit of the Church. Everyone who has received their gifts is responsible before God to yield their lives to the Holy Spirit so that they can serve the Lord through the gifts given to them. Paul also encouraged Timothy to stir up his gifts meaning to set in motion, arouse or awaken. See 2 Timothy 1:16.

How do we stir up our gifts?

1. Daily reading of the Bible
2. Daily praying
3. Daily speaking in spiritual tongues
4. Attending church consistently (Hebrews 10:19-25) and by
5. Fellowshiping with the saints of God.

"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" (1 Peter 4:10-11 NKJV). This scripture encourages all who have received their gifts to use them. To do this it is important to be in tune with the moving of the Holy Spirit and when prompted, to willingly employ one's gifts. The church will then be edified. In addition, your gifts may open the door to minister to others outside the church. There may even be occasions when: *"A man's gift makes room for him, And brings him before great men"* (Proverbs 18:16, NKJV).

Making Room for All to Minister

In order for the saints to use their gifts in the church, room must to be made for them to minister. Making room for members of the body of Christ to employ their gifts is the responsibility of local elders. This is so vital as seen in 1 Corinthians 12 where Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of every member to the body of Christ. Every single member has a place in the church and is critically important to every other member. In order for one's human body to function as designed, every part of the body must do the job for which it is designed. So it is in the body of Christ. *"For it is from the head that the whole body, as a harmonious structure knit together by the joints with which it is provided, grows by the proper functioning of individual parts to its full maturity in love"* (Ephesians 4:16, Phillips).

Therefore every member must function in their gifts; otherwise, the body of Christ will eventually become unhealthy and stagnant. Concern is often expressed about the lack of growth (increasing numbers) in the church. Growth in maturity and in numbers will occur when every member of the body of Christ fulfills their responsibility in the church. When a flock of sheep are well fed and watered they will be healthy, and new lambs will be born and grow to maturity.

A Word of Caution

To be of value to the body of Christ, one's ministry must function under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The enemy of the church and our soul wants nothing more than to steer us away from relying on the Holy Spirit's inspiration and anointing. Ministering under the anointing of the Holy Spirit will always elevate Christ and bring glory to our heavenly Father, **not MAN**. Speaking from the intellect of the human mind tends to spur self-recognition and pride. This is exactly what the devil desires. It is possible to speak from one's own mind rather than the mind of God. Jeremiah speaking about false prophets warned: *"Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless;*

They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the Lord” (Jeremiah 23:16, NKJV).

Extroverts tend to find it easier to speak, prophesy, exhort, sing etc. They are advised to exercise caution so that they do not continue beyond what the Holy Spirit gives. The Apostle Paul warned in 1 Corinthians 3:18-20, “*Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their own craftiness”; and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.*” Therefore, it is of utmost importance to know when to quit ministering (speaking, preaching, teaching, praying, prophesying, exhorting, singing, etc). Responding to the Holy Spirit emotionally is a human response and cannot be relied upon as an indication of being in the Spirit.

We can feel we are in the Spirit but still can be out of order! It is good to remember this scripture: “*Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church”* (1 Corinthians 14:12, NKJV). This is why gifts of the Spirit are given; to edify, build up and instruct the church, **not oneself**.

A further point to keep in mind is that the body of Christ is composed of many individuals all with particular gifts specifically unique to each person. The church will be healthy and mature if every member has an opportunity to minister when moved upon by the Holy Spirit. “*from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies”* (Ephesians 4:16, NKJV). Over-ministering and ministering too often can rob others of the opportunity to minister, especially the young and inexperienced members. If one ministers often, it is good to wait a while to see if other members will give what God has laid on your heart. “*But if an inspired revelation is made to another who is seated, then the first one must be silent. For [in this way] you can all prophesy one by one, so that everyone may be instructed and everyone may be encouraged; for the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets [the prophecy is under the speaker’s control, and he can stop speaking]”* (1 Corinthians 14:30-32, Amplified Bible).

In closing this article let us read Romans 12:1-8 (NKJV):

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. **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; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.**” †*

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