

## The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The New Testament shows us that the early Church was an exciting, growing group of people who had been dramatically changed by the message of Jesus. God Himself testified to the reality of salvation in Christ through signs, wonders and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as a part of the preaching of the Good News of Jesus. Hebrews 2:1-4 (NKJV) says, "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?"

There are several passages in the New Testament that mention the Gifts of the Spirit. One of the best known passages is 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, quoted here from the New King James Version of the Bible: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 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. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills." This passage mentions nine spiritual manifestations or "spirituals" that God the Holy Spirit gives to each one (every believer) in a local church for "the profit of all." The manifestations of these gifts are meant to encourage believers in their individual relationships with God and the local church as a whole.

The nine spiritual gifts or "spirituals" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 are:

1. Word of Wisdom: special guidance from the Holy Spirit;
2. Word of Knowledge: information revealed by God that must be sensitively shared to bring healing, blessing or deliverance;
3. [The Gift of] Faith: faith far beyond our own to bring about a special answer to prayer;
4. Gifts of Healings (plural): gifts that bring various kinds of healing for various infirmities;
5. The Working of Miracles: a gift that God can use to multiply food or resources, recreate damaged physical parts or raise the dead;
6. Prophecy: usually a forthtelling of what God is doing now, but can be a revealing of a future event;
7. Discerning of Spirits: a gift that shows if a spiritual manifestation is of God or demonic;
8. Different Kinds of Tongues: speaking a message in a language not learned by speaker in a congregational or small group setting that needs to be interpreted;
9. Interpretation of Different Kinds of Tongues: this gift enables a message in tongues to be explained to the hearers of the message. (Note: 1 Corinthians 14:22 says that the spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues are a sign for unbelievers.)

Another passage that mentions spiritual gifts is found in Romans 12:3-8: "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" (NKJV).

The seven spiritual gifts or gift-callings listed here are:

1. prophecy: usually a forthtelling of what God is doing now, but can be a revealing of a future event;
2. ministry: perhaps both a call to ministry and the ability to minister to others through God's Spirit;
3. teaching: a specific ability and gift-calling to teach God's Word;
4. exhortation: God-given ability to encourage and motivate others to service and to the callings and giftings God has placed in their lives;
5. giving: a supernatural ability to donate to the work of the ministry above the tithe;
6. leading and
7. showing mercy.

In Ephesians 4:7-13, more spiritual gifts are listed, which could be actually referred to as "gift-callings." "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.' (Now this, 'He ascended'—what does it mean but that He also first] descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) 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..." (NKJV).

The five "gift-callings" cataloged in Ephesians 4:7-13 are:

1. apostles,
2. prophets,
3. evangelists,
4. pastors and
5. teachers.

In 1 Corinthians 12:28-30, another list of spiritual gifts is found, one that merges elements from both Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12:7-1. It also introduces two gift-callings: helps and administrations. 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 says, "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. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?" (NKJV). It is interesting to note that the speaking in tongues mentioned here is coupled with the gift of interpreting tongues, so it is NOT the same thing as the prayer language that is associated with the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The nine spiritual gifts and gift-callings in these verses are:

1. apostles,
2. prophets,
3. teachers,
4. workers of] miracles,
5. gifts of healings,
6. helps: perhaps a gift-calling that "sets the stage" for other gifts and gift-callings to function;
7. administrations: a gift-calling to do the administrative work of a church;
8. varieties of tongues (speaking in tongues) and

9. interpreting tongues.