

# Gifts of the Holy Spirit

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1 Corinthians 12: 7-11

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,<sup>[a]</sup> and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”

Christendom has divided opinions on the gifts of Holy Spirit, some believe gifts have ceased to exist (Cessationism) and others believe its ongoing and God wants to bless us with the spiritual gifts to build his kingdom (Continuationism). However due to the time limit we are not going to look into the differences between these two. People are usually sceptical when it comes to anything supernatural since it can be easily manipulated and play with the emotions of others. However, there are nearly 16 explicit passages in the bible which talks about speaking in tongues, and nearly 155 passages in the New Testament which talks either about the different gifts of the holy spirit or the out working miracles through the gifts of Holy Spirit.

Christianity is inescapably supernatural. We as Christians believe in addition to the physical world, we and experience, there is a spiritual world (that's one of the reason our war is not against flesh and blood, Ephesians 6). God just don't want us to have a good idea about his supernatural power but rather he wants us to experience it and us to be available to partner with him to fulfil his purposes on the earth. We are terribly wrong if we ever think that all God wants us to have is an intellectual understanding of his power/theological/rationally agreeing to the notion/idea of God's power than us to experience it.

We need to consciously seek and genuinely depend on God for his power and his grace. Corinthians 14: 1 “Follow the way of love and **eagerly desire** gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy (notice the words ‘eagerly desire’).” We are commanded to eagerly desire the gifts of Holy Spirit. Today we are going to look into the gift of Tongues and Healing.

#### 1 Corinthians 14:14-19

“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue”.

A spiritual gift is when the Holy Spirit energizes and enables my spirit to do what otherwise I couldn't do. In describing his own gift of speaking in tongues, Paul wrote, “my spirit prays” (1 Cor. 14:14). The important point, however, is that when Paul prays in tongues his mind is “unfruitful.” By this he means either, “I don't understand what I am saying,” or, “Other people don't understand what I'm saying.” The former is more likely. This is crucial. Many people think since one's mind is unfruitful, then what's the point of engaging in such an activity (however spiritual it might be) if we can't experience or rationally grasp it. But Paul strongly disagreed such notion.

Look closely at Paul's conclusion. In verse 14, “What is the outcome then?” (v. 15a). In other words, what am I to do? His answer may come as a shock to you.

He was determined to do both! “I shall pray with the spirit [i.e., I will pray in tongues], and I will pray with the mind [i.e., I will pray in Greek so that others who speak and understand Greek can profit from what I say].” Clearly, Paul believed that a spiritual experience that was beyond the grasp of his mind was yet profoundly profitable. Paul believed that it wasn't

absolutely necessary for an experience to be rationally cognitive for it to be spiritually beneficial and glorifying to God.

Furthermore, *since Paul was determined to pray with the spirit (i.e., pray in uninterpreted tongues), where and when would he do it? Since he ruled out doing it in the public meeting, he must have been referring to his private, devotional prayer life.* (Chapter 14 : 1-3 strongly talks about speaking in tongues is speaking the mysteries of God, and they do not talk to people but to God. It very strongly implies the spiritual benefits of speaking in tongues)

Paul had said that tongues-speech in the public gathering of the church is restricted without an interpretation. Since the purpose of church meetings is the edification of other believers, (unless you are not causing disturbance to fellow believers, or fellow believers also speak in tongues). Paul was addressing the very enthusiastic church of Corinth. They had so eagerly embraced the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to the point where their enthusiasm was proving to be a bit of a distraction and disruption in their church services. Instead of flowing with the pastor in charge of the service and submitting to his leadership, they were simply shouting out a tongue whenever they felt the unction of the Holy Spirit – without being sensitive to the appropriate time it should be released. You can imagine this brought absolute chaos and frustration, not benefitting anyone. So, Paul taught the believers to do things properly and in order by adhering to the leadership of the pastor and being sensitive to the timing and use of the gifts so that they will benefit all.) Paul preferred to speak in a language all could understand. Consequently, he rarely spoke in tongues in a public setting. **Now Paul is clearly talking about the wisdom while operating in the gift of Tongues.**

However, if Paul spoke in tongues more frequently and fervently than anyone else, yet in church he almost never did (preferring there to speak in a way all can understand), where did he speak in tongues? The only possible answer is that Paul exercised his remarkable gift in private, in the context of his personal, devotional intimacy with God. Remember, this is the man who wrote Romans. This is the man who is known to history as the greatest

theologian outside of Jesus himself. Yes, logical, reasonable, highly educated Paul prayed in tongues more than anyone!

Paul is giving a balanced yet spiritual exhortation on the subject. On the one hand, it warns people from having 'conversations' in 'tongues' on stage without interpretation (unless everyone is familiar with the context, 1 Cor 14:28), but on the other hand, warns intellectuals against emphasizing the mind/ intellect to the point that it's the only avenue through which our spirits can be edified, or God can be pleased with our worship.

## Healing

Gifts of healing, there never has and never will be a man with the supernatural gifts of healing to heal anyone at any time except Jesus. Even Paul couldn't heal Epaphroditus. Philippians 2:25 -26 "But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed, he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow." But on other instances he healed the entire island/city. Acts 28:8-9 "When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured."

There are occasions God had used men and woman to heal thousands of people at the same time, also the same people couldn't heal on other occasions. Here gifts of healing is for a particular time, for particular person/s. But it is commanded to us to pray for the sick, therefore we pray for the sick and believe God heals them. James 5:14 -16 "Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Our God is same yesterday, today and forever. And He is still doing miracles as he did through out the history. We have to trust him and humble ourselves so that we can be used by him. As apostle Paul says, desire the spiritual gifts, pray for it and be willing to be used by him. And let everything we do brings glory and honor to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions for connect group discussions.

1, Share with the group an occasion in your life/someone you know personally, when God did supernatural healing.

2, Why do you think church in general does not give importance to the gifts of Holy Spirit? explain the reasons?

3, How should the gifts be used? (e.g., in humility, for the glory of God alone, without exaggeration...)

Finally pray for one another.