

## THE HOLY SPIRIT – 3



### 1. THE PROVISION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – THE FATHER’S PROMISE

1. The Provision of the Holy Spirit – the Father’s Promise
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Luke 24:49 “I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

With the coming of the promised Holy Spirit, at that first Pentecost, there came gifts for the building of the Church. Lost to the majority of the Church after the first three centuries, their restoration has been long awaited. Indeed, over the past two decades, there has been a renewed emphasis on spiritual gifts. This is not a fad or even a trend. It is God’s plan and desire to **restore His Church to His original intention for its function.**

There is significant opposition to this move from within the Body of Christ. But where the Gifts are operating in conjunction with the proclaimed Word of God, there is tremendous growth – world-wide. Why? Mainly because the message is proclaimed that the Gifts were only for the start-up of the Church, and disappeared when the last Apostle, John, died.

Our own church is not dying. Some unbelievers believe this **is** the case with ‘Church’ in general. In the first year of this new millennium, we grew from 4 million to 5 million in one year; 95% of that growth was from new converts. In the last 18 months, another 750,000 have been added across the globe, and much of that in areas hostile to the Gospel, causing several CoG pastors to be martyred and many churches burned to the ground.

Today **God is placing ministry back** into the **hands of every believer** across all denominational and geographic barriers, as the Holy Spirit works to shape the church as a biblical community. A key passage to study is that of 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. There are others, but this is a particularly concise explanation of the Holy Spirit’s work among the people of God:

*1 Cor 12:7-11 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same*

*Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and **He gives them** to each one, just as **He determines**.*

These gifts are your privileged **function** within the body of Christ. Others may have similar gifts but they cannot do what you can do. No one else can do what you can do in the body of Christ.

The Scriptures are very explicit about this. In the passage that is before us, we read, “*But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift,*” (Eph 4:7 RSV). **Each of us!**

## 2. SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Spiritual gifts are **God-given**. You have a gift that is your privilege to **exercise** within the body of Christ and remember that there are **no** right or wrong spiritual gifts.

Spiritual gifts answer the question “**What** do I do **when** I serve?”

### a. Spiritual gift definition

- Spiritual gifts are divine endowments
- They are abilities God has given to us to make our unique contribution (1 Corinthians 12:7)
- Spiritual gifts are given by God
- He bestows spiritual gifts to us for meaningful service (1 Corinthians 12:11)
- Every believer **has** at least one spiritual gift
- Every believer is a minister (1 Peter 4:10)
- The spiritual gifts that God gives us allow us to serve one another better
- A major test of our use of spiritual gifts is to glorify God and edify others (1 Corinthians 12:7)
- God has carefully selected each believer’s spiritual gift and place of service within the body (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11, 18).
- We have **each** been given a **unique** role to play. Our **differences** are by **God’s design** (1 Corinthians 12:8-10).

### b. How do I know what I am supposed to do?

First, turn to the Word of God, and list the Scriptures that point to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We all need to recognise what the Holy Spirit has done in our individual lives to enable Christ’s church to become a working, powerful unit. As stated before, there are several lists of the spiritual

gifts, ‘*the charismata*’, in the New Testament:

- 1 Corinthians 12:8-10
- 1 Corinthians 12:28
- Romans 12:6-8
- Ephesians 4:11
- 1 Peter 4:9-10
- Exodus 31:3
- 1 Timothy 2:1-2
- Psalm 150:3-5

In addition to those identified in the New Testament lists, some would add: celibacy, counselling, deliverance, martyrdom and voluntary poverty as gifts.

Let us now turn to the 14 most common gifts of the Holy Spirit, and try to explain their meaning. There is the gift of:

- **Wisdom**                      That is the ability to understand how truth applies to specific situations, how to put truth to work. It has been described as, “*The application of knowledge*”, as knowledge by itself isn’t particularly helpful.
- **Knowledge**                      That is the ability to categorise truth, break it up into manageable portions and thus to understand it better.
- **Faith**                              That is what some call today the gift of vision. It is an idea that grips a person, that some needed goal can be accomplished. He sees it while others do not, and he goes right ahead and does it.
- **Gifts of healing**                      These gifts (plural) including physical, mental, or emotional healing.
- **Miracles**                              Events unexplainable by conventional wisdom or science.
- **Prophecy**                              This gift is something quite different than we usually think. It is predominantly used to **exhort, edify and console** the Church and individuals (these are the tests of prophecy as described in 1 Cor 14:3). This gift provides confirmation, rather than direction. To live our lives by prophecy is unwise. We live by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, so a word of prophecy should confirm what the Lord has **already** been putting into our heart. The gift can also provide warning, as was the case with the prophet Agabus in Acts 11:28 and Acts 21:10,11.

- **Discernment**                      The ability to see whether a person is a phoney or not.
- **Speaking in tongues**            This refers to speaking languages not previously learned by the speaker (Acts 2). It also refers to the special language known only to the Holy Spirit, which requires interpretation if this gift is to edify people.
- **Interpretation of tongues**    The ability to interpret a tongue spoken in public, as above.
- **Helps**                                The church would be nothing without this magnificent gift. It is called, in Romans 12, "*the gift of service.*"
- **Administration**                 This is for those who have a gift given by God to organise and administrate in spiritual matters. This is "*the gift of ruling*" in Romans 12.
- **Exhortation**                        This gift is the ability to get people moving, to say things in a way that will motivate people, exhort them.
- **Contributions**                    Every believer is to contribute but there are some who have a special gift for this, the gift of making money, which can be used to service the Great Commission.
- **Mercy**                                This can take a wide variety of forms, such as visiting a sick person and cleaning for them or cooking a dish, etc. It is the gift of showing kindness.

### 3. WHAT IS MY GIFT?

There is a wide diversity of gifts. "*Well,*" someone is saying, "*how do you find the gift that you have, how do you identify your gift?*" One answer is, "*You find spiritual gifts just as you find natural talents*". Let me explain.

1. Usually seeing certain people exercising a gift attracts you, or you enjoy some activities more than others do, and this is a possible indication. What you **enjoy doing** is usually what **God gives you** the privilege of doing, for the exercise of spiritual gifts is a **joyful thing**. People take great pleasure in exercising their gifts, for they are fulfilling and satisfying. Then you feel a continuing desire to exercise one line of activity more than another, and you long to find out more about it. You desire to do this more frequently, which is another indication.
2. Gifts can be imparted by other Believers, especially by the laying on of hands by Elders. So much is dependent on our desire for these gifts. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman and will never force anything on us. It's our choice to ask and to receive.
3. The true and final test of your spiritual gifts, though, is to **see if others recognise the gift(s) in you**, and encourage you to continue in their use. Recognising the spiritual gifts in others enables us to affirm/validate their contribution to the ministry. That encourages them and builds up the church. **It is very important that others recognise your gift(s).**

## 4. AVOIDING CONFUSION

- Do not confuse spiritual gifts with natural talents - natural talents are given at birth but spiritual gifts at spiritual birth. Natural talents may be transformed by the Holy Spirit and empowered as spiritual gifts, e.g. a nurse does not necessarily have the gift of healing or a school teacher the gift of teaching.
- Do not confuse spiritual gifts and the fruit of the Spirit (see Gal 5:22,23).
- Do not confuse spiritual gifts with spiritual disciplines (e.g. we **all** need the discipline of prayer, but **some** have the gift of intercession).
- Do not confuse spiritual gifts with ministry positions; this will be covered in the next section of this teaching.

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