

ADVANCED BIBLICAL COURSE



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The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

I BACKGROUND

JOHN 16: 7-8

He convicts us of our true state before God and the awful consequences.

JOHN 3:5

He brings about the “New Birth” when we believe in Jesus Christ (see 1 Peter 1:3). We must realise that the Spirit uses the Word of God (for it is His sword – Ephesians 6:17) to bring about this “New Birth.” In order to come to a place where we realise our need of Jesus as Saviour, the truth about our sin and our separation from God has to break into our minds and hearts. This calls for the supernatural work of “*revelation.*” We need to emphasise that like human physical birth, this is a one time work that the Spirit does once and for all, and places us into a relationship with our Creator that He will never break.

ROMANS 8:15-16

He confirms our salvation in our hearts reassuring us that we are God’s children and “*adopted*” us into His family.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19

The Holy Spirit comes to live within us permanently. Jesus promised this (John 14:16), for a dwelling place of God (Ephesians 2:22).

ROMANS 8:9

Every “*born again*” Christian has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:13

He “*baptises*” us into the “*body*” of Christ, by which we become a member of the “*true universal*” church of Jesus Christ.

EPHESIANS 1:13-14

We are “*sealed*” by the indwelling Holy Spirit, “*for the day of redemption*” (Ephesians 4:30).

JOHN 14:16

He is the “*Helper*,” helps us along in the Christian life. He is the One ‘called alongside.’

JOHN 14:26

He “*comforts*” the believer. The word “*comforter*” (A.V.) or “*Helper*” (NASV) comes from the Greek work ‘Parakletos’, which in turn is made up of two word, ‘para’ (alongside) and ‘kaleo’ (called), hence He is the “called-alongside’ One (of Acts 9:31) – to help the believer. He “*reminds*” us of past things we have heard.

JOHN 16:13

He will “*guide*” us into **all** truth. We need this spiritual revelation in order to grasp Truth, as the “*natural man*” does not discern the things of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:7-14) He “*declares*” to us the “things to come” (which He has already done to a great measure through Paul and John and others). Many things about the last times were revealed e.g. the Rapture, Revelation, etc. He “*glorifies*” Jesus to us, in us and as we will see later, through us (verse 14).

ROMANS 15:16

He “*sanctifies*” the believer (2 Thessalonians 2:13, Titus 3:5 & Ephesians 5:25-26). This is often a slow and long process, done by revelation, conviction, and then empowering us to be victorious.

ROMANS 8:2-13

He enables us to “*overpower*” the old nature within us. This is of course linked with the empowering of the Spirit in order to enable us to live as (be) good witnesses for Christ, which we will discuss later.

EPHESIANS 3:16

He “*strengthens*” us in the inner being, very much as David said in the 23rd Psalm, “*He restoreth my soul...*”

ROMANS 8:11

He also “*strengthens*” (quicken) our physical bodies in the struggle of life.

ROMANS 8:14

We are “*led*,” guided in our daily lives, by the Spirit (of Acts 16:6-7).

ROMANS 8:26

He “*helps us in our weaknesses*” our human weaknesses.

ROMANS 8:27

He “*intercedes*”... prays for us.

EPHESIANS 5: 18-20

He helps us to: -

- ◆ “*praise*” God in song
- ◆ “*minister*” to each other in song
- ◆ “*give thanks*” to God everything

EPHESIANS 2:18

He provides a means of “*access*” for us to the Father. He is our means of direct spiritual communication with the Father from our side to Him in prayer, and from His side to us in leading, revelation, inspiration, etc.

ISAIAH 11:3

The Spirit enables us to see with the eyes of faith.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16 (ROMAN 8:11 & 2 CORINTHIANS 4:14)

The last final work of the Spirit in the life of the believer is to resurrect our bodies from the grave at the last trumpet or “*translate*” us from the “*corruptible to the incorruptible*” state, in order to stand before our God, and enjoy His Presence forever more!

II THE “GIFTS” OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We have considered the “*Promise of the Father*” ... the great work of the Holy Spirit in and through the believer, which the Father promised would be a permanent thing in the life of the believer. Part of this great work is that of supernatural “*manifestations*” through the believer, for the benefit of those around him. Paul explains about these “*manifestations*” or “*gifts*” as they are also called in the following passages: -

They are called “Gifts” (1 Corinthians 12:4)

Here the word in the Greek is ‘Charisma,’ meaning a ‘free favour’ or ‘gift.’ It is tied up with the word ‘charis,’ meaning ‘grace’ or God’s ‘loving favour’ which is undeserved by man. Thus, these Gifts are “*free gifts of God which we do not deserve, to us.*” (Cf verses 1 Corinthians 12:28-31).

The idea of grace – undeserved...

Romans 6:23	-	salvation
Romans 5:15-16	-	salvation & justification
2 Corinthians 1:11	-	blessings and answers to prayer
Romans 1:11-12	-	spiritual encouragement or ministry
1 Timothy 4:14 & 2 Timothy 1:6-7	-	the Holy Spirit Himself

... without this broad view, we get trouble.

They are called “manifestations” (1 Corinthians 12:7)

Because the Holy Spirit, Who is invisible to the naked eye, shows Himself to us by doing these things through people. Therefore, they are supernatural and not natural. Just as Jesus manifested the Father, so if Jesus were here, He would pray for the sick and they would be healed. For those who were demon-possessed, He would command them to leave. Now, he is not here in person, so He manifests through His people, via the Gifts, and carries on His ministry!

We must take note of certain things about these Gifts: -

- ◆ 1 Corinthians 12:4, there are varieties of Gifts, but only one Holy Spirit Who makes them work in everybody.

From the two passages above, we can conclude that the Holy Spirit gives to each believer some manifestation. (Cf 1 Corinthians 7:7 & 1 Peter 4:10 each)

How do we get these Gifts?

Some say we must seek (1 Corinthians 12:11), but this answer is not found anywhere else in the Word.

1 Corinthians 12:11, it is the Holy Spirit Who inspires these Gifts, and it will always be according to the will of God, and should never be for the person's own glory, or for him to “play around with”. Nor is it to make the person a permanent “*tongues*” speaker or prophet in that church. That leads to

pride, stagnation and limits God's Gifts to that person! The Spirit is free and gives as He wills. We should never go around claiming boastfully, "I have 'this' or 'that' Gift." It is in terms of the body, for them not me! However, I must be ready to be the 'channel' at any time. I must learn to listen to God, and be in tune at all times, praying "Lord, You be in control of my life and manifest whatever You wish, when You wish."

In the context of over emphasis on tongues

Paul says to the Corinthians: "*You are imbalanced – look out for and recognise and appropriate the higher gifts too!*"

The Gifts are not given as a result of spirituality – it is a grace gift – free!

Look at the 1 Corinthians – Paul had to write chapter 13 to them!

1 Corinthians 12:7, the purpose of these Gifts is for the common good of all the other believers in the Church. Not just for the individual himself! 1 Peter 4:10 tell us "*As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*"

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, the operation of these Gifts must always be accomplished with the love of God, thus they will always bring good to the person to whom they minister. Our love to the body should be "*strong affection towards – ardently devoted – to an object of warm regard and devotion.*"

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Four separate lists of spiritual Gifts are found in the New Testament. The most famous occurs in 1 Corinthians 12. Equally important is Romans 12:3-8. Shorter lists are found in Ephesians 4:7-12 and in 1 Peter 4:10-11.

The nature of spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12-14 is not only a description of spiritual Gifts in general and of some Gifts in particular, it is also a practical manual about using the Gifts in the church. Paul's purpose in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 is to emphasise that, although the gifts are diverse, there is only one Giver. He states this truth three times, each time relating the Gifts to a different Person of the Trinity ("*the same Spirit*", "*the same Lord*", "*the same God*"). He also uses three different words to denote the Gifts themselves: -

- ◆ Charismata (verse 4) - Gifts of God's grace.

- ◆ Diakonai (verse 5) - forms of service, or ministries.
- ◆ Energemata (verse 6) - energies, effects, activities or powers, which the same God “*energises*” or “*inspires*” in everyone.

When the three words are put together spiritual Gifts may perhaps be defined as “certain capacities, bestowed by God’s grace and power, which equip people for specific and corresponding service (mutually supportive).”

In 1 Corinthians 12-14 Paul states the following important facts: -

◆ **Christians need to be informed about the Gifts: (1 Corinthians 12:1)**

Fear, misunderstanding, wrong impressions, suspicions and pride or arrogance etc. all arise out of ignorance about the nature, purpose and use of spiritual Gifts in the local church. It is therefore imperative that Christians are informed about and understand the Gifts.

◆ **Jesus must be Lord: (1 Corinthians 12:3)**

Jesus needs to be at the center of the church (local Body), and He needs to be Lord of the individual. As the Lord of our lives Jesus needs to be obeyed. The exercising of the Gifts must always center around the Lordship of Christ. Jesus Christ must always be the one who receives the glory!

◆ **The Gifts are for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:3)**

The Gifts of the Spirit are **not** to be paraded as some mark of spiritual status in the Christian life. They are **not** to be seen as a mark for progress in the Christian life. They are **not** given as a result of having attained a certain level of spirituality. Rather, the Gifts **are** for the common good and the edification of the Body (1 Corinthians 14:26). The Gifts **are** to be used to encourage and build up individual Christians, **not** cause them confusion and perplexity.

◆ **The exercise of the Gifts is the work of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11)**

Spiritual Gifts will emerge and flourish in an atmosphere of faith and obedient submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

◆ **Don’t feel inferior and belittle the Gift that you have (1 Corinthians 12:14-20)**

There is the danger of assuming that we can’t be used of God, or of thinking that the Gift we have is insignificant. The Gifts of the Spirit are the work of God’s grace (charis). ‘Charis’ means grace or God’s ‘loving favour,’ it is undeserved by man. The Gifts are freely given by God and therefore we ought not to feel inferior about the Gift He has chosen to bestow on us. He gives as He sees fit and knows best. The effectiveness of the Gifts does not depend on our attaining a sufficient level of maturity or spiritual experience. God can use

whoever He chooses. Paul points out that no one should act as if a certain Gift was insignificant. On the other hand believers must be careful not to reject the Gifts because in doing so they are rejecting what God is using for the effective ministry of His Body.

◆ **Don't exult the Gifts of the Spirit through fleshly pride (1 Corinthians 12:21-26)**

Paul was very much aware of the danger to exult some Gifts to the detriment of others. The Corinthian church seemed to think that tongues and knowledge were the most important Gifts. Their use was causing a spirit of competition and a sense of pride, which Paul sought to correct. God is the author and distributor of Gifts and therefore they are to be treated with humility rather than reacting with pride and arrogance.

◆ **We are not to restrict the Gifts to the spectacular (1 Corinthians 12:28)**

All the Gifts are important and all have their proper place.

◆ **Desire the Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31 & 14:1)**

Paul uses two words here to speak about spiritual Gifts: *charismata* (Gifts of grace) and *pneumatika* (Gifts of the spirit). In both instances the word "*desire*" is the same; it means to have a zeal for, or be zealous towards. Christians should not have the attitude "if God wants to give me such and such a Gift then I'm willing to accept it," but should be zealous to receive from God. There must be an attitude of anticipation of receiving what God wants to give us.

◆ **Follow the way of love (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)**

The operation of the Gifts must always be accompanied by the love of God, thus they will always bring good to the person to whom they minister. Whenever the New Testament speaks of the Gifts, it is always in the context of love in the fellowship (Romans 12; Ephesians 4 & 1 Peter 4). Paul points out that all the Gifts will one day pass away but that love is eternal. It outlasts even faith and hope.

◆ **Aim at edifying the church (1 Corinthians 14:3-5, 12, 17 & 26)**

This is the reason that God gives these Gifts. He is at work by His Holy Spirit to build up the church and to bring unbelievers into the kingdom of God. Thus in weighing prophesy, testing interpretation, or allowing tongues in public worship, we have to ask whether such use builds up the body, or does it produce confusion and division?

◆ **Everything must be done in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:33 & 40)**

II THE VARIOUS GIFTS

◆ **Manifestational Gifts**

- Gifts of Revelation

- Utterance of Wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8)
- Utterance of Knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8)
- Discerning of Spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- Power Gifts
 - Faith (1 Corinthians 12:10)
 - Healing (1 Corinthians 12:10)
 - Working of Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- Proclamation
 - Prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:10)
 - Kinds of Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10)
 - Interpretation of Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- ◆ **Ministry Gifts**
 - Apostles (Ephesians 4:11)
 - Prophets (Ephesians 4:11)
 - Evangelists (Ephesians 4:11)
 - Pastor / Teacher (Ephesians 4:11)
- ◆ **Motivational Gifts**
 - Serving (ministering) (Romans 12:7)
 - Teaching (Romans 12:7)
 - Exhorting (Romans 12:8)
 - Giving (Greek = sharing) (Romans 12:8)
 - Ruling or leading (Romans 12:8)
 - Mercy (Romans 12:8)
- ◆ **The Manifestational Gifts**

III GIFTS OF REVELATION OR PERCEPTION

◆ **Word of Wisdom: (1 Corinthians 12:8)**

The word of wisdom is supernatural revelation of the mind and purpose of God communicated by the Holy Spirit. This enables one to make God's will known to men. It is the capacity to apply spiritual principles to contemporary problems. It must be emphasised that the wisdom in question is not fleshly or worldly wisdom, but the wisdom of God. Examples: Joseph's interpretation of the dreams, (Genesis 41:39-40) and Solomon: The two women with the baby, (1 King 3:25 ff).

◆ **The Word of Knowledge: (1 Corinthians 12:8)**

This is the ability to understand truth that is unknown by natural means, or that has not been previously learned. It is a supernatural revelation of the existence or nature of a person, or a thing, or the knowledge of some event, given to us by the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose. Examples: Nathan and David after David's sin, (2 Samuel 12:1-14) and Peter's confession of who Christ is, (Matthew 16:14-17).

◆ **Discerning Of Spirits: (1 Corinthians 12:10)**

This is the Gift of being able to discern whether a spirit is from God or not. Examples: Mark 1:23 ff & 5:7 ff & Acts 16:17.

IV POWER GIFTS

◆ **Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9)**

This is not faith for salvation by which a man believes in Christ. Paul is referring to the special ability to trust God in a situation, which appears totally impossible from a human point of view; the ability to hold on to God in prayer (over many years if necessary). Example: Noah had this Gift of faith in believing God that there would be a flood and acting on that belief against all the odds and the laughter of his fellow men he built the ark. Abraham believed and trusted God until eventually after 25 years the promise of God came to fruition. It is obvious why this Gift is mentioned alongside healing and miracles. The latter two cannot be effected unless accompanied by faith in God.

◆ **Gifts of Healings (1 Corinthians 12:9)**

These Gifts are for the supernatural healing of diseases and infirmities without natural means of any sort. They are the miraculous manifestation of the Spirit for the banishment of all human illnesses whether organic, functional or nervous; acute or chronic. Healings through these Gifts are wrought through the power of Christ. Examples: This Gift was operational in the life of Jesus. Peter and John healing the Man at the gate called Beautiful. (Acts 3:1-10)

◆ **Working of Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10)**

A miracle is a supernatural intervention in the ordinary course of nature; a temporary suspension of the accustomed order; an interruption of the system, as we know it. The working of miracles operates by the energy or dynamic force of the Spirit in reversals or suspensions of natural laws. A miracle is a sovereign act of the Spirit of God irrespective of laws or systems. Examples: The crossing of the Israelites of the Sea of Reeds, (Exodus 14:16 ff), the crossing of the Jordan River, (Joshua 3:14 ff) and the many miracles performed by Jesus.

V PROCLAMATION OR INSPIRATIONAL GIFTS

◆ **Prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:4; 24 ff)**

Prophecy was valued by the people in both the Old and New Testaments because through it God spoke directly to His people. He had done so through the prophets and prophetesses of the Old Testament, He had done so through Jesus “*that prophet like Moses*” and continued to do it through inspired individuals or groups bearing testimony to Jesus in words they themselves had not thought up.

It is not easy to be precisely clear what early Christian prophecy was but two things are very clear: -

- It was a direct word from God for the situation on hand through the mouth of one of His people.
- It was clear speech, which didn't need any interpretation.

Prophecy contributed to the edification of the whole Christian body assembled for worship. It struck to the heart of unbelievers present who were amazed at the directness and relevance of what was said. It showed that God was indeed present in the congregation. (1 Corinthians 14:4 & 24 ff) Prophecy can't be described as simply preaching or teaching.

◆ **Tongues**

This is the ability to speak in a language that the speaker has not learned, does not understand and that is incomprehensible to the hearer. Tongues enable a person to speak to God in prayer (1 Corinthians 14:2 & 14). It releases a genuine liberty in Prayer. It also enables a person to praise God at a depth unknown previously (Acts 2:4 & 10:46; Ephesians 5:10 7 Colossians 3:16). Those who have received this Gift of tongues find themselves free to praise, thank, adore and glorify their heavenly Father as never before. There is a new dimension of praise and worship that is experienced.

The Gift of tongues edifies the person himself (1 Corinthians 14:4) as opposed to all the other Gifts, which are said to be for the edification of the Body. Tongues is given, unlike the other manifestations of the Spirit, for our profit, 1 Corinthians 12:7, as it allows the human spirit to pray, even when the mind is unfruitful because it cannot understand (1 Corinthians 14:14).

It appears that there are two 'dimensions' to the Gift of tongues: -

- It is the one Gift, which seems to be available to **all** believers (for personal edification). My reason for concluding this is based on Jesus statement (Mark 16:17) and Paul's teaching (1 Corinthians 12-14) especially the particular term, "*various kinds of tongues*" which Paul uses (1 Corinthians 12:10 & 28). This Gift also seems to be the one "*common evidence*" which usually follows when a person is filled with the Spirit.
- It is a Gift, which is given (like the others) to certain individuals to be exercised in a public gathering of God's people. When, however, this Gift is exercised in public, it must be accompanied by the Gift of interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:13, 27 & 28) and then it is for the edification of the Body, (1 Corinthians 14:5). On the day of Pentecost the languages spoken by the disciples in the upper room were understood by outsiders. Tongues may be a recognised language, or it may not be, depending on circumstances and the particular Gift of God to the individual.

◆ **The Gift of Interpretation**

This Gift is the ability to give the sense of what has been said in an unknown tongue that has been exercised in the congregation. The Gift of interpretation is a requirement when the Gift of tongues is exercised in a public gathering. Just as the Spirit leads one person to speak in a tongue he does not understand, so the same Spirit leads someone else present to interpret what has been said or sung. The interpreter feels the Spirit impelling him to speak. It is not a direct translation, but an interpretation – an act of faith. Those who have the Gift of tongues are exhorted by Paul to pray for the Gift of interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:13). It is very unusual to find someone having the Gift of interpretation who cannot themselves speak in tongues.

VI THE MINISTRY GIFTS

◆ **Apostles (Ephesians 4:11 & 1 Corinthians 12:28)**

The word "*apostle*" comes from a Greek word meaning, 'sent one.' The apostle has a strong sense of mission. Apostles are generally itinerated who plant and then 'parent' churches.

◆ **Prophets (Ephesians 4:11 & 1 Corinthians 12:28)**

They proclaim God's truth in a way that reveals flaws in the foundation of, and sin in a church.

◆ **Evangelists (Ephesians 4:11)**

They have a special ability and anointing to proclaim God's truth to the unsaved. The Evangelist also prepares God's people to evangelise.

◆ **Pastor/Teacher (Ephesians 4:11)**

These men oversee the church, caring for the needs of God's people and teaching them God's truth.

The above persons are gifted by God and are God's Gifts to the church to equip the saints to do the work of ministry.

VII MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS

◆ **Service/Helps (Romans 12:7 & 1 Corinthians 12:28)**

This Gift enables the individual Christian to serve the needs of others in a way that blesses both parties and glorifies Christ. It can be manifested in any area (physical, financial, social or spiritual). This Gift brings strength and encouragement to others.

◆ **Teaching (Romans 12:8)**

This is the ability to acquire and communicate (impart) truth so effectively that people are able to learn, resulting in changed lives.

◆ **Exhortation (Romans 12:8)**

The word is derived from two Greek words, 'para' (alongside) and 'kaleo' (to call). This Gift enables a person to help others by coming alongside him and motivating, encouraging and up building him.

◆ **Giving (Romans 12:8)**

The Gift of giving is the ability to share money and / or other material resources with the rest of the body with no thought of return or gain for self in any way (see Acts 4:36, 37)

◆ **Leading/Ruling/Administering (Romans 12:8 & 1 Corinthians 12:28)**

The word translated "*lead*" is from two Greek word meaning 'before' and 'stand.' A leader is one who stands before others directing them toward a common objective. Although the word used here "to lead" is different from the word "*administer*" in 1 Corinthians 12:28, the Gift refers to the same general function of leading.

◆ **Mercy (Romans 12:8)**

The person with this Gift has the supernatural ability to identify with and comfort those in distress. He/she is able to empathise with those who suffer misfortune and to mentally and emotionally relate to their need and give them support.

There is an overlapping of the various Gifts. Also it must be noted that the Gifts cannot be limited to those mentioned above. There are others, such as those mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:7.

We must also be very careful not to limit the Gifts to just those mentioned in these lists in Romans and Corinthians. There are others, such as mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:7, where he calls his special God-given ability to remain a bachelor as a 'Charisma' ... a Gift of 'grace.' The above however are the general ones, which are used in the setting of the church. We must never limit God or His Spirit, in fact any supernatural Gifts and ministries given by God to His people are the result of His grace (His loving favour to us which is undeserved by us.) They are 'grace Gifts', and are thus 'Charisma.' The Gift of the Spirit Himself is a 'Charisma,' and so is the gift of salvation. (See Romans 1:11-12 & 5:15-16 & 2 Corinthians 1:11)

Therefore... it is your responsibility to find out what Gift God has given to you, learn how to use it according to the Word of God, and exercise that Gift in love, for the benefit of others, and always to God's glory!

We must also then take great care to learn how to use the Gifts properly – and back them with a clean life – so that we will be good stewards of God's grace. We can be good stewards as in 1 Peter 4:10 already quoted.

VII HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT/S

- ◆ Believe God and His Word.
- ◆ Pray for God to give wisdom and understanding.
- ◆ Know what the different Gifts are.
- ◆ Experiment with those you can. Look around to see what needs there are and try to do something meeting them.
- ◆ Examine your feelings. What do you enjoy doing? What are you good at?
- ◆ Evaluate your effectiveness.
- ◆ Seek confirmation.