

The Gifts of the

Holy Spirit

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*Barrie
Christian
Fellowship*

More Than Just Sundays.



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Chapter 1



This fall our Bible Study is focused on Spiritual Gifts from **1 Corinthians 11 – 14**. The Holy Spirit gives these gifts freely to born again believers, but as with all gifts we need to open them to receive them. Therefore, believers must first be filled with the Holy Spirit. We remember that the people that Paul was immediately addressing, the gentile Greeks, were freshly minted converts. They were a volatile, argumentative bunch and given to posturing in public. So, it was imperative that both self control and spiritual control be exerted when they were all meeting together for the purpose of public worship and schooling in the Word of God. It is a very simple procedure to read 1 Corinthians in sequence from chapter 11 through chapter 14 and see the clear connections of truth.

In chapter 11: Paul speaks of the **ORDINANCES** of the church

In chapter 12: The **OPERATIONS** of the Spirit

In chapter 13: The **OBLIGATIONS** of love. The standard by which all things are measured

Finally, in chapter 14: The **ORDER** of the church assemblies when ordinances, operations and saints meet together as a family.

They were, in many ways, no different to the believers living and meeting together in our city today. In other ways, they differed greatly in culture, world outlook and



education and in their proximity to the apostles such as Peter, Paul and Apollos and also in the recent events that has taken place in Jerusalem, which were fresh in everybody's mind – especially the eye-witnesses of the Resurrection.

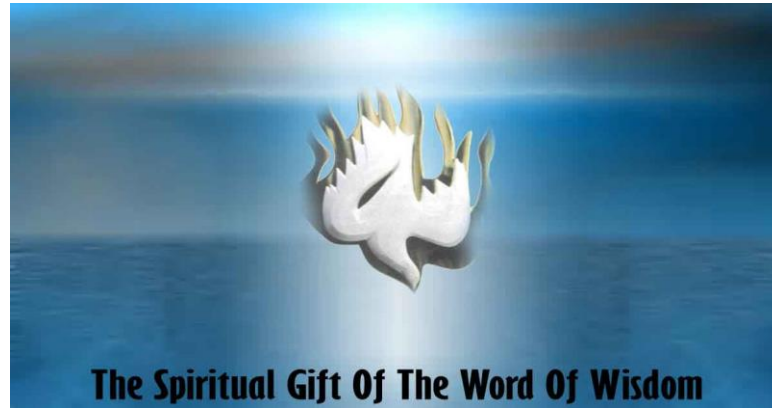
Their public assemblies were often noisy, unrehearsed affairs. Paul, therefore, gives guidelines for the operation of Spiritual gifts: in the 14th chapter and in the 13th chapter in the Spirit of preference of each other that must prevail in our dealing with other believers whether in private or in public. We tend to forget that the great love chapter stands between the 12th and 14th chapter of Corinthians. It begins with a chastening word about spiritual gifts being no more than tinkling cymbals or sounding gongs if they do not have impulses of love within them.

The percussion side of the orchestra is the side that is focussed on by Paul whose ears and patience had obviously suffered when he had been in previous meetings and where there had been the unrestrained use of the spiritual gifts. However, the thought is also clear, that when the gifts of prophecy, words of knowledge, tongues and interpretation are employed under the compulsions of love, they are like a beautifully harmonised orchestra, where percussion only adds to the symphony of sound.

With these thoughts in mind, welcome to the spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12.



Chapter 2



First reference is given in **1 Corinthians 12:1** where we read:

“Brethren, concerning spiritual gifts. I would not have you to be ignorant.”

The connection between spiritual gifts and the mind of the believer is that of ignorance and there will continue to be ignorance as far as, and to the degree that, a man uses his natural thinking to reason through what are termed in the original text, “The Spirituals”.

The verse could read, concerning the Spirituals, I want you to be enlightened. However, as with all spiritual truths and the workings of the Spirit, they are beyond the capacity of the natural mind to comprehend. So, like all other spiritual realms and peripherals of God we must enter the dimension of spiritual gifts by FAITH.

Paul is frank with the Corinthian believers. He says, *“you once worshiped DUMB idols but now you have come to a God WHO SPEAKS”*.

Notice the contrast between verses 2 and 3. The stone and metal idols of the Greek gods whose statues filled the major cities of Greece and the Spirit of God filling human vessels and using them to bring His word to the congregation of believers, and those OUTSIDE the fellowship of believers.

I've often referred to the spiritual gifts as the POWER TOOLS of the MASTER BUILDER of church. For we must bear in mind the words of Jesus in Matthew 16



where he tells his disciples (Peter in particular) that HE will build HIS church and the gates of hell will be unable to prevail against it.

Immediately afterward in this passage, He speaks about the Keys to the Kingdom. So quite obviously some of the keys are the gifts of the Holy Spirit – to accelerate the building of His church. (Note well: that there are KEYS of the Kingdom not the TOYS of the church)

Before Paul enumerates the gifts of the Spirit, he makes it clear in verses 4, 5, 6 and 7 that;

- 1) Spiritual gifts are given to EVERY MAN!
- 2) That they are given to edify all who are present in their function.
- 3) That they are distributed without partiality by the Holy Spirit.
- 4) That they differ one from another even as people differ one from another.
- 5) That they are to be desired and sought after.



Chapter 3



This last verse of **1 Corinthians 12** is VITAL to our understanding and employment of spiritual gifts. If they are given to EVERY MAN so that all might profit, then every man must also covet earnestly the best gifts and desire to use them (14:1)

Herein is the first major breakdown in the modern Western church. Instead of an eager and earnest desire to locate and use spiritual gifts, there is an intellectual scepticism about their use and their place in the public service. Now there is a theological position that states they are not for the church today. There is an argument given that “that which is perfect has come”, for we now have the Bible fully printed and have no need for Spiritual Gifts! Small wonder then, if these attitudes prevail we rarely experience the type of gathering described in the 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians.

But the simple answer to this scepticism is to ask the question, “if these gifts were needed to break through the hostility to the gospel in the first century BC, are they not needed now to break through the apathy of the 21st century church?”

These gifts, after all, are to address the basic need of man (whether ancient or modern) and in that respect they are TIMELESS since the needs of mankind for salvation and a meaningful relationship with his creator are timeless. It is with this fundamental need of mankind, that we approach the list of charismatic gifts in 1 Corinthians 12.

- I) The first of the listed gifts is Wisdom. Wisdom must always stand paramount among the attributes of God bestowed upon men. Solomon in the Book of Proverbs says, “in all of thy getting, get wisdom.”



He goes on to characterise wisdom as a person, homeless, walking around the streets of a city crying out to sleepy inhabitants 'LET ME IN' and the house holders saying to themselves, 'who needs this stranger in our house?'

The folly of it.

Then as the **Book of Proverbs** unfolds, there are repeated references to the calamity that comes upon fools and the security that is given to the wise. Some of those examples need to be read and reflected upon for they are as applicable today as they were when they were first written.

Notice that the spiritual gift mentioned here is the WORD of Wisdom not words of wisdom or simply wisdom. What is the distinction? Well, as in all things we look to Jesus for our model. In Him were all the spiritual gifts in harmonious living function.

It says in the gospel that when Jesus taught He taught with both "wisdom and authority" (**Luke 4:38**). Numerous times His wisdom was referred to even from His earliest years. However, on certain occasions that wisdom came forth as a shining jewel that represented a perfect answer to an impossible situation.

Think of **Mark 12** when the Pharisees tried to entrap Him with the loaded question of tax money. "*Shall we give to the hated Caesar or shall we not?*"

Think of His impeccable answer.

"Bring me a tax coin. Whose image and superscription is this?"

They replied "*Caesar's. Then render to Caesar what belongs to him and to God what is due to Him.*"

There we have it. Also, in **John 8** there is another instance of a Word of Wisdom where Jesus is besieged by malevolent adversaries who are using the bait of a woman arrested for adultery and who are calling for her stoning.

His reply "*let he who is without sin among you cast the first stone.*" (**John 8:7**) silenced the mob and put them all to flight. Notice a simple sentence (the Word of Wisdom) was sufficient to bring resolution to a situation fraught with consequences.



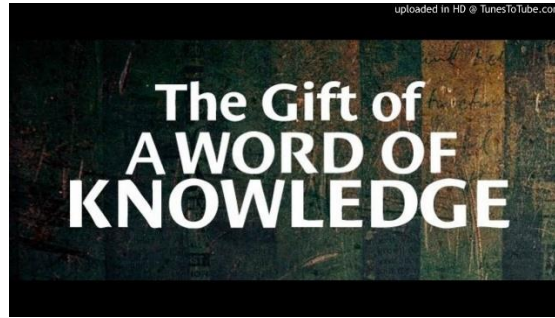
This was not the general spirit of wisdom with which Jesus always spoke, but a specific Word of Wisdom, scintillating and to the point that silenced the opposition.

So, the spiritual gift of Wisdom is a combination of wisdom granted to all who call upon the God of all wisdom for enlightenment and the Word of Wisdom granted at that very moment when needed in defense of the gospel or for the immediate advancing of the Kingdom of God.

Think of that scripture where Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 1:30** – Jesus Christ made unto us “*wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*”

Wisdom leads the way and indeed, WINS the day against all the reasoning of the carnal minds of men – who wish to gain say the Word of God.

Chapter 4



Alongside the gift of the Word of Wisdom is the Word of Knowledge.

The Word of Knowledge is NOT to be confused with the accumulation of knowledge that comes from applied study, reading and attendance at seminars and the like. We are to grow in the knowledge of God and use all means available to us to do so. Nevertheless, this Word of Knowledge is not referred to as simply knowledge. The scriptures state that knowledge itself merely ‘puffeth up’ but allied to the Spirit of Love it buildeth up and the building up or edifying of each other is the chief end in all our public gatherings.

“Let all things be done to edification” says **1 Corinthians 14**.

This Word of Knowledge is a scintillating moment of revelation that is given by the spirit that unveils a hidden agenda or reveals a person’s heart and hidden motives.

Think of John chapter 4 where Jesus is speaking to the woman at the well. She has come to draw water at midday in Samaria because of the shame of being seen in public. All of the other women came early in the morning, but this lady came in the heat of the day to avoid contact with them. Jesus engages her in conversation and at a certain point He asks her to bring her husband to join in the dialogue. She responds, *“I have no husband”* and Jesus replies *“That is true. You have had five husbands and the man you are with at the moment is not your husband.”* The woman immediately reacts and says, *“You are a prophet of God”* and later on says to the men of the village, *“Come and see a man that told me everything I ever did.”*

Such is the power and insight of the Word of Knowledge. This incident took place in the 4th chapter of John. But the book opens with Jesus telling Nathaniel that even



before they met He has seen him sitting under a fig tree. (**John 1:48 & 50**) This in turn brings the exclamation “*Thou art the Son of God. Thou art the King of Israel.*” There are other recorded events in both the Gospels and in the Book of Acts where the Word of Knowledge is used to unveil a previously unknown situation and lay everything open to the view of the onlooker.

Peter’s challenge to Ananias in **Chapter 5 of Acts** that he had lied to the Holy Spirit, was a stunning example of the Word of Knowledge in operation and what consequences followed. After the death of Ananias and his wife, we read great fear came upon the people and multitudes were added to the church.

I remember during my teaching days in Liverpool a two-shilling piece going missing in one of my classes. There were over 30 boys in that class and the money had been taken from a boy’s pocket after gym lesson. When I confronted the class, no one owned up to the theft. It was known to the class that I was a true believer in God so when I went behind a swing blackboard to hear from God who the culprit was great fear came upon the whole class. I still remember the Holy Spirit speaking one boys name to me. “Graham”. I did not hesitate but simply came from behind the board and pointed to the boy and said, “it was you Graham”. He immediately broke into tears and between sobs admitted his guilt. Instead of sending him to the principal, I administered discipline and warned every boy to be absolutely honest, never to steal or lie for the rest of their lives. I believe they heard me. From that moment on for the rest of my tenure at that school I had no discipline problems and had rapt attention when I spoke. What had caused this? The operation of the Word of Knowledge.

It was a year or two later when I had married Pauline that the Word of Knowledge operated again in a very true situation. On this occasion my wife who was pregnant at the time, came home distressed that an overbearing principal had shouted at her in front of her students. This was clearly a breach of professional protocol. I prayed for guidance and asked Pauline the man’s name. It was Johnson and in the Liverpool directory there was well over a hundred. Nevertheless, in the area of the city where Pauline taught, there were perhaps thirty or so. Having prayed I looked at the list and asked the Lord to witness to my heart which ‘Johnson’ it was. One on the list seemed to stand out and without hesitation, I picked up the phone and called. Sure



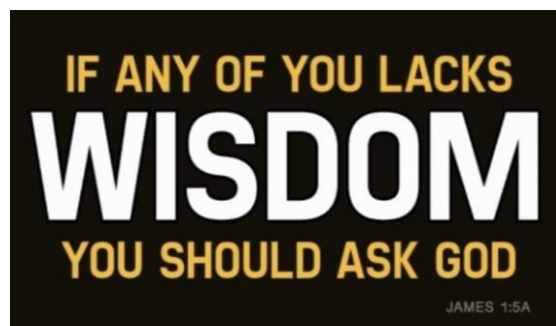
enough, the voice that answered belonged to the very man who has shouted at Pauline that morning. I will say no more other than to add that when my wife went to school the next day, she received a heartfelt apology.

For the gifts of the Spirit to operate a believer must be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is within that same spirit that all knowledge resides. The Spirit knows all things about all people and about every situation.

In order for the gifts of Knowledge to function as man and woman must be filled with the Holy Ghost and then move with faith and boldness. The Lord knows when He has possession of a man or woman who is fully committed to doing His will no matter what. Listen to how the Spirit moved in Jesus. We read in John chapter 9 that when Jesus came, He came Full of grace and of His Fullness have we have all received “grace upon grace”.

The operation of spiritual gifts takes place through the fullness of the Spirit and the gifts moving from the overflow of our lives.

The first three gifts set out in **1 Corinthians 12** are the REVELATORY gifts.



Chapter 5



The third one listed is the DISCERNING of Spirits.

All saints have the power of discernment (or should have) for the **1 Corinthians 2** says that, “*The spiritual man discerns all things but himself discerned by none.*” (reference) That’s an amazing statement. What Paul is saying is that when a man moves in the realm of the Spirit, he sees and understands on a wavelength unknown to the natural man and natural reasoning power, and people cannot figure out how. Numerous times in the gospel, we read that Jesus perceived their thoughts. In other words, by revelation or discernment. He knew exactly what they were thinking and told them so (which often maddened them further).

This is the Word of God at work described in **Hebrews 4:12** where we read “*the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword*”. Notice the level at which the Spirit moves. Dividing asunder soul (mind) and spirit (being) and is a discerner of the thoughts and motive of a person’s heart. Awesome indeed!

The word discernment means to perceive or read at deeper levels, beneath the surface. Every believer should move in this deeper level in their walk. But there is an even further manifestation when the gift of Discerning of spirits is at work.

This is a God given ability, where the occasion demands to see and perceive spirits at work and to be able to instantly tell if they are of God or of Satan. This gift is critical when it comes to effectively pioneering or pastoring the church of Jesus Christ. I believe it is one of the keys given to Peter to unlock spiritual power. In 1 John 3 we read that there are many spirits that are gone out into the world. Test



the spirits whether they be of God. That testing is done in several ways and at several levels. Obviously if the Spirit (which belongs to a messenger) is speaking contrary to Scripture then it/he/she is not of God. That simple.

But sometimes messengers ARE speaking consistent doctrine but are still not of God. Here we judge (or discern) the MESSENGER himself. Who is he and what is he, not just what is he saying. The messenger himself needs to be discerned.

On one occasion I was left in charge of a large house church in Liverpool. A man arrived from another church in London, called the Buckingham Place Fellowship. He said that he had been sent up to Liverpool to minister. While I was in conversation with him, his face turned black and his eyes became like two stones in his head. Then in a few seconds he returned to his former countenance. I immediately knew there was a serious problem with the man. I phoned Buckingham Place that night and found that this brother had demonic interference and had sexually abused one of the girls in the church. Needless to say, his stay in Liverpool was very brief.

This was an instance of the gift of Discernment at work and in this case, I actually SAW the unclean spirit. On other instances, too numerous to mention, I have heard the Spirit speaking in the voice of someone who seemed fairly normal. Demonic spirits always like to talk and if there are more than one they compete for ‘AIR TIME’ in the host. When you allow the gift of discernment to work you can actually sense the moment when they switch channels. Some of these spirits are lying spirits, other seducing spirits, others religious deceiving spirits – all are from Satan and all are unclean. When the power of God descends they lapse into silence. They cannot praise God with up lifted hands and full voice and thus at the commencement of our study of **1 Corinthians 12:3** we read *“no man speaking by the Spirit can call Jesus accursed and no man can worship and praise Jesus Christ as Lord unless by the same blessed Spirit who is one with the Father and Son.”*

In these days of great deception and declension from the standards of Holy living and the spirit of truth, the gift of discerning of spirits is of critical importance, especially among church leaders. It has become culturally acceptable to ordain homosexuals and endorse same sex unions in many denominations. Spirits have been unleashed to destroy churches from leadership down through the flock.



Paul said in **Acts 20:29** To the elders at Ephesus, “*When I am gone grievous wolves shall be let loose among you not sparing the flock.*” The question must be asked, ‘why did the wolves not howl and bite when he was present?’ The answer is simple, because Paul would have put a stop to them and shut their mouths before they had a chance to speak. That is the job of all good leaders and shepherds. Both to feed the flock with the Word of God and to protect the flock from assaults from misguided malicious people masquerading as the true teachers and from the chaos and craziness that often passes for the liberty of the Spirit.



Chapter 6 Power Gifts



The 9 charismatic gifts of the 12th chapter can be classified as the Revelatory gifts, the Power gifts and the Oral gifts. All are important, but some have a more dramatic effect than others.

We now come to the power gifts – the gift of Faith, gifts of Healing and the Working of Miracles.

We begin the power gifts with the gift of Faith.

We must understand that all faith is a gift from God. **Ephesians 2:8**, that popular verse and oft quoted as a key to the miracle of salvation, states, *“for by grace are you saved through faith, and that (faith) not of yourselves, it is a gift of God not of works lest any man should boast.”*

Faith, a gift from God to all who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. But is this the gift of faith that is spoken of?

Clearly not, for why list this as a special gift if every Christian has received the gift? Actually, the passage limits this gift to ‘SOME’ not all.

So, what is this gift and how is it set apart from the one mentioned in **Ephesians 2:8** or in **2 Peter 1:1 – 2**?

It is obvious that this spiritual gift is an endowment to accomplish a special task or mission. Peter in **Acts 3** when asked about the healing of the cripple at the gate Beautiful in the temple said, “Men of Israel why are you looking at us as if we accomplished by our own power or holiness” and later on added *“faith from God has been the primary source of power.”* Faith that was not his own but a special endowment from God.



Smith Wigglesworth who was one of the main people involved in the founding of a church where I was once a member, spoke often about ‘exchanging my faith for the faith of Jesus’ (when faced with a mighty challenge). He had faith that all believers move in but when more was required he received a greater endowment to accomplish the greater task.

Let me speak of how this gift of faith has worked in my life.

Speaking of giving. When I had little but giving all with the confidence that the lord would uphold me. Abandoning all with my wife Pauline to come to Canada with no source of income. To pioneer three churches when there were no members but seeing and speaking in faith to a multitude of unseen people.

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (**Hebrews 11:1**) It is the ability to see things not seen and embrace them as if they already WERE that describes the faith of Abraham and which marked him out as the model of faith in action. It was a gift of Faith. A spiritual gift. This ‘gift of Faith’ I did not recognize in my early years as a believer, since I assumed that all Christians simply lived by the same principle. “God said it, I believe it, that settles it”, but over the years I began to see that others seem to struggle to accept what I already saw as being done. They were in the present tense when it seemed, I was in the future tense. This was proved especially when I was pioneering churches and would preach to 200 people when before me there were only 5 saints (including Pauline) who comprised the whole congregation. If I was to preach to only five people where was the money to come from to sustain me and my family? The five people grew to be a hundred and thereby we would be able to pay for the rent of a building and keep the lights on. Seeing things as they WILL BE and seeing people as THEY WILL BE and not as they are, is a gift of Faith and this gift works by LOVE.

Paul takes this up in **chapter 12**, the great love chapter when he says, *“if I have faith to move mountains and have not love, I am nothing.”* A big zero. However, I must add that I have never met a person who had faith to move mountains who did not firstly move in love.

Love is the great infallible key to all these spiritual gifts and for that reason, the ‘obligations of love’ is centred squarely between the operations of the gifts of the



spirit in chapter 12 and the order of the church assembled (where they are used) in chapter 14.

The gift of Faith comes into play when a believer finds himself in EXTREMITY for that is the true context in which the gift of Faith works. As a young pastor I found myself commiserating with the parents of a child who was about to die in the hospital. I wanted to hold their hands on the sofa and ‘weep with those that wept’. As I was speaking consoling words, the Spirit spoke to me and said “stand to your feet and praise me. I will heal the child right now!”

To the astonishment of his parents I jumped to my feet and began to praise God with my hands in the air and shout “Tommy is healed.” I KNEW that he was. When his parents went to the hospital that night, the child was out of his coma, standing in his cot, demanding to go home.

What happened? The gift of Faith allowed me to SEE something before it happened and thereby praise God as if it HAD HAPPENED.

Faith is tied indissolubly to the next two spiritual gifts.

Faith
daring the soul to go beyond
what the eye can see

Chapter 7



The easiest definition of a miracle is an event which suspends or supersedes all-natural laws. Because all-natural laws are superseded we see miracles as a clear demonstration of the SUPERNATURAL WORLD.

Jesus said in **John 14**: “*if you do not believe in the words I speak, believe Me for the works that I do.*” Which works were they? Let us list some:

- Walking on water
- Raising the dead
- Healing lepers
- Casting out devils
- Feeding the multitude
- Changing water into wine
- Restoring sight to the blind eye

To name only a portion of His works. When He said “*the works that I do you shall do also and greater works than these*” what did He mean? (**John 14:12**) Since it is impossible to do a greater work than the raising of Lazarus from the dead or the feeding of the five thousand from a handful of food, the greater must mean a greater in number. This is entirely possible and for this reason that all the Acts’ spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles to this very moment are the ACTS OF JESUS working through His people. It is therefore of no surprise to note that there is no ‘amen’ at



the end of the Book of Acts. It is a book that is still being written, for the works are still being done.

There are the signs that follow believers listed in **Mark 16:5**. *“These signs shall follow them that believe. They shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall be healed.”* This is a verse that is a simple list of miraculous things and notice it begins with ‘casting out devils.

I believe this to be so since whenever I have been in the front line of God’s work, advancing the kingdom and pioneering the church, I have been directly confronted with devils – devils in people and sometimes demons without human form speaking in voices to my mind. When they have spoken to my mind, I have had to counteract them with the Word of God (the Scriptures as in **Luke 4**). When they have been in human form, I have had to counter them with the Scripture or cast them out with the Spirit of God.

Casting out devils is the first miraculous sign in **Mark 16** and therefore casting out demons is one of the sure evidences of the working of miracles. When devils are cast out the way is open for other miraculous workings of God.

When I was in Mexico in a place called Navajoa, I was preaching in a large metal warehouse. I had anointed some Kleenex with oil and told the congregation at lunch time to lay them on members of their families and friends. This was in accordance with **Acts 19** where clothes were taken from Paul and laid on the sick with many ‘notable’ miracles took place. In the evening a great crowd filled the metal outbuilding, one woman gave testimony of how her grandson, always a mocker of the gospel and who refused to come to church, was in the meeting that night because she laid the cloth upon him and a miraculous change took place. He came to the service and was saved. It was in this service that three sisters in their late twenties came, one had had the ‘miracle’ cloth placed on her and she felt an immediate change in her attitude towards God. When they came to the meeting, these girls came to the front for prayer. One of the girls (the older one as I recall) began to manifest in front of me. Immediately laid my hands upon her and with a loud cry the demon came out. Instantly it seemed as if this shed was filled with the Presence of God, great faith was given to the people. They began to cry out, some for healing, some for salvation. They wanted to press forward and touch me. It was a mighty time in God, which



began with the miracle of exorcism and the unleashing of God's Presence to do more than we could ever have imagined.

It is true to say that many more miracles are seen in third world countries than in our sceptical western world where everything is brought to a mental analysis. However, when people are brought by crisis or calamity to a place of simplicity, wonderful things take place.

When preaching in India in the great city of Bangalore, I was ministering to the church of a man called Shiju Kuriakes. The meeting place was a warehouse type structure, but next door was a two-story concrete edifice almost complete. I asked about this building and Shiju, I will tell you the story.

Shiju had been preaching in a very small rented building that was already filled to overflowing. He was pastoring in the shadow of the vast Electronic City in Bangalore which, in some ways, is like the New Jerusalem let down from heaven! News had got round the area that a preacher was preaching about a god called Jesus who could heal the sick. A high ranking member of the Bangalore City council had a wife who had been a cripple for several years. He asked if he could bring her to the meeting. The following week she was carried in a stretcher. Shiju did not pray for her but told her that if she received Christ as her saviour she could expect Him to heal her. The following week the lady confessed Christ as she was lying at the front of the church before the pulpit. During his message Shiju had faith that the Lord would heal this woman and told the congregation that the Lord would heal her then and there. With that, he stopped his preaching and commanded the woman to arise and immediately she rose up and was healed. The place was electrified more than Electronic City. Her grateful husband, who was a rich man, allocated a parcel of land for the construction of the church which stands today as a testimony to the faith of God's people and the healing power of Jesus Christ.

As we have seen the middle three of the nine listed gifts are usually teamed with the Dunamis or power gifts.

Peter linked Faith, Power and Boldness (reference) together when he explained the healing of the cripple at the gate Beautiful and said that all came directly from God and did not belong to himself or John. They were indeed the power gifts at work to



bring about this remarkable healing, that shook the whole of Jerusalem. This miracle could not be denied for the man was standing in the middle of the crowd who all knew him, leaping and praising God. This was the power gift of healing at work.

It is true to say that in our modern world of medical marvels, some attribute the gifts of healing to doctors and surgeons. These people and their teams replace all sorts of body parts, insert pace makers, implants for deaf ears and set in place stainless steel joints by the thousands. We live in truly remarkable days where human life is being extended and enhanced by gifted professionals. But are these the healing gifts that are spoken of in this passage?

We must conclude that they are not since many of these workers of medical marvels hold no profession of faith but simply do their jobs and give no glory to God who made the bodies they are working on.

Where lies the difference?

It is truly an amazing sight to see a surgeon's hands at work reconstructing a human body, but it is absolutely staggering to see God at work performing operations without hands. There is a constant unvaried catalogue of healings taking place in the gospels through the ministry of Jesus that is then followed by a similar flow in the Book of Acts accomplished by the healing gifts of the Apostles and preachers. Philip, the evangelist, on his trip to Samaria saw the whole city shaken by a demonstration of God's Power that saw devils cast out and the sick or paralyzed healed.

In my younger years I attended a church in the North of England that was started by the ministry of Smith Wigglesworth. Smith had formerly been a plumber in Bradford but had been raised up by God to be one of His special instruments who was exercised in the gifts of healing. After he had visited my town, a Pentecostal church was founded that was still in revival thirty years after his visit. One of the members, a man called Billy Parlington, still had the clearest memories of Smith's visit to the town of Spennymoor and would speak excitedly of the things he witnessed decades before.

Further west of where I lived was the town of Bishop Auckland. A man called Stephen Jeffries preached a crusade in the town hall in the mid 1920's. The whole



community was shaken when a cripple called Nellie Welford was healed. She was 16 years old. She lived to a ripe old age and I heard her give her testimony in a place called Evenwood 40 years later. She was still aglow and still excited at what had taken place decades earlier.

These men, Smith Wigglesworth and Stephen and George Jeffries in England, John G. Lake, Jack Coe, William Branham in America were men who possessed the spiritual gifts of Healing and thousands were dramatically touched by God and were happy to share their testimony years afterwards.

Fortunately, we live in days when footage of their meetings can be played, and we will powerfully illustrate this section of footage filmed in their meetings. These clips from Later Rain revivals of the 50's and 60's will show us the POWER TOOLS of the gifts of Healing at work.

Like all other encounters with God they are intensely SUBJECTIVE experience. They cannot be explained by natural thinking or by scientific means.

When my brother-in-law David Barret was healed, his friends called him the MIRACLE man, but he sought to explain the event by psychology and a paranormal happening. Regardless of the fact that almost simultaneous to his healing, several men, including myself, had prayed in Barrie three thousand miles away for God to perform this very miracle.

When William D. Upshaw, a well-known congressman, who had been a cripple for 40 years was healed in a Branham crusade, he did not attribute his healing to a paranormal power. He boldly confessed Christ as His Saviour and wrote an account of his healing to all six hundred members of congress. None of them could deny his story since, like the man at the gate beautiful, EVERYBODY knew him. Since this man threw away his crutches and made a bold confession of faith, he lived in perfect health and mobility for the rest of his life.

There are multitudes of dramatic healings that are irrefutably of God, but we rarely hear of them because Satan's job is to suppress the good news of the gospel not spread it. Therefore, you will never hear the story of Uncle Willy. He was the uncle of Rees Howell's the intercessor from Wales. His brother prayed revival down on



his nation and saw mighty things happen. None was stranger than the healing of his uncle.

William had been confined to a wheelchair for thirty years after a crippling accident that had left him a paraplegic. In a vision Rees saw his uncle healed on a certain day. Such was his confidence in God that he bought his uncle a suit and shoes and told him at a certain time the following day, he would need it, since they were going for a walk together. Sure enough, the following morning, the Presence of God swamped the room, uncle Willy jumped out of his wheel chair, got dressed and walked down the street in front of astonished neighbours.

These are but a few of the occasions where we see the gift of Healing in operation and, doubtless you can add your own stories and they will be part of our ongoing conversation.

Chapter 8



Now we turn to the remaining package of three gifts of prophecy, tongues with interpretation of tongues.

They represent the vocal part of the nine gifts of the Spirit. They are the ones most commonly exercised in the Pentecostal denomination. It is interesting to observe that in the last thirty years as the Pentecostal churches have absorbed into mainstream evangelicalism that the operation of these gifts has all but ceased to exist and the title “community” has replaced “Pentecostal” on the signs outside the church buildings.

That being so, ‘community’ and the acceptable image with it, becomes intrinsic to the growth of a local church rather than bearing what is termed the stigma of being Pentecostal. The use of the word Pentecostal is traced back to Acts chapter 2 where we read “*when the day of Pentecost was fully come*”.

This verse introduces us to one of the most marvelous events in church history, or indeed, in human history. It describes in detail what happened when the Holy Spirit was outpoured on the one hundred and twenty waiting souls in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. The immediate evidence that the promised Spirit had come were tongues of cloven fire upon the heads of believers and simultaneously, the gifts of speaking in languages unknown to them, came upon them.

This indwelling power drove them out from the seclusion of the upper room out into the streets of Jerusalem where they continued to speak in tongues, preach and

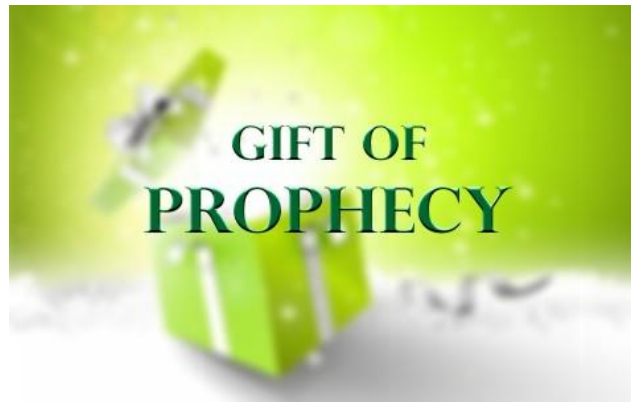


prophecy. Such was the impact upon the “community” that by the end of the day, 3000 new converts were added to the church with thousands more to follow in coming days.

What had taken place?

Quite simply God had kept His promise, The Holy Spirit had been sent from Heaven and ordinary men and women had been endued with EXTRAORDINARY power and the course of human history had been altered for all time. The evidence is still with us to this very moment as we discuss the subject. Let me state that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not the sole property of any one denomination. Nor is the initial evidence of speaking with other tongues the sole or indelible proof of a person filled with the Spirit. We read through Acts of those who were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues and we also read of those who were filled with the Spirit and who prophesied. (**Acts 10 and Acts 19**) However, in each of the recorded events there was EVIDENCE that the Holy Spirit had come and that is the important point.

Chapter 9



Let us consider then the gifts of Prophecy which are pursuant to the filling of the Holy Spirit. When Paul says ‘covet’ earnestly the best gifts in **1 Corinthians 12** and ‘desire’ especially to prophecy he is telling his audience (and we who are living today) that prophecy is one of the better gifts. Why? Because it EDIFIES both the speaker and the assembly gathered, whereas tongues alone without the gift of interpretation baffles those who hear.

The gift of prophecy does not make the person who exercises it a prophet. The prophet, as is mentioned in **Ephesians chapter 4**, is an ascension gift and one of the five building gifts that were bestowed when Christ returned to His Father’s glory in Heaven. Nor is this gift the foretelling gift of the Old Testament prophets. A person moving in this prophetic gift may forth tell without speaking of future events, for the gift in its definition given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14, is a vocal gift that brings EXHORTATION, EDIFICATION AND COMFORT to the people.

There is no mention here of UNVEILING of future events, although there may be.

Agabus who was a prophet used his gift to tell Paul that he would be arrested in Jerusalem (**Acts 21:11**) and on another occasion, there were prophetic words to warn of a coming famine in the days of Emperor Claudius in **Acts 11:27-28**.

Nevertheless, the employment of the gift of Prophecy is in the main confined to this simple framework of **1 Corinthians 14:2**. This gift like all spiritual gifts, is not confined to any gender. The Bible speaks of women who prophesied in the church assembled. The only restriction being that they have their heads covered.

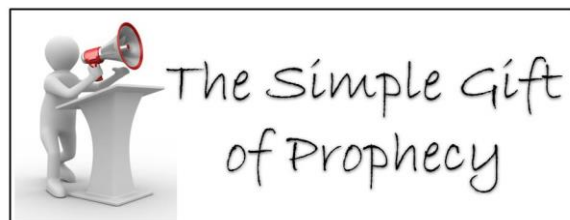


Gender is no restraint when spiritual gifts are in operation. Women and men are encouraged to ‘covet’ spiritual gifts and to employ them within the House of God – the church gathered. The only restrictions applied is that spoken of by Paul when he says “*let the prophets prophesy by two or by three and let the REST judge.*” That ‘REST’ means the congregation not the other people who are seen as prophets.

What IS important is that every person ‘covet earnestly’ the gifts of the Spirit, and they should be exhorted to do this by all in church leadership. It always seems to me to be a regrettable thing when only one predominant gift is in operation while the rest say “amen”.

There is never a point in any public meeting when people are disengaged or found with their mind in neutral. The word regarding prophesy in the public meeting is JUDGE and THEN decide whether to say ‘amen’.

In the modern church where spiritual gifts are rarely (if ever) in operation, the word prophesy has been replaced by preaching and speaking in tongues by the word translation. Which is quite astonishing but should not be thought so surprising if the word community can replace the word Pentecostal.



Chapter 10



Closely allied with the gift of Prophecy, are the two gifts of the Spirit, ‘Tongues’ and ‘interpretation of tongues’. ‘Tongues’ is a gift that in the public gathering should always be accompanied by the gift of Interpretation. If it isn’t Paul says it should not be used in public. He says when a person speaks in tongues or sings in the Spirit, the person edifies themselves. Therefore, he says that he would rather speak 5 words in a KNOWN tongue than ten thousand in an unknown tongue.

It is behoven therefore, if a person speaks in the gift of tongues to SEEK to interpret also or remain silent. All of these restraints were given by the man who says, “*I speak in tongues more than you all*”. I well remember my friend Billy Partington recall how Smith Wigglesworth spoke to a lady in the crowded town hall who burst out in tongues. “Woman where are your manners. If you want to speak in tongues, go home and do it, but be quiet in my meetings.”

Nevertheless, I neither diminish nor demean the gift of tongues which I have employed almost everyday for the past 55 years of my life. Where I pray in the Spirit and SING in the spirit I find great joy and liberty in doing so. It is a source of great liberation to pray in the Spirit in tongues when my brain gets in the way of what I believe the Lord is saying. I pray in the Spirit and find both simplicity and clarity of thought for it is true as Paul says that we do not know how to pray as we ought. But the Spirit prays through us in mysteries that may or may not be revealed to us.

Finally, I have found that the gift of Tongues is a powerful offensive weapon against the devil. When an assault comes against my mind, I often resort to my gift of tongues and immediately I go to a different dimension, after all, if the devil is a liar



and contradicts the truth how can he contradict a language he doesn't even know? But God knows what is being said and this is the heart of the gift of speaking in Tongues. The Word of God says the man's spirit speaks to God and man's soul sings directly to God who knoweth all things and interprets all things. So, a spiritual hotline is established between the believer and the Risen Lord.

The interpretation of tongues is the last gift of the Spirit that is recorded in this chapter. It is bracketed with its twin for both work harmoniously together (or should do).

The man/woman who speaks in tongues in public should expect an interpreter to be present or interpret themselves which I have often heard done. Either way the church assembled is edified.

There can be several messages in tongues in a meeting and interpretation given by the same person or by others. Paul does not encourage this to happen too many times or the Word of God loses its power by the simple fact of inflation, pretty much like too much currency in circulation. But when the gift of tongues is truly allied with the gift of Interpretation, powerful impressions are made upon the assembled gathering and the unbeliever (as Paul says) is caused to say God is in you of a truth.

The length of a message in tongues may not necessarily match the length of its interpretation for after all it is not a word-for-word translation but a synopsis of the truth that the Spirit of God wishes to convey. What is it like to receive an interpretation to a message in tongues?

Some have thought that words appear miraculously upon the screen of someone's mind – like a tele-prompter. Others have thought that audible whispers come in a person's ear. But, like the exercise of a spiritual gift, its operation is by Faith.

When I first received an interpretation of tongues, I knew in my heart the truth of what was being spoken before the message had ended, but I did not have the 'print-out' of the words. I opened my mouth believing that the Lord would give me clarity to speak forth what I had received in 'seed' further believing that more would be given as I continued to speak, and it happened. The witness in my heart was followed by the witness of the people who afterwards told me of how they were



helped. Thus, I had stepped out of the boat of my secure reason and walked on the water of trust in the same Spirit who was giving the message in tongues.

In all the years I have moved in the realm of the gifts of the Spirit, it has never been more complicated than that. Later in chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians we have the natural gifts of the senses mentioned.

Paul poses very simple questions to which we can all relate when he speaks about smelling, seeing, hearing and touching and then relates them back to the head (or the brain).

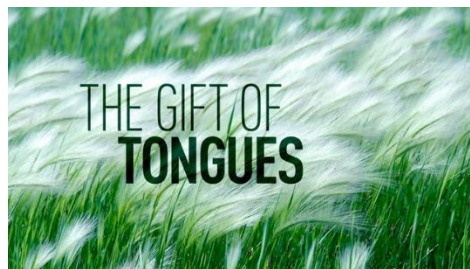
It is the BRAIN where all the senses derive their direction and function. In other words, the gifts of the five senses reside WITHIN a person and operate as he decides. Any normal, healthy person operates in the area of all his senses, even so the gifts of the Spirit reside WITHIN the Holy Spirit.

The argument could not be simpler. If the gifts of the Spirit reside within the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit resides within the believer, then potentially all the gifts reside within the Spirit Filled believer. What is the key to their release?

There are two keys.

The first is FAITH. FAITH that embraces the Promise of God that He is both with us and IN us, willing to do His good pleasure. Faith to believe that the inward promptings to speak forth or to act are indeed from the Blessed Holy Spirit, and allied with that faith must come BOLDNESS to allow our voice to become His voice, and to allow our lips to become His, to allow our members to become His and step out. When we do, we enter into the blessed dimension of power-based ministry.

We have begun to employ God's Power Tools to build His church – and the public meeting becomes an exhilarating affair.



Chapter 11

Closing Thoughts

My closing thoughts are in answer to many of the questions that I have heard from the saints. They are what I term the ‘What ifs’. Let’s consider a few of them

- 1) What if I speak in tongues and it is only ME SPEAKING. Let me answer this with a Smith Wigglesworth quote which went something like this. – “Sometimes I begin with ME but if I continue speaking, I always finish with Him.” When I first spoke in tongues, I wasn’t sure what was happening, I had been praying for the gift and not a syllable came forth but one day in a church service I was given a full utterance in tongues. The happy saints proclaimed I had been filled with the Spirit, but since my salvation a few years before, I could not have been more filled with the Spirit. No. What had taken place was an answer to my prayer. I had been coveting earnestly the gifts of the Spirit and God had bestowed upon me the gifts of tongues, as well as interpretation and prophecy. I was coming to realize that there was a Teacher who was within me and He was perfectly guiding me into all truth according to His promise. ‘When He comes He will guide you into all truth’. (**John 16:3**) When we are processing through this study keep this verse uppermost in your mind. In the employment of the gifts of the Spirit, they always glorify God and edify His church.
- 2) What happens if I lose control and finish in a psychiatrist’s office? This thought, I can assure you, comes from the devil himself. Paul makes it quite clear in **1 Corinthians 14** that the Spirit of the prophet is always subject to the prophet and there is never any occasion when our own spirit is hijacked by God. To be filled with the Spirit means to be in perfect harmony with God in us and in His Workings within us. On the contrary, it is the devil who seeks



to hijack the human faculties. NEVER! GOD who has bestowed freedom of volition on all human beings.

- 3) What if I am wrong in giving an interpretation or a 'Word of Knowledge'. This is one of the most frequently asked question. I counter it by asking another question; what happen if you were right and failed to pass on that life-giving word to someone who desperately needed it? The 'right' or 'wrong' of a word is of no great consequence with God. We are connected to Him who is the Truth, the Way and the Life and the great arbiter of all things spiritual is LIFE. You can never be condemned if you move in love and minister life albeit your understanding may sometimes be off or need more fine tuning.
- 4) The fourth one is to do with other church members who do not believe in the gifts of the Spirit. What will they say if I tell them I speak in tongues? Will they still be happy to have me around or will I be ridiculed as being some sort of fanatic? All I can say is that throughout my Christian walk I have been labelled by other believers. It concerned me in early years, but I took heart from Jesus words to Peter when he was asking about his fellow disciple John (**John 21**). In reply Jesus said "*what is that to you? Follow Me.*" Further, in **Galatians chapter 1** Paul said, "*If I pleased men, I would not be a servant of God*". Settle the matter quickly. If you are a believer filled with His Spirit, the devil won't like it and a lot of other people won't either. Just do what God tells you to do and leave the consequences to Him. There are many other 'what ifs' and we can't deal with them in our discussion times, but my final one;
- 5) What happens if God tells me to do something really stupid, should I obey Him? HOLD ON!! There was a reason why the Lord sent his disciples two by two. (**Luke 11**) They can then be a check on each other, thus the second opinion is always a safety factor to keep things both sane and spiritual.





Chapter 12

FINAL CHAPTER

It was said of Jesus by His hearers and observers that He spoke with authority and not as the Scribes. (**Matthew 7:28**)

That is a hugely significant statement.

The scribes and the religious community knew the Scriptures to the last full stop and comma. In fact, they often memorised the whole Torah, but they had no relationship with the Author Himself. Therefore, when they spoke their words were dry; lacking in life and power.

Contrast this with Jesus. When He taught and expounded the same Scriptures there was an immediate connection with His hearers because His words were power and life to them.

So, it must be with the genuine exercise of spiritual gifts. They should establish immediate connection with the hearer and be relevant without further explanation. This is the true definition of spiritual authority. Let me explain it this way. The City of Barrie was originally built in a valley running from Lake Simcoe towards Angus in the west. Now it has spread to the surrounding higher ground. On these ridges are well marked blue and white towers. They hold thousands of gallons of water. Because they are on high ground the force of gravity provides pressure to the homes in the area. Simple as that. When we open the taps in our house the water flows with force. The height gives pressure at the point of outlet. Sometimes when ministers open their mouth the words seem to dribble out. Their tap is opened but their words do not come with authority or conviction. They may be speaking out of an open Bible, but the Scriptures are not “opened” as described in Luke chapter 24 and nobody’s heart is left burning within them. They have not come from the height of Heaven.



But when men or women operate in the genuine gifts of the Spirit they have immediate impact. They have come from a higher place and have the force of heavenly authority because they are derived directly from the Spirit. The Bible says each one of us should seek earnestly the gifts of the Spirit that we might edify the church assembled and bring the Word of God to all to whom He sends us.

Let us then, follow the Heavenly injunction, that Christ be uplifted, and His people thrive and be fruitful in every area of their lives.

