

Spiritual Gifts

Introduction

Miracles, healings, supernatural knowledge, people being raised from the dead. No wonder our Christianity sometimes seems powerless when we compare it to that manifested by the Early Church. What was that dynamic power those first Christians had, and why don't we see more of it today?

Our Study

Before His death Jesus gave His authority to His disciples and sent them out with specific instructions.

The Scripture: Matthew 10:8

"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."

1. What was Jesus' command to His disciples? _____

The Bible tells us that the disciples were obedient to Jesus' command, and after Pentecost, we see His followers still manifesting that same power.

The Scripture: Acts 3:2, 6-8

"Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg.... Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. "

2. What command did Peter give to the beggar? _____

3. What happened? _____

This was just the first of many miraculous acts performed by the followers of Jesus. The supernatural power so evident in the first centuries of the Church was manifested through what we call the spiritual gifts. Those same gifts are available to every Christian today.

Let's see what the Bible has to say about the spiritual gifts.

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4, 7

"Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.... There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit.... Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. "

4. Where do all spiritual gifts come from? _____

5. For what are they given? _____

Paul adds to this idea in another scripture.

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14:26, 27

"When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church."

6. In these verses what does Paul say the spiritual gifts are for? _____

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

"To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the 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, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines."

7. List the spiritual gifts here. _____

8. How are the gifts distributed? _____

Generally, the spiritual gifts are classified into three groups: the vocal gifts, the revelation gifts, and the power gifts. We will look at each group in turn.

The Vocal Gifts

The vocal gifts are speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy.

Speaking In Tongues and Interpretation

The spiritual gift of speaking in tongues must not be confused with the personal prayer language you received when you were baptized in the Holy Spirit. The *tongues* mentioned here is the public gift of tongues.

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14:22

"Tongues, then are a sign...for unbelievers."

9. To whom is tongues a sign? _____

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14:13

"For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says."

10. What should always accompany the public speaking in tongues? _____

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14:28

"If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church."

11. What should the person who has a message in tongues do if there is no interpreter? _____

Prophecy

The gift of prophecy is a message from God, given in the language of the listeners.

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14:1, 3, 4b

"Eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.... Everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement, and comfort.... He who prophesies edifies the church. "

12. What gift should we desire above all? _____

13. What does prophecy do? _____

14. Who is prophecy for? _____

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14:24, 25

"If an unbeliever... comes in while everyone is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God.... "

15. What will happen when an unbeliever hears prophecy? _____

16. What will he do? _____

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14:29

"Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said."

17. What should the listeners do? _____

The expression, weigh carefully, is translated judge in many versions of the Bible.

The Revelation Gifts

The revelation gifts are the message of wisdom, the message of knowledge, and the distinguishing of spirits.

The Bible gives us very little specific information on how these gifts are to be used, so we will see how they were used in the Early Church.

The Message of Knowledge

The message or word of knowledge is a supernatural knowledge previously unknown to the person and given by the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 5, we have the story of Ananias and Sapphira, who sold a piece of property, then lied about the selling price.

The Scripture: Acts 5:3

"Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?'"

18. What was Peter's message of knowledge? _____

Later when Sapphira also lied, Peter told her she was going to die, and she fell down dead.

These are two instances of the message of knowledge in operation.

The Message of Wisdom

The message or word of wisdom is supernatural wisdom given for a specific occasion. In the early days of the church a dispute arose over whether or not non-Jewish converts to Christianity had to be circumcised. Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to meet with the elders of the church.

After hearing their testimony, James, the leader of the Jerusalem church, had a message of wisdom.

The Scripture: Acts 15:19

"It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God."

19. What was James' judgment? _____

Through a message of wisdom the unity of the Early Church was re-established.

Distinguishing Between Spirits

Distinguishing between spirits is the divine ability that enables a person to distinguish between the divine, satanic, or human origin of spiritual activity.

A sorcerer, named Simon, offered to pay the apostles if they would give him the ability to lay hands on people and have them receive the Holy Spirit.

Peter chastised him and told him to repent.

The Scripture: Acts 8:23

"For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."

20. What did Peter say was wrong with Simon? _____

This was an example of the distinguishing between spirits in operation.

The Power Gifts

The power gifts complete our list of spiritual gifts. They are faith, gifts of healing, and miraculous powers.

Faith

The gift of faith is supernatural faith given for a specific time or occasion.

When Paul and Barnabas were in Salamis, the proconsul wished to hear the word of God. Elymas, a sorcerer, opposed them.

The Scripture: Acts 13:9-11

"Then...Paul...looked straight at Elymas and said, 'You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right.... Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind.' Immediately mist and darkness came over him. "

21. Briefly summarize what happened. _____

Gifts of healing

We see the gifts of healing much in evidence in the life of Paul. While the apostle was being taken to Rome to stand trial, the ship that carried him was shipwrecked off the isle of Malta. The chief official of the island welcomed everyone into his home where his father was suffering from fever and dysentery.

The Scripture: Acts 28:8b

"Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him."

22. What happened when Paul laid hands on the father? _____

When this happened all the sick people on the island came and were healed by Paul.

Miraculous powers

The final spiritual gift we will look at is that of miraculous powers, or, as it is more commonly called, miracles.

In Joppa, a well-loved disciple named Tabitha who had done much good and helped the poor, died. Her friends sent for Peter.

The Scripture: Acts 9:40

"Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, 'Tabitha, get up.' She opened her eyes and seeing Peter she sat up. "

23. What happened when Peter told Tabitha to get up? _____

As important as the spiritual gifts are, they must never be separated from the other aspects of our walk with the Lord.

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14:1a

"Follow the way of love."

24. What must we do while desiring the spiritual gifts? _____

Answers

1. To heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and drive out demons
2. *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."*
3. The man jumped to his feet and began to walk.
4. The Spirit
5. For the common good
6. The strengthening of the church
7. The message of wisdom, the message of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in different kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues
8. As the Holy Spirit determines
9. The unbeliever
10. The interpretation
11. Keep quiet
12. The gift of prophecy
13. It strengthens, encourages, comforts; it edifies the church
14. Believers
15. Be convinced he is a sinner
16. Worship God
17. Weigh prophecy carefully
18. That Ananias had lied
19. Not make it difficult for Gentile converts
20. That he was full of bitterness and captive to sin
21. Individual answers
22. He was healed
23. She opened her eyes and sat up.
24. We must follow the way of love

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