

August 2019

*”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.” (1 Corinthians 12:4, 7)* ….. “Do not be satisfied with God’s calling or His gifts in your life. Be satisfied with Jesus Christ Himself.” Brother Yun, the heavenly man.

The gifts of the Spirit as found in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, whereas some might have two or more of the gifts below, another may have only one of them. *The Spirit gives to one the gift of the word of wisdom. To another, the same Spirit gives the gift of the word of revelation knowledge. v9 and to another, the same Spirit gives the gift of faith. And to another, the same Spirit gives gifts of healing. v10 and to another the power to work miracles. And to another the gift of prophecy. And to another the gift to discern what the Spirit is speaking. And to another the gift of speaking different kinds of tongues. And to another the gift of interpretation of tongues. v11 remember, it is the same Holy Spirit who distributes, activates, and operates these gifts as He chooses for each believer. (1 Corinthians 12:8-11 TPT).* Also, a gift may flourish once - and then never again. Sometimes a gift may reside permanently in a person.

**WISDOM**

This is the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit. It heads the list. Wisdom is the presence of the mind of the Holy Spirit. It is knowing what to do next; it shows the next step forward when we don’t know what to do. It is having 20/20 foresight vision. We all seem to have 20/20 hindsight vision, realizing too late what we should have done. But wisdom is 20/20 foresight vision, showing what to do or say now. It will keep you from mistakes. It will keep you from regrets. It will keep you from putting your foot in it. It will keep you from making a fool of yourself.

Have you ever wondered why the book of Proverbs (part of ancient Hebrews literature) says so much in early chapters about sexual purity? Go read the first seven chapters and notice how much attention is given to adultery and sexual infidelity. Why? Because sexual purity is one of the first qualifications to have wisdom. It is the last thing some want to hear. It is listed first, but it is the least talked about, sometimes the least wanted, and sometimes the least evidenced in the church today. It sometimes seems as if we are living in the period like in the book of Judges - *“Everyone did as they saw fit.” (Judges 21:25).*

If you covet earnestly the best gifts - and feel some of them are beyond your reach - do not forget that James (Jacob) said we can always pray for wisdom. *“If any of you lacks wisdom* [don’t we all?]*, He should ask God” (James (Jacob) 1:5).* There are two kinds of wisdom: One is from below. It is recognized by bitter envy and selfish ambition. Its origin: the flesh and the devil. There is the wisdom that comes from above - that is what Paul talks about in this gift that heads the list. It is “*first of all pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere” (James (Jacob) 3:17).* The gift of wisdom as James (Jacob) describes it comes the nearest of the gifts of the Spirit to seem to be like the fruit of the Spirit. This is a revelation gift of the Holy Spirit to impart an understanding of strategy and insight that only God can give. This is more than simply wisdom, but the clearly crafted “word of wisdom” to unlock the hearts of people and free the corporate body to move forward under God’s direction. This gift will express the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, not of men. Examples of this gift were when Jesus saw Nathaniel under the fig tree and knew his true character as a man without guile and when Jesus spoke to the woman at the well and unlocked her heart with the words, *“go get your husband”. (See John 1:45-49, 4:16)*.

**WORD OF KNOWLEDGE**

The phrase “word of knowledge” is the KJV translation. The ESV says “utterance of knowledge”. The Passion translation says “word of revelation knowledge”. This phrase has pretty much become the way this gift of the Spirit is referred to, although it is less clear what it actually means. It could refer to someone highly gifted in knowledge, but that is not the way it is normally accepted.

This gift may be needed in a crisis or supernatural knowledge referring to something going on in one’s life. It borders on the word of wisdom and prophecy. A word of knowledge may disclose a person’s illness, concern or specific need. The gift of the message (Gr. logas) of revelation knowledge has been defined by some as the Holy Spirits impartation through an impression, a vision, or His voice that gives understanding of a person or situation that cannot be known through the natural mind of man. It may be exercised in the prayer of healing. This revelation knowledge is seen in Saul’s healing of blindness in Acts 9 and in Acts 10-11 with Peter’s revelation knowledge of Cornelius’ servant outside his door and the subsequent salvation of Cornelius and his household. The word of revelation knowledge could also include knowing facts that are unknown to the speaker, such as names, dates, or events to come.

**FAITH**

It may seem odd that faith would be listed as a gift of the Spirit since we are justified by faith; we are saved by grace through faith. So it would seem redundant that faith should be listed as a gift of the Spirit to people already saved. But this is obviously not talking about salvation.

This gift also can refer to crisis situations. It is sometimes easier to trust God to take you to heaven than it is to get you through the day! As I said, a gift of the Spirit may come to a person only once, it could reside in someone else indefinitely. Heidi and Roland Baker, missionaries to Africa are famous for their extraordinary faith. They trust God for food for literally hundreds to thousands of orphans, for God to look after their needs, living one day at a time, never telling anybody much of the time what the needs are and God always provides. There were times of sitting down to eat with nothing but plates and utensils. They would thank God for food that wasn’t there. Before they finished praying, there would be a knock on the door that would come with all of the food needed. This happens over and over again.

A man with a ministry to harlots during the Welsh revival (also in the Pensacola revival) would be told by the Holy Spirit how many would show up the next morning to be fed. Whether it be “19” or “4”, the exact amount of food needed for these “precious in the sight of God” would be provided - not a little bit extra or too little. This is the supernatural power of faith released in a believer to do the miracle works of God on the earth.

**HEALING**

Who wouldn’t want this gift? Who has it? I suppose those who see a lot of people healed when they pray for sick assume they have this gift. I have seen a few healed. Even a blind boy next to me at a revival in Pensacola. I think the gift of healing comes sovereignly, and that those who have it all the time are exceedingly rare. The late Oral Roberts was the most famous of faith healers. I had the privilege of attending my freshman year of college at Oral Roberts University on a basketball scholarship. Brother Roberts would tell us of how when the Lord stopped him in his hallway and said to let go of the “old anointing” and take the new and when he did there were extraordinary healings. This is the supernatural power of God released through a believer to heal the sick. This gift seems to come and go. Nobody can make God do things.

**MIRACULOUS POWERS**

What is the difference between healing and miraculous powers? You tell me. Some say healing is gradual, a miracle is sudden. What happened when the 40-year-old man was instantly healed at the Beautiful gate? Was it a miracle? Surely, but it is called a healing too. (Acts 3:16). Just as the gift of word of revelation knowledge overlaps with the gift of prophecy, so too with the gift of miracles and healing. Perhaps it is the gift of miracles when a person is delivered from demons. I would write of several personal stories dealing with demon possessed and oppressed people that have crossed my path that God brought through to deliverance, but I’ll save those testimonies for another time. I also believe the gift of miraculous powers includes the divine ability to still a storm, feed a multitude, walk on water, cast out demons, turn water into wine and raise the dead.

**PROPHECY**

When Paul urged the Corinthians to desire the spiritual gifts “especially the gift of prophecy” (1 Corinthians 14:1), he was not implying they could become Elijah’s or Isaiah’s. Neither does prophecy mean preaching. He was talking about exhortations of encouragement, perhaps cautions too, but not magisterial predictions or pronouncements. I am not sure these Corinthians could become Agabus’s either, and yet his predictions about Paul going to Jerusalem did not turn out exactly right. (See Acts 21:10-11, then follow what exactly happened to Paul). There are levels of prophecy, pointing out that canonical prophets or biblical writers - the highest level - will not be duplicated again, just as Scripture is final and complete.

What some people do get carried away with is saying “Thus saith the Lord” or “The Lord told me.” Speaking like this is not only highly presumptuous but it is a way to take the name of the Lord in vain. It is simply unnecessary to bring the Lord’s name in when we think we have a word for someone unless one is told to do so by the Lord. I do believe we are told to do that on occasions to those that the Lord wants to deal with in that particular way, but we must be sure. Otherwise, it is using God’s name - the worst possible kind of name-dropping - to elevate our own credibility. You are not thinking of the Lord’s credibility but your own when you bring in His name. Careless prophesying has done a lot of damage to the issue of the gifts of the Spirit, but when done according to the Spirit it is a wonderful, supernatural gift and ability to speak the Word of God in proclamation and at times in predicting what God wills to come to pass. This is one gift that every believer should desire and never despise.

*It is good that you are enthusiastic and passionate about spiritual gifts, especially prophecy. v3 But when someone prophesies, he speaks to encourage people, to build them up, and to bring them comfort.v4 the one who speaks in tongues advances his own spiritual progress, while the ones who prophesies builds up the church. (1 Corinthians 14:1, 3, 4 TPT). Never restrain or put out the fire of the Holy Spirit. v20 And don’t be one who scorns prophecies. (1 Thessalonians 5:19, 20 TPT). So Timothy, my son, I am entrusting you with this responsibility, in keeping with the very first prophecies that were spoken over your life, and are now in the process of fulfillment in this great work of ministry, in keeping with the prophecies spoken over you. With this encouragement use your prophecies as weapons as you wage spiritual warfare by faith and with a clean conscience. For there are many who reject these virtues and are now destitute of the true faith. (1 Timothy 1:18, 19 TPT). Don’t minimize the powerful gift that operates in your life, for it was imparted to you by the laying on of hands of the elders and was activated through the prophecy they spoke over you (1 Timothy 4:14 TPT).*

**DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN SPIRITS**

This is the God - given ability to discern the true from the false - recognizing the Holy Spirit and also the demonic. Too many people think only of the demonic when it comes to this gift. It is more important to discern the presence of the Holy Spirit than the demonic. It is equally important to discern the absence of the Holy Spirit when people are making claims about the Spirit of God. In working with so many musicians and singers through the years, I’ve denoted it as such to them when it comes to the ‘anointing’ of the Spirit on their gifting. “I’m not always sure (but I actually am) on what the anointing is (for), but I sure know when it ain’t”. Divine discernment is to know what message, that what is being offered to the Lord in the congregation is from the Holy Spirit or from a human or from a demonic source. *God revealed their secret to Peter, so he said to him, “Ananias, why did you let Satan fill your heart and make you think you could lie to the Holy Spirit? You only pretended to give it all, yet you hid back part of the proceeds from the sale of your property to keep for yourselves”. (Acts 5:3 TPT).* Discernment is greatly needed in the church today to hear the voice of the Lord clearly. There are too many false prophets, pastors, teachers, musicians and singers operating out of their own charisma than on God’s charis (Gr) (grace) offering up a counterfeit spirit or strange fire on the altar. We need to clearly hear God’s voice today and know when defilement is attempting to enter in.

**SPEAKING IN TONGUES**

I have covered this somewhat without entering into the discussion how 1 Corinthians 14:2, speaking in tongues to God, sometimes called a “prayer language” relates to Acts 2:4, when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. According to Paul, these ‘tongues’ talked about in 1 Corinthians 14 are not known languages but Spirit - inspired utterances. Speaking in tongues is the gift so many think about when the discussion “gifts of the Spirit” comes up. I say again, if it were not for the stigma of this particular gift - given the notoriety it has received, I don’t think the gifts of the Spirit would be nearly so controversial.

**INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES**

This may be the rarest of the gifts. There is a subtle difference between interpretation and translation, but people need to maintain integrity when exercising this gift, especially when a person interprets his or her “own” tongue. It is always more validating if a different person interprets than the one who speaks it, even more so when the interpretation could be validated by a second person interpreting who had not heard the first. But if the interpretation is absolutely right, it can bring a great witness to God’s glory. *For the intimate secrets of his heart will be brought to light. He will be mystified and fall face down in worship and say, “God is truly among you!”. (1 Corinthians 14:25 TPT).*

Twice Paul said we should “eagerly desire” the gifts - *but you should all constantly boil over with passion in seeking the higher gifts. And now I will show you a superior way to live that is beyond comparison! (1 Corinthians 12:31 TPT). It is good that you are enthusiastic and passionate about spiritual gifts, especially prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:1 TPT).* The responsibility is on us all to show how closely we wish to adhere to Scripture by coveting the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit at any time to any one He chooses. *Remember, it is the same Holy Spirit who distributes, activates, and operates these different gifts as he chooses for each believer. (1 Corinthians 12:11 TPT).*

I’m really praying and believing that you all are doing more than just reading these letters, but are actually applying and praying about your relationship to the God that I know. The One who has nothing but good and intimacy and amazing love for you no matter what you’ve done. We were all sinners, now I pray for you to be a saint. Walk in His grace and mercy and favor, yes right there in the place you find yourself, surrender and pursue Him with everything and watch what happens! You’ll never be the same! Encounter God! There is nothing like it!

Revival is coming!

Get ready!

***Chief***

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***Christ’s Heart In Every Felon***