

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

I. DEFINITION OF GIFTS

The word *gift* comes from the Greek word *charisma*, meaning a free gift from God. It is a gift of *grace* (Greek, *charis*). Gifts are supernatural abilities given by the Holy Spirit for Christian service. The word *charismatic* refers to exercising the gifts mentioned in Scripture.

II. DIFFERENT KINDS OF GIFTS

There are a number of gifts mentioned in Scripture, found primarily in three passages: Ephesians 4; 1 Corinthians 12; and Romans 12. Gifts are given to individual believers as God wills. (1 Corinthians 12:11) Each believer has at least one gift and probably more. (1 Peter 4:10)

A. THE GIFTS OF EPHESIANS 4:11

The five gifts in Ephesians 4:11 are not simply abilities given to certain individuals, but actual offices in which gifts are used. Paul said, referring to Jesus, *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.*

1. THE APOSTLE

The word *apostle* (Greek, *apostolos*) means *one sent forth*. He is an ambassador of the Gospel. Though we are not certain exactly what constitutes the office of apostle, it would appear from Scripture that the apostle does the following:

a) THE APOSTLE MINISTERS THE WORD

He preaches, teaches, testifies, and exhorts regarding the word of God. (Romans 1:1; Acts 2:40,42)

b) THE APOSTLE ESTABLISHES CHURCHES

The apostle helps in starting churches, in making and strengthening believers, and in appointing leaders. (Acts 14:21-23)

2. THE PROPHET

The word *prophet* (Greek, *prophetes*) means one who proclaims a divine message.

a) THE PROPHET FORTHTELLS

He proclaims or reveals Scripture. In this capacity he does the following: (1) teach (1 Cor. 14:19); (2) edify, exhort, and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3; Acts 15:32); convict (1 Cor. 14:24,25); and speak a revelation from God (1 Cor. 14: 29-31).

b) THE PROPHET FORETELLS

He predicts future events. (Acts 11:27, 28)

3. THE EVANGELIST

The word *evangelist* (Greek, *euaggelistes*) means a preacher of the Gospel.

a) THE EVANGELIST PREACHES THE GOSPEL

He preaches the Gospel (good news) message of salvation through Jesus Christ, including salvation spiritually, emotionally, physically, financially, and relationally. (Mark 16:15-20)

b) THE EVANGELIST REACHES THE LOST

He takes his message to the lost, whether near or far. (Acts 1:8; 11:19-21)

4. THE PASTOR

The word *pastor* (Greek, *poimen*”) means a shepherd, one who feeds and tends the flock of God.

a) THE PASTOR FEEDS

He feeds the believers in the local church, so they can grow spiritually. (John 21:15-17; 1 Peter 5:14) He does this by teaching the word of God. (1 Peter 2:2,3)

b) THE PASTOR LEADS

He leads his flock in the paths of righteousness. (John 10:14)

He is an example for them to follow. (1 Timothy 4:12)

c) THE PASTOR GUARDS

He is the overseer of the sheep, God’s people, protecting them from false teachers and others who would harm them. (Acts 20:28-30)

d) THE PASTOR WATCHES

Believers are exhorted concerning their pastors, *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.* (Hebrews 13:17)

5. THE TEACHER

The phrase *pastors and teachers* in Ephesians 4:11 indicates Paul may be speaking of one office, that of pastor and teacher. The pastor is to be both pastor and teacher. There are, however, teachers who are not pastors. The word *teacher* (Greek, *didaskalos*) means an instructor, a teacher of the truth. While the evangelist preaches to the unbeliever, the teacher teaches the word to the believer.

a) THE TEACHER TEACHES SOUND DOCTRINE

Paul advises Titus that a pastor is to hold *fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.* (Titus 1:9)

b) THE TEACHER TEACHES THE WORD ACCURATELY

Paul advises Timothy, *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* (2 Timothy 2:15)

B. THE GIFTS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 12:410

In 1 Corinthians 12:410, we find nine gifts or supernatural abilities which God gives to certain individuals.

1. WORD OF WISDOM (Verse 8)

This is a word or utterance from God revealing His mind or will, or how to carry out His will. (Acts 13:13)

2. WORD OF KNOWLEDGE (Verse 8)

This is a word or utterance from God revealing information about a person, place, or thing. (Acts 5:16)

3. FAITH (Verse 9)

This is an extraordinary faith to believe God for the impossible. (Acts 9:3243), beyond each believer's "measure of faith." (Rom 12:3)

4. GIFTS OF HEALINGS (Verse 9)

Through gifts of healings, God imparts physical healing to people. While all believers have a "healing ministry" (Mark 16:18), some have very active and powerful ministries in healing. (Acts 8:5-8)

5. WORKINGS OF MIRACLES (Verse 10)

A *miracle* (Greek, *dunamis*) is power, and involves performing supernatural works. (Acts 3:110; 6:8; 14:3; 19:11,12)

6. PROPHECY (Verse 10)

Prophecy is the act of proclaiming God's message through forthtelling or foretelling. (Acts 21:11)

7. DISCERNING OF SPIRITS (Verse 10)

Discerning of spirits is the ability to identify the operation of evil spirits. (Acts 16:1618)

8. DIFFERENT KINDS OF TONGUES (Verse 10)

This is the ability to speak in another language without learning it. Any believer can receive tongues for private communication between his spirit and God. (1 Cor. 14:2,4) The gift of *different kinds of tongues*, however, is for giving a message in an assembly, to be followed by a divinely given interpretation. (1 Cor 14:5)

9. INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES (Verse 10)

This is the ability to interpret or explain in the known language a message given in tongues. (1 Cor. 14:5) The message can be either from man to God in prayer and praise (1 Cor. 14:2,14-17), or from God to man in prophecy or revelation (1 Cor. 14:6,21,26).

C. THE GIFTS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 12:2831

1 Corinthians 12:2831 mentions again some gifts we have already considered, along with two we have not discussed.

1. HELPS (Verse 28)

Helps is the ability to render assistance, especially to the poor, weak, or needy. It was said of Tabitha in Acts 9:36 that she was *full of good works and charitable deeds*. (Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 16:1518)

2. ADMINISTRATIONS (Verse 28)

Administrations is the ability to direct, administer, and implement the work of God. (Acts 14:2123)

D. THE GIFTS OF ROMANS 12:6-8

Romans 12:68 explains how to use certain gifts. In addition to the gifts of prophecy and teaching, several gifts are mentioned here which are not considered in 1 Corinthians 12 or Ephesians 4.

1. MINISTRY (Verse 7)

Ministry (Greek, *diakonia*) is the office and work of serving, including (1) domestic duties (e.g., waiting on tables), and (2) spiritual duties (e.g., praying, preaching, teaching). (Acts 6:115; 8:58)

2. EXHORTATION (Verse 8)

Exhortation is the gift of encouraging, admonishing, or urging someone to pursue a future course of conduct. (Romans 15:14)

3. GIVING (Verse 8)

Giving is the divine ability to give, to share. It should be exercised "with liberality" (generously). (Acts 4:3437)

4. LEADING (Verse 8)

Leading is presiding, ruling, *with diligence*. (1 Pet 5:24)

5. SHOWING MERCY (Verse 8)

This is the ability to have compassion and sympathy for someone in misery, exercised *with cheerfulness*. (2 Cor. 8:17)

E. AND MORE GIFTS

Aside from Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12, and Romans 12, other gifts are mentioned in Scripture, such as *hospitality*. (1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Pet. 4:9) God is infinite, as are His gifts.

III. WHY THE GIFTS ARE GIVEN

A. TO EQUIP

Paul writes that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers are given to the body of Christ *for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry*. (Ephesians 4:12)

B. TO EDIFY

Paul then adds that these gifted men are *for the edifying of the body of Christ*. (Ephesians 4:12) All believers exercise their gifts so that the body can be built up and strengthened spiritually. (1 Cor. 12:7)

IV. HOW WE SHOULD REGARD THE GIFTS

A. DESIRE THE GIFTS

Paul closes his discussion of the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:31 by saying, *But earnestly desire the best gifts*.

B. PRAY FOR THE GIFTS

After you receive the Giver of all gifts, Jesus Christ, pray: (1) for the gifts you need to serve Him; (2) for the ability to use them in love to benefit the body; (3) for opportunities to minister your gifts.

C. EXERCISE THE GIFTS

Paul advises, *Do not neglect the gift that is in you*. (1 Tim 4:11)

D. EXERCISE THE GIFTS HUMBLY

Gifts evidence God's grace and power, not spirituality. Spirituality is evidenced by fruit, not gifts. (Read Gal 5:22-23)

E. SEEK THE GIVER MOST OF ALL

Desire the gifts, but desire most of all the Giver of all gifts, Jesus Christ, and His kingdom. *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*. (Matthew 6:33)

