

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“for the edification of the body”

For related information look at theology file #313 Miracles, Healing

Key question

How are we to understand and use special gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church today?

Key text

I Peter 4:10-11

“As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus ‘Christ. To him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

Key definition

Spiritual Gifts

A spiritual gift is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church.

Introduction

1. The rise of the charismatic movement has drawn attention to special (supernatural) gifts of the Spirit used for ministry in the church.
2. This subject has been controversial and often divisive in the evangelical church because:
 - a. It sometimes becomes a dominant theme in church’s where certain gifts are experienced.
 - b. It sometimes leads those with special gifts to feel more spiritual than those without.
 - c. It is sometimes associated with behavioral excesses and unorthodox doctrinal teaching.
 - d. It sometimes is met with an over correction or reaction which denies the present existence or usefulness of such gifts.

A. **Key texts of Scripture that deal with this subject.**

1. **Joel 2:28-29** predicted the outpouring of the Spirit in the “age to come”. This was fulfilled at Pentecost in Acts 2:17-20.

2. **Rom.12:6-8** encourages believers to exercise their gifts in proportion to their faith with humility and after they have died to their own interests in response to God’s grace.
3. **I Cor.12-14** teaches us that the variety of gifts come from one Spirit, are given to people with differing abilities, and are to be used to edify the one and same body with due respect for each other. Love is to govern the use of gifts. Tongues without prophecy are a judgment not a sign of blessing. We should seek to use gifts that edify the church.
4. **Eph.4:11** tells us that certain gifts are to equip the rest of the body for ministry.
5. **I Pet.4:11** teaches us to use our gifts with confidence.

B. What are Spiritual Gifts?

1. The gifts are bestowed on the body (the church) by the Spirit of Christ for the edification of the church. I Cor.12:7; 14:5,12
2. No one person has all the gifts nor is any one of the gifts bestowed on all persons. I Cor.12:14-30
3. Although not equally conspicuous, all gifts are important. I Cor.12:22-26
4. The Holy Spirit apportions the various gifts to whom and as he wills. I Cor.12:11
5. Dangers to be avoided in the use of spiritual gifts. (I Cor.12-14)
 - a. Gifts are not to be confused with God’s special favor, spirituality, virtue of character, or maturity.
 - b. Less dramatic gifts are to be honored, not belittled.
 - c. The gift of tongues is not to be exalted or universalized.
 - d. Gifts of revelation are to be tested and evaluated critically.
 - e. A gift’s manifestation is to be recognized not by its form but by its content.
 - f. A genuine gift can be misused.
 - g. Gifts of prophecy are to be desired above other gifts.
6. **I Peter 4:11** suggests that gifts can be divided into categories. “Whoever **speaks**, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever **serves**, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Speaking	Supervising	Serving	Sign
prophecy evangelists teaching exhortation tongues interpretation	Apostles pastors/teachers administration	wisdom knowledge faith healings miracles discernment	miracles tongues

7. There are varieties of gifts, ministries, and effects. **I Cor.12:4-6** “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.”

Gifts (motivations)	Ministries	Effects (manifestations)
The Spirit given ability to edify the church.	The office or position from which a gift is exercised.	The result of the gift's use in the life of the church.
Aptitude	Ordination	Word effected (result)
Creative powers	Administrations	Operations
By the Holy Spirit	When ordained by elders (church)	To the Body of Christ To the World
When? At the moment of salvation	When? At the time of ordination the body recognizes the gifted one	When? When "gift", "ministry", and "the Holy Spirit" work together.
How Many? Basic motives, gifts, aptitudes	How Many? Large number	How many? Large number
Gifts of the first order	Gifts of the second order	Gifts of the third order

- Some gifts are recognized as greater (more edifying than others). These gifts include prophecy, teaching, apostleship, tongues with interpretation – **I Cor.14:4-5**. It was expected however that the lesser gifts be given greater places of honor in the church because they may tend to leave those with those gifts feeling insignificant – **I Cor.12:22-24**.
- The special gifts given to individuals does not excuse each of us from responding to God's command to minister in areas that may not be our gift.

Gifts given to some	Commands given to all
Ministering	Serve one another – Gal.5:13
Exhortation	Exhort one another – Heb.10:25
Giving	All give – II Cor.9:7
Teaching	Teaching one another – Col.3:16
Showing Mercy	Be kind – Eph.4:32
Faith	Walk by faith – II Cor.5:7
Evangelism	All witness – Acts 1:8

C. Have some of the more miraculous gifts ceased with the passing of the Apostles and the completion of the New Testament canon?

- A key passage used in support of cessation is **I Cor.13:8-13**. "Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but **when the perfect comes**, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

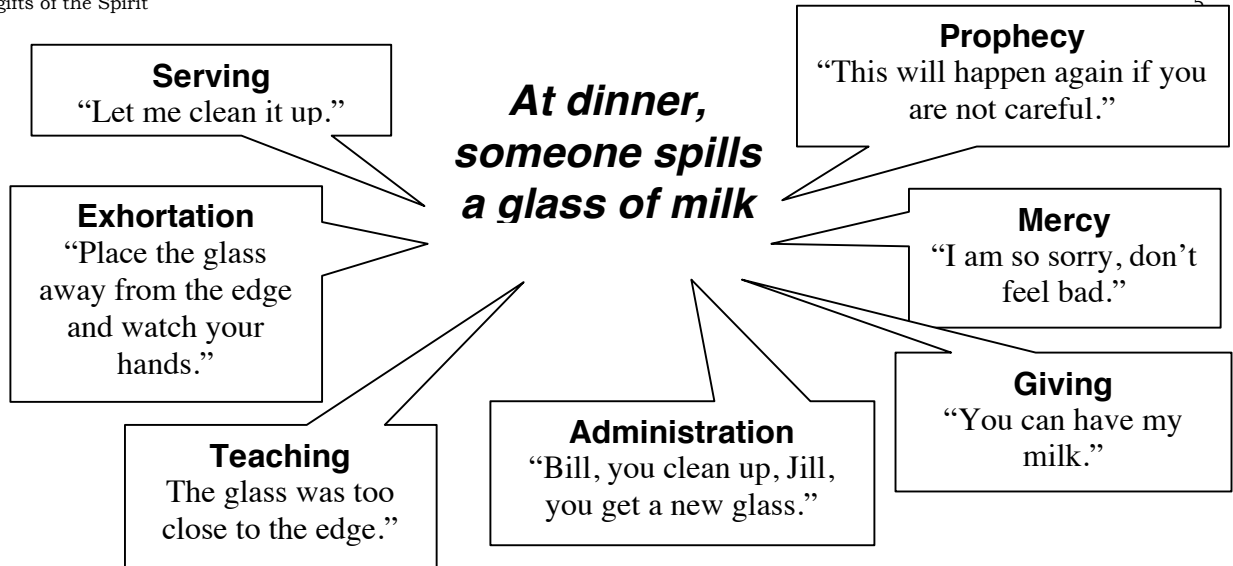
2. “*when the perfect comes*” is best understood as the return of Christ not the completion of the NT canon.
 - a. I Cor.1:7 “*You are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
 - b. “See face to face” is used in the OT to refer to seeing God personally (Gen.32:30; Judg.6:22; Deut.5:4; 34:10; Ezek.20:35; Ex. 33:11).
 - c. “Now I know in part; then I shall know even as I have been known” is best understood in the context of the Lord’s return rather than the present age.
3. Prophecy in the church is not to be held with the same authority as Scripture. “*our prophecy is imperfect.*” Vs.9
4. Miracles were not always accompanied by the giving of new Scripture as some have suggested – Elijah and Elisha, Acts 21:4, 9-11; Rom.12:6; I Thess.5:20-21; Eph.4:11.

D. **How are gifts to be used?**

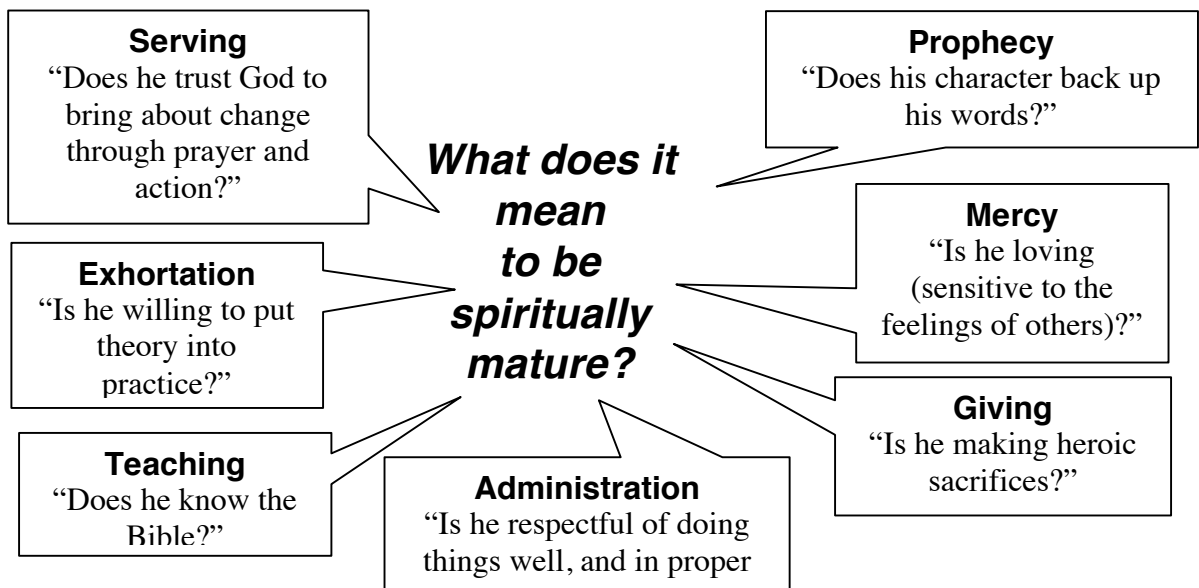
1. The pattern found in **Rom.12:1-8** is important.

“¹ I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, {which is} your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. ³ For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. ⁴ For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, {let each exercise them accordingly}: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷ if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

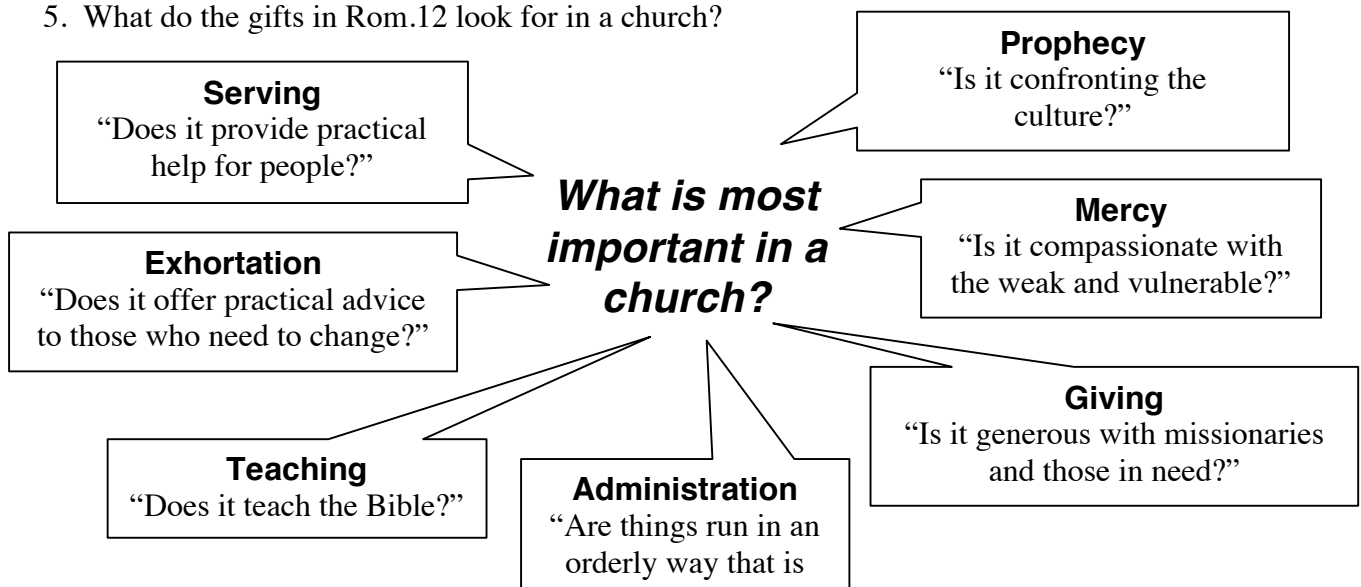
- a. We must be grounded in the “mercies” (grace) of God. Guilt and fear are poor impulses for the proper ministry of gifts.
 - b. We must be willing to “die to selfish motives” and be renewed in our mind or attitude. Our gifts cannot be allowed to become the source of our need for security and significance.
 - c. We must be willing to minister with humility, respecting the full diversity of gifts in the body.
 - d. We must be willing to use our gifts within the boundaries of our faith and the needs present.
2. Respect for the edification needs of the body at the moment as directed by church leaders is a part of the order that God has ordained to keep peace.
 3. The various gifts mentioned in Rom.12 represent different responses to life. (The following three charts are adapted and modified from Bill Gothard’s Basic Youth Conflicts.)



4. How the gifts in Rom.12 tend to judge the "spirituality" of others?



5. What do the gifts in Rom.12 look for in a church?



E. **The Bible and false prophets**

1. The New Testament

a. **Wonderful works are done by False Prophets in the name of the Lord:**

- **Matt.7** “¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ¹⁶ Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ¹⁷ Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. ²⁰ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. ²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

b. **False Prophets will be numerous, and very successful:**

- **Matt.24:11** “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”
- **II Pet.2** “¹ [NIV] But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves. ² Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. ³ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.”
- **I John 4:1** “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

c. **False Prophets work miracles that deceive:**

- **Matt.24:24** “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”
- **Mark 13:22** “For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.”
- **Rev.13** “¹¹ And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. ¹² And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.”
- **Rev.13** “¹³ And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, ¹⁴ And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.”
- **Rev.19:20** “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

d. **Many prefer the False Prophet:**

- **II Tim.4** “² [NIV] Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. ³ For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.”

2. The Old Testament

a. Defining the False Prophet and their fate:

- **Deut.18** “²⁰ But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. ²¹ And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? ²² When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.”
- **Isa.8:20** “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

b. The Motivation of the False Prophet is money:

- **Micah 3** “¹⁰ They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. ¹¹ The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us. ¹² Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.”

c. Many people actually prefer False Prophets:

- **Isa.30** “⁹ That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: ¹⁰ Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: ¹¹ Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. ¹² Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: ¹³ Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. ¹⁴ And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.”
- **Jer.5:31** “The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?”

d. The fate of False Prophets and those who follow them:

- **Jer.14** “¹⁴ Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart. ¹⁵ Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed. ¹⁶ And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of

Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them.”

f. The prophecies of False Prophets do not always fail:

- **Deut.13** “¹ If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, ² and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," ³ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. ⁵ That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.”

Questions that you should be able to answer.

1. Specific facts you should know.

- a. What texts in the New Testament speak of spiritual gifts?
- b. What are the terms used in the New Testament to describe the Spirit's work in the life of the believer?
- c. What are the four specific commands given to believers in their relationship with the Spirit?

2. Issues that you should be able to discuss.

- a. How is the manifestation of the Spirit different in the New Testament as compared to the Old Testament?
- b. What is the significance of Pentecost?

3. Questions you should wrestle with.

- a. Are the miraculous gifts of the Spirit to be expected in the church today?
- b. In what way does the Spirit intercede with our spirit in prayer?