

USING THE GIFTS TO MINISTER

Andrew Wommack

We've already talked about God's love for you and how you can appropriate it for yourself. We talked about how you can implement it in your daily life concerning your finances and your marriage . . . every area of your life. Now we want to talk about how you can take the love of God you have received and share it with other people—how you can be an effective minister to others. In 1 Peter 4:11 it says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." The term, "oracles of God," refers back to the Old Testament when they had the Holy of Holies and put God's word in it. That was called "the oracle," so when it says "speak as the oracles of God" it means speak as the mouthpiece of God. Speak as if you are speaking from the Holy of Holies, as if God is speaking through you. The verse continues, "if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and for ever." What this says is that you need to minister to other people, not out of your own ability, but out of the ability that God gives.

One of the great things about the Christian life is that it isn't just me or you talking to someone and sharing things from our own ability, but God Himself comes and lives on the inside of us. He begins to speak through you and flow through you. You can literally be God-possessed and have the Spirit of God flow through you. As you start sharing with other people, you need to remember that this is what is called the gifts of the Spirit and is what they're for. God takes every single person in the body of Christ and gives them specific gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12 it says every one of us has been given different gifts according to His will. In verses 4-6 it says, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences [diversities] of administrations [ministrations], but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations [workings], but it is the same God which worketh all in all." This means that God works these things in all of us, as verse 7 says, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" or to profit everyone through.

These verses say that God has put supernatural ability within every single one of us. You may not feel it, you may not be aware of it, but this is a promise of God's Word. If you've come this far in the discipleship series—if you've already made Jesus your Lord—if you've learned how to receive from God and begin to apply it in your life, then I can promise that the power of the Holy Spirit is at work inside you. You have other people's miracles on the inside of you—God has put the seed form of a miracle inside you for somebody else. It's up to you to be able to release it and get it out into their lives. Scripture says this has been given to every one of us by the Spirit. Not a single person has been left out. Nine different gifts of the Spirit are listed in 1 Corinthians 12, such as a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, discerning of spirits, working of miracles, gifts of healing, etc.

There are other gifts listed in Romans 12, which I haven't time to deal with all of this. You need to study them on your own and be aware that every single one of you has had the Holy Spirit place within you special anointing—special ability—to be able to minister to other people. Not everyone will be able to minister the way I do, for instance. You may not have a teaching gift, but every person in the body of Christ can teach by sharing their faith with another person. There are people who are called specifically to teach, people who are called to preach and pastor churches. Another gift listed in Romans 12 says there are those whose gift is hospitality. Many of you may have an ability or gift without being aware of it. You just

have a desire to be able to be a blessing to someone. You may be the kind of person who, when you walk into a room, picks out people who seem to be ill at ease. You empathize with them, you know what they're going through, and you have a desire to make them feel at ease and to minister to them. Did you know that's a supernatural gift of God?

Romans 12 says some people have been called to the gift of giving, the ability to make money, and give to support the Gospel. That is their gift, their call in life to do that, and some of you may be called to that very thing. Some of you have the gift of exhortation. Others have the gift of administrations, typically called by the church, a gift of helps. There are all kinds of things that can be done, not only in the church setting, but on a day-to-day basis dealing with people. There are some of you who have the ability to encourage those who are discouraged, something I would never be able to do just through teaching the Word. You just have a supernatural ability to go up, put your arm around somebody, bless them, and enable them. The point I'm making is that you don't need to see this as just being natural, as "well, that's just my personality type." You may have classified yourself as this type of person, but, you know what, it was a supernatural ability God placed inside you that gave you the gifts, the talents, and the perspective that makes you gravitate toward doing certain things.

When you are ministering to other people, Scripture says you need to be ministering the things God has placed on the inside of you. We all need to become ministers, whether as a full-time vocation, on our jobs, or wherever we are. If you do it with your neighbors or people at the store, you need to do it out of the ability God gives, not out of your own ability. So I encourage you to seek God, discover the gifts He has placed inside you, and don't discount them if you aren't called to one of the ministry gifts that is a vocation. Recognize that every one of you has had the Holy Spirit place within you supernatural ability, and then minister to other people through the gifts that God has placed inside you.

It will take time and practice. You won't be perfect the first time, so don't be afraid to practice. If you make a mistake, God won't fall off His throne, and other people will see the sincerity of your heart. Your love will minister to them even if you don't do something perfectly. Start ministering to others. Recognize that you are gifted of God, and start sharing the supernatural ability He has given you with other people.

USING THE GIFTS TO MINISTER (Outline)

BIBLE TEXT: 1 Peter 4:11: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

We need to minister, not out of our own ability, but out of the ability that God gives. (God lives in us.)

1 Corinthians 12:4-7: ⁴“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”

God has given each and every one of us supernatural abilities. (People’s miracles are within us.)

1 Corinthians 12:9-10: ⁹“To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; ¹⁰To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.”

The Holy Spirit has put in each of us a special ability to minister.

Romans 12:13: “Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.”

Romans 12:8: “Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Don’t be afraid to practice your gifts.

USING THE GIFTS TO MINISTER (Teacher's Guide)

1. According to 1 Peter 4:11, who's ability are we supposed to minister through?

God's ability through Jesus Christ.

2. A. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 states that God has given each believer supernatural abilities, but who actually does the work?

The Holy Spirit/God.

- B. According to verse 7, who is left out?

Nobody!

3. A. What are the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10?

The word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. (The teacher should explain these gifts.)

- B. In Romans 12:6-8, more gifts are listed; what are they?

Serving, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, and mercy.

- C. Have you recognized any of these gifts working through you?

- D. Have you recognized the need for these gifts to be ministered to you?

Yes—this is how the body of Christ is supposed to operate.

NOTE: These gifts that you have are from God. By using them to help others, you are letting God work through you. It's important to practice letting the Holy Spirit use you.

USING THE GIFTS TO MINISTER (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

NOTE: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14 to counter ignorance about spiritual gifts. This is the most complete expose on the matter in the Bible. Yet, sad to say, many people are still “in the dark” about spiritual gifts and the proper operation of them. A large portion of the body of Christ believes that all these gifts passed away after the first century. That is even more ignorance than the Corinthians had.

² The first test to apply to any gift of the Spirit is to ask, “Does it glorify Jesus?” That is the point Paul is making in 1 Corinthians 12:3. The Holy Spirit will never lead anyone to defame Jesus in any way. Jesus made it very clear that the Holy Spirit would only glorify Him (John 15:26; 16:14). Any utterance or act that denies Jesus is not from the Holy Spirit.

In Paul's day, there was still a transition being made from Judaism to Christianity. Some Jews were teaching that keeping the Old Testament law could produce salvation. They violently opposed Paul's teaching that faith alone in Jesus could produce salvation. Any utterance to trusting in the law for salvation would be considered by Paul to be calling Jesus accursed and would definitely not be from the Holy Spirit.

Also, the pagan religions of Paul's day believed in many gods. Anyone who tried to make Jesus just another god or a way to God, instead of the way to God, would be calling Him accursed. The Holy Spirit would never inspire anyone to do this.

Therefore, any group or individual today that claims to be inspired of the Holy Spirit, yet rejects Jesus' own claims to deity and His being the only way to the Father (John 14:6), is not truly receiving inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Those who are truly moved by the Holy Spirit in their utterances will always glorify Jesus.

So, the first test that any spiritual gift has to pass is answering this question, “Does it glorify Jesus?”

¹How does 1 Corinthians 1:7 show that the gifts of the Holy Spirit have not passed away?

²According to John 16:14 who will the Holy Spirit only give glory to?

³ In Galatians 5:22 Paul said, “But the fruit of the Spirit is” and then he listed nine things. Notice that fruit is singular. These nine things are all characteristics of the one fruit in a similar way like light can be divided into many colors but are all part of light. An individual who has the Spirit has all nine of these attributes in him whether he ever manifests them or not.

In contrast to that, Paul is saying that there are different gifts (plural) of the Holy Spirit. No individual necessarily possesses all nine of the gifts of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12. In 1 Corinthians 12:11, Paul did say that the Holy Spirit gives “to every man severally as he will.” So, it is possible for one person to operate in more than one of these gifts, but it is not every believer’s right to do so, as it is with the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

⁴The Greek word that was translated “manifestation” in 1 Corinthians 12:7 is “phanerosis,” which means, “exhibition, i.e. expression, a bestowment.” The New American Heritage Dictionary defines “manifestation” as, “the demonstration of the existence, reality, or presence of a person, object, or quality.” All of these meanings make it clear that every believer who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit has the ability to demonstrate the reality of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit through some gift of the Holy Spirit, if he will but believe.

In the beginning of the church age, the preaching of the Gospel was always confirmed with signs and wonders following (Mark 16:20). Even Jesus used the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit to confirm His teaching and authority (Hebrews 2:4). One of the main functions of the Holy Spirit is to demonstrate the reality of an unseen God to a lost world.

Yet today, many people have chosen to preach the Gospel without the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. This has done great damage to the credibility and the impact of the Gospel. The Lord never intended His Gospel to be spoken in word only (Acts 4:29-30; 1 Corinthians 4:20).

³ (a) In the New Testament church, how many gifts were used in ministering to others? 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.
(b) Do these gifts all come from one person?

⁴ What does Mark 16:20 say happens when people obey, go forth, and preach the Gospel?

⁵There are nine gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, but it would be incorrect to take Paul's list and assume that these are all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are not all of the spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12:28-29, Paul mentions apostles, prophets, and teachers in combination with some of the nine gifts he deals with in verses 8-10. This would imply that these ministry gifts are spiritual gifts also. So, the five ministry gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11 are also gifts of the Spirit. Paul also listed seven gifts of the Spirit in Romans 12:6-8.

Paul did not claim to deal completely with this subject in 1 Corinthians 12. As he said in verse 1, he just didn't want them to be ignorant. He specifically dealt with the more visible and audible gifts of the Spirit in this chapter because these were being misused and abused in their meetings. He gives some specific instructions in chapter 14 about how to correct these abuses.

⁵(a) What are the gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11?
(b) What is the purpose of these gifts?

USING THE GIFTS TO MINISTER (Discipleship Questions)

Read 1 Corinthians 13:2

1. What is the one element in this verse that, if missing, makes the rest of no effect?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-12

2. What never fails?
3. Will prophecies fail?
4. Will tongues cease?
5. Will knowledge vanish away?
6. What two things do we do in part (Verse 9)? _____ and _____
7. Is our knowing and prophesying in part in the present tense?
8. Since we are presently “knowing and prophesying,” when will that which is in part be done away with?
9. Who do you think Paul is talking about when he says, “But when that which is perfect has come”?
10. Since Jesus hasn’t come yet, are we still in the present tense of “knowing and prophesying in part”?
11. Can you conclude, based on this, that the gifts have not yet passed away but are still alive and relevant for today?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:5-7

12. Why did Jesus enrich us in all utterance and knowledge?
13. If His desire for us was to “come short in no gift,” have the gifts passed away as some believe?

Read 1 Peter 4:7-11

14. How are we to be in our prayers, since the end of all things is at hand?
15. What are we to have “above all things”?
16. What will cover a “multitude of sins”?
17. How are we to be hospitable to one another?

18. What are we to do with the gift that God gave to us?
19. How are we to speak?
20. How are we to minister?
21. Why is it we are to rely on God's abilities working through us to minister?
22. If we try and do God's work in our own strength and abilities, does Christ get glorified?
23. "To Whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever"?
24. Do you see your name written in there? _____ (Keep that in mind).

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1

25. What does Paul not want you to be ignorant of?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

26. "There are _____ of gifts, but the _____ Spirit."
27. "There are _____ of ministries, but the _____ Lord."
28. "There are _____ of activities, but the _____ God who works _____ in _____."
29. What is the same? _____, _____, _____
30. What is different? _____, _____, _____
31. What does verse 7 say was given to each one of us?
32. Does it say only certain special people get it?
33. Who is the gift supposed to profit?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

34. List the nine gifts that are given through the Spirit.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
 - E. _____
 - F. _____

G. _____
H. _____
I. _____

35. Are there different spirits distributing these gifts to us?
36. How does the Spirit give these gifts?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12, 14-17

37. Is a body made up of one body part or many?
38. What is Christ's body made up of?
39. Can you see how ridiculous the thought of not needing the entire Body is?
40. Can you see how this relates not to our physical bodies alone, but more importantly to the body of Christ?
41. Can you see why it is that God gave us different gifts and functions within His body?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:22-26

42. How has God exalted the "weaker and less honorable" parts of His body?
43. Are the weaker parts just as necessary as the greater parts?
44. Are we to despise the "lesser gifts"?
45. Verse 25 clarifies how all members of the Body should be toward one another. What is it?
46. If we are treating everyone with love and respect, will there be schisms (divisions) within the Body?
47. How are we to be toward the members that suffer?
48. How are we to be toward the members that are honored?
49. If we are one body, does one part get more glory than another?
50. Do we all get to partake in the victories?
51. PRAISE GOD!

52. Read Romans 12:3-8
How are we to think of ourselves in the body of Christ?
53. Do all the members of the body have the same function?
54. "So we, being many, are _____,
and individually _____."
55. By what means do our gifts differ?
56. What are we to do with the gifts we have received?
57. How are we to use them?
58. So, in proportion to our faith, if we have the gift of
 A. Prophecy = _____
 B. Ministry = _____
 C. Teaches = _____
 D. Exhorts = _____
 E. Gives = _____
 F. Leads = _____
 G. Shows Mercy = _____

Read Romans 12:16

59. How are we to be toward one another?
60. If we are of the same mind, Whose mind is it?
61. What are we not to do, according to this verse?
62. If we are wise in our own eyes, we are considered what? P _____
63. If we are prideful, are we putting ourselves first or others?

Read John 16:13-14

64. Who will guide you into all truth?
65. Whose authority will the Holy Spirit speak on?
66. Will He tell us the things the Father speaks?
67. Will He show us things to come?

68. Who will the Holy Spirit glorify?

GRACE: God's ability working in us.

Read Ephesians 4:7, 11-16

69. What was given to us according to the measure of Christ's gift?

70. Verse 11 lists five gifts, which are considered "offices." List them.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

71. There are three things listed in verse 12 that explains the reason for the above five gifts. What is the purpose for them?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

72. For how long are we to use these gifts (verse 13)?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

73. Verse 14 is not only a warning but also an unveiling of the devil's schemes. If we are operating in the gifts and are encouraging one another, what is the result of this verse?

74. How are we to speak the truth?

75. How are we to grow up?

76. If every part does its share, and every joint supplies according to the needs of the entire body, what is the end result?

Read Mark 16:17-18

77. What signs will follow those who believe:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

78. Are we able to carry out this Great Commission with our own strengths and abilities?
79. Can you see how the application and exercising of the gifts are vital to the carrying out of the Great Commission?

Read Acts 1:5, 8-9

80. What did John baptize with?
81. What else were the disciples to be baptized with?
82. What shall we receive when the Holy Spirit has come upon you?
83. What happens after we receive His power?
84. Can we be effective witnesses for Christ if we don't have the power of the Holy Spirit?
85. Whose power is it that operates the gifts within us?
86. If we don't receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, will we have any power?
87. If we don't have the Holy Spirit and operate in His power, will we be able to carry out the Great Commission as stated in Mark 16?

Gifts are not magical, they are SUPERNATURAL.

Gifts are not mystical, they are PURPOSEFUL.

Gifts are not to be hoarded, but are to BE GIVEN AWAY.

Gifts are not for you, but for GLORIFYING JESUS CHRIST.

Gifts are a BLESSING to both ends of the receiver. That means you and your brethren.

Do not despise the gifts given to you by Jesus Christ your Lord.

If you don't use them, you will lose them.

USING THE GIFTS TO MINISTER
(Discipleship Answer Key)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Love | 22. No |
| 2. Love | 23. Jesus |
| 3. Yes | 24. No |
| 4. Yes | 25. Spiritual gifts |
| 5. Yes | 26. Diversities - same |
| 6. Know – prophesy | 27. Differences - same |
| 7. Yes | 28. Diversities – same – all - all |
| 8. When that which is perfect has come | 29. Spirit – Lord - God |
| 9. Jesus | 30. Gifts – ministries - activities |
| 10. Yes | 31. Manifestation of the Spirit |
| 11. Yes | 32. No |
| 12. That we would come short in no gift | 33. All |
| 13. No | 34. A. Word of Wisdom
B. Word of Knowledge
C. Faith
D. Healing
E. Miraculous
F. Prophecy
G. Discerning of spirits
H. Different kinds of tongues
I. Interpretation of tongues |
| 14. Serious and watchful | |
| 15. Fervent love for one another | |
| 16. Love | |
| 17. Without grumbling | |
| 18. Minister it to one another | 35. No |
| 19. As the oracles of God | 36. Individually as He wills |
| 20. With the ability God supplies | 37. Many |
| 21. I will be most effective – God will get glory | 38. Many members |

39. Yes
40. Yes
41. Yes
42. He has bestowed great honor to these parts
43. Yes
44. No
45. No schism but have the same care for each
46. No
47. Suffer with them
48. Rejoice with them
49. No
50. Yes
51. Praise God!
52. Soberly
53. No
54. One body in Christ
Members of one another
55. According to the grace given to us
56. Use them
57. In proportion to our faith
58. A. Prophecy
B. In ministering
C. Teaching
D. Exhortation
E. Liberality
F. Diligence
G. Cheerfulness
59. Of the same mind
60. Christ's
61. Set our minds on high things
62. Proud
63. Ourselves
64. Holy Spirit
65. God's
66. Yes
67. Yes
68. Jesus
69. Grace
70. A. Apostles
B. Prophets
C. Evangelists
D. Pastors
E. Teachers
71. A. For the equipping of the Saints
B. For the work of the Ministry
C. For the edifying of the Body
72. A. Until we come to the unity of the faith
B. Come to the knowledge of the Son of God
C. To a perfect man
D. To the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ
73. It will come to no effect
74. In love
75. Into Christ who is the head
76. Causes growth in the body for the edifying of itself in love

- 77. A. Cast out demons
- B. Speak with new tongues
- C. Take up serpents
- D. Divine protection
- E. Heal the sick

78. No

79. Yes

80. Water

81. Holy Spirit

82. Power

83. We become witnesses

84. No

85. Jesus'

86. No

87. No

USING THE GIFTS TO MINISTER (Additional Information)

The gifts of the Spirit operating in someone are not meant to be a substitute for having our own faith in the Lord. We are not to depend so completely on some individual with a spiritual gift that we neglect our own spiritual growth and maturity. We can receive anything we need from the Lord without a gift of the Spirit operating through another individual, if we know how to believe. Dependence on the Lord directly is superior to dependence on the Lord indirectly through someone operating in one of these gifts.

If that is true, then why do we need the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Should we just all receive directly from God and cut out the intermediary? Well, that would be nice, but the truth is that our souls do not reach instant maturity at the time of our conversion. There is a growth process in the Christian life.

What if there were no gifts of the Spirit, and the Lord established that the only way we could receive from Him was through our own faith? There would be some individuals who would get born again who already had terminal diseases and didn't have enough time left to mature in their faith. They would die if it wasn't for others who interceded for them or who had the gifts of healing. That's why the Lord gave these gifts—to keep us encouraged and alive so we can mature (Ephesians 4:11-13).

However, if an individual doesn't mature in his personal faith in the Lord and becomes dependent on these gifts, that is wrong too. It is not beneficial for someone to receive miracles through a person with the gift of miracles and then struggle along until the next time that gifted minister came through town. The Lord wants us to receive through these gifts, but then He wants us to become mature ourselves so that we can walk in God's best on our own.

This does not mean that we can mature beyond the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We can mature beyond a total dependency on the gifts to where we can hear and receive from God directly. But none of us will ever reach such a level of maturity in the Lord where there is nothing left to learn or receive.

In 1 Corinthians 12:8 notice that the Spirit gives a “word” of wisdom and a “word” of knowledge. The Holy Spirit does not impart to an individual all of God's wisdom or knowledge about a person or situation. He gives just a word, a tiny portion of His ability to deal with the problem.

Some people who have not understood this point have thought that a person operating in the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge knows everything about them and is fearful that all might be revealed. That is not so.

On the other hand, some people who have sought to operate in these gifts and have not understood that the Spirit is giving them just a “word” of wisdom and a “word” of knowledge have spoken more than what the Lord inspired. The Lord gave them a word, and they made a paragraph out of it.

Corinthians 12:8 describes the gift of the word of wisdom. Wisdom involves understanding and the application of good judgment (American Heritage Dictionary). Therefore, the word of wisdom is a supernatural imparting of God’s understanding and direction for a given individual or circumstance. This gift of the Spirit is supernatural, that is, not based on human knowledge of the person or circumstances.

Jesus operated in this gift, although it is often so intertwined with the gift of prophecy and His personal teachings that it is hard to distinguish. Two examples are in Mark 1:44 and John 5:14.

The word of knowledge is a supernatural imparting of knowledge about an individual or about circumstances that the person operating in the gift did not discern naturally.

Jesus operated in this gift many times, even to the extent of telling people their names and things about them that He could not have known otherwise. One of the most miraculous examples of this gift in the life of Jesus is the time He sent His disciples to prepare for His last Passover (Mark 14:13).

The word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and the gift of prophecy often work hand in hand. That is to say that when one of these gifts operates, the other ones will usually operate also to minister to the individual. For instance, the word of knowledge may reveal a problem, the word of wisdom may apply God’s wisdom to the situation, and the gift of prophecy will give the results of obedience. They complement each other.

All believers have faith. That’s how they got saved (Ephesians 2:8). They actually have the same faith as Jesus, but their souls have to be matured through the renewing of the mind to operate in that faith. That’s the reason the Scriptures speak of great faith (Matthew 8:10) and little faith (Matthew 8:26). We can use different amounts of faith.

The faith mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:9, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, is different from the faith that we received at salvation. This gift of the Spirit is a supernatural imparting of faith that doesn’t come through the normal renewing of the mind process (Romans 12:2). It is a gift for helping those who are struggling in faith to believe.

Many things that we need are received directly, according to our faith (Matthew 9:29). If our faith is weak, we need to strengthen it and/or seek out a person with the gift of faith to help us.

In 1 Corinthians 12:9, gifts of healing are mentioned. Notice that it says, “gifts” (plural) of healing. According to verses 5 and 6, there can be different administrations and operations of the same gift that provide plenty of variety through just one gift. This verse specifically mentions a plurality of gifts of healing.

The gifts of healing are supernatural powers released through an individual for the purpose of bringing healing to others. All believers can lay hands on the sick and see them recover (Mark 16:17-18; John 14:12), but there are some people who are called to a ministry of healing the sick. These people are endowed with the gifts of healing, and this characterizes their ministry.

All believers can experience miracles as a result of their own faith, but some individuals have been given the gift of miracles. Miracles characterize their ministry.

A miracle is a supernatural intervention of God’s power over natural law. Healings occur within the boundaries of natural law, while miracles are not limited to natural law. A person with a high fever who receives prayer and then begins to recover, is experiencing a healing. The Lord intervened, but in natural ways. The virus, infection, or whatever was rebuked, left the body (Luke 4:39), and then the natural healing process that the Lord built into all of us took over. When something totally supernatural happens, that’s a miracle. When Jesus reattached the servant’s ear, and it was instantly whole after Peter cut it off (Luke 22:51), that was a miracle. It was a healing too, but it was a miraculous healing. Feeding the five thousand (Matthew 14:19-20), walking on the water (Matthew 14:25), translating a ship and all aboard to the other side of the sea (John 6:21)—all these are miracles. Miracles are usually instantaneous whereas healings are sometimes gradual.

The gift of prophecy is different from the ministry gift of a prophet (Ephesians 4:11). According to 1 Corinthians 14:3, this gift of prophecy is for edification, exhortation, and comfort. There have certainly been many prophets whose prophecies didn’t meet those standards (2 Samuel 12:1-14; 1 Kings 13:1-5; 21:17-24).

This simple gift of prophecy that operates in the church assembly is limited to general edification, exhortation, and comfort of the body (1 Corinthians 14:3). If a person begins to give an individual prophecy of personal direction to someone, that falls into the ministry of a prophet and is different from this simple gift of prophecy.

For example, believers wouldn’t allow a person called to the office of a teacher to interrupt a service and just start teaching. That would be out of order. The teacher should make himself known to the pastor and if given the authority, then he can teach. Likewise, for someone to minister direction or future events to an individual or the whole body and claim that it is a prophecy is out of order. That would be the ministry of a prophet and the prophet should be recognized by the pastor just as a teacher would have to be.

This simple gift of prophecy that Paul is describing here will never be a lengthy teaching, a rebuke, or a warning. That's the ministry of a prophet. It will just be words of encouragement from the Lord along the lines of, "Children, I love you. I've received your praise. I'm present to minister to you."

A lack of understanding the difference between this simple gift of prophecy and the ministry of a prophet has led to some strange things being called a word of prophecy in many churches. Some people actually prepare teachings during the week and deliver them as prophecies in church. Others vent their own prejudices or use prophecy as an opportunity to rebuke someone or put in their two bits about what the church should be doing. These things are not the gift of prophecy that Paul is describing here.

First Corinthians 12:10 describes the gift of discerning of spirits. Some people believe this gift is the supernatural ability to distinguish different kinds of spiritual beings (i.e. angels, demons) while others interpret spirits as being attitudes or emotions. Indeed the word "spirit" can be used to refer to things in the spiritual realm, or to attitudes such as school spirit.

Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 12:10 describes different kinds of speaking in tongues. This gift of speaking in tongues is a ministry gift that operates in church and differs from personal speaking in tongues that every believer who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit has (Mark 16:17). Only some believers are given the gift of tongues that operates in public (v. 30) and equals prophecy when interpreted.

The gift of interpreting the gift of tongues is not a translation but an interpretation. That is, it just conveys the thought of what was said into the known language. Therefore, the interpretation may be longer or shorter than the message in tongues and may differ in style, yet be the proper interpretation. When the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation of tongues operate together, that is equal to prophecy.

It is important to recognize that all believers can operate in areas without having the specific gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12. Every believer should have God's wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30, Ephesians 1:8, 17, Colossians 1:9, 2:3), and knowledge (2 Peter 1:2-5), as well as His faith (Romans 12:3 with Galatians 2:20). All believing Christians can lay hands on the sick and see them recover (Mark 16:18), and we should all see the same type of miracles that Jesus did happen in our own lives (John 14:12). At times, every member of the body of Christ can prophesy, discern spirits, speak in tongues, and interpret tongues. Yet not every Christian has these things as a supernatural gift of the Spirit in his or her life.

All believers are to teach others about their faith in Christ, but that doesn't mean they have been called to be a teacher as mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. All believers are to evangelize, but that doesn't mean they have been called to be an evangelist as in Ephesians 4:11. Likewise, all believers can operate in these areas that are called gifts of the Spirit, but that doesn't mean they have that gift.

Not every Christian has the gift of speaking in tongues that operates in the church services, but every believer who has been baptized in the Holy Ghost has the personal gift of speaking in tongues that is for his own edification. A person with the gift of speaking in tongues is a person who stands in the assembly of believers and speaks out a message in tongues which, when interpreted, equals a word of prophecy.

The person who has a gift of the Spirit will repeatedly operate in this area, plus it will come relatively effortlessly compared to those who operate in that area without a gift. The person will also have a real love for or drawing toward the gift that is dominant in his or her life.

There are three main places in scripture where spiritual gifts are discussed: (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:4-8, and Ephesians 4:11). It is interesting to note that in each of these instances, the unity of the body of Christ is stressed in the same context.

In all three instances, Paul makes this point by comparing the different gifts to different parts of the physical body. Just as the human body has to have all its parts function together to get the proper results, so the body of Christ has to have each part function in unity to truly demonstrate the fullness of Christ to this world.

This is especially true with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some of these gifts are more spectacular than others and might seem more necessary than another gift, but that's not true. We need all the gifts in their proper order and relationship to the other gifts to get the full impact of Christ's ministry.

Jesus was an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher—all in one (Ephesians 4:11). It takes all these gifts functioning together in unity to reproduce the ministry Jesus had here on earth. It takes all of these gifts operating together in His body to see His power manifested as it was during His earthly ministry. Likewise, all the gifts listed in Romans, chapter 12, need to function together to release the fullness of His life.

Failure to see all these gifts function together in unity has been a tremendous hindrance to the body of Christ and has kept us from accurately representing Jesus to a lost world. Unity among believers will be the greatest testimony the church has ever given of the reality of Christ and will release such power that it will be one of the main factors that brings the second return of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:25).

Copyright © 2004
Discipleship Evangelism
P.O. Box 17007
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80935-7007 U.S.A.
www.krowtracts.com www.delessons.org
Phone: 719-577-7775