

CHAPTER 13 – GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to bring understanding, to remove any fear or misunderstanding and to give the believer guidelines for the expression of the gifts of the Spirit in the local church.

Key Verse:

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit..... But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To 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: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. 1 Cor 12:4, 7-11 (KJV)

I. What is meant by “Gifts of the Spirit”?

There are many gifts that are part of the experience of the believer. All of God’s gifts are free, unearned and unmerited by man, but graciously given by God. The “gifts of the Spirit” outlined in 1 Corinthians 12 are to be distinguished from other gifts of God in the following ways:

- a. These gifts are distinctly attributed to the Holy Spirit as the source (1 Corinthians 12: 4, 7 – 11).
- b. These gifts are a manifestation of “shinning forth” of the Spirit who dwells within the believer (1 Corinthian 12: 7).
- c. These gifts are supernatural in character, not simply an extension or refinement of natural abilities or powers.
- d. These gifts are distributed at the direction of the Holy Spirit to meet specific needs at specific times (1 Corinthians 12: 11).
- e. The “gifts of the Spirit”, therefore, are supernatural endowments given to the believer at the direction of the Holy Spirit to meet particular needs at particular times.

II. What are the Gifts of the Spirit?

a. Gifts of Revelation – God communicating His mind to the Church

1. Wisdom – The gift of the Word of Wisdom is the God-given ability to perceive supernatural wisdom from God when it is needed (Matthew 22: 15 – 22).
2. Knowledge – The gift of the Word of Knowledge is the God-given ability to receive from God, by revelation, facts and information which are humanly impossible to know (John 4: 17 – 19).
3. Discerning of Spirits – The gifts of Discerning of Spirits is the God-given ability to recognize what spirit is behind different manifestation or activities. The gift also includes the God-given ability to challenge or cope with spirits (Acts 16: 16 – 18).

b. Gifts of Inspiration – God speaking to the Church

1. Tongues – The gift of Tongues is a God-given ability which enables a believer to speak in a language which he does not know (Acts 2: 1 – 17).
2. Interpretation – The gift of Interpretation of Tongues is the God-given ability to bring forth, in a known tongue, a message which is given in an unknown tongue (Daniel 5: 25 – 28).
3. Prophecy – To prophesy is the ability to speak forth a message from God which is received from the Holy Spirit as it is brought forth (Acts 11: 28, 21: 10 – 11).

c. Gifts of Demonstration – God doing or acting in the Church

1. Faith – The gift of Faith is a God-given ability to believe God for the impossible (Acts 3: 11, 13 – 16).
2. Healing – The Gift of Healing is the God-given ability to impart healing for the physical body at certain, specific times (Acts 28: 8 – 10).
3. Miracles – The gift of Miracles is a God-given ability to perform the impossible (Acts 20: 9 – 12; 13: 8 – 12).

III. How do these Gifts operate?

When it comes to the gifts of the Spirit, we see the Spirit of God and man working together as co-laborers.

a. There is the Spirit's part relative to the gifts.

1. The Spirit takes the initiative as the giver (1Corinthians 12: 11, 18, 28)
2. The Spirit will always to His part.

b. There is man's part relative to the gifts.

1. We should be totally yielded to the Lord (Romans 6: 1 – 2, 13).
2. We should desire to be used in this realm (1 Corinthians 14: 1; 12: 31).
3. We should learn all we can about the gifts (1 Corinthians 12: 1; Hosea 4: 6).
4. We should pray to be used in the gifts (1 Corinthians 14: 3; Matthew 7: 11).
5. We should maintain faith and dispel unbelief (Romans 12: 6; Mark 6: 5 – 6).

6. We should not neglect, but stir up the gifts (1 Timothy 4: 14; 2 Timothy 1: 6).

IV. What Guideline should govern the operation of the Gifts?

God gives many principles that anyone wanting to operate in the gifts should follow, realizing the vessel is responsible for the manner in which the gift is exercised.

- a. The gifts must be used for the purpose of edifying or building up the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14: 3 – 5, 12, 17 – 26).
 1. Will this strengthen the Body of Christ?
 2. Will this bring comfort?
- b. The gifts must be operated decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14: 27, 29, 33, 40).
 1. Is this message flowing with what God is saying?
 2. Is this the best time to function in this gift?
 3. Does my manner of presentation add or detract from the message?
- c. The gifts of the Spirit are to be balanced by the fruit of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit bring to us the ability of God. The fruit of the Spirit brings the character of God. We must have both the ability and the character of God in balance to bring life.
 1. Love – are you interested in the well-being of others (1 Corinthians 13)?
 2. Joy – Do you find your joy in building up others (2 Corinthians 7: 4)?
 3. Peace – Are you at peace with the family of God (Matthew 5: 22 – 24)?
 4. Longsuffering – Are you willing to wait for the right time (2 Timothy 4: 2)?
 5. Gentleness – Does it flow or interrupt? Is it pushy or gentle (James 3: 17)?
 6. Meekness – Are you ministering in true humility (1 Peter 5: 5)?
 7. Goodness – Is your personal life in accord with God’s word (Isaiah 52: 11)?
 8. Self-control – Are you willing to limit yourself to the prescribed guidelines (1 Corinthians 14: 32)?
 9. Faith – Has God told you to say or do this (Galatians 3: 2, 5)?
- d. A summary guideline to follow is: when operating in the gifts of the Spirit, obey the moving of the Spirit which operates according to the Word of God on the basis of love and edification.

V. What are some Misconceptions about the Gifts of the Spirit?

- a. Some feel that the gifts of the Spirit are an indication of God’s approval on a life or a church assembly. However, the gifts of God are not earned or deserved; God gives gifts to meet the needs of His people and they can be misused and abused by man (Mark 16: 17 – 20).

- b. Some feel that the gifts of the Spirit are an indication of spiritual maturity. However, the gifts are not to be seen as something that is only available to the “superspiritual”, but these signs should follow those who believe (Mark 16: 17 – 20).

Conclusion

The gifts of the Spirit are part of the equipment given to the Church by the Spirit so that the Church might be a supernatural influence in the world today. Believers should not be afraid of these realms but should look to the Lord each day for the supernatural enablements of the Spirit to face the individual and unique challenges that are part of our everyday life and experience.