

Biblical Explanation of the 9 Gifts of the Holy Spirit

A frequent topic in the church today is spiritual gifts. It is also a subject that very few Believers understand. The apostle Paul talks about them in his letters to the early churches, and they are passed down to us in Scripture to inform us how the Holy Spirit works in us for the good of the earthly church.

In addition to His direct work in our hearts and our circumstances, the Holy Spirit passes on the power of God to us, which manifests itself differently and in different proportions in each of our lives. We call these “spiritual gifts.”

The nine gifts of the Holy Spirit are given in **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**, which says:

“Now there are varieties (diversities) of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties (diversities) of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties (diversities) of activities, but it is the same God Who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance (Word) of wisdom, and to another the utterance (Word) of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits (discerning of spirits), to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, Who apportions to each one individually as He wills.”

From this passage, we can pull nine distinct spiritual gifts:

1. Word of wisdom
2. Word of knowledge
3. Gift of faith
4. Gift of healing
5. Working of miracles
6. Prophecy
7. Discerning of spirits Distinguishing between spirits
8. Speaking in tongues
9. Interpreting tongues

The nine gifts of the Spirit have been categorized into three groupings:

- (1) **The Utterance Gifts**, which are.
 1. Various Kinds of Tongues,
 2. The Interpretation of Tongues,
 3. Prophecy
- (2) **The Revelation Gifts**, which are.
 1. The Word of Wisdom
 2. The Word of Knowledge
 3. Discerning of Spirits
- (3) **The Power Gifts**, which are.
 1. The Working of Miracles,
 2. Special Faith
 3. The Gifts of Healing.

There is a current debate on whether or not some gifts have disappeared from the world today or whether all are present and active among believers.

No matter which side of that debate someone falls on, the fact remains that all nine of these gifts were present in the early church and are given to us as real and specific ways that the Holy Spirit moves in our lives.

Just as the gifts were needed back then, they are also needed today. They were needed for the church then, and they are still needed today. The church is here, the devil is here, and the gifts are here because the Holy Spirit is here.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (KJV) But the **manifestation** of the Spirit is given to **every man** to profit withal ("**nevertheless**"). 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers (various) kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 **But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.**

#1 Word of Wisdom The word of wisdom and the word of knowledge are closely related, but just as they are listed separately in Scripture, they should be understood separately.

Wisdom typically means the proper application of knowledge. Viewed in this light, the spiritual gift of the word of wisdom is understanding how to apply the truth of God in situations that may arise in life.

In our own lives or the lives of those around us, there may be circumstances where having the gift of wisdom helps us instinctively know what God would have us to do or say. This can apply to deciding on a new job, whether or not to marry someone, the best way to confront or forgive someone who is inflicting harm on others, or any other situation that requires discernment and wisdom to apply the Scriptures properly.

This doctrine (Teaching) has been abused in the early church through the practice of Gnosticism (Gnosticism is a collection of religious ideas and systems that coalesced in the late 1st century AD among Jewish and early Christian sects), which states that there is a “secret knowledge” available only to a select few believers.

This is not reinforced by the Bible, as we believe that God has distributed both the spiritual gifts and the path to salvation to everyone equally.

#2 Word of Knowledge

The word of knowledge is slightly more practical in nature, and typically refers to the right knowledge and interpretation of Scripture, or of doctrinal issues.

It is important for all believers to be able to articulate what they believe and to defend their faith to others who may want to learn more or who may challenge the Bible.

In academic circles, this area of study and practice is called apologetics. The word means “defense of the faith,” and usually pits the believer against a non-believer in a debate about what Scripture says.

While we should not seek out arguments to enter or argue for the sake of winning, we should always be willing to give a defense for the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. To this end, we should practice the gift of knowledge so that we can understand and interpret Scripture properly in the way that God intended for it to be given.

#3 Gift of Faith

Faith is a major topic of Scripture and is critical to the life of the believer. We can only be saved from the power of sin by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, and we can only withstand temptation through our faith in God's power and ability to deliver us from it.

Everyone possesses some measure of faith (Romans 12:3), but it must be put into practice regularly in order to strengthen it. It may also be necessary during some of the hardest times in your life when faith simply seems impossible. But if we can overcome our fear and doubt and choose to trust in God, our faith can be strengthened, and we will have a greater measure of faith when the next crisis comes.

#4 Gift of Healing

Healing can be indirectly linked to faith, as it refers to supernatural healing that defies known medical science. In other words, it is miraculous healing that relies on the power of the Holy Spirit instead of what we would understand as typical modes of healing.

Most denominations teach that this sort of healing requires an extraordinary amount of faith. Sometimes this faith is only required of the person performing or requesting the healing, and in some cases, strong faith is also required on the part of the one who needs the healing.

For example, both the person proclaiming healing over a sick person as well as the sick person himself). However, it is cited several times in Scripture as a gift used throughout the early church and can be found in religious circles today.

#5 Working of Miracles

Miracles are a more visibly supernatural act and are usually regarded as an "extinct" spiritual gift. This does not preclude the intervention of God in the natural world because He is the true source of all

miracles and can never be limited by human imagination or understanding. However, many conservative denominations believe that this gift has fallen away due to the death of the original apostles.

Whatever the case, we should always keep our hearts open to the possibility that God will do great things in our lives and in our world – even things that we would never expect or believe to be true but for His direct intervention.

#6 Prophecy

Some passages state that the gift of prophecy is the greatest of the spiritual gifts, although they all have tremendous value for the church.

It also carries different explanations. In most cases in the Bible, prophecy is a direct word from the Lord meant to be relayed exactly as it was received.

Some theologians believe that it instead means a word of encouragement or exhortation; it then takes on the meaning of speaking directly into someone's life and circumstances with a word from Scripture. In either case, it does require direct action when the truth of God is clear for a given situation.

#7 Distinguishing Between Spirits

Both angels and demons are actively at work in the world, and it takes a great level of spiritual discernment to understand the source of supernatural activity.

Coupled with knowledge and wisdom, we should seek to distinguish between the spirits that seek to influence this world either for God or for the devil. Someone may claim that they received a message from God, but if it does not align with the truth of the Bible, we should be quick to recognize a human or demonic influence at that moment.

#8 Speaking in Tongues

This gift is believed to be all but gone from the modern world. It does not refer simply to speaking in different languages but is an ecstatic

practice that involves speaking with the language of angels or other supernatural beings.

Again, we should never assume that such things are impossible for God, but there are very few reputable sources for speaking in tongues today.

#9 Interpreting Tongues

Paired very closely with speaking in tongues, this gift involves the interpretation of the tongue being spoken so that others can plainly understand the message the speaker receives.

Paul spoke of this gift in the context of a church service, instructing believers that no one should speak in tongues in church unless there was someone else ready to interpret. This was said so that Paul could ensure that the entire congregation could benefit from the message, which reinforces the communal nature of spiritual gifts.

Conclusion

We have all received the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and all of these spiritual gifts, as well as other powers from God, are present in each one of us. We should seek to discern where we have been gifted the most prominently for ourselves, then seek to use that gift for the betterment of the whole church.