

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

LESSON

Purpose: This installment will go through all the gifts of the Spirit. We will define them so that they can become recognizable to the Body of Christ. We will also define the purpose of each gift and the proper and improper use of that gift. The student will also be given an evaluation in order to help him recognize his gifts. The student will come away with a complete knowledge of the gifts, and he should be able to recognize them in himself and others.

INTRODUCTION

In this introduction I want to identify some dangers concerning studying the gifts of the Spirit. I don't want to give the wrong impression. I believe the gifts are vital to us in order to accomplish what God has called us to accomplish. Having said that, I want to reveal to you some of the problems that are inherent when mixing supernatural gifts with natural human beings.

DANGER ONE: PSEUDO SPIRITUALITY

The gifts of the Spirit being demonstrated in a person's life do not denote spirituality. Whatever may be said about the gifts of the Spirit, it must be retained that they are gifts of the "*Spirit*" not of the individual. It is easy for people to lose sight of this small yet important truth. This one truth is repeated several times by the apostle Paul. These gifts have nothing to do with our abilities or talents. I would even argue that our so-called natural abilities and talents are also from God; they are woven into the fabric of our being from our inception, thus they appear to be "*natural*" gifts. Spiritual gifts, however, transcend our natural gifts. The measure of spirituality in a person's life is demonstrated through the fruits of the Spirit and not the gifts of the Spirit.

DANGER TWO: PRIDE

There is a harmony created by God in the believer that should extend to other believers through the gifting of each individual. What I am saying is that God's gifting in us should produce a unity among us if we are willing to die to the pride within each of us. I have heard more than once a conversation between believers that asked the question, "*How many gifts of*

the Spirit have you exhibited?" The idea being that the more gifts I have exhibited in my life, the more spiritual I am. This cannot be farther from the truth. The gifts are not given based upon merit. In other words, you don't get more gifts because you are doing good things or you are more mature. The gifts are given as the Spirit wills. I have seen new Christians exhibit gifts that mature Christians have not.

DANGER THREE: GIFT FOCUS

This also needs to be said concerning spiritual gifts. The gifts have a Giver! How would you feel if someone to whom you wanted to give some gifts only sought the gifts to the exclusion of you who want to express your love by giving the gifts? Jesus wants us to seek Him! Because the gifts of the Spirit have tangible results, they can cause some to become excited about the gifts rather than the Giver of those gifts. We need to keep our focus on the Giver and let Him give to whom He wills.

DANGER FOUR: DIVISIONS THROUGH COMPETITION

John 17:11 *"I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.*

God intends us to be one, to be in unity with one another, and not in competition with each other. What would our human bodies be like if each member was warring for recognition? Would it not paralyze our bodies? Indeed, it would, and that is what happens to the Body of Christ when the members of that body compete against each other for recognition. No, Christ calls us to be servants. We should work in tandem with the other members of the body and not against them. We should recognize that other people's gifts are just as important as ours and needful to accomplish the will of God.

More was said to the Corinthian Church about the gifts of the Spirit than any other Church. The reason was not a lack of spiritual gifts but rather an abundance of them. In their abundance was the need for proper operation and instruction. Yet one thing plagued the Corinthian Church more than the other Churches. It was division, factionalism, and schisms. Why would the Church that exhibited a greater abundance of spiritual gifts also have a greater problem with divisions?

It is because the gifts were being categorized into groups according to value. Those with the more "*honorable*" gifts were given honor because of the gift. The Corinthian Church was born out of deep paganism. In this pagan worship there were priests of various temples who would go into a trance and speak in unknown languages. Then a priest or priestess would interpret

them. Thus, anyone who had this gift of speaking in unknown languages was highly esteemed in that pagan culture.

Then, when Paul brought Christianity to this culture and they began to speak with other tongues by the Spirit of God, there was a higher evaluation of that gift over and above the others, and Paul had to rebuke them concerning how they were using that particular gift. In short, it was an ego trip for them.

We must guard against these things ourselves. We are under the same temptations as any other age of humanity, and so we are not exempt from these things ourselves. We must continue to ask ourselves the same question constantly that the apostle Paul asked the Corinthian Church.

1 Corinthians 4:7 For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

If we constantly realize that everything we have, every gift, and every talent is from God, what can we boast of? Are we not His workmanship? Everything we have comes from Him. We cannot take credit for the things God has given us, can we? Are they not by grace, unwarranted, and unmerited? Yes, indeed, for our Lord tells us, “*For without Me, you can do nothing*” (John 15:5). As we embark upon understanding the gifts, let them not divide us, but rather unify us. We need each other’s gifts to accomplish God’s will for this Church.

DISTRIBUTIONS

Let us begin by revealing the role of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit concerning our gifting and calling.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.

In that one scripture we find the action of the triune God in us. Yes, God is actively working within you His will, so that you may be transformed into the likeness of Christ. It is in order that you will walk as He walked. Jesus walked in total submission to His Father; are you? Jesus did not say anything unless He first heard His Father say it; do you? Jesus did nothing unless He first saw His Father doing it; do you? Whatever our level of submission is, Jesus wants to be Lord in every aspect of our lives. There is the unity of God the Holy Spirit who gives us gifts, and the divine Jesus who gives us our callings or ministries, and God the Father who gives different combinations to produce different effects.

QUOTE

“Whatever the diversity of gifts, of ministries, of operations, it is the same Holy Spirit, the same Lord, the same God at work in each: there is diversity, but at the same time unity. Separation, division, factionalism—any playing off of one activity against another—cannot be of God”

Renewal Theology—Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective Volume 2 pp. 329

The Church must come to the realization that we are not all the same. There is great power in diversity with unity. When we honor those that are different than us and defer to their gifts, we truly can be one in the Spirit.

YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE NOT FOR YOU

*1 Corinthians 12:7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the **common good**.*

We do well to remember that the gifts of the Spirit are the **manifestations** of the Spirit. They are not the manifestations of the believer. As such, we need to be sure that we do not **feign** anything that does not initiate in Christ. There is a human element in that God uses humans to utter a word or lay on of hands, so this should be taken into account as well. The gifts being demonstrated through you are the invisible God revealing Himself in a visible, tangible way from which we can all benefit.

When we allow God to show Himself through us, we are demonstrating His Lordship in our walk. The Holy Spirit will not force Himself upon you. You, as a believer, have to give Him free reign to reveal Himself to others through you. We cannot make claim to having no gifts. God is an equal opportunity Employer. He does not discriminate and He will use every vessel that submits himself to be used by Him. Notice also that it is for the common good. This means that the gift God used in, and through you is not for you but for the rest of the Body.

If you are a Christian, God has given to you gifts that are to be used by you to edify others. They are not only for the Body but for the unbeliever as well. Paul speaks to us about the gift of prophecy and the effect that gift can have upon the unbeliever and the Body of Christ. He tells us that when the secrets of the unbeliever’s heart are revealed, he will glorify God. I believe the gift of healing is another gift that is for the unbeliever. If we have the promise of healing by covenant, then those outside of the covenant are the ones that need the gift of healing. The problem, though, is that we, as Christians, need to be willing to display this gift to the unbeliever. Pray that we all will be led by the Holy Spirit to do His will in the earth as it is done in Heaven.

THE WORD “GIFT”

There are five Greek words translated to the English word “gift.” However, there is only one word that concerns spiritual gifts, and that is “*charisma*.” This should be a familiar word to you. When we see someone who has a magnetic personality, we say they have “*charisma*.”

DEFINITION

5486 χάρισμα [*charisma* /*khar-is-mah*/] *n n.* **From 5483**; TDNT 9:402; TDNTA 1298; GK 5922; 17 occurrences; AV translates as “gift” 15 times, and “free gift” twice. **1** a favour with which one receives without any merit of his own. **2** the gift of divine grace. **3** the gift of faith, knowledge, holiness, virtue. **4** the economy of divine grace, by which the pardon of sin and eternal salvation is appointed to sinners in consideration of the merits of Christ laid hold of by faith. **5** grace or gifts denoting extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the Church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating on their souls by the Holy Spirit.

Strong, J. 1996. Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship: Ontario

VERSE LIST

Romans 1:11 “gift”
Romans 5:15 “free gift”
Romans 5:16 “free gift”
Romans 6:23 “free gift”
Romans 11:29 “gifts”
Romans 12:6 “gifts”
1 Corinthians 1:7 “gift”
1 Corinthians 7:7 “gift”
1 Corinthians 12:4 “gifts”
1 Corinthians 12:9 “gifts”
1 Corinthians 12:28 “gifts”
1 Corinthians 12:30 “gifts”
1 Corinthians 12:31 “gifts”
2 Corinthians 1:11 “favor”
1 Timothy 4:14 “spiritual gift”
2 Timothy 1:6 “gift”
1 Peter 4:10 “gift”

The word “*charisma*” is really a compound word. The word “*charis*” is the word used for “*grace*.” That is why this word is sometimes rendered “*free gift*.” Normally a gift by its very

nature is free. Yet sometimes a gift can be given because it was earned in the sense that the recipient may have done something or given something that initiated a return gift. Concerning the gift of grace, it is unmerited. Therefore, concerning the spiritual gifts of grace, they, too, are given without merit. It is simply done by the ordination of God to empower the believer to accomplish His will in the earth.

It should be noted that these gifts supersede the natural gifts or talents a person may have. They are the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Thus, they are supernatural or greater than natural. This point should not be lost because the glory these gifts bring to God must be retained. If we are to demonstrate these gifts, we must also decrease as John the Baptist said, and He must increase. Since the point of these gifts is to accomplish the will of God, they are also for the revealing of our King.

We are citizens of the Kingdom of God, and as citizens we reveal by how we live and move and speak what kind of King we have. As we move into the study of each gift, let the Holy Spirit speak to you and move in you and impart in you the spiritual gifts that He has in store for you. In other words, give Him permission to deposit the gifts in you that He desires. That is where you start. After we have done this, then we can be vessels that bring glory to our King.

GIFT DIVISIONS

There has been much said about the divisions of the gifts in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. They have been categorized by type more often than not. This categorization is not the same as what the Corinthian Church was doing because it is not done to elevate some gifts above others. Rather, it is done for the express purpose of understanding and dialog. There are a total of nine gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthian chapter twelve. There seems to be a division based upon the original language of Greek that is not brought out in our English language.

The division is based upon the word “*another*.” When listing the gifts, Paul repeatedly uses the term “*to another*” when listing the next verse. The interesting point of this is that twice he uses a different Greek word for “*another*.” The place where he does so seems to indicate divisions. It must be restated that these divisions are not done to prioritize the gifts but rather to demonstrate their differences. The division is 2-5-2. The word of wisdom and the word of knowledge being the first two, and the speaking with tongues and the interpretation of tongues are the last two.

QUOTE

“It is noteworthy that the first two, word of wisdom and word of knowledge, and the last two, various kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues, are closely connected. The first two

are word (logos) gifts; and the last two deal with tongues. In between are five other gifts. The two-five-two groupings quite likely represent different categories of gifts.” *Renewal Theology—Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective Volume 2 pp. 347*

The other more common division is:

- **Utterance gifts** comprised of tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy.
- **Revelation gifts** comprised of word of wisdom, word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits.
- **Power gifts** comprised of working of miracles, faith, and gifts of healings.

In this categorization the first three **say** something, the second three **reveal** something, and the last three **do** something. However, the reason I am not comfortable with this type of division is that prophecy is relegated to utterance rather than revelation. This I think because of the faulty definition of prophecy that has been passed around so much that it is accepted as truth, that prophecy is preaching.

THE WORD OF WISDOM

*1 Corinthians 12:8 For to one is given the **word of wisdom** through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;*

It must be remembered that this gift is uttered. If the gifts are for the common good, then it would make sense that this gift is spoken. It would therefore be wisdom from God spoken through someone to another. Wisdom is often spoken as a solution to a problem; a fix to a difficult situation.

Matthew 11:19 states that wisdom is vindicated by her deeds. That means that the outcome of a problem reveals whether wisdom was applied to the problem. This is not personal wisdom. It is a gift of speaking wisdom for someone else's benefit. Someone speaking a word of wisdom would look to the person hearing it as a solution that could only have come from God.

WHICH OF THE CALLINGS NEEDS THIS GIFT THE MOST?

It is my opinion that this gift is needed by all of the five callings. All need to have access to God's wisdom for the benefit of those they are equipping for ministry.

WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

*1 Corinthians 12:8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the **word of knowledge** according to the same Spirit;*

This gift again is spoken. It is a gift that reveals knowledge that is known by the one it is spoken to. However, it is not known by the one speaking it. This makes known to them that God is the

one revealing it. It is often used as a means of generating faith for the other gifts to operate. When God reveals something in a person's heart that only that person knew, then they are faced with the reality that God is speaking to them. Then when one of the other gifts are used, like healing or prophecy, the recipient has faith that God is at work in their life.

WHICH OF THE FIVE CALLINGS NEEDS THIS GIFT?

There is no doubt that the prophet operates in this gift frequently. It is the position of prophets to give direction to the Church, so they need this gift from God in order to open up that window of faith for people to believe the prophecy concerning their lives.

FAITH

1 Corinthians 12:9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

The third gift mentioned is faith. This is the only gift that is not only a gift but is also a fruit. There are nine spiritual gifts mentioned in the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians, and there are nine spiritual fruits mentioned in the fifth chapter of Galatians. This would be a good place to differentiate the fruits from the gifts. Notice, however, that they are both of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

The difference between a fruit and a gift is that fruit is developed through maturing; the gifts are available regardless of maturity. Yet, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the fruit is also of and by the Spirit. That's right; we cannot even take credit for our maturity. God will mature us, but only to the degree we surrender ourselves to Him. The fact that faith is found in both the fruits and gifts of the Spirit tells us something about faith.

Faith is something we grow through hearing, believing, and acting. That is representative of the fruit of faith. Yet, you may not possess the faith needed to accomplish something that God needs done through you now. That is where the gift of faith comes into practice. If faith is hearing, believing, and doing, then the gift of faith gives the end product of doing without having gone through the first two steps. The gift of faith generates all of the necessary components to do what God wants to do in any situation. That means the gift of faith will be so pronounced that doubt is impossible at that moment. It is as if God loans us for a moment, His faith, which is endless and boundless.

WHAT CALLINGS NEED THIS GIFT?

Virtually every calling has an equal need for this gift. We all need as much faith as it takes to complete our calling and sometimes God has to step in with His gift to help us.

THE GIFTS OF HEALING

1 Corinthians 12:9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another **gifts of healing** by the one Spirit. The first thing that must be noted is the plurality of gifts. Whereas the others use the word “*charisma*,” this is the only time “*charismata*” is used. That is the plural for the word “*gift*.” Some have said this is so because the diversity of diseases requires diversity of gifts. I am not opposed to this view, yet I believe that scripture will bear out that there are not only ailments of the body that need healing, but we have ailments of the soul that need healing as well. This word simply means healing, so there is no need to delve into the original word, but we will look at some scriptures.

It must also be noted that healing is not always instantaneous. When someone is prayed for there should remain the expectation of restoration regardless of the present condition. I am not advocating a refusal to acknowledge the condition of the present but to retain a hope and expectation of healing based in faith upon His Word.

WHAT CALLINGS NEED THIS GIFT?

Every calling needs this gift. Again, Jesus wants us to heal the sick in every city where we go and are received.

THE EFFECTING OF MIRACLES

The term “*effecting*,” or “*working*,” is from the compound Greek word “*energema*.” This is from the Greek word “*energeia*.” “*En-*” in Greek means “*in*” or “*by*,” and “*ergon*” means “*work*.” The complete thought is that God the Holy Spirit gives to whomever He wills His working or effecting of miracles. The Greek word for miracles is “*dunamis*” which means “*power*.” From these two words we get the English “*energy*” and “*dynamite*.” If we were to say this in English, we would say, “*To another the energy of dynamite*.” God gives to the one who has this gift the energy of His power!

The operation of this gift can only be revealed through the breaking of natural laws. Anything that falls within the laws of nature can be explained in natural phenomena. It is only when the laws of nature are breached that we say it is “*supernatural*.” Never would we say that the parting of the Red Sea was a natural phenomenon. It was a miracle!

WHAT CALLINGS NEED THIS GIFT

We find in the body of Christ that Evangelists often operate in this gift, but every ministry may find that they are moving in this gift for the glory of God.

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

You are going to hear many different ideas about this gift. So, I think it is important to deal with those things that are being labeled as prophecy but are not and to deal with this gift as it is revealed to us from the Holy Word. As usual, I would first like to deal with those things that I believe are in error.

SOME SAY PROPHECY IS NOTHING MORE THAN PREACHING.

There are those in Christendom who believe that prophecy is nothing more than preaching. They say that prophecy is “*speaking forth*” God’s Word. How does this measure up with the Word of God?

Mark 16:15 *And He said to them, “Go into all the world and **preach** the gospel to all creation. The word translated “preach” is the Greek word “kerusso” (kay-roos-so), and it means to herald or proclaim. Now, let’s take a look at the word “prophecy.”*

1 Corinthians 12:10 *and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another **prophecy**, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.*

The word translated “prophecy” is the Greek word “*propheteia*.” This Greek word is from the Greek word “*prophetes*” (prof-ay-tace). Whereas the first word mentioned means to preach, it issues out of the second which means prophet. Now what does the word mean? This is a compound Greek word. It is made up of two Greek words. The first is “*pro*” which means “before.” The second word is “*phemi*” (fay-mee) which means “to say.” Put them together, and it means “to say before.”

Having seen both the Greek word for “preach” and the Greek word for “prophecy,” it becomes clear that prophecy cannot mean preach. If the author wanted to convey the idea of preaching, why would he not use the word preach?

SOME SAY PROPHECY IS NOT FORETELLING.

In dealing with this gift, it becomes clear that there are forces that would like to neutralize this gift to make it ineffective. I think one of the reasons is that this gift is feared by many in the

Church. Those who are in the positions of leadership are often faced with situations that they would rather not have to handle. One of those types of situations is people operating in the gift of prophecy. It is because this gift can do so much damage if it is misused or faked that brings these leaders to the place of thinking that they need to suppress this gift. They do so by watering down its meaning. Their argument is that prophecy is forth-telling rather than fore-telling. Then, when they describe the Greek word, they break it down much like I have done except with one particular difference.

They claim that the word “*pro*” means “*for*.” With their rendition the word would mean “*to speak for*” rather than “*to speak before*.” That has a rather significant change in meaning. Here is where the sleight of hand is used. If you look in your English dictionaries and look up the prefix “*pro-*” you will find two of them. One is based upon the Latin “*pro*” and the other is based upon the Greek “*pro*.” If you look up the Greek word “*pro*” you will never find it translated “*for*.” In fact, it is translated “*before*” 44 times out of 48. Use your Strong’s Concordance to see for yourself. Let’s look at them.

DEFINITION

pro-1pref. **1.** Acting in the place of; substituting for: pronoun. **2.** Supporting; favoring: prorevolutionary.[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *pro-*, *pro-*, from *pro*, *for*. See *per1*.]¹

pro-2pref. **1.** Earlier; before; prior to: procambium. Rudimentary: pronucleus. **2.** Anterior; in front of: procephalic.[Middle English, from Old French, from Greek, from *pro*, *before*, *in front*. See *per1*.]²

Those wishing to subdue this gift use that Latin version of the word rather than the Greek. However, the word is composed of the Greek. Many are trying to take the future out of prophecy. This is unfortunate. The use of prophecy in the Church is a vital gift. It needs to be recognized for what it actually is. Prophecy is revealing something before the event happens. It is used to reveal even potential futures. For instance, when Jonah received the prophetic utterance over Nineveh, that prophetic utterance never came to pass. Jonah only said, “*Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.*”

There were no spoken or written conditions or statements; just a declaration of sure judgment. But what happened? Nineveh repented and that prophetic announcement was stayed. What

¹ Excerpted from *American Heritage Talking Dictionary*. Copyright © 1997 The Learning Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

² Excerpted from *American Heritage Talking Dictionary*. Copyright © 1997 The Learning Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

would happen if the prophetic word of Nineveh was, “*Yet in forty days and Nineveh shall be blessed exceedingly*” and the Ninevites began living wickedly?

Now there are some prophetic announcements that will never be altered and they will happen just as they are proclaimed. Most are like that. Yet, we must be careful to weigh the prophetic utterance and submit to it. That does not mean you are attempting to bring it to pass but are submitted to the revelation of God’s will in your life and in the life of others.

WHAT CALLINGS NEED THIS GIFT?

Even though all could benefit from this gift, obviously none are more exercised in this gift than the prophet.

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

1 Corinthians 12:10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another **the distinguishing of spirits**, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

This gift is the supernatural ability to know if one is a friend or foe to the cause of Christ, to the innocent, or to the brethren. It is also the supernatural ability to recognize a demonized person. This gift will discern any spirit whether or not the spirit is human, angelic or demonic. The word “*distinguishing or discerning*” means “*to judge through*” and carries the idea that one is able to judge “*through*” what appears to the senses to be real. This means that a person using this gift is able to see the hidden intentions of a spirit and not have any evidence of fact to support it.

WHICH CALLINGS NEED THIS GIFT?

All callings can obviously benefit from this calling, but it is exhibited often by the prophets.

THE GIFT OF TONGUES

In our modern culture this gift is by far the most controversial. However, we need not dismiss this gift simply because it has become a stumbling block to many. We have to be careful when evaluating things that are called “*of God.*” Tongues have been called demonic by many in Christendom. This is very dangerous. When Jesus was accused of casting demons out by the prince of demons, which was another way of calling Jesus a devil, they were given a strong warning. Jesus warned them that they are in danger of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit because they were attributing the works of the Spirit to the works of the devil.

Humanity has a tendency of dismissing anything that seems silly or strange. It really comes down to whether we accept the bible as authoritative, or whether we consider it to be the Word of God. I would caution anyone who does not accept the bible as absolute truth that if you take this position you endanger your own salvation. At some point the enemy will begin to hammer on your faith in Christ. After all, if you believe some of it is false, who is to say what you believe to be true actually is true? One thing we need to be sure of is that the bible we have is accurate and it was inspired by the Holy Spirit as men wrote.

We have many proofs of the bible's validity, but we do not have the space or time to treat it correctly in this writing. We will proceed, of course, on the premise that the Word of God is authoritative and without error. It must be remembered that your or my perceptions do not necessarily equate reality. This is why we need to just accept the reality of God as defined by God even if we do not understand it or it seems farfetched.

Tongues are a reality according to the bible. It was a phenomenon of the first New Testament Church, and it is still a phenomenon of the Church today. If we feel uncomfortable with the concept of tongues, we need to ask ourselves why we feel that way. You may be surprised at what you find is actually behind your uneasy feelings. From here let's open our minds and hearts and look at what the bible has to say about this gift. It should also be noted that the previous seven gifts were found in the Old Testament as well.

Although we may not find a direct road into the Old Testament concerning this gift, there is, I think, an indirect one. In Genesis chapter eleven, we find the account of the tower of Babel. It is interesting to note the contrast that the gift of tongues has with the story of the tower of Babel.

Genesis 11:1-4 Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and **let us make for ourselves a name**, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

The purpose behind this endeavor was to force humanity into a unity of sorts. They wanted to make for themselves a name. It was man directed, it was man instituted, and it was man building for himself a reputation. But the result is always the same...division and confusion. Even today when you see men trying to build God's work it results in division and confusion. This is the antithesis of what God did at Pentecost.

Genesis 11:6-9 The Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now **nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them**. "Come, let Us go down and there **confuse their language**, so that they will

not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

At Pentecost men were able to speak languages they did not know, and people heard and understood in their own language what was being said. This is a reversal of sorts concerning the tower of Babel. Contrast verse six with the following:

Matthew 17:20 *And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and **nothing will be impossible to you.**"*

Whereas God is opposed to man's efforts, He necessarily had to restrict or restrain human effort; however, when man is in agreement with God's effort, that restriction is removed. When it is God directed, God instituted, and God building a reputation for Himself, it results in unity.

QUOTE

Alan Richardson reminds us that the bestowal of the gift of tongues at Pentecost (Acts 2:5-11) can be thought of as the reverse of the confusion of tongues at Babel. He says: "When men in their pride boast of their own achievements, their results nothing but division, confusion, and incomprehensibility; but when the wonderful works of God are proclaimed, then every man may hear the apostolic gospel in his own tongue" (Genesis 1-11, p. 126)³

WHAT ARE TONGUES FOR?

1 Corinthians 14:2-5 *For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the Church. Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the Church may receive edifying.*

From this scripture we can see that, whereas prophecy edifies or builds up the Church, tongues build up the individual. There are many examples of people who were burdened and after they spent time alone praying in tongues, they emerged with a renewed faith and confidence in the power of God to address their burden.

³ Pfeiffer, C. F. 1962. *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*. Moody Press: Chicago

The gift of tongues imparts to you the ability to pray perfectly according to the will of God. How many times do we not understand how to pray or what words to say. Praying in tongues is the Holy Spirit praying through you the perfect will of God. The importance of this is staggering. For instance, I can be praying in tongues here and the Holy Spirit may be praying for a person who is about to lose their life on the other side of the earth because of their faith. But because I am praying in tongues here, God sends His angelic forces there to deliver this person from certain death.

This is why we must never shrink from using this gift if we have it. It is vital to the plans of God being carried out in the earth. I even think Jesus had this gift in mind when He answered His disciples' inquiry of how to pray; He said, *"Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven."* When we pray in tongues we are telling God from our actions that we want His will to be accomplished upon the earth.

CAN EVERY BELIEVER SPEAK IN TONGUES?

This is an explosive issue that has been in the Church at least since the Azusa Street revival of the early 20th century. I personally have gone both ways as I gained more knowledge on the subject. But the evidence for every believer speaking in tongues is far more abundant than the evidence for every believer not speaking in tongues. The one major verse that I always stumbled over was:

1 Corinthians 12:30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

This is a rhetorical question that has the obvious answer of "No." If we take that on face value it appears to be saying that not all believers are tasked to speak in tongues. However when taken in light of the whole of that chapter it becomes obvious that it was a statement made in the context of the local meeting. That is, in the local meeting not every person will speak in tongues, not every person will prophesy, not every person will interpret. The point is that every person will have a part in the meeting, but not every person will do the same thing.

The evidence for every believer speaking in tongues is found in abundance. If this is the only gift that edifies the individual, does it not make more sense that God desires every individual to be built up? If praying in tongues provides the amazing ability to pray the perfect will of God, do we not each need this gift? I would invite each of you to take a close look at the gift of tongues, and I think that you too will be able to come away with the same conclusion that I have; that God desires that every believer speak with other tongues.

I think it important to also address another line of thought, and that is to answer the question, *"Is the gift of tongues THE evidence for the baptism of the Holy Spirit?"* The problem is not with

the word “*evidence*” but the word, “*the*.” That is, the gift of tongues is “*an*” evidence but not “*the*” evidence. It would only make sense that every spiritual gift, which is a manifestation of a supernatural power of God, is an evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

WHICH CALLINGS NEED THIS GIFT?

Not only does every calling need this gift, but every believer.

THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

We need not spend much time with this gift. It is simply the interpretation of an utterance of tongues. When a person speaks in tongues they do not understand what they are saying. It comes from the Spirit of God, thus it is the words that God is speaking. When one interprets this utterance, it is the revelation of the mysteries that the Spirit was speaking.

WHAT CALLINGS NEED THESE TWO GIFTS?

The gift of tongues and interpretation is a benefit to all who have it. It is not calling specific in any way.

THE GIFT OF HELPS

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God has appointed in the Church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, **helps**, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

It is here that we break from 1 Corinthians chapter twelve. I searched for every use of the word “gifts” and then looked up the Greek word used for that translation. Only when it was translated from the Greek “Charisma” do we associate that as a spiritual gift. There are more gifts than found in the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians. The gift of helps is a much needed gift in the Church. In an age where it seems that leadership is exalted, many do not want to help. However, since it is a gift, one who has this gift can find much satisfaction in moving in this gift. Let’s take a look at the original word.

DEFINITION

1. *ANTILĒPSIS* or *ANTILĒMPSIS* (ἀντίληψις, (484)) properly signifies a laying hold of, an exchange (*anti*, in exchange, or, in its local sense, in front, and *lambanō*, to take, lay hold of, so as to support); then, a help (*akin* to *B*, No. 1); it is mentioned in *1 Cor. 12:28*, as one of the ministrations in the local Church, by way of rendering assistance, perhaps especially of help ministered to the weak and needy. So *Theophylact* defines the injunction in *1 Thess. 5:14*, “support the weak;” *cp. Acts 20:35*; not official functionaries are in view in the term “helps,”

but rather the functioning of those who, like the household of Stephanas, devote themselves to minister to the saints. Hort defines the ministration as “anything that would be done for poor or weak or outcast brethren.”⁴

So, the idea is that one is to take hold of something in place of someone else. Interestingly, this is the only place in the bible where this word is used. There are those in the Body of Christ who have a desire to take the helping or assisting role. We only need to look at the office of deacon to see this gift in action. The deacon was the assistant to the bishops of the Church. The deacons helped take the load off the bishops, so the bishops could devote their time to the study of the Word and prayer.

THE GIFT OF GOVERNMENT

This gift gives the possessor the ability to administrate and govern. It is the ability to bring into order and organize an organization or a project. Those enabled with this gift are able to place people where they are the most gifted and effective. Every Church needs order and organization.

*1 Corinthians 12:28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, **administrations**, various kinds of tongues.*

The Greek word for “administrators” is “*kubernesis*,” and it means “to steer.” The idea is that one does all that is needed to make sure that the organization or project is on the right track. If the organization or project veers to the left or right, the administrator steers it back on the right track.

THE GIFT OF HOSPITALITY OR SERVICE

This gift is the desire and ability to make strangers or foreigners feel comfortable while they are in their care. Those with this gift love to entertain others and measure their success upon the comfort of the guest.

*Romans 12:6-7 Since we have **gifts that differ according to the grace given to us**, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; **if service, in his serving**; or he who teaches, in his teaching;*

This Greek word is a form of the word used for “deacon.” It is “*diakonia*,” and the word for deacon is “*diakonos*.” They are related, and these words are translated “minister,” “servant,”

⁴ Vine, W., & Bruce, F. (1981; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996). *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Old Tappan NJ: Revell.

“*ministry*,” and “*deacon*.” Even though we are all called to be hospitable and we are all called to minister or serve, some of us have a gift of doing so to a greater extent.

THE GIFT OF TEACHING

Romans 12:7 *if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;*

The Greek word for teach is “*didasko*.” It simply means “*to teach*.” There are many that teach, but the ones who have this gift operating in their life are able to teach above and beyond human ability. They are supernaturally gifted to communicate godly ideas and doctrines in a way that makes the information understandable to the audience.

THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION

Romans 12:8 *or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

The gift of exhortation is a gift that is used to motivate God’s people to action in accordance with God’s Word. It can be used in a one on one encounter, or it can be used in preaching a sermon. The Greek word is “*parakaleo*,” and it means “*to call to one’s side*.” The picture is that of a person who is calling people to hear what they have to say, so this gift is the ability to preach in such a way that it draws people to hear.

THE GIFT OF GIVING

God has also given to the Church those who have a gift of giving. God’s work costs money to perform. Therefore, it is needed that God gift some with giving. Now it stands to reason that the one who is given this gift will also be given prosperity to carry it out. However, if someone has this gift, like all gifts, it has to be developed and it is developed through use. So it does not mean that God will give someone an abundance of money right away. We have to prove ourselves faithful and grow the gift.

Romans 12:8 *or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

The Greek word is “*metadidomi*,” and it means “*to impart*.” Notice also that the exhortation for those with this gift is to give with “*liberality*.” The Greek word here “*haplotes*,” and it means “*with simplicity*.” The idea behind this word is sincerity. Those who have this gift are to give with sincerity.

THE GIFT OF LEADERSHIP

Romans 12:8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; **he who leads, with diligence**; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

The gift of leadership is given to those who God has placed in positions of leadership. We are not all naturally endowed to be good leaders. It takes a grace from God to make one a “good” leader. The Greek word is “*proistemi*,” and it means “to set over.” If you ever find yourself in a place of leadership, ask God for this gift so that you can lead well.

THE GIFT OF MERCY

This gift often accompanies those who have the gift of healing. It is also needed in many different vocations. We all have a tendency toward justice, which is making sure people get what they deserve. It takes a gift of mercy for us to overlook people’s faults and have compassion on them in their troubles.

Romans 12:8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; **he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness**.

The Greek word is “*eleeo*,” and it means “to have mercy on.” It also has the idea of helping one who is afflicted or needs assistance. One can especially see the importance of this in the health care field. It must also be noted that one who has this gift without the knowledge of God are often the ones that are horrified by correction to another believer. When we apply the knowledge of God to the gifting we have, it will bring a balance and understanding to its operation.

SUMMATION

It must be retained in our thinking that these gifts are “*supernatural*” gifts. They supersede a person’s natural abilities and, therefore, are recognizable by the recipient as a work of God. These gifts should always bring glory to God, not to you! We can do nothing without Christ. It should also be noted that your gifting is not automatic. That is, it does not just show itself. You have to operate by faith, humility, and practice. You can have gifts and never utilize them. It takes stepping out in the faith that God will do His part if you will do yours.

Do not be discouraged by failure. We have all failed in using our gifts, either through not moving in them when the Holy Spirit was moving us or trying to move in them when the Holy Spirit was not moving us. The gifts are used at the command of God’s Spirit in you. That means that we have to develop our relationship with God so that we are familiar with His voice and His

impressing us. All gifts are under your control. At no time does God take control of your spirit and force you to operate in a gift. That means we are always responsible for accurately operating in the gifts.

One of the biggest enemies to the gifts is pride. The problem stems from doing supernatural things and people giving you accolades for it rather than God. Therefore, it is important that you always give God glory yourself before others give you the credit.

Also, gifts are to be pursued. Paul tells us to pursue spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophecy. The reason for this is that prophecy is the one gift that edifies all. Do not shrink from desiring spiritual gifts. The bible says that we have not because we ask not, and when we do ask we ask amiss (James 4:2-3). This means that we ask for our own gratification not for the will of God to be accomplished through us. So, when you ask for spiritual gifts, make sure that it is for the kingdom's purposes not for yours.