

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT
PART 1
INTRODUCTION

As we continue on in our series, Foundation of Faith, we are currently studying the Holy Spirit. And, over the past several weeks we have been laying a strong foundation on who the Holy Spirit is and His work today, not only in the world, but also in the life of the believer. We have seen that the Holy Spirit is a person and not only a person, but the third person of the Holy Trinity, Almighty God. From there we looked at the work of the Holy Spirit in this world. We have seen that the Holy Spirit is “**with**” us drawing us to Christ, drawing out a bride for Christ. Once a person comes to Jesus and asks Him to be Lord and Savior of their life, then the Holy Spirit comes “**in**” that person, they are saved, born again! This is a work of the Holy Spirit! And either at the time of salvation or after there is a third work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and that is called the baptism with the Holy Spirit where Jesus baptizes us. This is where the Holy Spirit comes “**upon**” a believer and empowers them for service. The believer is empowered to move the Gospel message forward, to be a witness of Jesus Christ.

And as I have said before, it is important to lay a firm foundation, a strong foundation regarding the Holy Spirit before we begin to look at the gifts because of the abuse we see with the gifts of the Spirit. We need to build upon this foundation the proper way that the gifts of the Spirit are to be exercised in the church today! And thus, this morning the focus will be the introduction of these gifts before we begin to look specifically at them.

We will deal with the abuse of these gifts in a few minutes, but let me say this. As wrong as many of these ultra-charismatic churches are, on the opposite end of the spectrum are those who deny these gifts or some of these gifts. They say that they were for the first century church and are no longer in operation today. I disagree. Let me give you a few examples of what is being said regarding this issue, I think it is important you hear what they have to say and then what the Scriptures have to say. In fact, some of you may agree with what they say about some of the gifts not being in operation today. Again, we will see what the Scriptures have to say regarding this. But listen to what those who deny some of these gifts have to say. We are told,

With the rise of the current Charismatic Movement there is a new interest in the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Such desire for knowledge is certainly good and commendable, however for many this has meant a deviation from the teachings of Scripture on what have come to be called the “supernatural gifts of the Spirit” (miracles, healings, tongues and their interpretation). The historic Doctrinal Statement of Scofield Memorial Church clearly states that we believe that these particular gifts were temporary in nature (Article XII, paragraph 3). The intent of this position paper is to expand on this statement in an attempt to help those in our fellowship to better understand our stance as the elders of our church in these most crucial and significant days.

- Source Unknown

Here we see that these gifts, what they call the “supernatural gifts of the Spirit” such as miracles, healings, tongues and their interpretation have all passed off the scene. If this is true, then the Scriptures should support this fact. Thus, we will look at this and see in a few minutes if some of these gifts are gone and when we look specifically at these gifts over the next several weeks, we will see that these gifts are for today! Another person wrote,

At various times in history, God employed supernatural signs and miracles to accompany the message being given by His messengers. The purpose of these miracles was twofold: to draw special attention to the message, for it was, in most cases, new, or stronger than the one given before; and to authenticate the speaker. The miracles, and the special power given men to effectuate them, were not the focus of the message; they were secondary, simply intended to draw attention to the spoken words and to validate the speaker as God’s chosen representative.

Likewise the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ - salvation solely through faith in Him - was new in that it centered men’s relationship with God on Jesus Himself - the Son of God, our Advocate, God as Man. In the same way His promise of the Holy Spirit as our Helper - God in us - required such abandonment of current Jewish thought that Christ’s ministry and that of the apostles were supported by continuous miracles - supernatural healings, speaking in unknown languages, sudden death - designed by God to promote His truth and lead witnesses to a saving faith in Christ.

At the moment of salvation when the believing person is baptized into the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit gives to every believer one or more gifts, God-given abilities for service as He chooses (I Cor. 12:11). However we believe certain of these gifts were temporary, and were used of God to authenticate the gospel to the first century church and, in the process, to establish the biblical canon. Today, having a completed canon which provides for the full knowledge of God, these temporary gifts are no longer necessary to reveal God's truth or to validate the speaker, and they are thus not a part of the believer's normal life. At the same time, other gifts endure to equip believers for service and to edify the whole church body.

- Source Unknown

So this can be a very touchy subject with some because they are either on one side that denies some of these gifts or the other side that abuses them, and both are wrong. Herbert Lockyer made this comment regarding Satan and what he does to deceive us. He wrote, "Satan has two methods of procedure in dealing with truth. First, he seeks to hide the vision. . . . Then Satan's method is that of patronage and falsification. He endeavors to take it out of its true proportion and turn it into deadly error!" Thus, it is important for us to understand what God has for us and what He does not have for us so we are not lead astray!

It is as Herbert Lockyer once again wrote, “In many cases, misconceptions concerning the Spirit and ignorance of His work are responsible for weakness and ineffectiveness in Christian life and labor. If only the Spirit could come into His own, lives would be rich in fruitfulness and fragrant with the perfume of Christ. By realizing all that the third person of the Trinity has for us, facts of promise could become factors of power.” I think we would all agree that we desire to have all that God has for us and we desire that power to be witnesses of Him, to be empowered with the Spirit of God to move the Gospel message forward. That is why we are taking our time looking at this issue, it is that important! It is as Pastor Chuck Smith said, “I am convinced that the greatest need in the church today is a renewal of the teaching of the subject of the Holy Spirit.” I agree with that.

We want that Spirit filled life and thus, we need to become familiar with what the Scriptures say regarding the Holy Spirit. And, the only way to insure against the danger of deception is by searching the Scriptures ourselves and seeing what God has for us. By testing what I say, what others say, what you think about the Holy Spirit and these gifts against the Word of God! Please understand that the Devil does not want us to understand this power that God has for us, he wants us to be ineffective and weak, but that is not what God desires for us. In all we do, in all we believe, we must test these things against the Word of God!

And so in this study we are going to take an introductory look at the gifts of the Spirit, and from there, in succeeding studies, we will look specifically at the various gifts, and there are more than just 9, as we shall see. And the best place to begin an introduction into a section like this is in I Corinthians chapter 12, as Paul is going to spend 3 chapters not only correcting their errors in regards to the gifts, but he will also tell them how these gifts are to be used in a proper manner.

Now to understand what Paul was writing about we need to have a little background information on this city called Corinth. This ancient city was and is still in southern Greece, west of Athens. Corinth was a strategically located city on major trade routes that ran north and south, and east and west. Because of that it was filled with people from all walks of life and all parts of the world, and not necessarily your model citizen. Thus, Corinth was a rough, nasty, and very immoral city whose reputation preceded them. Also in this city was the Temple of Aphrodite. This temple housed 1,000 temple priestesses, who were nothing more than prostitutes who would use the profits they made for the upkeep of the temple. And because of all this immorality and wickedness that was common in this city, a verb was coined after them, KORINTHIAZOMAI, which meant, “to lead a debased life.”

Now Paul first visited Corinth on his second missionary journey, (Acts 18). And as people heard the Gospel message, souls were saved, mostly gentiles as many Jews rejected what Paul was saying. But as people got saved, the church was born. And here in this dark, immoral, wicked city, this church was to be a light to the city which was in darkness. Leon Morris describes Corinth as “Intellectually alert, materially prosperous, but morally corrupt.”

The problem was that the opposite of what the church was to do, was happening. You see, the city was getting into the church instead of the church getting into the city! As Moffatt correctly put it, “The Church was in the world, as it had to be, but the world was in the Church, as it ought not to be.”

And so about three years after Paul visited Corinth, while he was preaching in Ephesus, he received a letter from Corinth telling him of the problems that were going on in the church. Thus, I Corinthians is a letter back to them, trying to correct those problems, trying to set right this worldly and carnal church.

And Paul lays out some of the problems that had developed in Corinth. We are told in I Corinthians 1:10-13, **“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, ‘I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Apollos,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ or ‘I am of Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”**

Paul starts out with a big problem in the church; divisions, schisms, the Greek word means to “tear” or to “rend.” In other words the church in Corinth was ripping each other apart, they were tearing up the body of Christ for their own selfish reasons and Paul says that should not be! Instead you should be like-minded, have the same focus, the Lord Jesus Christ. Be “**joined together**” which was a medical term that relates to putting bones back together that were broken or fractured. Thus, the idea here is putting back together or to make one again that which was broken or separated, relationships within the body of Christ! You see, this tearing apart of the body is not natural in the body of Christ, at least it shouldn’t be, and it is not what God desires! Thus, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, put on the mind of Christ and heal those relationships!

Here we see Chloe mentioned, probably a businesswoman and also a Christian, who sends news to Paul through her representatives that are traveling back and forth from Corinth to Ephesus, where Paul wrote this letter. And they are telling Paul, maybe through a letter and word of mouth, that there is trouble in Corinth with a capital “T”.

You see, they allowed their differences to divide up the body of Christ, cause quarrels, contentions and they used names to back up their cause – to justify their actions, and what a sad picture that is being painted here. By acting carnal, as the Corinthian church was, Paul tells them you are dividing Christ when we are supposed to be one in Christ!

Maybe you heard the story of the old, very contentious Quaker who went from one church to another church never finding the “True” church he was looking for. One day someone was bold enough to ask him, “Well, what church are you in now?” He replied back, “I am in the true church at last.” “Really,” said the man, “How many belong to it?” The Old Quaker replied back, “Just my wife and myself, and I am not sure about her sometimes.” Funny, yes, but not right!

It was not only these divisions that were causing problems, but they had become immoral by not disciplining a man who was sleeping with his stepmother. Paul said this in I Corinthians chapter 5, beginning in verse 1, **“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles - that a man has his father’s wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. . . . deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?”** I Corinthians 5:1-2, 5-6.

They allowed sin into the church and they were proud about it. They saw themselves as being very loving, when in reality; they were not because they allowed this believer to continue in his sin. You see, they needed to deal with this and any sin before the whole body was infected with its poison.

And there is more. They had problems with lawsuits amongst each other, and you can read of that in I Corinthians chapter 6. They also had marital problems that they were not dealing with, and you can read of that in I Corinthians chapter 7. Paul even had to rebuke them in the way they had their Agape feasts or pot lucks, as we would call them. The rich would bring their food and sit together while the poor brought whatever they could and had to sit by themselves and eat the little they brought while the rich gorged themselves. Then they would share in communion. And Paul rebukes them for that kind of behavior, telling them they are making a mockery of communion, and because of their actions some are sick and even some have died! And you can read of that in I Corinthians chapter 11.

And finally, as Paul comes to chapter 12, he is going to deal with another problem, the abuse of the gifts of the Spirit that were taking place in Corinth. Because of that, Paul is going to spend three chapters correcting them in the abuse and teaching them the proper use of these gifts.

Interestingly enough, this church in Corinth was very carnal, very worldly, and yet they had the gifts of the Spirit working in them, they exercised all of the gifts. That just tells me you don't have to be some super giant to acquire these gifts in your life. And the reason is simple, they are grace gifts the Spirit gives us, not because we are worthy of them, but because He desires to give them to us. The problem we see in Corinth is that carnality plus these gifts of the Spirit equals abuse, and I believe we are seeing that very thing today in the church.

In fact, when it comes to these gifts many just toss out the window all they know and understand in the Word of God and gravitate to the experience. They come to the conclusion that it is feeling's, wo-o-o feeling's, that is where it is at and this must be from God even though God has not instructed us in it. As the late John Wimber, head of the Vineyard Fellowship of churches said in regards to this issue, "There's nothing in the Scripture that supports these kind of phenomena that I can see, and I can't think of anything throughout the church age that would. I feel no obligation to try to explain it. It's just phenomena. It's just people responding to God." (Charisma, Feb. 1995, p. 26).

I am sorry to hear that, because Paul had to deal with the Corinthian church because of their abuse and misuse of these gifts that went contrary to God's Word. And so let's see what Paul has to say so that we can stay on track and be guided by the Spirit of God, according to the Word of God, and receive all that God has for us.

Let's begin reading in I Corinthians 12:1 where Paul tells us, "**Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant.**" Now in verse 1 it should read, "**Now concerning spirituals**" for the word "**gifts**" was added for clarity but it truly is not needed because the context of these verses tell us that Paul is referring to gifts. The Greek word that is used here for, "spirituals" is PNEUMATIKA, and the IKA ending on a word means, "characterized or controlled by." And Clarke defines these spirituals this way, "Gracious endowments, leading to miraculous results . . . These all came by the extraordinary influences of the Holy Spirit."

Now regarding these Spiritual gifts, Paul says that he did not want the Corinthian believers to be ignorant about them. He wants them to pay close attention to this information because it is important. Tragically, even today, look at how ignorant Christians are regarding Spiritual gifts; from abuse to negating them saying they are not for today.

And think about what we have been talking about regarding the Corinthian church. Paul has just been speaking of how carnal they have been, living in the flesh, and now he is going to speak to them on, “spirituals” like I have said.

Let’s paraphrase what Paul is saying here to help us to understand it more clearly. “Now concerning the things of the Spirit that are controlled by the Spirit.” Do you see how important it is to have a correct understanding of what Paul is saying here? But again, many put their own ideas, their own thoughts here and thus, what they believe is in stark contrast to what Paul was saying here in Corinthians! We see people running to and fro for this healing service on Thursday, another on Monday, and-so-on. When the reality is, we don’t control the Holy Spirit or place our demands on Him when healing services are going to take place. The Spirit of God is in control and He gives gifts as He sees fit, not necessarily when we want them. These are the things of the Spirit that are controlled by the Spirit, may we not forget that!

Another point that Paul makes is that he does not want us to be ignorant about Spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to us. And yet, in the church today there is much ignorance of these things, and that should not be! The other area Paul didn't want us to be ignorant about is the Rapture of the church, as he tells us this in I Thessalonians 4:13. And again, it is one of those areas that have many confused about because they listen to man rather than God's clear teaching from His Word!

It is interesting that Paul uses the "super emphatic" in the Greek when he speaks of not wanting us to be ignorant of these gifts. It is a word that speaks of being forceful or absolute. Then why is there so much confusion today? One of the reasons, I believe, for this ignorance is that it is driven by fear and emotions. Many have seen the abuses that have gone on in regards to the gifts of the Spirit, and they want nothing to do with them. And really, you can't blame them if that is all they had to go by. And then there is the abuse that is centered on emotions and feelings. But again, we do not have to fear any of this because we have the Word of God that was there to guide them just as it guides us.

And think about this. If this is a gift that God has promised us, why should we be fearful of it? We should not fear those things that God desires to give us. Remember what Jesus said in Luke 11:11-13, **"If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"**

God is not going to trick us or give us something that will hurt us, that is not our God! Now I have to admit I don't use the word, "charismatic" to describe what I believe too often. Why? Because of the negative relationship it is associated with. I am more likely to just explain what I believe in regards to the gifts instead of using a title or name for it. That way the person understands what I believe clearly.

Others believe that these gifts were just for the first century church, as I have said, and not for us. They needed these gifts to get the church started and they think we don't need them anymore. How wrong they are. Just look at this nation and the impact the church is having on this nation today! It is very little. We need these gifts just as much as they did back then. And I think you will see that the Scriptures support this view, that these gifts were not just for the first century church.

And lastly, the abuse of these gifts that we are seeing today which go contrary to what the Word of God has to say are bizarre to say the least. And granted, even though they are still out there, we don't hear as much about them and I will explain a possible reason for that in a minute. But what are people doing today and blaming the Holy Spirit for? We are seeing people today, believe it or not, barking like dogs, being drunk in the Spirit, glued to the floor, bouncing their heads on the floor, roaring like lions, laughing uncontrollably, running around like some warrior, throwing the Holy Spirit around like some kind of magic trick, and we say this is of God! **NOT!!!!**

Why don't we hear of this as much as we did a few years back? Because you can only laugh so long. You can only bark like a dog so long. You can only be drunk in the Spirit for so long. Thus, they will come up with some other bizarre behavior and blame the Holy Spirit for it. In fact, there is a new guy who brings healing to people by body slamming them to the floor. I think it does the opposite, but he is trying and it is not of God!

Now my intention is not to try to offend you or have you turn off what I am saying because it is going against what you believe. All I ask you, as we go through these things, even if it is contrary to what you believe, is that you would see what the Word of God has to say instead of going by feelings or experiences. Yes there is a lot of abuse going on in the church today in regards to spiritual gifts, but lets not throw the baby out with the bath water!

In fact, without the gifts functioning in the church, without the operation of these spiritual gifts, the church is lifeless and ineffective in its mission. It is the Spirit of God drawing people to Christ and the Spirit of God uses the body of Christ, He uses us to do that by the various gifts that He bestows upon us. And so, let's not be ignorant of these things!

You see, God is going to give to us the things we need to do the work He has called us to do, and He tells us just to ask Him! It is as Vance Havner said, “We will move this world not by criticism of it, nor conformity to it – but by combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God.” Folks, we need the power of God upon our lives today, just as much as the first century church did. Why is that? John Courson gives to us an excellent example of why it is needed, what it is all about. He tells us that, “The steam in a locomotive does not exist to toot the whistle. Its purpose is to power the engine and move the train. So too, the empowering of the Spirit is not given for people to feel ‘Holy Ghost goose bumps’, emotional highs, or warm fuzzy feelings. The Spirit comes upon people in order that the message of the Gospel might be moved throughout the world.” May we not forget that and let us not be ignorant of these things!

As we move on into verse 2 of I Corinthians chapter 12 we are told, **“You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.”** What is Paul talking about here? Before these believers got saved they were following pagan practices, carried away by these things. And Paul is telling them that they were like that, but they should no longer continue down that path, applying the spiritual gifts to their old pagan practices.

I find this thought interesting and troublesome. It is interesting that many, if not all the cults practice mind control, where you can't think for yourself, but someone else tells you what to think, how to act. What is troublesome to me is that in the church we have developed this kind of thinking. You can't question what is being taught, even if it is not according to the Word of God, because we are not allowed to touch the Lord's anointed! Or, empty your mind of everything so God can speak to you, that is not Scriptural!

Some of you might think I am off on this, but understand this, it is happening at alarming rates throughout the church today. Listen closely to what one well known televangelist had to say about those who check what he has to say according to the Word of God. He said,

You wonderful people of God, quit attacking men of God by name! Somebody's attacking me because of something I'm teaching! Let me tell you something brother, you watch it! . . . I don't mind if they attack Benny and the way he is and the way he walks, but don't attack the anointing on my life; don't attack this man of God [Paul Crouch].

There is a group here in California that thinks they are the judgment seat of Christ! They judge everything you do. Listen here, fella, let me tell you something: you're not my judge; Jesus is my judge! You walk around with your stiff lip and collar on your neck - dear God in Heaven I wish I could just –ooh!

They call it a ministry, my foot! You know, I've looked for one verse in the Bible - I just can't seem to find it – one verse that says, "If you don't like' em, kill' em!" I really wish I could find it! But there's nowhere in the bible where it says it! . . .

Sometimes I wish God would give me a Holy ghost machine gun! I'd blow your head off!

- Benny Hinn

Now as much as Benny Hinn, and others like him, may say things like that, which are unscriptural, they do not want anyone to check their teaching to see if the Word of God speaks of these things. Why is that? Because the Word of God does not teach what they are teaching, they are false prophets and false ministers of God if what they are teaching is contrary to God's Word and so are those that bring in New Age Mysticism into the church! Remember what Paul tells us this in I Thessalonians 5:21, "**Test all things; hold fast what is good.**" If you don't test all things according to the light of God's Word you are a fool and you are opening yourself up to many deceptions that are out there! You see, if a teaching is God's truth, then it will stand the test of tough questions, under the light of God's Word!

And so we see Paul speaking on Spirituals and he does not want us to be ignorant of these things. He does not want us to apply these Spiritual things to the old life, the old practices, doing whatever we want, but to be directed by the Spirit of God.

As we move on into verse 3 of I Corinthians chapter 12, Paul tells us, “**Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.**” It seems here that Paul is answering a question that was sent to him by the Corinthians. And by his response it seems that the question is about tongues and how some were saying they heard people speak in tongues, understanding that language, and these people were calling God accursed when they used this gift.

We even see that going on today. It goes something like this, “I have a friend, whose aunt’s friend’s daughter knows someone who was at a service somewhere, and when the gift of tongues was being exercised they understood the language, and they were cursing God using the gift of tongues.” And the conclusion, thus, is that they were not exercising the gift of tongues and it proves that this gift is not for today. That is not at all what Paul is saying here!

Paul is telling them, and us, that there is no way you can call God accursed using the gift of tongues. You see, the gift of tongues is a beautiful prayer language unto God that speaks praises unto Him and glorifies Him, even though you can’t understand it. This gift is not something we should fear, but understand that this enhances our prayer life before God. And yes there is the counterfeit to tongues that the enemy uses, but do you really think that our heavenly Father is going to give to His children the counterfeit? No way. Don’t let the enemy negate what God is doing! And again, we will deal more with this issue of tongues when we look at this gift and the interpretation of tongues!

As we move on in I Corinthians chapter 12 we are told, **“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.**

And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.”

I Corinthians 12:4-6. Here in these verses Paul now speaks of various kinds of gifts or graces, **“diversities of gifts”** or CHARIS in the Greek, that the Holy Spirit gives freely to us. You don’t earn them; in fact you can be a new Christian and manifest these gifts in your life. The Holy Spirit freely gives these gifts as He sees fit.

From there we see Paul move on to, **“differences of ministries”** in verse 5. The Greek word for “ministries” is DIAKONIA, which speaks of “service” or “assistance.” It is a word that carries with it the idea or thought of ministering or serving someone. This is important for us to understand, anyone in ministry, and we are all in ministry, we are not there to be served, but to serve, that is our role, that is what the gifts are for, ministering or serving someone. In fact, Jesus is our example and He said in Mark 10:45, **“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”**

And then in verse 6 Paul speaks of various kinds of activities or **“diversities of operations”** it is literally speaking of. You see, there are many different types of gifts, there are differences of ministries, or we all have been called to a different ministry in the body of Christ, serving each other. And finally, there are different ways the gifts work.

You see, the same gift might not work the same way in each of our lives. Think of it this way. The Holy Spirit is using a painter's pallet to mix the gifts and use them in a unique way, blending them together in such a way in that person's life that it will edify that body of believers or those people he comes in contact with. But each painter's pallet will be different, to fit that individual, to fit the work that the Holy Spirit wants to do!

Let me give you an example. Think of Jesus and the various ways he used the gift of healing. Sometimes He touched a person, sometimes the person touched Him, sometimes He just spoke from a distance and the person was healed, and-so-on. The gift of evangelism can be manifested in different ways. Some are comfortable speaking before thousands of people, and many are saved. Some like going door-to-door and they see much fruit in their ministry. Others like just that one-on-one, meeting people on the street, and their ministry is fruitful. You see, the same ministry, the same gift used, but manifested in different ways.

And again, this is important to understand. There are many types of gifts out there, a diversity of gifts. Not only that, but there is many different kinds of ministries, many different kinds of ways to serve people, come to their assistance using the gifts of the Spirit. And lastly, there is a multifaceted way that the gifts of the Spirit can be used in individual lives, ways that the Holy Spirit sets forth. It is the same Spirit, the same Lord and the Same God who works in all or think of it like this. It is the same Holy Spirit that is working in us. It is the same Jesus that is working in us. And it is the same God the Father that is working in each of us. Now again, some may have a hard time with this, but notice what the focus is as we read on in I Corinthians chapter 12.

In I Corinthians 12:7 Paul tells us, “**But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.**” The Living Bible puts this verse like this, “**The Holy Spirit displays God’s power through each of us as a means of helping the entire church.**” May we not lose sight of this! The Holy Spirit gives to us the things we need and the end result is that it profits those around us, it blesses them, encourages them, points them to Jesus, whatever the Holy Spirit sees is needed!

Paul is speaking here of the, “**manifestation**” and what he is speaking of is the outward evidence of each of these gifts, which are given not for our own personal gain, but for the prophet of the body of Christ, the edification of the body, except for the gift of tongues which does edify us but it can also bless others.

Tragically, some misuse the gifts for their own personal profit. Others stay at home and in doing so they are not using their gifts in a local body. The gifts are used for the profit of all in the body! In fact, we can see in I Corinthians 12:12-28, Paul speaks of the body of Christ and how these gifts are given in the church so that the body may move and work in a powerful manner.

Think about it, no cell can do much by itself, but the billions upon billions of cells in the human body, when they are working together, just look at the awesome things they can do. Think about the organs in the body, what if they just wanted to take care of themselves, and not assist in working and benefitting of the entire body, the body would die or at least move spastically. And the same is true in the body of Christ as we work together and exercise these gifts, awesome things are accomplished.

And as God gives us these gifts, not talents, we need to use them for His glory. Don't envy what others have, but praise God for what He has given you, and ask the Lord for those things you need in a given situation. And then understand that the Holy Spirit will give these gifts out as He sees fit.

In I Corinthians 12:11 Paul makes this point as he wrote, **“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”** I feel that this verse sums up what Paul was saying in verses 4-6 of I Corinthians chapter 12. The Holy Spirit is Sovereign and He decides what each person needs and will receive in a given situation. The Holy Spirit gives each of us unique ministries, mixed in a way that will benefit those around us. You don't demand anything from God, you ask and He will give you what you need, not what you want and if you are willing to receive what He has for you, there will be a blessing, the body of Christ will be enriched, it will be edified!

And let me conclude with these words from the first part of I Corinthians 12:31, where Paul wrote, **“But earnestly desire the best gifts. . . .”** Now this is an interesting statement that Paul is making here because out of what he has just written comes an interesting question, “What is the best gift?” Some may say miracles or the gift of prophecy, or tongues, or this gift or that gift, but if that is what you are thinking, you are missing the point! Paul will tell us that this needs to be done in love, that is what is best, but again, there is a point to all this.

You see, it all depends on what job needs to be done. For example, if you had a workshop full of saws, which one is the best one? And again, the answer depends on what job you are going to use it for. You would not use a chain saw to cut a round hole in a piece of fine wood, you would use a saber saw. On the other hand you would not use a saber saw to cut down a tree, you would use a chain saw. Also, you wouldn't use a saber saw to cut a pipe, but a hack-saw would work great! That would be the best saw for the job! It is not that one is more important than the other; it just depends on what job needs to be done and of course, the work should be done in love, with a right heart!

The same is true of spiritual gifts, the best one depends on what you need it for. You would not use tongues when someone needed healing, you would ask the Holy Spirit to equip you with the gift of healing or miracles because that is what is needed in this situation. And the Holy Spirit will then give you what you need according to His Sovereignty, and we must never forget that! It is not just because we think it is the right thing for this situation, it is in the hands of our sovereign God to give to us what we need, the best gift for the situation to bring about His will and not ours!

Let me give you an example of how these things work in the body. This illustration comes from a book by Dr. Flynn, as he records a story of a carpenters shop as the tools spoke. This is what he wrote,

Brother hammer presided:

Several suggested that he leave the meeting because he was too noisy.

Replied the hammer, "If I have to leave this shop brother screw must go also. You have to turn him around again and again to get him to accomplish anything."

Brother screw spoke up, “If you want I’ll leave, but brother plane must leave too. All his work is on the surface, he has no depth.”

To this brother plane responded, “Well then brother rule is going to have to withdraw also for he is always measuring folks as though he is the only one who is right.”

Brother rule then complained against brother sandpaper, “You ought to leave because you are so rough, always rubbing people the wrong way.”

In the middle of this discussion in walked the Carpenter of Nazareth. He had arrived to start his days work. Putting on his apron he went to the bench to make a pulpit from which to proclaim the Gospel. He employed the hammer, the screw, the plane, the ruler, the sandpaper and all the other tools. After the days work when the pulpit was finished, brother saw arose and remarked, “Brethren, I have observed that all of us are workers together with the Lord!”

- Dr. Flynn

All were called to do the work, just in a different way. The same is true with spiritual gifts. They are all used for the edification of the body of Christ. No one is more important than the other, and the best is only best for that particular purpose it is needed for. Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 12:7, “**But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.**” May we not lose sight of that!

We opened up this study speaking of the confusion that there is in the church regarding spiritual gifts. May we heed the words of Paul, when he said, “**Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant.**” The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**NOW ABOUT the spiritual gifts (the special endowments of supernatural energy), brethren, I do not want you to be misinformed.**” And lastly, we are told in The Living Bible tells us, “**And now, brothers, I want to write about the special abilities the Holy Spirit gives to each of you, for I don’t want any misunderstanding about them.**” I Corinthians 12:1.

God does not want us to be ignorant, uninformed, to misunderstand these gifts of the Spirit and I truly believe God will not lead us astray as we seek His gifts according to His Word. We will begin looking at these gifts next time and we will take our time going through them so we all understand what these gifts are and how important they are for us to exercise them in this church and this world today!

The empowering with the Holy Spirit upon a believers life, the gifts of the Spirit were not just for the early church, I pray you have seen that as we have gone through the Scriptures. That power that was needed in the early church to move the Gospel message forward is still needed today for it is as the Lord said, “. . . **‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts.**” Zechariah 4:6. Let me close this morning with these words from James Packer. He wrote,

And may we not lose sight that the gifts are not only to build up the body of Christ, but to bring glory to God, to illuminate Him as we minister to others. It is as James Packer wrote regarding the Holy Spirit, “It is if the Spirit stands behind us, throwing light over our shoulder on to Jesus who stands facing us. The Spirit’s message to us is never, ‘Look at me; listen to me; come to me; get to know me’, but always, ‘Look at him, and see his glory; listen to him and hear his word; go to him and have life; get to know him and taste his gift of joy and peace.’”

- James Packer, *Your Father Loves You*, 1986

As we have seen this morning, this empowering of the Spirit upon our lives and the gifts of the Spirit, God does not want us to be ignorant about. May we ask Him for that empowering, and like our salvation, believe it by faith. Desire the best gifts for the situation you are in and see what God will do in you and through you to bring Him glory and to build up the body of Christ! Let me leave you with these words from Paul from our study this morning, “**But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.**” I Corinthians 12:7. What a wonderful and gracious God we have, He cares for us all and will minister in us and through us to touch the lives of others for His glory!