

What The Bible Says About

Spiritual Gifts



Good Hope
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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Focal 1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

What does the Bible have to say about "Spiritual Gifts"? What are "Spiritual Gifts"?

When conservative Christians hear those two words together - "Spiritual" and "Gifts" - what immediately comes to their minds is **Benny Hinn** or some other televangelist slapping somebody on the head, knocking them down, and declaring them healed. The things we see on television and perhaps have seen in other local Churches have made us suspicious of "Spiritual Gifts". At one Church I pastored a member and teacher within the flock told me "**We don't allow speaking in tongues here**". That's the first place our minds go when we think of Spiritual Gifts.

Illustrate Listen Beloved. There's counterfeit money all over the world, some of it in our very area. I was at Wal-Mart in Louisburg when a woman innocently tried to pass a 100\$ counterfeit bill. She received it from someone else, and I'm sure it had passed hands many times before a Wal-Mart employee "penned" it and discovered it for what it was. In this world there are counterfeit Christians and counterfeit Churches with counterfeit Spiritual Gifts. What they may do might pass muster and the casual glance, but when "penned" by the Scripture they are shown to be false. What are the marks of *genuine* Spiritual Gifts? Look at your context:

Context 1 Corinthians 12:2-3 **Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as**

ye were led. **3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.**

Word Study What are the marks of a counterfeit Spiritual Gift? The Bible says the false will **"carry you away unto dumb idols"**. The word translated **"carried away"** is the *Present Passive Participle* of APAGO (*απαγω* pronounced **ap-ag'-o**), which literally means **"to lead you away to trial, prison, or death"**. The genuine Spiritual Gift will lead you to God and Life. The counterfeit will bind you to darkness and death.

Just as genuine money has the backing of the United States of America, the genuine Spiritual Gift has the backing of the Kingdom of God. The Genuine Gift will magnify Christ and Christ's Church.

The genuine Spiritual Gift will magnify the Name of Christ and His Work in Progress, His Body the Church. The genuine Spiritual Gift will say **"Jesus is Lord"**, whereas the counterfeit will make other things besides Christ to be Lord.

All Christians Are Indwelt By God The Holy Spirit

Focal **1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.**

To define Spiritual Gifts, look at the words:



"Spiritual" - From the Spirit

"Gifts" - Something given, not earned

The Bible says that Spiritual Gifts are given only to *Christians*, those who are **"brethren"**. We are ...

Galatians 3:26 ... all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

We who have believed in Jesus Christ and His finished work have - at the point of salvation - *surrendered our lives to Him*. Repenting and rejecting our old way of life we came to Jesus **"the way, the truth, and the life"** (**John 14:6**).

The Christian Way of life is to be *willing* to God.

When Jesus Christ was on this earth He promised each and every believer that He would:

Luke 24:49 send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The **"Promise of the Father"** is the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ. The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit:

John 14:15-17 If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you

another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

but EVERY believer, regardless as to race or gender, receives the Holy Spirit. You may not feel Him, but He is there. You may not sense His presence, but if He is *not* there then you are not saved. The **Holy Spirit in your hearts** is the earnest, the down payment that God has made on your salvation.



God *promised* you salvation, and *promised* you the Holy Spirit. Whether you feel it or not, God's *promise* is always sure!

2 Corinthians 1:21-22
Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ,

and hath anointed us, is God; 22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Galatians 4:4-7 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but

a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The Christian *must* have the Spirit of God indwelling him. If he does not then the Scripture says:

Romans 8:9 ... Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Dr. Adrian Rogers said,

"The moment you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit of God seals you into Himself. What does it mean to be sealed? It means to put the King's seal on you. The King's seal can be broken by no man. That means you are His for all time and eternity. 2 Timothy 2:19 says, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His." You are sealed into a relationship with God by the Holy Spirit."

It is the Holy Spirit that bears witness with our spirit, that we are the Children of God (Romans 8:16). It is the Holy Spirit living in us that speaks to our hearts, affirming that we *are* born again of Him.

It is the Holy Spirit that gave us life ("you must be born of the Spirit" - John 3:5) and it is the Holy Spirit that maintains our life. (John 3:8). It is the Spirit of Christ Who guides the Christian through God's Word and shepherds us this world (John 10:27)

The Holy Spirit Works Through The Believer

But Will Never Force The Believer

What then is a spiritual gift? Simply, it is the Holy Spirit working through the saved believer. The Bible describes this through three different phrases:

Context 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

Word Study Sometimes in the translation process the Bible Translators get it wrong. In our above text we see three words diversities differences diversities all highlighted above. In each case this is the same Greek word DIAIRESIS (διαίρεσις pronounced dee-ah'-ee-res-is). It should have been translated the same way each time, for the Apostle is using this word to tie the three phrases together. The **Holman Christian Standard** translates the word as "differences". The **New American Standard** translates it as "varieties". There are many different **gifts, ministries, and activities** in the Body of Christ, but for each to be valid they must come from **the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God.**

It is God the Holy Spirit Who gives the gift and works through the believers of the local Church. He gives the gifts to enable the Church to grow and expand the Kingdom of God on the earth. The Gifts benefit the Church internally and glorify Christ externally by

spreading His Gospel so that others might be saved and become a part of His Kingdom.

Context 1 Corinthians 12:7 **But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.**

A Spiritual Gift is called a "manifestation of the Spirit" because it is an outward evidence of the indwelling Spirit. People cannot see the Holy Spirit indwelling you, but they can see *the evidence of the Spirit* by the operation of the Spiritual Gifts.

Objection I'm sure some of you are saying in your hearts right now, "I don't think I have a Spiritual Gift. At least, I've never manifested a Gift". Look at what God's Word says: "**The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man**". In verse 11 we read "**But all these (gifts) worketh that One and the Selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.**" The Bible makes it clear that every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and the context makes it clear that every believer has at least *one* spiritual gift. Consider it this way.

Illustration The Children of Israel were promised the Land of Canaan before they ever left Egyptian slavery. God told Moses:

Exodus 3:8 ... I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, ...

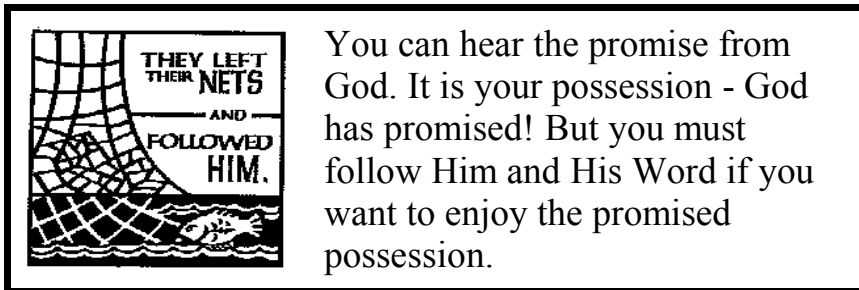
It was *their land*. God said:

Exodus 6:4 ... I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan,

After freeing Israel the Lord told His people in the Law given at Mount Sinai:

Leviticus 20:24 ... Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people.

Yet the first generation of Israel never entered the land of promise, but died in the wilderness. Only two - Joshua and Caleb - entered the Promised Land.



Numbers 14:21-24 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. 22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; 23 Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: 24 But my

servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

Within the realm of Spiritual Gifts the Holy Spirit of God works through the believer, but will not force the believer. He will call you to service, but will not - as Pharaoh did - beat you with whips and make you create brick without straw. As believers we can be used of God, but we must submit.

The Genuine Spiritual Gifts Are Kingdom Builders Discovered By Those Who Love The Lord

Context 1 Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Context 1 Corinthians 12:11-12 But all these {spiritual gifts previously listed} worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. 12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

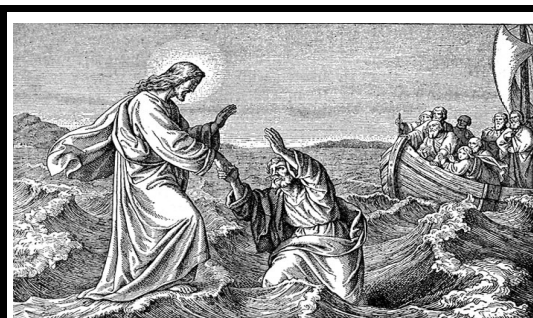
The Gifts of the Spirit are given to *every person to profit with all*. The Spiritual Gifts are not given to just to bless the



person who has the gift. Just as the Body of Christ, the Church, is *many members but one Body*, so does the Spirit give many *gifts to benefit that one Body and*

promote the Kingdom of God on the earth. In short, Spiritual gifts are given to benefit the whole Body. They exist to empower believers while at the same time expanding God's Kingdom.

When the Spiritual Gifts are discovered by and exercised by the members of the Church, the whole Body grows and Christ is glorified. The Gifts that are given to the Church are given by God Who loves us and wants to see us grow. Each Christian is to exercise his gift within the Body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 12:12-27**).



The problem with the Church in America today is that many congregations are Spiritless and Giftless. We are trying to do the work of God with the will and power of man. To build the Kingdom of God is a God-sized work that we cannot - in our own power - accomplish.

Jesus told His disciples - along with the impetuous Peter:

Acts 1:4-8 {you} should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

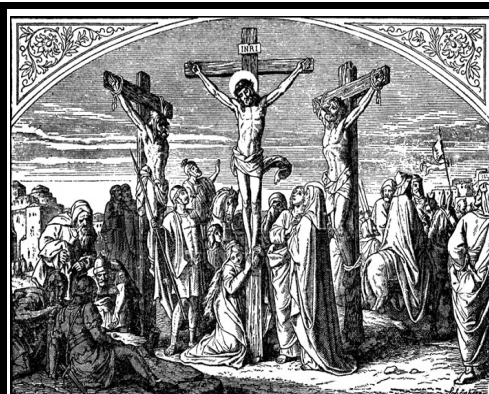
It was only when God's Church united in prayer, seeking

His face and obeying His Word that the 120 of the Upper Room went out with the Gospel of the Kingdom. *Three thousand* were added to the Church that wonderful day. God's arm is not shortened - what He has done He can do again. But God's people must cherish Him and His Word, possessing our possession for His glory.

The Old Time Evangelist **Vance Havner** wrote in his book *Hearts Afire*:

" I have heard of a spider that tried to build its web on the moving hands of a town clock. Just as futile is the plan of any man to build against God's plan of the ages or God's will for his life. The only man who can understand the times is the man who views them in the light of the Living and the Written Word. Suppose, on a starry night, I found you on a hilltop viewing the heavens. Suppose I suggested to you, "Friend, I have a telescope which you may use," and you replied, "Oh no, why should I limit myself to that tube when I have two good eyes and can look everywhere unhampered?" But you could see more in a moment by confining your view through the telescope than you could behold all night with your unaided vision. Just so do the wisecracks today scoff at restricting themselves to the Bible viewpoint. As well might a minnow complain at confining itself to the Atlantic Ocean! No man with God's telescope need ask, "What are we coming to?" He knows. We are not of the night but of the day. We are not to be unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is. We are to walk circumspectly, not as fools but as the wise, buying up the opportunities because the

days are evil. God expects us to understand His program and get in step with it. He is not converting the world nor saving civilization. It has been said that Pentecost did not save Jerusalem from falling to the Roman armies, but saved people out of Jerusalem; that, on his voyage to Rome, Paul was not concerned with saving the ship but with saving the passengers. God is taking out a people for His name. Christ is the Great Gatherer, and he that gathereth not with Him scattereth abroad. We are not out to salvage a wreck but to save people out of the wreck. "



The Spiritual Gifts are given by a Loving God to His Church, so that His loving Church can go out and introduce others to our Loving God. The Gifts unify the Church, empower the Church, grow the Church - and all because they come from Love and are exercised in Love.

Will You List The Spiritual Gifts?



The Bible gives us three different Spiritual Gift lists. In our context of 1 Corinthians 12 we read:

Context 1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some

in the church, first **apostles**, secondarily **prophets**, thirdly **teachers**, after that **miracles**, then gifts of **healings**, **helps**, **governments**, **diversities of tongues**.

The other Spiritual Gift lists state:

Romans 12:6-8 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether **prophecy**, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or **ministry**, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on **teaching**; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on **exhortation**: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that **ruleth**, with diligence; he that sheweth **mercy**, with cheerfulness.

Ephesians 4:11-13 And {God} gave some, **apostles**; and some, **prophets**; and some, **evangelists**; and some, **pastors** and **teachers**; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Now may I say that there are a number of Christians all throughout our faith that *fight over these Spiritual Gift lists*. How foolish! The Bible is very clear that

Context 1 Corinthians 12:11 But all these {gifts previously listed} worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

It is the Holy Spirit of God Who gives the Spiritual Gifts.

In the early Church the Holy Spirit gave the following Gifts to the Church:

1 Corinthians 12	Romans 12	Ephesians 4
<i>apostles</i> <i>prophecy</i> <i>teaching</i> <i>miracles</i> <i>healings</i> <i>helps</i> <i>governments</i> <i>tongues</i>	<i>prophecy</i> <i>ministry</i> <i>teaching</i> <i>exhortation</i> <i>giving</i> <i>ruling</i> <i>mercy</i>	<i>apostles</i> <i>prophecy</i> <i>evangelists</i> <i>pastors</i> <i>teaching</i>

At first glance you can see that *the number and type of gifts is not the same from Church to Church*. The Corinthian and Ephesian Churches had **apostles** listed, but the Roman Church did not. All three Churches had **prophets and teachers** listed, but only the Church at Ephesus lists **pastors and evangelists**. What does this mean? Again, **it is the Holy Spirit Who gives the Spiritual Gifts**. Each local Church is building the Kingdom of God where it is. Each local Church has a unique makeup and a God given design that enables it to reach its community and beyond.

What about the Spiritual Gifts that are listed? Are they all available today? Well, we know that when these Spiritual Gift lists were written, the New Testament *had not yet been fully written*. Because of that there were still **prophets and apostles**. Are there prophets and apostles today? The Bible tells us:

Ephesians 2:18-20 For **through {Jesus} we both have**

access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

Word Study We are - the Church - built upon the **FOUNDATION** of the Apostles and Prophets. The word translated "foundation" is the Greek THEMELIOS (θεμελιος Pronounced them-el'-ee-os), which means "that which is laid first, the beginnings, the first principles, the foundation of a wall, a city, or a kingdom". In the sense that **Peter was an Apostle and John the Baptist was a Prophet**, these foundational Gifts no longer exist. Once the foundation is laid the rest of the building is set upon it - and you lay the foundation no more. The Scripture - both Old and New Testament - is complete. **Dr. Dave Miller** of the *Apologetics Press* states:

"Once the church of Christ was established and Christianity was given its initial presentation (cf. Colossians 1:23), the apostolic office faded from the scene along with the age of miracles. As an eyewitness of Christ's resurrection, Paul referred to himself in relation to the other apostles as "last of all" (1 Corinthians 15:8). Neither apostles nor miraculous gifts was needed any longer. They had served their temporary purpose (Mark 16:20; Acts 4:29-31; 13:12; 14:3; Romans 15:18-19; Hebrews 2:3-4; cf. Exodus 4:30). Miraculous gifts functioned as scaffolding while the church was under initial construction, and

were removed once the structure had been completed (1 Corinthians 3:10; 13:11; Ephesians 4:13-14). The book we call the Bible is the totality of God's written revelation to the human race. Consequently, people now have access to everything they need (2 Peter 1:3) to enter into a right relationship with God via Christianity and the church of Christ. The apostles "had no official successors. From the nature of their duties, there could be no succession" (Hayden, pp. 20-21). "

We no longer have Apostles or Prophets as in the early Church because we have God's completed Word.

There are some who believe that - though the original offices of Apostle and Prophet ceased - that these words now refers to "Missionaries" and "Preachers".

Is the Gift of Tongues still available? Tongues was given as an evangelistic tool. The Bible tells us that on the first day the Church was formed:

Acts 2:5-8 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. **6** Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. **7** And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? **8** And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

The Gift of Tongues has never been more than an

evangelistic tool. The Holy Spirit gave the early Church the Gift of tongues to translate the Gospel of the Kingdom into the language of the hearers. Please notice that - in the three Spiritual Gift lists - tongues is only found listed among the Corinthian Church. The Apostle Paul said:

Context 1 Corinthians 14:18-19 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: **19** Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

He used the Gift of Tongues as an evangelistic tool, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom as he traveled about for the Lord Jesus. Paul *did not* use Tongues in a Church service, for the Gift would be out of place there. Paul told the Corinthians:

Context 1 Corinthians 14:27-28 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. **28** But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

that if there was no one to Interpret Tongues within the Church services, then keep your mouth shut. Speak to yourself, to God, but do not disrupt the services of the local Church. Is the Gift of Tongues still available today? Our God is able to bridge the language barriers He sat at the Tower of Babel anytime He wants. Just bear in mind that the Gift is an evangelistic tool - not an emotional toy to be used by anyone.

What of the other Gifts? Within the local Church the Holy Spirit still endows believers with governing and administration gifts, ministry, exhortation, giving, mercy, helping, and healing. He raises up counselors among His people who can help spiritually damaged people overcome the traumas of life. He equips teachers, pastors, and evangelists who feed the Word of God to the hearts of His people. Where there is need, God enables. Where it aids God's people to carry the Gospel of the Kingdom to a lost world, God empowers.

God equips, He enables, He empowers. He manifests His gifts through those who are willing to follow Him. All of the Gifts operate through love to build His Kingdom and glorify its King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Though I have given you a "Lifeway Spiritual Gift Survey" to help you find your gift, my best suggestion to you is:

1. Read and prayerfully examine the Bible, God's Word, every single day. Ask God to speak to your hearts and grow you through His Spirit and His Word.
2. Ask yourselves, "How can I help advance the Kingdom of God?" Talk to your Pastor about the needs of the Church. Seek God in prayer. Then DO His Word.
3. Attend - and support - your local Church. The Gifts are given to the Church by the Holy Spirit. If you won't be a part of the Church then you won't find your Gift.

