

SPIRITUAL GIFTS



When you accepted Christ as your personal Saviour, God sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in you as you are baptized into the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:13). In this way God's church on earth may be described as an extension of Christ to demonstrate God's glory, which is His character.

In order to function as the body of Christ, we are bestowed with certain gifts through the Holy Spirit. These gifts may be divided into two categories. The first, such as apostles, prophecy, pastors, and teachers etc., for the edification or building up of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 12:7). The second, such as miracles, healings, tongues, are supernatural signs and wonders manifested to witness the power of the gospel (see Acts 5:12).

Every believer is endowed with one or more gifts. No one is excluded. These gifts are not only our natural talents or abilities but are given by the divine grace that the Holy Spirit bestows upon us so that the church may grow up into Christ and be a witness to the Saviour and to this world.

In this study we will consider in general what these spiritual gifts are and zero in on the most important ones. We will concentrate on what the Bible says about the prophetic gift, since it is the gift that edifies the church.



WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT THE SPIRIT

“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.”

Acts 1:8

As you study, be thinking about the Life Quest questions.

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make to my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?

HIS WORD SAYS

1. Who is the one source of spiritual gifts? 1 Corinthians 12:4

The mission of the Holy Spirit in the church is to reproduce the character of Christ in us. In order to do this He bestows on all believers gifts or divine abilities so that each believer functions as part of the body of Christ.

2. For whose benefit are these gifts bestowed on individual believers? 1 Corinthians 12:7

It is important that every believer understands the purpose of spiritual gifts. They are not for personal benefit but primarily for the good of the whole church.

3. Who decides what gift or gifts an individual believer is to receive? 1 Corinthians 12:11

It is not the believer or the church that determines which gift or gifts each person is to receive but the Holy Spirit. We must however keep in mind that these gifts are supernatural abilities and may have nothing to do with our natural talents or abilities.

4. What does Paul compare the church to in describing its mission? 1 Corinthians 12:12

Like the human body, the church is also made up of many parts (i.e., members), yet constitutes one body, the body of Christ (see also verse 13). That is why the greatest evidence the church can give to the world of the power of the gospel is when the church acts as one body perfectly united in love (see John 13:34,35).

5. In order that the church may function as the body of Christ, what must each believer do with the gifts received? Romans 12:6-8

Just as the human body needs all its members to do its part, so every member of Christ's church is to use his or her gifts. Failure to do so is what paralyzes the witness of the church.



6. List the gifts of the Holy Spirit as the apostle Paul enumerates them?

1 Corinthians 12:28

i) _____

ii) _____

iii) _____

iv) _____

v) _____

vi) _____

vii) _____

viii) _____

Of the gifts, three are of more importance. The gift of being an apostle is a unique one and was bestowed on the 11 disciples of Christ and Paul. These men were chosen by God to lay the foundation of the church by establishing the truth as it is in Christ (see Ephesians 2:19,20).



7. Next to the apostolic gift, the next most important gift is prophecy. Why is this so?
1 Corinthians 14:2,3

Today much emphasis is given to speaking in tongues and very little is mentioned about the gift of prophecy. Yet the Bible places great importance in the gift of prophecy because it is the gift that builds up the church of Christ.

8. What counsel does the apostle Paul give regarding the gift of prophecy?
1 Thessalonians 5:20-21

While we are not to treat the prophetic gift with contempt, the apostle Paul does warn believers to test the gift before accepting it. The measuring stick for all truth is the Bible. All truths must be verified by the words of Scripture. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

9. What is the purpose of the various gifts of the Holy Spirit? Ephesians 4:11, 12

To edify is to build up the church in Christ and then to equip the church for service as a witness of the gospel to the world.

10. How long are the gifts of the Holy Spirit to continue in the church? Ephesians 4:13

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are to continue until the church fully reflects Jesus Christ.

11. In prophesying about last day events, who did Christ predict would appear to deceive God's people? Matthew 24:24

This is why we must be grounded in the Word of God and always be on our guard.

12. To what must all the messages we hear and read agree for us to know it is from the Lord? Isaiah 8:20

The words and writings of modern day prophets are not to replace or substitute the words of Scripture. Everything must be evaluated and judged by what the Bible teaches. The Bible alone is the only standard of truth. We see many false prophets today speaking against the law of God, from this alone we know that it is not God who has sent them.

13. When a prophet makes predictions, how are we to know that they are from the Lord? Jeremiah 28:9

Since God only knows the future, the predictions of a true prophet will always come to pass, whether they be of peace or calamity. (See also Deuteronomy 18:21,22).

14. What is one way we can identify a true prophet? 1 John 4:1-3

In order for Christ to redeem fallen humanity, He had to become one of us by assuming the nature of the human race that needed redeeming (see John 1:14). Any prophet who denies this fundamental truth of the gospel is a false prophet.

15. Who controls a true prophet? 2 Peter 1:21

A prophet does not speak their own words, but the words of God.





"If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

1 Corinthians 12:17-18

LIFE QUEST:

Have you thoughtfully reviewed these Questions?

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make to my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?

YOUR TURN

Check the statements that most closely reflect your response to this study.

I understand the principles applied to this study.

I believe that these teachings agree with Scripture.

I believe that gifts of the Holy Spirit are required by God for his Church.

I believe that all prophets' predictions come true

Other _____