

The Spiritual Gifts

Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant.

(1Corinthians 12:1)

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The Spiritual Gifts

The chapters 12, 13 and 14 of 1 Corinthians must be read as a unit, concerning spiritual gifts. Chapter 12 speaks of what we should not ignore, hence what we must know. Chapter 13 speaks of the motivation that we must have, what should move us. Chapter 14 talks about how we should act, or what we must do.

What must we know?

1. Two important words: gifts and manifestations.

The word gift accentuate a very important thing: no one deserves the gifts, they are gifts, gifts from God, independent of us.

The word manifestation emphasizes that the gifts become visible in christians. This word also emphasizes that the gifts are not ours. They are manifestations of the Holy Spirit through us.

These two words prevent two mistakes: pride and stagnation.

2. How can be grouped the spiritual gifts?
 - a) Inspirational Gifts (speaking gifts):
 - . Tongues
 - . Tongue Interpretation
 - . Prophecy
 - b) Gifts of power (action gifts):
 - . Gifts of healing
 - . Working of miracles
 - . Faith
 - c) Gifts of revelation (knowledge gifts):
 - . Discerning of spirits
 - . Word of Wisdom
 - . Word of Knowledge

A little about each one

1. Tongues

There are two ways to express themselves:

- a) For personal edification (1Co 14:2);

- b) To edify the church, accompanied by interpretation (1Co 12:10, 14:27-28).

Important: The gift of tongues has only one direction: man talking to God - 1Co 14:2.

2. Tongue Interpretation

The first thing we must understand is that interpreting is not translating, interpreting is to give the meaning of what has been said. If speaking in tongues is speaking to God, the interpretation will always be in the same direction.

3. Prophecy

They exist to edify, exhort and comfort the people of God (1Co 14:3). The prediction of the future is not the main content of the prophecies, it is just an occasional element.

4. Gifts of Healing

That is the grace of God to supernaturally heal diseases without natural means. We are not denying, as such, the value and effectiveness of the medical sciences.

The word "gifts" in the plural indicates a variety of healings, and that different people can be used by the Spirit to heal different illnesses.

In the Scriptures, we see "healing" associated with the following elements:

- a) Laying on of hands: Mar 6:5, Luk 4:40, 13:13, Act 28:8;
- b) Anointing with oil: Jas 5:14, Mar 6:13;
- c) Confession: Jas 5:15-16, Joh 5:14.

5. Working of miracles

These are events that transcend or contradict the laws of nature, demonstrating the power of God (Mat 15:32; Joh 2:1-11).

6. Faith

There is the natural and supernatural faith. Supernatural faith has three types:

- a) Faith for salvation: Heb 11:6, Act 16:31, Eph 2:8-9, Rom 10:17.
- b) Faith as a fruit of the Holy Spirit: Gal 5:22, Rom 1:17:
- c) Faith as a gift of the Holy Spirit: 1Co 12:9 .

7. Discerning of Spirits

This gift enables us to discern the nature of someone's motivation, whether its origin is divine, human, or demonic. Ex: Act 16:16; Joh 1:47; Mat 16:15-23; Luk 9:54.

8. Word of Wisdom

It is the supernatural application of knowledge. Know what to do with the supernatural or natural knowledge that God gives you. That is, an appropriate judgment for the action. The word of knowledge reveals the information, but the word of wisdom shows how to apply it. Ex: Mat 21:24; 22:20-22; Joh 8:7, Mar 3:4.

9. Word of Knowledge

Through knowledge God reveals information about acts, situations and thoughts. Ex: Mat 9:4; 2Sa 12:7-13; Joh 4:17-18,29, Act 5:3; 9:11-12,17.

What should move us?

This chapter 13 is right in the middle of two chapters that talk about spiritual gifts, that talk about supernatural power that sparkles the eyes of those who see it. Why is this chapter here? Would it not be in the wrong place? What the gifts have to do with love?

We note that Paul ends chapter 12 saying he would show a “still more excellent way” and this way is love. Remember that gifts are given by God's grace for our ongoing service, but love is part of the fruit of the Spirit in the formation of our character.

What Paul is making clear there is that love is the only correct way to express gifts. Many seek the spiritual gifts for their self-glorification, with the motivation to call the attention for themselves. We can not seek the gifts as a way to project ourselves, but with the right motivation, which is love to serve our neighbors.

The misconceptions regarding the gifts

1. To whom belong the gifts?

Two mistakes:

- We are the owners of the gifts
- The gifts are from Spirit, as the Spirit is within us, hence we can express all the gifts whenever we want.

Correct: The gifts are from the Holy Spirit and he grants us them whenever he pleases, whenever he wants. (1Co 12:11)

2. Duplicity of gifts

- It is not correct to say that Tongues + Tongues Interpretation = Prophecy
- In 1Co 14:5, Paul is not saying that when interpreted tongues become prophecy. He is saying that they are at the same level of edification.

3. Confusion about the gift of tongues interpretation

- Who speaks in tongues speaks to God. How do I interpret God speaking to man? Here is a very common error in the church. Whenever there is the manifestation of this gift will be the man talking to God and never the opposite.

4. Childish mysticism

- Exaggeration in the manifestation of the gifts, such as wheezing, tremors, chills, emotionalism, etc ... Not that could not happen, the problem is when we condition the manifestation of the gifts to that (1Co 14:27-30).

5. Confusion about the gift of prophecy

- Deep eerie voice and the first person (I, the Lord, who speaks to you);
- Directive word. Ex: With whom to marry, where to go, and so on ... The prophecy is for edification, exhortation and comfort. Here is a serious problem in the church, many accept the prophecy (which must be judged) more than revealed in the word of God.

6. The gifts replace the delegated authorities

- There is a great danger we use some people that God has manifested gifts as if they were psychics, future predictors, a sort of evangelical horoscope. We must be cautious. The Lord warns us in Deu 13:1-5 and Col 2:18-19. God does not govern through the gifts, but by the ministries (1Co 12:28).

7. Gifts are used as attractions for unbelievers:

- This produces pride, self-glorification, exhibitionism and self-exaltation. Ex: Dorcas (Act 9:36-42). Jesus never used in such way, always asked them not to tell anyone about it (Mat 8:1-4).

What must we do?

Advices from the Holy Spirit regarding Spiritual Gifts:

- a) Seek zealously the gifts – we only seek what interests us and when is missed. How to seek for it? Through: prayer, fasting, vigils, etc;
- b) Progressing steadily (1Co 14:12-13). Ex: crawling, walking...;
- c) About the gift of tongues (1Co 14:27-28);
- d) About the gift of prophecy (1Co 14:29-33);
- e) About the participation of everyone (1Co 14:26);
- f) all things are done to edify (1Co 14:26) in decency and in order (1Co 14:40).



Pursue love, and desire
spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you
may prophesy.

1Co 14:1