

## **“THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT”**

### ***“About Spiritual Gifts”***

#### **Scripture Reading – I Corinthians, 12:1-7**

*Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. Therefore I tell you that no-one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed”, and no-one can say, “Jesus is Lord”, except by the Holy Spirit.*

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

***‘It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.’***

***Ephesians, 4:11-13, NIV***

**This series is based on ‘THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT’.**

According to Scripture, every saved person has, at the time of their conversion, received a spiritual birthday gift from God through the Holy Spirit. Only when you discover this gift and use it can you really be fulfilled in your life, ministry, and service.

*‘You are a gifted child. Did you know that? God has called you to serve him. Not only has God given you a gift, but he has also issued you a call to be a living sacrifice. Your gift is to come full circle back into his presence as a gift to him. God has equipped you in a special way for his special purpose at this special time. And you are to discover that gift (you have got at least one), develop it, and deploy it for the glory of our Lord.’*

***“UNWRAPPING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT”, Adrian Rogers***

#### **EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY IN HIS BODY**

***‘The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.’***

***I Corinthians, 12:12, NIV***

**We are ‘THE BODY OF CHRIST’, therefore Jesus is the head and we are the members.**

Paul compares The Body of Christ to a human body. Each part has a specific function that is necessary to the body as a whole. The parts are different for a purpose, and in their

differences they must work together. The Body of Christ exists to show Jesus and to serve him. We best do that when we are engaged in fulfilling his purpose and being motivated by the Holy Spirit

## **“ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS”**

**There are three kinds of Christians in the Church.**

*Those who make things happen ... Those who watch things happen ...*

*Those who do not know anything is happening.*

This second group of people remind me of that observation made about a football match: “On the pitch there are twenty two players frantically running around desperately in need of a rest, being cheered on by 50,000 people sitting in the stadium desperately in need of exercise”.

**The Body of Christ requires everyone to play their part.**

*‘When we speak of the Church as ‘THE BODY OF CHRIST’ we mean that all believers are incorporated in spiritual union with Christ their head, and with one another as fellow members working in harmony. We mean that the Church is Christ’s visible presence in the world, given life by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and called to grow in conformity to Christ. Scripture teaches that every member of the body has an essential part to play if the whole is to function to the glory of God, and that without the presence and participation of every member, the body suffers.’*

***“SALVATION STORY”, Salvationist Handbook of Doctrine***

**Do you want your life to count for Jesus?**

Christians should not be content to sit around and wait to go to heaven. The reason you are not there right now is because God has something for you to do in this time. God has called you and equipped you to serve him. There should be no retirement until you inherit heavenly rest.

*In the meantime, it is your task to discover your spiritual gift, develop it, and deploy it...*


## **1. THE DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS**


***‘Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.’***

***I Corinthians, 12:1, NIV***

**Paul wrote about Spiritual Gifts.**

*However, the Greek word that Paul uses can have three different translations:*

** ‘NOW ABOUT SPIRITUAL MEN’...** but what Paul writes to the Corinthians would suggest a church full of carnality not spirituality.

** ‘NOW ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATTERS’...** and Paul later goes on to deal with the first-fruit of the Holy Spirit – the fruit of love.

** ‘NOW ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS’...** this seems the most likely translation, and is in the NIV.

**Paul wrote about Spiritual Gifts because some Christians were ignorant about them.**

Of course, some people say that 'ignorance is bliss' and whilst that may be true on some matters, it should not be our yardstick on spiritual matters. Jesus was unimpressed with those who showed ignorance of the Scriptures and the power of God and was swift to point out their mistake. How would you like to hear Jesus say to you: **"YOU ARE IN ERROR BECAUSE YOU DO NOT KNOW THE SCRIPTURES OR THE POWER OF GOD"** (see **Matthew, 22:29, NIV**).

### **Are you interested in Spiritual Gifts?**

Be very careful how you answer the question. Some people have an unhealthy fascination with them and this can create problems. Some people do not want anything to do with them – and this tells me more about them than I really want to know. After all, surely every Christian should be interested in spiritual matters.

*Only as I truly know thee, can I make thee truly known;  
Only bring the power to others, which in my own life is shown.  
Show thy power in me, show thy power in me,  
That I may be used for others; show thy power in me.*

**Ruth Tracy, SASB 435:1**

***'Now, dear brothers and sisters, I will write about the special abilities the Holy Spirit gives to each of us, for I must correct your misunderstandings about them.'***

***I Corinthians, 12:1, NLT***

We need to know about these gifts – and we need to know of them.

They must become a part of our Christian experience, our fellowship, and worship. Paul is not writing about material gifts, nor is he writing about natural abilities. In fact, he is concerned with 'SPECIAL ABILITIES' or 'SUPERNATURAL ABILITIES' that God gives to each and every Christian. These are the 'CHARISMATA', the gifts of God's grace. They are given as God himself deems fit.

## **2. THE DISTORTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

***'You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.'***

***I Corinthians 12:2, NIV***

Paul wrote about Spiritual Gifts because some Christians were misusing them.

Instead of building up and unifying the Corinthian church, the issue of spiritual gifts was splitting it. Spiritual gifts had become symbols of spiritual power, causing rivalries. Some people thought they were more 'spiritual' than others because of their gifts. This was a terrible misuse of spiritual gifts because their purpose is always to help the church function more effectively, not to divide it.

*'We can be divisive if we insist on using our gifts our own way without being sensitive to others. We must never use our gifts as a means of manipulating others or serving our own self-interests...'*

*'It follows that the use of spiritual gifts to promote competition or to further individualism is misuse. We must beware, then, of the elevation of certain gifts as proof of spiritual superiority and the consequent undervaluing of other gifts... Speaking in tongues is the clearest example of a gift that is overvalued in some Christian fellowships and undervalued in others. This gift is overvalued when it is regarded as the all definitive evidence of the baptism in the Spirit and so becomes a measure of spiritual accomplishment. It is undervalued when it fails to be acknowledged as a true gift of God's Holy Spirit.'*

***"SALVATION STORY", Salvationist Handbook of Doctrine***

**Paul wrote about Spiritual Gifts to warn against the counterfeit.**

In the Old Testament, there is an example of how the devil reproduced the work of the Holy Spirit. We find it when Moses is confronted by Jannes and Jambres.

***'The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a miracle', then say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh', and it will become a snake". So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. Pharaoh then summoned the wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts: Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the LORD had said.'***

***Exodus, 7:8-13, NIV***

**How were these wise men and magicians able to duplicate Moses' miracles?**

Some of their feats undoubtedly involved trickery or illusion, and some may have used satanic power since worshiping gods of the underworld was part of the religion of Egypt. Ironically, whenever they duplicated one of Moses' plagues, it only made matters worse. If the magicians had been as powerful as God, they would have reversed the plagues, not added to them.

**In the Church at Corinth, Christians were experiencing different things.**

Some would be genuine, but other experiences would be faked. That being the case, Paul gave us a guideline to discover who is genuine and who is faking it.

***'I tell you that no-one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "JESUS BE CURSED", and no-one can say, "JESUS IS LORD", except by the Holy Spirit.'***

***I Corinthians, 12:3, NIV***

**It is only through the Spirit that a person can truthfully declare, "JESUS IS LORD".**

A sneering sinner may mouth the words, but he is not giving a true confession. It is important to note that the believer is always in control of himself when the Holy Spirit is at work because Jesus Christ, the LORD, is in charge. Any "Spirit manifestation" that robs a person of self-control is not of God; for **'THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS... SELF-CONTROL'** (see **Galatians, 5:22, 23**).

**When you are under the influence of the Holy Spirit there is self-control.**

The so-called TORONTO BLESSING' seems to be something of the past now, but you will remember the stories. People laughing uncontrollably – an act that was justified by reminding us that we will be reckoned through Isaac, and the name Isaac means laughter. People falling on to the floor – an act that I once heard justified by the words 'HE MAKES ME LIE DOWN'. Some people were engaging in barking like dogs and making other animal noises. There seems to be no self-control here. But the acid test of any spiritual utterance is "JESUS IS LORD".

**"JESUS IS LORD" – Jesus is YHWH – in other words, Jesus is God.**

*'In so far as the early Church had a creed at all, this simple phrase was it. The word for Lord was 'KURIOS' and it was a tremendous word. It was the official title of the Roman Emperor. The demand of the persecutors always was, "Say, 'Caesar is Lord (kurios)'". It was the word by which the sacred name 'JEHOVAH' was rendered in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. When a man could say, "JESUS IS LORD", it meant that he gave to Jesus the supreme loyalty of his life and the supreme worship of his heart.'*

*"THE DAILY STUDY BIBLE", William Barclay*

### 3. THE DIVERSITY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

***'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.'***

***1 Corinthians, 12:4-6, NIV***

*'There is a Trinitarian emphasis here: the same Spirit ... the same Lord ... the same God'. We individually may have different gifts, ministries, and ways of working, but 'it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure'. The source of the gift is God; the sphere for administering the gift is from God; and the energy to use the gift is from God. Why, then, glorify men? Why compete with one another?'*

*"BE WISE", Warren W Wiersbe*

**There are different 'GIFTS', different 'ADMINISTRATIONS', different 'OPERATIONS'.**

GIFTS speak of God's provision, ADMINISTRATIONS / SERVICE speak of God's purpose, and OPERATIONS/WORKING speak of God's power.

**The Greek word for 'WORKING' is the word 'ENERGEMA'.**

This is the word from which we get our own word 'ENERGY'. It speaks of God's power. God has given you a gift for a purpose, and God gives you the power so that you may fulfil that purpose. The same Holy Spirit gives us different gifts. We perform different service to the same Lord. The gifts we have need to be administered – worked out – but the same God works in all men.

**In the Body of Christ, we have different functions, but share the same Spirit.**

DIVERSITY in a church is always good, whereas DIVISION is always bad. The Church should experience unity in diversity. When the Band plays they play different parts – they do not all play the same notes. God made each of us different, and when we come together in one Spirit, our work becomes a harmonious symphony of loving service to the King of Kings.

**Consider the following items.**

A television, video recorder, computer, refrigerator, kettle, toaster, lamp... they are all different. They have different functions, they serve different purposes. Nonetheless, they share the same requirement – electrical power. The power they share is the same. Without it they are of no use, but with that power source provided and utilised they all serve their designed purpose.

***'My dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.'***

***Philippians, 2:12-13, NIV***

### 4. THE DESIGN OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

***'To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.'***

***1 Corinthians, 12:7, NIV***

**Paul wants to stress the essential unity of the Church.**

The Church is 'The Body of Christ' and the characteristic of a healthy body is that every part in it performs its own function for the good of the whole; but unity does not mean uniformity, and therefore within the Church there are differing gifts and differing functions. But every one of them is a gift of the same Spirit and designed, not for the glory of the individual member of the Church, but for the good of the whole.

**The gifts are given for the good of the whole church.**

They are not for individual enjoyment, but for corporate employment. Many people think their spiritual gift is for their enjoyment. Your spiritual gift is not for your enjoyment; your spiritual gift is for your employment. It is a tool, not a toy. If I have a gift, God has given it to me so that I will bless you. If you have a gift, God has given it to you so that you will bless me. Together, we will bless one another.

***'It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.'***

***Ephesians, 4:11-13, NIV***

**How are Spiritual Gifts distributed?**

By the Holy Spirit! You do not decide which of the spiritual gifts you would like. Instead, God sovereignly chooses the gift for you. There is no need to ask – if you are saved, God has already given you a gift, a birthday gift. It was given to you on the day you were born again.

**It is your duty and privilege to discover, develop, and deploy your spiritual gift.**