

## Bible Study on Spiritual Gifts

Today, we are exploring what the Bible teaches us about spiritual gifts and how they should function within the church. These gifts, granted by the Holy Spirit, are essential for edifying and strengthening the body of Christ. Let us first turn to **1 Corinthians 8:1-2** to set the stage for understanding these gifts.

### 1 Corinthians 8:1-2 (KJV)

"Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

Paul here introduces an essential truth: while knowledge is valuable, it has a tendency to lead to pride. Knowledge without love ("charity") can make us feel superior to others, causing division. However, love is what builds up the church.

Paul reminds us that, though we may possess knowledge, it is incomplete. All of us, no matter how much we know, lack the full understanding of God's truth. So, our knowledge should humble us, not puff us up, leading us to rely on God as the true source of wisdom and understanding.

**Application:** As we learn about spiritual gifts, let us recognize that these gifts come from God, not from our own abilities or worthiness. All glory belongs to God.

### Addressing the Corinthian Church's Issues with Spiritual Gifts

Let's turn to **1 Corinthians 12:1**, where Paul directly addresses the topic of spiritual gifts:

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant."

Paul is writing to the Corinthian church, a congregation known for having many spiritual gifts. Yet, this church was also riddled with problems—pride, division, and confusion were prevalent. Despite their gifts, the Corinthians struggled with sin and disorder, and Paul took on the task of setting things in order.

Why does Paul call them "brethren"? Even with their issues, he acknowledges them as members of the body of Christ. He wants to instruct them, not condemn them. So, he says, "I would not have you ignorant." His aim is to correct their misunderstandings about the gifts so they may use them appropriately.

Paul's primary point is that spiritual gifts are not for personal exaltation but for the edification of the church. When gifts are misused, confusion and division arise. Spiritual gifts are intended to:

1. **Edify** the Church: The purpose of each gift is to build up the body of Christ, helping believers grow in faith and unity.

2. **Serve** God's Purposes: The gifts are distributed by the Spirit as He wills, not as we will. They are tools for ministry and for fulfilling God's purpose, not ours.

Let's remember this as we continue.

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Paul provides a list of gifts in **1 Corinthians 12:8-10**:

1. **Word of Wisdom**: This is not simply knowledge or understanding; it is the ability to apply knowledge in ways that align with God's will. Wisdom helps us make decisions that honor God, using our understanding in ways that edify the church.

*James 1:5* encourages us, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Wisdom is available to anyone who sincerely asks, and it is a gift that helps us walk in God's truth.

- **Example**: *Acts 6:3-5* — The apostles used wisdom to select men full of the Spirit to handle disputes, showing the role of wisdom in church leadership.
2. **Word of Knowledge**: This gift involves insight given by the Spirit that brings understanding of God's mysteries and His will.
    - **Definition**: This is a supernatural insight into God's mysteries or knowledge that could not be known naturally. It enables one to understand aspects of God's truth or specific situations that require divine revelation.
    - **Scripture**: *1 Corinthians 2:10-12* — "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."
    - **Example**: *Acts 5:1-11* — Peter's knowledge of Ananias and Sapphira's deceit was divinely revealed, showing how knowledge from God can protect the church from dishonesty.
  3. **Faith**: All believers are called to have faith, but the gift of faith is a special ability to believe God for the miraculous.
  4. • **Definition**: While all believers are called to have faith, the gift of faith refers to an exceptional measure of confidence in God's power and promises, especially during trials. This gift encourages others by demonstrating steadfast belief in God's ability to work miraculously.
  5. • **Scripture**: *Matthew 17:20* — Jesus says, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed... nothing shall be impossible unto you."

6. • **Example:** *Acts 27:22-25* — Paul's confidence during the shipwreck demonstrated unwavering faith that God would save them all, inspiring courage in others.

*Romans 10:17* reminds us, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Faith is a gift that grows through hearing and obeying God's Word, and it can move mountains when applied with pure, unwavering belief.

7. **Gifts of Healing:** Healing is one of the most direct expressions of God's love and power, but it's essential to remember that healing is by the Holy Spirit, not by the power of an individual.
8. • **Definition:** This refers to miraculous healings granted by the Holy Spirit. God's healing power can be administered through various believers as He wills, restoring physical, emotional, or spiritual health.
9. • **Scripture:** *James 5:14-16* — "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church... and the prayer of faith shall save the sick."
10. • **Example:** *Acts 3:6-8* — Peter and John healed the lame man at the temple gate, showing the Spirit's power to heal through believers.
11. **Working of Miracles:** These are supernatural acts beyond human ability, meant to confirm God's Word and inspire faith.
12. • **Definition:** This gift involves supernatural acts that demonstrate God's power over nature, circumstances, or evil forces, affirming His authority and inspiring faith in those who witness it.
13. • **Scripture:** *Hebrews 2:4* — "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."
14. • **Example:** *Acts 9:36-41* — Peter raised Dorcas from the dead, a miraculous act that brought many in Joppa to believe in Christ.
15. **Prophecy:** While prophecy may include future predictions, it primarily refers to preaching or speaking forth God's truth to edify the church. In **1 Corinthians 14:1**, Paul emphasizes that prophecy is given to edify, encourage, and comfort the body of Christ.
16. • **Definition:** Prophecy is the Spirit-empowered ability to speak forth God's message. It can involve foretelling future events, but more often, it is proclaiming God's Word for instruction, edification, and encouragement.
17. • **Scripture:** *1 Corinthians 14:3* — "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."
18. • **Example:** *Acts 11:27-28* — Agabus prophesied a famine, enabling the church to prepare and provide aid.
19. **Discerning of Spirits:**
20. • **Definition:** This is the Spirit-given ability to distinguish between what is of God and what is not. It enables believers to detect false teachings, unclean spirits, or deceit within the church.

21. • **Scripture:** *1 John 4:1* — "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God."
22. • **Example:** *Acts 16:16-18* — Paul discerned that the spirit in the slave girl was not of God, though she proclaimed truth about him. He cast it out, revealing her true nature.
23. **Divers Kinds of Tongues:** Speaking in tongues is the ability to speak in languages unknown to the speaker, provided by the Spirit for personal edification or corporate benefit when interpreted.
24. • **Definition:** This gift is the Spirit-given ability to speak in languages unknown to the speaker, either as a sign to unbelievers or for personal edification. When used publicly, it should be accompanied by interpretation.
25. • **Scripture:** *Acts 2:4* — "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
26. • **Example:** *1 Corinthians 14:4* — "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself..." Paul emphasizes its place in worship and the need for order.
27. **Interpretation of Tongues:** The ability to understand and communicate the message being spoken in tongues so the church can be edified.
28. • **Definition:** This is the ability to interpret or translate the message spoken in tongues so that the whole congregation can be edified. This gift works alongside the gift of tongues to build up the church.
29. • **Scripture:** *1 Corinthians 14:13* — "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret."
30. • **Example:** *1 Corinthians 14:27-28* — Paul gives instructions for the orderly use of tongues and interpretation in the church, showing that interpretation is essential for communal edification.

Each gift serves a unique function, but all are given to strengthen the body of Christ. No gift is more important than another, and every believer has a role in using their gifts to build up the church.

### **Additional Gifts Mentioned in Scripture**

Beyond the nine in **1 Corinthians 12**, other passages reveal additional gifts:

1. **Administration (1 Corinthians 12:28):** The gift of guiding the church in orderly function and organization.
2. **Helps (1 Corinthians 12:28):** The gift of supporting others through acts of service, relieving needs within the body of Christ.
3. **Teaching (Romans 12:7):** The ability to explain and apply God's Word in ways that inspire growth and understanding.
4. **Encouragement/Exhortation (Romans 12:8):** The Spirit-empowered ability to encourage, uplift, and console believers.
5. **Giving (Romans 12:8):** The gift of generosity to support others materially, driven by the Spirit's prompting.

6. **Leadership (Romans 12:8):** The ability to lead and guide the church with diligence and love.
  7. **Mercy (Romans 12:8):** The ability to show compassion and care for those in need, demonstrating God's love.
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Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that spiritual gifts are valuable but that the greatest gift is love, as highlighted in **1 Corinthians 13**. The gifts should be exercised in a way that reflects Christ's love and humility.

### **The Purpose of Gifts Today**

The gifts remain essential for the church. They help to build unity, encourage faith, and provide clarity to God's will. However, they are not a means for self-exaltation or creating division. They should always point back to Christ.

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Jesus spoke of "greater works" in **John 14:12**:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

These greater works refer to our role in sharing the Gospel, leading souls to salvation, and edifying the church through the gifts God has given us. Unlike physical miracles, which are temporary, salvation has eternal significance.

**Example:** When Jesus was on earth, no one was yet baptized in His name, filled with His Spirit, or able to enter into the fullness of salvation. Today, as the church, we can offer salvation through Jesus Christ, making this the greatest work of all.

### **Concluding Thoughts: Walking in Spiritual Gifts with Love and Humility**

As we close, let's remember that spiritual gifts are given to us by God for the purpose of glorifying Him and building up His church. They are not personal achievements or reasons to boast; they are tools to serve and edify.

**Final Exhortation:** Pray that God would grant us wisdom, understanding, and love as we seek to serve Him. Let us use our gifts not to draw attention to ourselves but to point others to Jesus Christ, who is the source of every good gift.