

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. Introductory thoughts
 - a. The body of Christ compared with our physical bodies (1 Cor.12:12-24).
 - b. The entire Trinity is involved in the matter of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-6).
 - c. “How can I know what my own spiritual gift is?” (Acts 9:6).
2. Specific spiritual gifts
 - a. Apostles: “sent out ones” (Luke 9:2,52; 10:1; 19:29; 22:8; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:28,29; Eph. 3:5; 4:11); foundation of the Church (Eph. 2:19,20); had seen Christ in resurrection (Acts 1:22-26; 1 Cor. 15:8); authority over demons and diseases (Luke 9:1); authority to deliver evildoers to Satan (1 Tim. 1:20; 1 Cor. 5:5); Christ Jesus the greatest Apostle (Heb. 3:1; John 3:16,17; 1 John 4:9,10,14).
 - b. Prophets: “those who speak for another,” especially messages from God (1 Cor. 11:23; 12:10,28; 15:3; Eph. 4:11; 2 John 4); often linked with apostles (1 Cor. 12:28,29; Eph. 3:5; 4:11; Rev. 18:20); Christ Jesus the greatest Prophet (Deut. 18:15,18; Luke 7:16; John 8:28; 12:49; 14:10; Acts 3:22-26).
 - c. Evangelists (Eph. 4:11): those who have a heart for the gospel and long for the salvation of souls; have great courage, energy, and perseverance (2 Cor. 11:23-27); realize the importance of prayer (Eph. 6:18,19); depend upon the Lord to bring fruit (1 Cor. 3:6).
 - d. Teachers, word of knowledge (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:8,28; Eph. 4:11): those who explain clearly and accurately the Word of God.
 - e. Pastors or shepherds, word of wisdom (1 Cor. 12:8; Eph. 4:12): those who apply the Word of God to believers’ manner of living and problems of everyday life (Phil. 4:6; 1 John 4:18; Matt. 5:24; Jas. 5:16; 1 Pet. 4:12-16; 5:10).
 - f. Faith (1 Cor. 12:9): while all believers are to be characterized by trust and dependence upon the Lord (2 Cor. 5:7; 12:9; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 4:19; 2 Thess. 1:3), some are especially gifted with an extraordinary measure of faith (for example, George Müller, Hudson Taylor; read their biographies).
 - g. Ruling, governing (Rom. 12:8; 1 Cor. 12:28): similar to the work of an elder/overseer and the work of a deacon (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:4,5,12; 5:17).
 - h. Giving (Rom. 12:8): giving liberally, without expecting to be repaid (Luke 6:30-36), but finding that the Lord is often pleased to repay anyway (Prov. 3:9,10; 11:24,25; 19:17; 28:27; 31:20).
 - i. Showing mercy (Rom. 12:8): not just *feeling* sorry for someone in unfortunate circumstances, but *doing* something to help (Luke 10:25-37).
 - j. Exhorting or encouraging (Rom. 12:8): same root as “Comforter,” a name for the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7) and as “Advocate,” a name for the Lord Jesus (1 John 2:1).
 - k. Helping and Serving (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28): Priscilla, Aquila, and Urbane were noted as “helpers” (Rom. 16:3,9); Martha and Phoebe were noted for their service to others (Luke 10:40; John 12:2; Rom. 16:1); the root word for “serving” or “ministry” is also translated “deacon” (1 Tim. 3:12).

- l. Discerning of Spirits (1 Cor. 12:10): needed in the latter times (certainly today!) because of seducing spirits and doctrines of devils (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Pet. 2:1-19; 1 John 4:1-3); discernment by the apostles (Acts 5:3; 14:9; 16:16-18).
3. More Specific Spiritual Gifts: the Sign Gifts
 - a. Healing (1 Cor. 12:9): the apostle Paul healed others (Acts 14:10; 28:8,9) but not himself (2 Cor. 12:8,9); healing was immediate and complete (Acts 3:7,8; 9:34; 14:10); *all* were healed of *all kinds* of sickness (Acts 5:15,16; 8:7; 28:9); those healed were well known both before and after healing (Acts 3:2; 14:8); healing included bringing the dead back to life (Acts 9:36-41; 20:9,10) and the opposite—calling down sickness in judgment (Acts 13:11).
 - b. Working of miracles (Mark 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:10): the apostle Paul did not die from snakebite (Acts 28:3-6); we are not to put God to the test to work miracles on our behalf (Matt. 4:7).
 - c. Speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:10,28,30); real languages (Acts 2:4,6,11); interpretation means translation; inferior to prophecy, that is, speaking in an understandable language (1 Cor. 14:2-19).
 4. Are All of the Gifts Still With Us Today?
 - a. Apostles and prophets: No one is any longer qualified to be an apostle, strictly speaking (Acts 1:21,22); these provided the foundation of the Church (Eph. 2:20).
 - b. Sign gifts: Their purpose was to draw attention to and authenticate the teaching of the apostles prior to the completion of the Holy Scriptures (Acts 2:1-41; 3:1-26; 8:6-8); tongues will cease (1 Cor. 13:8), but when? at the end of the apostolic era or at the coming of Christ?
 5. Variations of “Discontinued Gifts” Still With Us Today
 - a. Apostles: foreign missionaries who do pioneering evangelism are a kind of apostle today.
 - b. Prophets: all may prophesy today in the sense of bringing a message by the Holy Spirit to others (Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 14).
 - c. Healing: healing the backslidings of God’s people is always needed (Jer. 3:22; Hos. 14:4); healing of conflicts among Christians is carried out by peacemakers (Matt. 5:9; Acts 15).
 - d. Working of miracles: through ministry of the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit, bringing about amazing changes in people’s souls (Luke 18:27).
 - e. Tongues: becoming adept in speaking foreign languages; bridging communication and fellowship gaps among different age, gender, cultural, racial, economic, or educational groups within an assembly.
 - f. Interpretation of tongues: taking the ministry of a teacher and making it more plain to others by means of simple examples and illustrations.