

Desiring the gifts of the Holy Spirit (part1)

Series: By My Spirit

Introduction

X in the first part of this series on the Holy Spirit we focussed on the revelation found in the Bible on the works and ways of the Holy Spirit. We looked at how the Holy Spirit forms us, fills us and empowers us. Then in the second part of this series we began looking at the commands given to Christians about the Holy Spirit. We saw we are commanded to be led by the Spirit and not to grieve the Holy Spirit.

Today the command we will look at is found in 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 14:1 (ESV Strong's)

1 Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

Notice the command to earnestly desire the spiritual gifts. The word earnestly desire could be exchanged with "to be zealous and eager for".

~ In a congregation that were practicing gifts at the time

* Perhaps we can do a quick personal spot-check right now...how well, on a scale of 1-10 would you say your eagerness for the gifts of the Holy Spirit would register right now?

I generally think the church is in a state of mild to severe disobedience when it comes to this clear command in the Bible. I hope that the Scriptures however will unlock our hearts more and more to obedience to this command.

X Now I must add that we are yet to cover the baptism and filling with the Spirit which is clearly linked to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We will look at this subject in a few weeks time. For now we will spend two weeks looking at the Scriptures concerning these gifts. We will

firstly look at what we need to know about them. Then we will look at their purpose and how to practice them. Lastly we will look at the Corinthian list of some of the gifts and give a few examples of how we have seen them used in practice.

→ Start of the teaching — Reason for ^{their abuse} back is #1
1. Some things to know about the gifts “uninformed”

Paul writes the following to a congregation that was already practicing numerous of the gifts

1 Corinthians 12:1 (ESV Strong's)

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

Paul then goes into a very long teaching about the gifts from 1 Cor. 12:1 - 1 Cor 14:40. In other words being uninformed is both dangerous and without excuse for us today. We need to know our stuff! So what are some of the key things to know about the gifts?

- We need to know what they are

- They are by definition, good! + do good. “common good”
- They cannot be earned as they are a gift
- They are sovereignly given by the Trinity together but, as we have seen, graciously worked in us by God the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (ESV Strong's)

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

- They require God's power, so we are not talking about skills or talents here but a special enabling by God on a Christian. — level above answered prayer — powerful & reflective
- They are varied yet they contribute to unity. This means we must not make moulds from our own experience of them. Throughout the OT and the NT we cannot really examples of the gifts being expressed more than once in the exact same way. This is a great lesson to learn as it can hinder people operating in the gifts because they think it does not look like so and so's modus operandi. I believe there are many overlaps and interactions of the gifts sometimes working simultaneously. You might have faith and healing or miracles together for example.

- We need to know we need them

I believe that one of the reasons for the low level of the gifts in many churches is that we do not think that we need them. We would be wise however to realize our need of them before God allows circumstances to teach us that we need them.

We also can make the great error, if we think we don't need them, to get to the place where we actually start to despise the gifts. Paul warns the Thessalonians about this

1 Thessalonians 5:20 (ESV Strong's)

20 Do not despise prophecies,

Do you?

They become something that irritates us, we feel it is in the way. We begin to have our preferences. Some prefer the teaching gift but are skeptical of prophecy. Others prefer tongues but despise teaching and so on.

* Hurt by them; Disappointed; ... change doctrine
Why do we need them?

- Primarily because we know and trust the Holy Spirit + the Bible
- Secondly because of their power, they can achieve in one moment what a thousand counseling sessions could not. outreaches * eg Philip in Samaria - religious conversions / Stephen
- Thirdly because they will always honour Christ - they are expressions of Him working through His body the church (The lack of them makes us look less like Jesus)
- Fourthly they will advance the Kingdom of God especially in the times of great resistance (Acts 4)

* Nicodemus - not your love but your signs Jn 3:2

- We need to seek them

If we are to earnestly desire them, this implies a number of wonderful truths.

- Though God gives them sovereignly, we can ask for the gifts
- It means you can develop in a particular gift
- It means you can seek to be used in gifts you have not been used in. For example those that speak in a tongue should pray that they can interpret it.
- We have each been given some gift already so seek to use it
- The parable of the talents is applicable. Develop what you have by all human means and for the honour of the Master and then expect for the Master to add more as you prove faithful.

It is significant that nowhere in the Bible are we told that we should stop seeking the gifts as they are temporary while other gifts are permanent. This is a popular teaching with no Scriptural grounds.

1 Corinthians 13:8 (ESV Strong's)

8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

Notice the three things mentioned that will pass away. The last one is knowledge... Many of those that teach that the gifts ceased based on this verse neglect to see it refers to a time when knowledge too will cease, in particular knowledge of the Lord. The reason is given in verse 12

Reflects an image
via a medium
1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV Strong's)
12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

** I will see Him & won't need gift to reveal Him like a mirror*

The gifts will not be needed when we see Jesus face to face, until then they help me to see Him in His body the church as so I eagerly desire then as I eagerly desire to see Him.

2. The purpose and practice of the gifts

1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV Strong's)

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 14:12 (ESV Strong's)

12 So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

The ultimate purpose of the gifts is to build up the body of Christ through the revelation of Jesus to others. This is fundamental to our desiring the gift as they show even unbelievers that God is here (see 14:25)

OT -> Positive outworking + Destinies changed! § 160

As for the practice of the gifts we need to see that love is to be central in using the gifts.

The famous chapter on love is actually part of Paul's teaching on the gifts of the Spirit as you can see if you read the last verse of chapter 12 and the first verse of chapter 14, this is all one subject.

What we can deduce is that without love the gifts of the Spirit become useless.

Love is characterised by sacrificial service to others. If the gifts are not expressed in sacrificial service to others they become noise, losing all the meaning and power put in them by the Spirit.

How to use the gifts
4 of 7

This does not mean that gifts are bad but they are to be transmitted by a loving heart in order to be effective.

Faith through love

If you take a preacher that preaches truth but they carry no love, people will battle to receive from them.

This brings another important point with it. Gifts do not prove spirituality or a good character but love does. You should never follow a person because of the gift they operate in but you are urged to look at how they love the Body of Christ and what fruit they have in their out of ministry lives.

Paul lists some of the signs of loveless use of the gifts

eg. Saul

Love is not arrogant

Love is not jealous

Love is not self-seeking or trying to get all the attention on themselves

In the practice of the gifts we must allow all to be tested. This means there is room for error and at the same time room to learn in a loving body. ** Special warning - people may want something so badly that you can make mistakes - makes them anti the gifts*

The practice of the gifts is also to be orderly and under the control of the church. Some feel that chaos is a sign of the Spirit moving. Yet the move of the Spirit may be unexpected, unusual and surprising but it is explained, resulting in the building up of the church. **** Acts 2

3. The Corinthian list of gifts

In various chapters in the NT we are given lists of gifts from God. None of them are the same. My view is that Paul was not trying to give a list of all the gifts of the Spirit. I think there are many others and variations and combinations of these gifts. We think of the supernatural strength of Samson or the courage that came upon Queen Esther, or supernatural ability to minister to children or to lead worship. I believe we can expect the list to be long and varying according to what the Holy Spirit sees the body needs at a time.

people into

Let us go through some mentioned here with an example. As I share them, I am trusting that there will come an inner witness around some that in particular the Holy Spirit is quickening in you.

1 Corinthians 12:7-10(ESV Strong's)

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

(Solomon)

* Preaching / counselling - Preaching example

* Gerhard

- Wisdom - practical insight into how to live in obedience to God. **** Parenting / M.E preaching Gospel
- Knowledge - special insight into facts or even into the counsel of God. **** Lady tested high for

doyle syndrome baby. Daleen saw a tall blond girl. The family left South Africa and Daleen saw a FB photo of her with this tall blond daughter next to her. **** Prayer burden for Daleen's dad ****

For unbelievers - Jesus said to Nathanael

can come through dreams / vision / verse stands out

John 1:48-49 (ESV Strong's)

48 Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." 49 Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

* ananias

Acts 9:11-12 (ESV Strong's)

11 And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight."

* the black girls

- Faith - not saving faith but supernatural gift of faith. George Müller had faith to develop orphanages without asking for money. He had a gift of faith. You might try the method but unless you have the faith it will not work. **** One of the elders shared this week how, while in the bath God gave him faith particularly that month to trust that when he uttered breakthrough

- Healings - more than one kind and way God heals. Emotional, physical, mental, instant, process... All of us are instructed to pray for one another - Special power of Peter - shadow fell on people

- Miracles - The release of the one girl from captivity when we prayed together was miraculous

- Prophecy - speaking for God in a specially given way. Note that some prophecies became part of the Bible, but many did not. There are two levels of prophecy in that sense and no prophecy can give a different message to the Bible. We will give more time to this next week

- Distinguish between spirits - this can include discerning a demonic spirit or what is from God and it can also discern what is the motivation of a person as Jesus knew what was in their hearts. ****

Acts 16:16 Paul discerns the demon even though the person was saying that Paul was from God

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and was telling people the way of salvation. ~~Ann~~ Annanias and Sapphira gave money claiming it was the full amount of the property they had sold. Peter discerned this was a wrong motive.

- Tongues - this is nicely described as non-rational praying with different kinds of words and sounds. *you don't understand*
- Interpretation of tongues - this is putting into words the meaning of ^{what} could not be understood in a tongue. It is not a translation. We will look at this too next week. *Ps 46 Daleen + me*

Conclusion

The church is not a natural institution, it is the body of Christ. One of the truths of that is that it is to continue the work of Jesus as His present body on the earth. The gifts of the Spirit are empowering gifts given to advance and build the church supernaturally. They ultimately do this by revealing Christ who is the healer, the great prophet, the one who knows all things, perfect wisdom, worker of miracles etc... Without the gifts we lack many of the powerful ways to show what Jesus is like in this world.

If you are stirred, out of love for the body, then tell the Lord today.

You already have a gift...so start there. Be faithful to use it in love. Develop, learn, practice, ask others to input...

If you desire more and want particular help, we have material and training you can find out about.

Contact one of the elders