

## **PRINCIPLES ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

Christ revealed Himself first in a human body, through which all His attributes were manifest (John 1:14). Now He has a new body—the Church—a spiritual body. We who know Christ are that Body (Rom. 12:3-8, 1 Cor. 12:12-27). Each Christian is a vital member of Christ's Body, and just as a human body must work totally and completely together to be healthy, so we must function in interdependence with each other for the unity of this Spiritual Body.

God has set in order a plan for the healthy function of His Body. This is the plan—Each believer has been given certain Holy Spirit abilities, called “grace-gifts” or “spiritual gifts.” Through these gifts the Holy Spirit ministers to the other members of the Body and this network of inter-mutual ministry strengthens every part and allows the whole body to grow healthy and strong (Eph. 4:11-16).

The Bible provides some basic principles in the use and exercise of spiritual gifts/grace-gifts. Ten are highlighted.

1. They Are Important And Essential For The Health Of The Body.  
These gifts are essential because they are vehicles/channels through which the Holy Spirit ministers to the Body. My gifts are for you! Your gifts are for me and others. For the body to be healthy and grow, all these gifts must be operative (Eph. 4:16)!
2. The Holy Spirit Is The Source Of All These Gifts.  
The gifts are not to be sought (1 Cor. 12:11). The Holy Spirit gives them to all Christians. This is the common ground of all gifts. On this basis, if they all operate as they should, apart from the flesh, they will unite and not divide (1 Cor. 12:4-6). If there is division, it means the gifts are being used for selfish gain and not as the Spirit's gift to build up the Church. If the Spirit gave and ministered them as designed, He would not divide Himself.
3. The Gifts Are Not Natural Abilities.  
They are sovereignly bestowed manifestations of the Spirit's power through divine enablement. The Holy Spirit may elect to use a man in the area of his natural ability, and gift him in that area, or He may not. The fact that one has a natural talent does not mean that the Holy Spirit will choose to use it.
4. There Is Not An Essential Hierarchy In Gifts, But There Is A Functional Distinction In Importance.  
All the gifts are important, necessary, and to be honored (1 Cor. 12:25-31).
5. Gifts Are No Sign Or Guarantee Of Spirituality.  
All believers possess them, even carnal believers (1 Cor. 12:7, 11). And gifts can be counterfeited and operated in the energy of the flesh. Having a gift is also no guarantee of being right, even in the area of your gift (1 Cor. 14:29, 32, 37). Even one who has the gift can misuse it in a fleshly manner (Ex. The Corinthians and tongues). Satan can pervert the gifts to his use. So we see

that the possession of a gift does not signify either spirituality or infallibility on the part of the one who exercises it. What is really from the Spirit will be done in harmony with Scripture. The authenticity of the message or work must be confirmed by the written Word and the witness of the Spirit.

6. The Gifts, When Rightly Exercised In The Spirit, Have The Promise Of Divine Energy.

(1 Cor. 12:4-7) When wrongly used, as in Corinth, they bring confusion and disorder (1 Cor. 14:33). Each Body member's gift can only be effective in building up the Body if it is exercised as the true gift, in the energy of the Spirit—not as a fleshly or Satanic counterfeit. We must operate in the Spirit (1 Peter 4:10, 11):

- Prayer
- Yieldedness
- Filled with the Spirit
- Walk in the Spirit

7. When The Gifts Are Used, The Body Profits.

Both the one who uses the gift and the recipients of its ministry will be blessed (1 Cor. 12:7)—All the gifts work together for a healthy body. As I minister to you, you are built up in the areas of your lack. As you minister to me, I am built up in my weak areas. So all the gifts blend to make each member strong in all areas—thus to make the body strong/mature that it might have a dynamic witness (John 17:21, 23).

8. The Gifts Of The Spirit Are Distinct From The Fruit Of The Spirit.

What is described in Gal. 5:22-23 are characteristics common to all believers who walk and live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

9. You Can Have A Gift And Not Be Using It.

Sadly, most Christians are in this situation (1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim. 1:6).

10. Spiritual Grace-Gifts May Come In Combinations.

Believers probably have more than just one (2 Tim. 4:1-5). Timothy and Paul both had many of the gifts.

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS: AN OVERVIEW

| <u>GIFT</u>                             | <u>PURPOSE</u>                    | <u>TRUE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE GIFTS</u>  | <u>FLESHLY COUNTERFEIT</u>   | <u>SATANIC COUNTERFEIT</u>   |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1. PROPHECY<br>Rom. 12:6<br>1 Cor. 14:3 | Proclamation of Divine Revelation | Preaching revealed truth in power and demonstration of the Spirit—always telling forth the Word.   | Preaching with enticing words of human wisdom, depending upon oratorical manipulation, emotionalism, sentimentalism, etc.<br>1 Cor. 2:1, 4 | The preaching of doctrines that are false and untrue to God's Word, under the direct inspiration of evil spirits.<br>1 Tim. 4:1    |
| 2. TEACHING<br>Rom. 12:7                | Teaching                          | Teaching the things of the Spirit with wisdom and light given by the Spirit, depending upon Him to give understanding to the hearer.<br>Eph. 1:16-19 | Teaching in man's wisdom, depending upon man's ability to give understanding.<br>Col. 2:18; Rev. 2:20                                      | Teaching of false or unsound doctrine under inspiration of an evil spirit. 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Cor. 11:14, 15; 1 John 4:1-6              |
| 3. FAITH<br>1 Cor. 12:9                 | Enabling                          | Holy Spirit-given trust and confidence in what is in accordance with God's Word and will.  | An effort to believe that depends entirely upon will power and emotional attitudes.  | Faith, inspired by evil spirits, in occult power of any kind or in false doctrine or satanically inspired systems.<br>1 Cor. 10:20 |
| 4. WISDOM<br>1 Cor. 12:8                | Revelation                        | Holy Spirit-given clarity in the stating of revealed spiritual truth—application of facts.   | Spiritual truth stated with reliance upon natural ability to give understanding.   | Revelations supposed to be from the spirit world received from evil spirits.   |
| 5. KNOWLEDGE<br>1 Cor. 12:8             | Understanding                     | Application of spiritual truth to practical experiences of life under inspiration of the Spirit.   | Human wisdom's attempt to adjust spiritual truth to the practical things of life.<br>Acts 26:9; Rom. 10:2                                  | Satan-inspired systems, based upon satanic principles, for the betterment of conditions among men and nations.                     |

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|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 6. DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS<br>1 Cor. 12:10          | Protection                            | Given by the Spirit to distinguish between what is from Him and what is a deception of Satan.        | Human wisdom's attempt to judge what is of God and what is of Satan.<br>Cf. Heb. 4:12    | Evil spirits immediately discern what is of Christ and may impart that knowledge to one under their control.<br>Mk. 1:23, 24; 3:11; 5:7; Acts 19:15; Jas. 2:19 |
| 7. MERCY<br>Rom. 12:8                              | Manifest Love                         | Holy Spirit-inspired acts of love and kindness manifesting the love of Christ.                       | Acts of love inspired by human agendas. Limited by the limits of human love.             | Manifestations of interest in human welfare that are inspired by Satan.<br>Gen. 3:1, 4, 5  |
| 8. EXHORTATION<br>Rom. 12:8                        | Encouragement and Direction           | Holy Spirit-inspired counsel, consolation, etc. manifesting the pure love and wisdom of Christ.      | Effort to help and counsel based upon human wisdom.                                      | Counsel inspired by Satan and based upon his principles, as Peter's advice to Christ.<br>Matt. 16:22, 23   |
| 9. GIVING<br>Rom. 12:8                             | To Meet Genuine Financial Need        | Giving that is under the direction of the Holy Spirit.   | Giving for merit or merely as a duty or in response to emotional or sentimental appeals. | Giving inspired by Satan that supports that which carries out his purpose. False systems do not lack for money.  |
| 10. GOVERNMENT RULING<br>1 Cor. 12:28<br>Rom. 12:8 | Maintain Order and Provide Leadership | Ruling under the guidance and with the wisdom of the Spirit—dynamic leadership.                      | Dependence upon human ability for leadership and ruling.                                 | Ability to rule, displayed through human wisdom and personality, given by evil spirits.  |
| 11. MINISTRY HELPS<br>Rom. 12:7<br>1 Cor. 12:28    | Service                               | Material service rendered under the guidance and with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.<br>Ex. 35:30-35 | Material service done in the wisdom and power of man and offered to God.                 | Ability and cunning given by Satan to those he is using, enabling them for the carrying out of enterprises inspired by him.                                    |

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|---|--|--|--|---|
| 12. MIRACLES<br>1 Cor. 12:10, 28              | Special Signs (perhaps belonging to apostolic era only or primarily) | Direct intervention of divine power in response to faith given by the Holy Spirit. | Natural phenomena or coincidence attributed to God's intervention by falsely religious enthusiasm.   | Miracles wrought through the power of Satan as seen in certain false cults.   |
| 13. HEALING<br>1 Cor. 12:9                    | Special Signs (perhaps belonging to apostolic era only or primarily) | Healing wrought by God's power in response to faith given by the Holy Spirit.      | Healing, real or imagined, resulting from the employment of psychic means, such as suggestion, and attributed to divine intervention.  | Healing wrought by the power of Satan as seen in certain false cults.   |
| 14. TONGUES<br>1 Cor. 12:10, 28               | Special Signs (perhaps belonging to apostolic era only or primarily) | Utterance produced on certain occasions by the presence of the Holy Spirit.        | Ecstatic utterance produced by bringing certain soul powers into a state of unnatural excitement, or by feigning such utterance. Confusion and the glorifying of the flesh are the result. | Utterance of an evil spirit through a person under its control. Such utterances may feign piety, but are unsound and often vile. Confusion and unscriptural doctrine and practice are the result. |
| 15. INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES<br>1 Cor. 12:10 | Special Signs (perhaps belonging to apostolic era only or primarily) | Revelation given by the Spirit of the spiritual meaning of an utterance given.     | An interpretation that is feigned, or that is imagined as a result of religious excitement or manipulation.  | Interpretation suggested to the mind by evil spirits. May feign piety but is unsound and often unholy.  |

Spiritual gifts fall naturally into three categories: support gifts, service gifts, and sign gifts. The following chart helps to sort them.

| SUPPORT GIFTS   | SERVICE GIFTS   | SIGN GIFTS  |
|---|---|---|
| Apostleship<br>Prophecy<br>Evangelism<br>Pastor-Teacher<br>Teaching | Administrations<br>Exhortation<br>Faith<br>Giving<br>Helps<br>Showing Mercy | Distinguishing of Spirits<br>Miracles<br>Healings<br>Tongues<br>Interpretation of Tongues |

