

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Whereas we repeatedly turn to 1 Corinthians 11 which speaks of the Lord's Supper, why do we skip Chapter 12 which lists the Gifts of the Spirit, and jump to Chapter 13? (In many Bibles, the Chapters 11 & 12 are on the same page!) Why don't we proceed to Chapter 14 also to learn how to operate the Gifts? Why do we skip it also and jump to Chapter 15? Is not "ALL Scripture" inspired and profitable? (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20,21). Why show this partiality to the Scriptures? Is this why we are ineffective in edifying the Church and powerless in evangelizing the world?

Do you say that the subject of Spiritual Gifts is controversial? Do you know that the Lord's Supper is also a controversial subject? Some insist on observing it only at night because it's the Lord's "supper," and not the Lord's "breakfast" or "lunch!" (1 Cor 11:23; Acts 20:7; Mt 26:19,20). Others emphasize footwashing in breadbreaking services (Jn 13:3-5,14,15). Are bread and wine just symbolic or sacramental? Bread first or wine first? (Mt 26:26-29; Lk 22:14-20; 1 Cor 10:16; 11:24,25). Can "we" break bread and can "we" bless the cup and share them among ourselves, or someone should serve us these elements? (1 Cor 10:16; Lk 22:17; Mt 26:26,27). Observance daily or weekly or monthly? In the formal Church gatherings only or in meetings at homes also? (1 Cor 11:18; Acts 2:46; 20:7,8).

So also the subject of Baptism! In which Name? (Mt 28:19; Acts 2:38; 19:5; Rom 6:3). Sprinkling or pouring or immersion? Stagnant water or running stream? Single dip or three dips? The baptizer also to get into the tank or can he stand outside? Should only a fulltime preacher baptize candidates or any disciple of Christ who shares the Gospel can administer it? (Mt 28:16-20; Acts 8:1,4,38; 9:10,17,18).

Beloved, if we keep avoiding all controversial issues, so called, we would become spiritual paupers! (1 Cor 11:19).

Here's apostle Paul's admonition: "Brothers, I do NOT want you to be IGNORANT of spiritual gifts" (1 Cor 12:1). "DESIRE spiritual gifts" (14:1). "Let ALL things be DONE decently and in order" (v40). Without spiritual gifts, we are like soldiers with rifles but no bullets!

I urge pastors of both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal Churches to periodically arrange teaching Seminars for the congregations on the Gifts of the Spirit with the help of experienced and mature servants of God who are known for balance (Rom 1:11; 1 Tim 4:14). The remedy for abuse or misuse is not disuse but proper use! It's not gifts "or" fruits, but gifts "and" fruits! That's why the fruit Chapter (1 Cor 13) is sandwiched between the two gift Chapters (1 Cor 12 & 14)! Unless the operation of the Gifts is encouraged and restored in our Churches, the silent majority will keep on swelling in number. Our pews will be populated only by the unemployed and the underemployed.

Attached herewith is a list of 50 practical lessons I have brought out from 1 Corinthians 12,13 & 14 on Spiritual Gifts. Use it profitably in Church gatherings, prayer meetings and study groups. This is one of the 50 Chapters of my 320-page book, "Bible Power," which presents what the Bible teaches on the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:9
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and one is hungry and another is drunk.
22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame? (those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.)
23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."
24 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."
25 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.
26 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.
27 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.
28 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.
29 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.
30 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.
31 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.
32 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.
33 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.
34 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant; that you may know that you were led by the Spirit.
35 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.
36 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
37 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.
38 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.
39 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.
40 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another the word of faith by the same

50 Lessons on Spiritual Gifts

from 1 Corinthians 12,13 & 14

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***Do keep your Bibles open to 1 Corinthians 12,13&14
while studying these lessons.***

1. None of God's children can afford to be **ignorant** of spiritual gifts (12:1).
2. The greatest ministry of the Spirit of God is to lead God's people to **worship** Jesus as Lord (12:2,3).
3. The Holy Spirit helps **expression** — God to His people and God's people to Him! ("*dumb idols*" contrasted) (12:2,3).
4. God the Father operates administrations through Christ and gifts through the Spirit. Administrations are the manifestation of God's **authority** and Gifts that of His **power** (12:4-6).
5. Gifts are means; Administrators are men; and Operations are methods (measures). The means, men and methods manifest **unity in diversity** — among themselves and between one another in the beauty of trinitarian oneness of Godhead (12:4-6).
6. The Spirit manifests His gifts thro' **everyone** (12:7-11).
7. **Each believer** has a **ministry** to others (12:7).
8. The gifts of the Spirit are the **manifestation** of the Spirit. In other words, the Spirit is audible, visible and tangible through His gifts (12:7-10).
9. The nine gifts arrange themselves in **four sets** of two each, the gift of Faith being common or basic for the operation of all. The sets are Wisdom and Knowledge, Healing and Miracles, Prophecy and Discernment, Tongues and Interpretation. (These are in the Scriptural order) (12:8-10).
10. Knowledge tells "what," and Wisdom "how" (Mt 22:15-22; Acts 15:25-28). Healings are the most coveted Miracles among men (Acts 4:30). Discernment is the insight which is fundamental for Prophesying (1 Cor 14:24,25,29,30). Tongues without Interpretation are useless when spoken in the Church (14:27,28).
11. The emphasis in 1 Cor 12:8-11 is "the **same Spirit.**" It occurs 4 times. The lesson: The quality, nature or essence of all the gifts are the same and so comparison for competition is foolish.
12. The **choice** of the gift (the manifestation) and the person (the member) is done by the Spirit according to His will or desire (12:11). The zealous and obedient person is generally chosen (14:12,37), and the specific need of the situation decides the choice of the gift (14:19,26).
13. Just as the members of the body, though distinct, are interrelated, the manifestations (or gifts) of the Spirit operate **interdependently**, either through one individual or many. One gift needs the other (See point number 10.) (12:12,15-21).

14. The ministries of the Two Comforters are **complementary**. The Second Comforter (Holy Spirit) baptizes us into the First Comforter (Jesus Christ), and then vice versa. The first act gives us authority (in Christ) and the second gives power (thro' the Spirit) (12:13).
15. The Holy Spirit breaks all **barriers** for unity among God's people (12:13).
16. We should seek for the **balanced development** of all the gifts. Specialisation is necessary but not at the cost of other gifts (12:17,19).
17. The gifts which "*seem to be more feeble*" or which we "*think to be less honourable*" should not be slighted or **neglected** (12:21-24).
18. Exclusive **preference** of certain gifts unavoidably leads to divisions (12:25).
19. Gifts develop when there is **mutual care** or **encouragement** (12:25-27). For example, one who prophesies should encourage the one speaking in tongues, or the one who manifests wisdom should encourage the one who discerns, and so on.
20. When there is a **defect** or **failure** in the operation of one gift by a member, the other members should meet with him for concern and not condemnation. Also when there is a remarkable **success** in the operation of one particular gift by a member, the other members should rejoice with him and never give place to envy (12:26).
21. God has made provision in the church for **Inter-Church** ministry, **Outreach** ministry and **Local Church** ministry. We have a triple responsibility: ministry to members of our own local Church, ministry to members of other churches, and ministry to people outside the Church. The degree and nature of responsibility is not the same for all (12:28-30).
22. All are not apostles but all should **support** the apostles; all do not have the gifts of healing but all should **encourage** such evangelistic ministers; all are not administrators in the Church but all should **cooperate** with such leaders (12:26-30).
23. There is no second or third grade gifts with God. "*Best gifts*" mean gifts "most suitable" for the occasion (12:31; 14:5).
24. The basic **motive** behind the operation of the spiritual gifts must be love, that is concern to serve others. This is the "*more excellent way*" (12:31; 14:6,12).
25. It is possible to manifest the Gifts of the Spirit — Tongues, Prophecy, Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, etc. — without a genuine concern to serve and edify others. **Self-gratification** should be forsaken to enjoy the God-intended full benefit of the gifts (13:1,2; 14:12).
26. It is possible to perform acts of charity or sacrifice — Feeding the Poor, Voluntary Martyrdom, etc. — to earn **a name for self** and not motivated to serve the people or glorify God. God does not reward such. Thus not only spiritual gifts but also social works can be wrongly motivated (13:3).
27. When we operate gifts with **love** — that is, a motive to serve others, we will be patient, kind, appreciative, soft and not rash, gentle, unselfish, not touchy, good-willed, just and truth-loving (13:4-6).
28. The Gifts of the Spirit thrive in the soil of tolerance and trust (13:7).

29. Prophecies, Tongues and Knowledge are **temporal** in scope — that is, we will not need them in Heaven. For example, what is there to prophesy in Heaven? All would then have been fulfilled! But love is eternal. All believers need that in Heaven too for coexistence! (13:8).
30. When the **perfected** stage comes, that is, New Heaven and New Earth, our present imperfect knowledge and prophesying will be done away. Illustrations: (a) Childhood vs. Manhood, (b) Seeing through mirror vs. Face to face (13:9-12) .
31. When we remain immersed in the Holy Spirit, He **builds** up in us Faith, Hope and Love. Faith for today, Hope for tomorrow and Love for ever! (13:13 cf Jude 19-21).
32. While desiring to manifest spiritual gifts in the Church, if we are concerned about **others** we will prefer to prophesy rather than speak in tongues. Because, prophesying edifies the Church but tongues the speaker only, unless interpreted (14:1,4,5).
33. Tongues are addressed to God and so form a part of prayer and praise; whereas prophesying is addressed to the Church and hence may be combined with preaching or exhortation (14:2,3).
34. Tongues contain spiritual mysteries no one can understand; whereas prophesying brings forthright messages to men to edify, exhort and comfort them (14:2,3).
35. Tongues serve as a tremendous means of self-edification and so beneficial to all; and Prophesying greatly edifies the Church and so all should desire it to serve one another (14:4,5,31).
36. Tongues with **Interpretation** come nearest to Prophesying in edifying the Church (14:5).
37. Servants of God must minister to the congregation with definite words of Revelation, Knowledge, Prophesying or Doctrine, should they be a blessing to the members. These are basic gifts respectively for the three ministers presented in 1 Cor 12:28. Apostles are known for wisdom and knowledge, Prophets prophesy and Teachers expound doctrine. They are generally mobile ministers for inter-Church ministers. (Note Paul's words, "If I *come* unto you ...") (14:6).
38. Tongues without interpretation are like pipes, harps or trumpets, which, if they give uncertain sound, can confuse people. They will not understand whether to prepare for battle or banquet (14:7-11).
39. Tongues enhance private praying, thanksgiving, praise and worship (14:14,16,18).
40. Praying or singing in Tongues is permitted in the Church provided there is **interpretation**. The tongue-speaker or one of the listeners may interpret. Interpretation must be prayed for (14:13,15,27,28).
41. As predicted in the prophecy of Isaiah (28:7-14) and witnessed on the Day of Pentecost, the Lord might occasionally cause Tongues to serve as a warning sign to the truth-rejecting unbelievers. But Prophesying mainly serves the believers. As the believers in an assembly room are being edified by God's manifest presence realised through Prophesying, if one ignorant of salvation or spiritual gifts happens to enter the room, he

gets caught in God's electrifying presence and breaks down before Him in confession and worship (14:22-25).

42. In a New Testament Church gathering, **each member** should actively participate and contribute to the life of the Church, say, by a Psalm, Doctrine, a Tongue, a Revelation, or an Interpretation (14:26).
43. The ministers of God must encourage with a positive spirit the every-member-participation. **Negativism** kills the people (14:26,5,31,39).
44. In the Church gathering, there should be a **balanced** operation of the Gifts of the Spirit. For example, all the time should not be spent just in Tongues or Prophecy. Two or three may speak in tongues and two or three prophecy. Tongues must be interpreted and prophecy judged (14:27-29) .
45. **Team spirit** is a must for realising the full benefit of the Gifts of the Spirit. For example, I should not press to speak out and exhaust all that I want to say, if I realise another believer also has something to say. The rule should be, Maximum participation in the available time (14:29-31).
46. The ultimate result of the operation of the Gifts in the assembly is **knowledge** and **comfort**. Christ Jesus came as the Truth and God's first Comforter, and the Holy Spirit was sent as the Spirit of Truth and another or second Comforter (14:31; Jn 14:16).
47. The manifestation of the Gifts of the Spirit is never beyond **human control**. For the development of the gifts there must be human cooperation, and likewise for the discipline and decency in the operation of the same, there must be human control as per the Scriptural regulations (14:32-40).
48. Though gifts operate in a supernatural realm, there will be no **confusion** whatsoever when we let God have His way and flow with Him (14:33).
49. The **leaders** in the Church have a great responsibility to discipline the members after the divine order in the operation of gifts, by inspired guidance, and lead them to maturity (14:37,20).
50. Some folk choose to be **ignorant** of teachings concerning spiritual gifts. We cannot help them, but they will cause great harm if they come to any level of responsibility or leadership in the Church (12:1; 14:37,38).

(I completed this write-up while on board Airbus, Calcutta to Madras, on 16 February 1982. It's presented here now after 37 years, 2019, without any revision.)