

Let The Holy Spirit Use You

15-oct-17 Charlie Lehardy

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (NLT) - Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. 2 You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. 3 So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

4 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 5 There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. 6 God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. 8 To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. 9 The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. 11 It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

The Holy Spirit has a unique role in the Trinity, and in this era after the death and resurrection of Jesus, He has taken on a special purpose. It's that special purpose that is the foundation of the gifts of the Spirit.

"The Spirit's message is never, 'Look at me, listen to me; come to me; get to know me,' but always 'Look at Jesus, and see his glory; listen to Jesus and hear his word, go to Jesus and have life; get to know Jesus and taste his gift of joy and peace.'" J I Packer

"The truth we must grasp here is that our exercise of spiritual gifts is nothing more nor less than Christ himself ministering through his body to his body, to the Father, and to all mankind. From heaven Christ uses Christians as his mouth, his hands, his feet, even his smile; it is through us, his people, that he speaks and acts, meets, loves, and saves here and now in this world." J I Packer

John 20:22 (NLT) - Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." 22 Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

What exactly is a spiritual gift?

1. A spiritual gift is a special ability given by the Holy Spirit to build up the church and make Jesus known to the lost.

John 16:13-14 (NLT) - "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. (14) He will bring Me glory by telling you whatever He receives from Me."

2. A spiritual gift is the Holy Spirit's way of compensating for our weaknesses. They make ordinary people into vessels into which God pours His power.

Romans 8:26 (NLT) - And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.

1 Corinthians 1:27 (NLT) - Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful.

3. We tend to think of spiritual gifts as awesome demonstrations of God's power, but most of them are not very flashy. Many of the gifts Paul mentions involve acting with generosity, compassion, kindness, servanthood and love.

The Spiritual Gifts

(One way to begin exploring your spiritual gifts is to take an online inventory, [such as this one](#). Think of this as a way to start the conversation with the people who know you well, and in your personal time of prayer with God.)

Gifts of instruction:

- Preaching (Rom 12:6-8) (1 Peter 4:11)
- Evangelizing (explaining the Gospel message to unbelievers) (Rom 12:6-8) (Eph 4:11) (1 Peter 4:11)
- Teaching (explaining spiritual things to the church) (Rom 12:6-8) (1 Cor 12:28) (Eph 4:11) (1 Peter 4:11)
- Xenoglossia (explaining the Gospel message using a previously unlearned human language) (1 Cor 12:8-10)
- Counsel/judgment (providing spiritual and life guidance to members of the church) (Isaiah 11:1-2)

Gifts of discernment: (These gifts all involve special sensitivity to God's perspectives, God's will, and God's intentions.)

- Words of wisdom (1 Cor 12:8-10) (Isaiah 11:1-2)
- Words of knowledge (1 Cor 12:8-10) (Isaiah 11:1-2) (neither of these are defined by Paul)
- Understanding (Isaiah 11:1-2) (possibly, having God's perspective on truth vs. error)
- Fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:1-2) (a special sense of awe or reverence towards God)
- Distinguishing between good and evil spirits (1 Cor 12:8-10)

Gifts of leadership:

- Apostleship (1 Cor 12:28) (Eph 4:11) (some believe this gift only applied to the original disciples and Paul)
- Prophet (1 Cor 12:28) (Eph 4:11) (Paul's definition of prophesy had more to do with relaying messages to the church that God wanted them to hear either to build them up, to guide them,

or to correct them. A less common form of prophesy was a message from God about future events.)

- Pastor (Eph 4:11)
- Leadership (Romans 12:6-8) (this gift equips men and women to take on formal responsibilities in the church, such as elders and deacons, but it also was a way for the Holy Spirit to prepare individuals to do specific tasks, such as when Paul and Barnabas went out to establish new churches in Asia.)
- Faith (not the faith of all believers, but something greater) (1 Cor 12:8-10)
- Courage (Isaiah 11:1-2)

Gifts of serving:

- Giving (extraordinary financial generosity in support of the church and God's work)
- Administration (not literally management, but various types of service to the body) (1 Cor 12:28)
- Mercy (compassion, comfort, and support for those who are hurting, grieving or suffering) (Romans 12:6-8) (1 Peter 4:11)
- Helping, rendering service (being engaged in all manner of practical services that aid the church) (Romans 12:6-8) (1 Cor 12:28) (1 Peter 4:11)

Gifts of supernatural power:

- Healing (miraculous, immediate healing in response to prayer, not the application of medical science, normally, though it's my personal belief the work done by Christian doctors and nurses can be seen as a gift of the Holy Spirit as they seek to make themselves God's instrument of healing) (1 Cor 12:8-10) (1 Cor 12:28)
- Miracles (all manner of demonstrations of the power of God to intervene in nature, either to witness to unbelievers or to build up the church) (1 Cor 12:8-10) (1 Cor 12:28)

Gifts of inspired speech

- Prophecy (a message from God to the church, sometimes about the future, more often as a means of building up, correcting, or guiding) (Romans 12:6-8)
- Glossolalia (speaking an unknown, non-human language that only God can understand) (1 Cor 12:8-10) (1 Cor 12:28)
- Interpretation of tongues (translation of an utterance of glossolalia so that others present can understand its meaning) (1 Cor 12:8-10) (1 Cor 12:28)

"[Paul is concerned] for what profits or benefits the group. ... If one is exercising one's gifts in love, then one will think of the benefit to others first. Corinthian worship was at times an exercise not of a body but rather of a collection of isolated individuals all displaying their gifts, rather like merchants at a fair."
Ben Witherington III

MY NEXT STEP -- If you've never given much thought to your spiritual gifts, what next steps are you willing to take to try to discover them? Are you using your spiritual gift(s) effectively? How can you begin to have a conversation with the Holy Spirit about putting your gift(s) to work?

MORNING PRAYER -- Every morning when you wake up, start your day welcoming the Holy Spirit into your life, every aspect of it, and ask God to fill you with His Spirit. Click [HERE](#) for a copy of a prayer that John Stott used to pray every morning as soon as his feet hit the floor!

FOR MY PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD THIS WEEK:

1. If you haven't already, pick up or download a copy of the book *The God I Never Knew* (copies are available each weekend at Grace's Guest Services Center). Read chapters 12-17 this week, seeking to better understand the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
2. Read I Corinthians 12:1-11 and Romans 12:6-8. How have you seen these gifts in others? Think back over your journey of faith and try to remember the people God used as models, mentors and teachers. Think of the people who stepped into your life to help you at crucial times. How did you see the Holy Spirit influencing your own faith through theirs? Who are the people today who play important roles in your spiritual growth? All of us have been encouraged and strengthened in our faith by others. Spend some time thanking the Holy Spirit for bringing those influential people into your life.
3. Re-read I Corinthians 12:1-11 and Romans 12:6-8, and this time recall times when you may have had a personal opportunity to teach, to lead, to serve, to share your faith story with someone, to give godly advice, to extend mercy to someone in need, to pray with someone in a time of crisis, or to give sacrificially of your time or money to support the ministry of the church. In those experiences, did the Holy Spirit give you confirmation in your heart or through the words of others that he was using you in a very special way? What might those experiences reveal to you about your gifts?
4. Sometimes, fear keeps us from using our gifts. In Revelation 12:10, God calls Satan "the accuser," which means that Satan wages a kind of psychological warfare on us to discourage us. What fears or concerns keep you from using your gifts? If you have sensed the Holy Spirit nudging you towards some specific area of ministry or service, what has held you back? Look at what Paul said to Timothy: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline." (2 Timothy 1:7) If fear has been holding you back from exercising your spiritual gifts, ask the Holy Spirit to help you overcome your fears.
5. Spend some time talking to God about your relationship with Him. Where would you like to see yourself grow in your faith? What would it look like for you to live more fully surrendered to God's Spirit?
6. Read John 11:1-40. Have you been a witness to a miracle of healing? Do you believe it's possible for God to perform miracles today? Do you believe it's possible for the Holy Spirit to speak prophetically in the church today? These are important and difficult questions for all of us, and they frequently define the outer boundaries of our faith, of what we believe is and isn't possible. Spend some time praying that the Holy Spirit will deepen and widen your faith to new possibilities.
7. Next week we will continue this series by exploring in depth what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Read ahead what the Bible teaches about the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. What experiences

have you had with being filled with the Holy Spirit? Share your thoughts and experiences with Pastor Dave in the comments of the “Hello” card at www.myGrace.church!

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK: Mental Health Sufferers- *Pray for those struggling with cognitive challenges including anxiety and depression. HopeSpring and for all who suffer the wounds of mental illness to receive counsel and hope-building relationships. May the light of the gospel truth dispel the lies and oppressive power of Satan and for the comfort and hope of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*