

Biblical Theology

Unit 6: Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Lesson 6: Gifts of the Spirit I

General Considerations

Definition: A spiritual gift is an ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church.

1. Some gifts are related to natural abilities while others are more supernatural.

- Related to natural abilities: teaching, showing mercy, administration.
- More supernatural abilities: prophecy, healing, distinguishing spirits.

- 1 Corinthians 12:28
 - 1. apostle
 - 2. prophet
 - 3. teacher
 - 4. miracles
 - 5. kinds of healings
 - 6. helps
 - 7. administration'
 - 8. Tongues
- Ephesians 4:11
 - (1). apostle
 - (2). prophet
 - 14. evangelist'
 - 15. pastor-teacher
- 1 Corinthians 7:7
 - 16. marriage
 - 17. celibacy

- Many believe there are far more spiritual gifts than are listed in scriptures.
 - **1 Peter 4:8-11** - *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

- 1 Corinthians 12:8-10
 - 9. word of wisdom
 - 10. word of knowledge
 - 11. faith
 - (5). gifts of healing
 - (4). miracles
 - (2). prophecy
 - 12. distinguishing between spirits
 - (8). tongues
 - 13. interpretation of tongues

- Romans 12:6-8
 - (2). prophecy
 - 18. serving
 - (3). teaching
 - 19. encouraging
 - 20. contributing
 - 21. leadership
 - 22. mercy

2. All spiritual gifts are empowered by the Holy Spirit

- **1 Corinthians 12:11** - *All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*
- **Ephesians 4:3-4** - *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit,*

3. The purposes of spiritual gifts are to glorify Christ and carry out his ministry.

- **John 16:14** - *He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive...*
- **Acts 1:8** - *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*
- **Ephesians 4:12** - *to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up*

4. The purpose of spiritual gifts are to edify the believers.

- **Ephesians 4:11-14** - *to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son*
- **1 Corinthians 14:4** - *Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church.*
- **1 Corinthians 12:7** - *the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*
- **1 Corinthians 14:26** - *What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.*

Prophecy

Definition: Speaking something that has been revealed by God.

- 1. Prophecy had distinct roles throughout biblical history.**
 - Old Testament Prophets delivered direct words from God to mankind (Deut 18:19; 1 Samuel 8:7; 1 Kings 20:36)
 - New Testament Apostles delivered direct words from God to mankind.
 - Old Testament Prophets and New Testament Apostles commanded by God to record certain prophetic messages as Holy Scripture. (Numbers 22:38; Deuteronomy 18:18-20; Jeremiah 1:9; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Corinthians 13:3; 2 Peter 3:2)

- 2. The gift of prophecy does not entail words of divine authority, but messages revealed by God.**
 - Original Greek uses form of word “prophet” (prophetes) that simply expresses formal function of declaring but does not possess divine authority.
 - Involves human words revealed by the Holy Spirit but not the words of God himself.
 - Should not be stated as “Thus saith the Lord.”

- 3. Prophecy is always subject to the authority of God’s word and should be tested thusly.**
 - **2 Timothy 3:16-17** - All Scripture [NOT PROPHECY] is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
 - **1 Corinthians 14:37-38** - If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:20-21** - Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good,

- 4. The gift of prophecy serves as sign for the edification to believers.**
 - **1 Corinthians 14:22-23** - Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?
 - **1 Corinthians 14:3-4** - the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church.

- 5. Believers should seek, desire, and encourage prophecy.**
 - **1 Corinthians 14:1** - Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.
 - **1 Corinthians 14:5** - I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy.

- 6. Practical considerations of prophesy in the church.**
 - May be in a formal or non-formal setting.
 - Should reconsider charismatic approach of emotional experiences.
 - Needs to be distinguished from speaking in tongues.
 - Tongues is God-directed, prophecy is man directed.
 - Should be distinguished from teaching.
 - Teaching has more authority, as it is based on Scripture.
 - Should not be used on vocational basis.
 - Must always be tested by scripture.
 - Must always be tested by outcome.

Teaching

Definition: Teaching is the ability to explain Scripture and apply it to people's lives.

- Differs from prophecy in that it is not via revelation but via the scriptures.
 - **Acts 15:35** - *But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.*
 - **Acts 18:11** - *So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.*
 - **2 Timothy 2:2** - *And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*

Words of Wisdom / Knowledge

- Only mentioned one time (1 Corinthians 12:8)
- Some believe these gifts are subcategories of prophecy while others believe they are subcategories of teaching.
 - **1 Corinthians 12:8-10** - *To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.*

Discussion Questions

1. Before this lesson, were you aware of your own spiritual giftedness or did you feel gifts were only for certain believers? How has the Spirit gifted you?
2. What do you think could be done to help churches avoid having controversies and even divisions over the question of spiritual gifts?
3. Have you ever experienced a gift of prophecy as defined in this lesson? How can you test whether your experience with prophecy was legitimate?