

Parson to Person

1 Corinthians 12 – Part 2 (The Gifts of the Holy Spirit)

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:4–11 NKJV).

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The activities and work of the Holy Spirit are controversial and contested. However, the fact that the gifts of the Spirit are included in the inspired text of Scripture indicates that they are to be considered valid and valuable. The controversy may concern when, where, with whom, and how the gifts apply, but we cannot deny the truth of Scripture and therefore must give heed to the truths contained—and make every effort to rightly divide the Word.

No Dispensational Change?

We have learned that there has been no dispensational change since the Day of Pentecost; this, then, includes the gifts and work

of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the gifts of the Spirit are for the Church today, are intended to bring edification to the body of Christ, and are designed for the glory of God.

The Servant Purposes of Holy Spirit Gifts

In the opening comments regarding the gifts (charisma), we learn that “[t]here are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all” (vss. 4–6).

“*Diversities of gifts*” suggests that there are many gifts, that the gifts are distinguished one from the other, but that these gifts are provided to believers by the one and only person of the Holy Spirit.

“*Differences of ministries*” suggests that the variety of gifts are given in service. Ministry is a servant activity! Moreover, this servant ministry is an intended extension of the work of Jesus (“*the same Lord*”).

“*Diversities of activities*” suggests “works.” Therefore, the “work” accomplished is purposed by God—according to His will and for His glory.

The Godhead

The presence of the Father (“*the same God*”), the Son (“*the same Lord*”), and the Holy Spirit (“*the same Spirit*”) is evident in the text. Therefore, we see the triune nature of the Godhead manifest in the service-filled operation of the gifts. Paul correctly asserts that

there is only one God (the Father), only one Lord (our Savior Jesus Christ), and only one Holy Spirit. Moreover, he demonstrated that within the Godhead there is perfect unity, harmony, will, and purpose.

Purpose: The Edification of the Church

It should come as no surprise that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as manifest in the Church Age, are beneficial to the Church. For *“[t]he manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all”* (vs. 7). This should help believers recognize that these gifts are given to and through the Church throughout the Church Age—not just in the first century. Moreover, it is of note that the various gifts are given to/through specified individuals, according to the purposes of God, as functionally administered by God, according to His will. *“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills”* (vs. 11).

God desires to glorify Himself through a healthy, functional, and edified church. When a body of believers is built up in the faith, that body is best equipped to serve others, share the Gospel, and disciple the nations—as directed. Therefore, an indirect by-product of a healthy, functional, and strengthened Church is the blessing the Body of Christ provides the world.

The Diversity and Distribution of the Gifts

Paul listed a number of the Holy Spirit’s gifts. He also gave insight into their purpose and function.

Careful listing helps distinguish the gifts, one from another. Moreover, showing that God distributes the gifts to separate

persons within the body (as we will see in vss. 11–31) is needed in order to call the believers to unification and mutual service. Sovereign distribution discourages independence and self-exaltation. Furthermore, adulation towards the men and women God chooses to use is misdirected praise. All the glory belongs to the Lord!

The Gifts

a. “To one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit.”

The word of wisdom is supernaturally communicated wisdom. It does not come as the result of age, experience, or process-gained information. It is a what-to-do, how-to-do set of instructions granted by God for His purposes.

b. “To another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit.”

The word of knowledge is supernaturally communicated information. It does not come as the result of age, experience, or process. It is information needed for ministry service. In my experience, the word of knowledge often works in tandem with the word of wisdom. Therefore, knowledge is given, and what to do with it or how to act upon it is given by the word of wisdom.

c. “To another faith by the same Spirit.”

The gift of faith is a supernaturally empowering faith. It should not be confused with the illuminating faith given every man—enabling trust in the Lord (see Ephesians 2:8–9). The gift of faith enables the believer to step up or out in great courage. It

empowers the believer(s) to step up or out to great acts and exploits. In my experience, the gift of faith works in tandem with the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom.

d. “To another gifts of healings by the same Spirit.”

The gifts of healings are the supernatural work of God whereby a person is used to bring about physical recovery from those things that harm or afflict the body. Healings generally occur in process over time. Some might suggest that mental, emotional, and/or spiritual healings may also occur as the result of God working through the gifts of healings. In my experience, the gifts of healings often work in tandem with the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom.

e. “To another the working of miracles.”

Miracles generally occur instantaneously and visibly. The working of miracles defies the laws of nature. In my experience, the working of miracles may work in tandem with the gifts of healings, the gift of faith, the word of knowledge, and/or the word of wisdom. Miracles are often physical but should not be limited to the physical dimension.

f. “To another prophecy.”

Prophecy is best described as verbal or written communication wherein the information is either the foretelling or proclamation of information given by God. At times this information comes via an overwhelming Spirit-inspired utterance in seemingly spontaneous overflow. On other occasions the information is given through insights (potentially in tandem with the gift of the word of

knowledge) but provided to others under non-spontaneous natural means. In my experience, prophecy works in tandem with faith, the word of knowledge, and/or the word of wisdom.

g. “To another discerning of spirits.”

Discerning of spirits is the God-given ability to recognize the invisible influences working in the dimension of the spirit. This gift, like other gifts, is generally working in tandem with both the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom.

h. “To another different kinds of tongues.”

Different kinds of tongues are communication languages given whereby the one exercising the gift is provided the supernatural ability to praise, pray, or sing through non-natural, non-academic means. Some believe the “tongue” may be the language of men and/or angels (see 1 Corinthians 13:1). However, without ruling out the language of angels, the “tongue” may be a human dialect (see Acts 2:7–12) provided by God for supernatural communication with Him (see 1 Corinthians 14:2). In my experience, the exercise of the “tongue” most often works in tandem with the gift of faith, the working of miracles, the word of knowledge, and/or the word of wisdom.

i. “To another the interpretation of tongues.”

The interpretation of tongues is the supernatural ability to understand or translate a “tongue.” A verbal translation of the “tongue” is for the edification of the Church (see 1 Corinthians 14:5, 9–14, 26–27). In my experience, the interpretation of a tongue most often works in tandem with the gift of faith, the

working of miracles, the word of knowledge, and/or the word of wisdom.

I love you all,
Pastor Paul