

Bible Studies

Gifts of the Spirit

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The Gifts of the Spirit are supernatural abilities, imparted by the Spirit for special ministries.

Read 1 Corinthians 12v1-3

It is often noted that the things about which Paul did not want his readers to be ignorant, are things about which there is still confusion. Paul wants his readers to have real understanding.

Before listing the gifts, Paul makes two observations;

1

First the gifts of the Spirit have nothing to do with paganism or the occult. (Most of the gifts are counterfeited in the occult world)

Is this a reason not to practice them?

What assurance does Jesus give us in Luke 11v11-13?

2

Secondly, Paul says that you can only say “Jesus is Lord”, through the work of the Holy Spirit. The words can be said (but you’d be surprised how often they can’t) but they can only ever be words if the Spirit is not there. We cannot be saved without the assistance of the Spirit, Romans 8v9. Therefore we all *have the Spirit*, but this is not the same as the *baptism in the Spirit*. John 14v17 Paul’s main point here is that the Spirit always glorifies Jesus. John 16v14. If our use of the gifts does not bring glory to Jesus, then our use is wrong.

Read 1 Corinthians 12v4-7

Paul speaks of the Gifts of the Spirit, (Gk Spirituals) in three terms; Charismata, grace gifts; Diakonia, service gifts and Energemata, power gifts. There are not three different types of gifts, but description that fit each of the gifts. Paul emphasises the diversity of the gifts.

How many gifts are there?	1 Corinthians 12v8-10
How many gifts are there?	1 Corinthians 12v28
How many gifts are there?	1 Corinthians 12v29-31
How many gifts are there?	Romans 12v6-8
How many gifts are there?	Ephesians 4v11

Depending on how you count, there are up to 20 gifts of the Spirit. The same words for the gifts are used in each of the above lists, but obviously the five fold ministry gifts of Ephesians are different from the nine gifts of 1 Corinthians 12. Some gifts overlap, prophecy and encouragement can be the same, 1 Cor 14v3, or different, Rom 12v6-7. Do gifts of healings, require a gift of faith to operate? Paul emphasises *diversity* of gifts, *singularity* of Spirit and *unity* in the use.

Division of the nine gifts

Word of Wisdom		
Word of Knowledge	Revelation	Knowing Gifts
Discerning of Spirits		
Faith		
Miracles	Power	Acting Gifts
Healings		
Prophecy		
Tongues	Utterance	Speaking Gifts
Interpretation		



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**What qualifications are needed to receive the Gifts of the Spirit?**

They are gifts not rewards! No criteria of maturity or knowledge are ever given. Rather they are;

1 Corinthians 12v11

Hebrews 2v4

Ephesians 4v7

Because they are only gifts, they cannot make the user superior to someone else.

How does 1 Corinthians 4v7 explain this?

When Paul writes to the Corinthians he is writing to a Church that lacked no gift, 1 Cor 1v7. Paul does not need to explain what the gifts are only how they should be used correctly. (this is why a chapter on love is sandwiched between two on the gifts.)

What does this imply for us?

Just because God gives you a gift does not mean you will automatically use it right. It also tells us that to a large extent we control how we use the gifts. Operating in a Gift of the Spirit does not mean that God automatically endorses our actions.

Have you seen examples of gifts used wrongly?**Is a gift a natural part of my personality.**

I.e. if I am a naturally clever person, does that mean I have the gift of wisdom. Or if I am a good preacher do I have the gift of Prophecy?

No God's gifts are supernatural abilities that he puts in your life. They do not rely on your natural abilities, but on God's supernatural power. Sometimes a gift will supplement your own ability.

**Is a gift given for you personal use?****Read 1 Corinthians 12v7**

It is very clear that the Gifts of the Spirit are give for the common good, ie for the up building of the body of Christ. In a very real sense the church has the gift, which an individual holds and uses on their behalf.

**Is the gift your own possession?**

Like a passport or a bank card, the gift is never yours to own, only to use.

**How many gifts can a person have?**

We may all at different times operate in each gift, but in practice there will be one, two or a few gifts that we will regularly use.

**Do I have a gift?**

For Paul it was inconceivable that a believer should be giftless. I agree. If you do not operate in one of the gifts, then two things are possible; 1] you have not received the gift(s) God has fore you and need to seek them. Or 2] you have not recognised the gift you in fact already have.

**How do I receive a gift?****Read 1 Corinthians 12v31, 14v1, 12**

You ask, seek desire. Then you do what your hand finds to do. Often the gifts come to fill a need we face.

**Do I need the Gifts?**

Only if you really want to serve the Lord!

Are some gifts more important? 1 Corinthians 12v31

The order in which the gifts are given does not indicate their importance. For Paul, it was the gifts that most built up the Church, that were more important. I guess it depends what our needs are.

What does the Bible want us to pursue in connection with our desire for the gifts?**Read 1 Corinthians 13v4-7, 14v1****Why does Paul not want us to be ignorant of Spiritual Gifts?**

Bible Studies

Word of Wisdom



To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, 1 Cor 12:8

This is called a message or word, (proclamation or declaration), rather than a gift because it is a spoken gift. It does not make the recipient wiser, but gives God's wisdom into a situation.

It provides guidance in solving problems or difficulties. It applies the wisdom of God and the Word of God, to a given need. It gives God's perspective of how a difficulty should be handled. A Word of Knowledge reveals a fact, but a Word of Wisdom reveals God's will and purpose, it gives direction and guidance. In this it can be similar to prophecy.

Wisdom is the application of knowledge, in this case not our knowledge but God's.

Scripture associates Wisdom with;

<i>interpreting dreams and vision</i>	<i>Acts 7v10</i>
<i>skill in managing affairs</i>	<i>Acts 6v3</i>
<i>Dealing with unbelievers</i>	<i>Colossians 4v5</i>
<i>Explaining christian truth</i>	<i>Colossians 1v28</i>
<i>Godly living</i>	<i>James 1v5,</i>
<i>Applying Scripture</i>	<i>Matthew 13v54</i>
<i>Defending our faith</i>	<i>Luke 21v15</i>



Read James 3v13-18

What are the two kinds of wisdom?

How would you describe heavenly wisdom?

If someone operated this gift what will the outcome be?

If someone is especially wise does this mean they have the Word of Wisdom?

Does the Word of Wisdom rely on human wisdom?

As we have seen the gifts of the Spirit are not natural abilities, they are direct from God and do not rely on our talents. In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul is very keen to contrast human wisdom with God's wisdom. Some people are natural very wise, this too is a gift from God, but it is not the Message of Wisdom.

Goes God's wisdom always seem wisdom to us?

Examples



Read Haggai 1v1-2

The people had come back from Babylon to rebuild the Temple, after c20 years it was still not done, Haggai suddenly got insight into what was going wrong.

What did he say?

This was not something the people were saying, part of the problem was that the temple had not been mentioned for years. They said it in their hearts and actions. Haggai got insight into the situation by the Holy Spirit, then he tells the people what they need to do.



Read Acts 6v1-6

This was the first major internal problem, the Apostles had to deal with.

What would have happened if the problem had been ignored?

What did they do?

Who set the qualifications for the seven?

Who chose them?

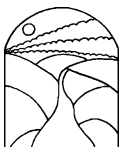
We are not told this was a word of wisdom but it certainly fits.

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Read Acts 15:13-21

Another problem, what to do with gentile believers, should they convert to Judaism to become followers of Jesus? There was a debate in which the whole subject discussed.

Was a vote taken?

Instead James stands up and gives God's wisdom, it is recognised as such and the issue is settled.

Was this a word of wisdom? *It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us Acts 15:28* indicates that James' speech came as a gift of the Spirit.

The OT is full of words of wisdom, times when God gave direction on how something should be done, Joshua at Jericho *Deu 34:9*, David against the Philistines at Raphaim, *1 Sam 5:23*, or Jehosaphat, sending out his singers first, *2 Chr 20:15*.



As a young and inexperienced pastor, I had to take over a homegroup/Bible study for 6 weeks, several of the people resented an outsider leading the group, they wanted to do, but were not suitable, consequently each week, three of them tried to disrupt the group. Each week God gave me a different way to deal with the attempted disruption. Each week peace and order were maintained in a way that did not offend or put anyone down. It was not until much later that I realised that I had received words of wisdom.

Do you think the message of wisdom is often recognised for what it is? Does this matter?

In what circumstances might you need a word of wisdom?

Can you remember a situation where you have received a Word?

What kind of situation do you think a word of wisdom might be needed?



Jesus promised that when we stood on trial for our faith, or having to give an answer for our faith, we would be told what to say, this is another example of a word of wisdom. *Luke 21:12-15*. Note the goal was not always to bring an equal by that the gospel might be preached *v13*.

Stephen was a good example of this when he witnessed about Jesus. *But they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke. Acts 6:10*

Is a word of wisdom always on a spiritual level or can it work in secular situations?

This gift is often found in Church leadership, Those who have responsibilities need this gift badly.

Is it exclusively for leadership?

If someone was always claiming a word of wisdom to justify their actions, but their schemes always went wrong or caused grief;

What would you say?

Do words of wisdom need to be tested?

The Bible is God's wisdom, as is the message of the Cross, a grounding in the Scriptures will help you recognise and administer this gift correctly.

How do you know if something was a Word of Wisdom? Matthew 11:19

Bible Studies

Word of Knowledge



To another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12v8

Like wisdom, knowledge is also described as a message, word, proclamation or declaration. It is a specific word for a specific occasion, a fragment of knowledge for your temporary need. It does not make the recipient especially clever. Nor is it produced by learning, study or careful consideration. It is a revelation from God.

Two application of the Word of Knowledge



It is the revelation, by God, of a fact past of present that you did not know.

Examples;

John 4v16-18

John 1v48

Matthew 9v4

2 Kings 6v8-10

Acts 5v1-3

In each of these cases, information was received about something, which could otherwise not have been known. This is a Word of Knowledge.

Please note in the first example, how carefully Jesus used the knowledge. Knowledge is a dangerous thing, it must be used with wisdom. Sometimes God tells you something so that you can pray, not so that you can share it with everyone. Much damage has been done by failing to recognise this. It is not an excuse for being a busybody.

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:13

And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6:18

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm. O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. Psalm 139:1-4

This gift is also connected with Prophecy *and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!" 1 Corinthians 14v25*

When do you think this gift would be helpful?

Counselling	<i>Reveals the problem.</i>
Evangelism	<i>eg Nathanael John 1:49 1 Corinthians 14:25.</i>
Intercession	<i>Being told when some one needs prayer.</i>
Giving	<i>Knowing when there is a need.</i>
Spiritual Warfare	<i>When and where the Enemy is active.</i>
Encouraging	<i>We don't always see when people are down.</i>
Rebuking	<i>Finding the root of something that needs to be dealt with.</i>

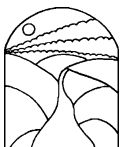
Will God reveal all your secrets to someone else? Many people live in fear of this, and it does on occasions happen. If you are fearful of this, then maybe the Holy Spirit is convicting you. If you deal with the sin you need have no fear. We are a family, we are to deal gently with one another, not to condemn or embarrass one

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another. The gift is given to help one another not to bring condemnation.

Does God ever do anything that is not for our good?



If someone came to you and said the Spirit told me that Mr brown has a sin in his life. **What would you do?**

Most people associate a word of Knowledge with the preacher who stands up and says, “*there is a person here with a bad back*”. I believe this is a valid expression of the gift, but I can quote no Scripture as an example, it is certainly no the major thrust of the gift.

What kind of knowledge do you think God might want to give? For what reasons would he give the information?

During my time in Jerusalem, there were several groups who worked against Christians, on several occasion I walked into the back of the church, saw just the back of someone’s head and knew they were a plant, to spy on us. Later they would start to ask questions, the wrong questions “*do you have any Jewish believers here?*” but by the Spirit we were prewarned.

Who needs this Gift?

How would you like to use this Gift?



It brings knowledge into God’s word.

One of the jobs of the Holy Spirit is to led us in all truth. John 15v26,14v26,16v13 Some people consider this the most important aspect of this gift, it brings understanding into the Bible and into the mysteries of God.

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, Colossians 1:9-10

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand (know) what God has freely given us. 1 Corinthians 2:12



Read 1 Corinthians 14v6&26

Here the Word of Knowledge is clearly an insight into the meaning of a verse.

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, 1 Corinthians 2:4 Pauls message did not contain demonstrations of the Spirit’s power, it was a demonstration of the Spirit’s power.

When I started out a preacher I was quite young, I was very self conscience of my age. Paul’s words, *Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, 1 Timothy 4:12* reassured me. I thought he was saying “*you Ephesians, Timothy might be young but your not to look down on him*”. On day I realised that it was *Timothy* who had to act, *he was to let no one look down on him*, I too had to act in this way. This word of Knowledge empowered my ministry.

The knowledge that the Lord most wants us to have, is that of Himself, His will, His Word, the requirements of the Gospel. This will truly edify the whole body.

Bible Studies

Faith



To another faith by the same Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:9

Faith is the third Gift of the Spirit recorded in Corinthians. It is the first of what are sometimes called power gifts. Faith is the only Gift of the Spirit which is also a Fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5v22 Faith & Faithfulness are the same Greek word).

Faith is an essential part of the Christian walk

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Hebrews 11:6

Three kinds of faith;



Saving Faith *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— Ephesians 2:8*



Serving Faith This is the faith that enable us to live a Christian life and to please God, Faith that God is in control, faith that He will see us through, Faith that He will work through us.



Special Faith This is Faith that Corinthians call a gift of the Spirit. It is the faith to meet extra ordinary situation.

Are the *fruit* Faith and the *gift* Faith the same kind of faith?

Clearly the nature of the Gifts of the Spirit is such that not all have the Gift of faith,
Does this mean that not every one need have the fruit of faith?

Saving faith is a gift, special faith is a gift, Is serving faith a gift?

Yes it is, but more often I would say it is a choice.

Jesus said “*Have faith in God,*” Mark 11:22, this is something we must all have, the Gift of faith goes beyond this.

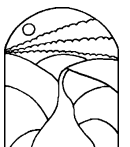


Special Faith

1 Cor 13 is a continuation of Paul’s teaching about the place and use of the Gifts.
How does 1 Corinthians 13v1 describe faith?

Donald Gee described it like this “*a quality of faith, sometimes called by our older theologians the “Faith of Miracles.” It would seem to come upon certain of God’s servants in times of special crisis or opportunity, in such mighty power that they are lifted right out of the realm of even natural and ordinary faith in God. And have a divine certainty put within their souls that triumphs over everything... It was faith of this particular quality of which He could say that a grain of it would remove a mountain. Matt 17v20. A little of that Divine Faith, which is an attribute of the Almighty, dropped into the soul of man- what miracles it can produce!*”

More simply :*trusting God for a specific need, with the divinely given assurance that he will meet it.* Stanley Horton.



This kind of faith is seen in Hebrews 11, were men carried out great deeds in God's service.

An example of this kind of faith is found in Elijah



Read 1 kings 18v33-38 & 41-46

Or when Moses stretched out his hand over the Red sea, or when Jesus said to the centurion, "go it will be done for you". Matthew 8v13.



Often this faith is associated with other Gifts of the Spirit, like healings, miracles and discerning of spirits. It is faith that raises to the occasion.

It is also linked with,

<i>blessing,</i>	<i>eg Isaac</i>
<i>protection,</i>	<i>eg Daniel</i>
<i>provision,</i>	<i>eg Elijah</i>
<i>perseverance</i>	<i>eg Jeremiah</i>
<i>winning victories</i>	<i>eg David</i>
<i>to pray</i>	<i>eg Elijah</i>
<i>taking a step of faith</i>	<i>eg Abraham, Peter</i>

What areas might this faith be expressed?

The gift of faith enables us to trust God for something he wants us to do.

An example of this is George Muller. He felt led by God to open an orphanage, only he had no money, but because God called, he did it anyway. Times are recorded when the orphans sat around an empty table and thanked God for food they didn't have. A knock on the door would come and food would be given from the most unexpected sources.

It was faith that enabled George Muller to do the impossible.

Harold Horton defines it like this; *Those who possess Faith the Gift of the Spirit believe God in such a way that God honours their word as His own and miraculously brings it to pass, "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.* Mark 11:23

We must be careful, for we do not have the right to order God, nor to presume upon Him. The Gift of Faith only ever speaks out God's will never man's. Such faith is in very great need in the Church today.



Sharing Faith

There is another way in which the gift of Faith operates. It is the Gift that enables an impartation of faith into the body of Christ. It communicates faith, nurtures and releases faith in others and so builds up the Church.



Read Galatians 3v5

When Paul preached, faith arose in the Galatians, the believed and the Holy Spirit moved. Maybe it is this Gift that Paul had in mind when he wrote *I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—* Romans 1:11

The ability to stir faith in others is also very much needed today.

Bible Studies

Gifts of Healing



To another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:9

In the Greek both words are in the plural *Gifts of Healings*. The Human body is very complex and there are many kinds of Illness; bacteria, virus, cancer. Bits of us that break, strain, things that wear out or stop working. Chromosomes and birth defects. Mental and emotional Illness. The causes of illness are equally varied, sometimes the cause is simply physical. But today Doctors recognise that people get sick because of stress, anxiety, frustration, or other Psychosomatic reasons. To these we can add more spiritual causes; sin, demonic activity, disobedience, unforgiveness, bitterness. Cf. 1 Corinthians 11v29-30

The need for healing is for the whole person

Body, Soul, Spirit.
Physical, Mental, Emotional.
Conscious, Subconscious, Unconscious.

The Gifts of Healings are for manifold needs.

Some take the plural *Gifts of Healings*, to mean that each healing is a new gift from God. Other believe it means that different people get used to heal different kinds of illness. Still others that it is the sick person who receives the gift. Mat 9v22, Acts 3v6

What do you think?

Surely he took up our infirmities ... and by his wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:4-5
Praise the LORD ... He ... heals all my diseases Psalm 103v3
I am the LORD, who heals you." Exodus 15:26

Have you ever been healed? Do you know of anyone who has?

The Gifts of healings are part of the Church's inheritance. They were a major part of Jesus, Peter and Paul's ministry.

They will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." Mark 16:18
Is any one of you sick? ... And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. James 5:14-15

The Method;

Mark 6v5.
Luke 11v14
Luke 6v10
John 9v6
Matthew 8v8
Matthew 9v20



What conclusion can you draw about Jesus method of healing?
What different ways might God choose to heal someone?

Did Jesus ever pray for the sick?

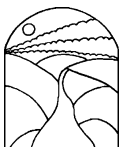
Because of this some people believe that prayer for the sick comes first, then comes laying on of hands and healing. *His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. Acts 28:8*

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Three things that Jesus did (that we often don't)

1

He asked them what they wanted? Mark 10v51

It was obvious to Jesus what Bartimaeus wanted, so why did he ask?

Asking People engages faith, this should be part of our practice in healing.

Desire → Faith → Expectation.

2

He talked about Faith

Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you."

And the woman was healed from that moment. Matthew 9:22

Jesus did some bazaar things when he healed people, why?

3

He told them to sin no more

Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop

sinning or something worse may happen to you." John 5:14

Do you think there is a connection between healing and forgiveness of sin?

The Bible associates oil with Healing.

James 5v14

Mark 6:13

The oil has no magical properties (in Jesus day it was thought of as a medicine) it is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, a declaration of faith, and an act of obedience.

In James 5 why is it important that the sick person take the initiative?

There are no formulas in healing. And no rules about 'who has to have the faith' (and whose failure it is if no one gets healed). Instead we fix our eyes firmly on God who alone can heal the sick.

Too often like the cripple at the pool of Bethesda John 5, we are looking to a formula or a man when Jesus is there to heal.

Why don't people always get healed?

For many of the reason people get sick, (unbelief, unforgiveness, sin etc) and often for no reason I ever understand. I don't know.

If someone is not healed;

Don't pretend.

Affix no blame.

Ask God for Guidance.

Keep exercising faith.

Keep praying.

The bottom line is that God is Sovereign. The command for us, especially those who have this gift is to pray for the sick, healing is God's business. Have Faith, Expect healing.

Healing and Evangelism

Healing is an evangelistic gift, though do not assume people to come to faith even if dramatically healed. Offer to pray with those who are sick, tell them the gospel.

?

How do you know if you have the gift of healing?

What might stop you exercising this gift?

We must use the gifts God gives us. If you have the gift of healing, pray every day for an opportunity to use the gift.

Should only people with the gift of healing pray of people to be healed?

Bible Studies

Miracles



To another miraculous powers, 1 Corinthians 12:10

The KJV call this *The working of Miracles*. Like healings, the Greek for both words is plural, *the workings of miracles*. The word *workings* in the Greek is *energema* (from which we get energy) cf v4, The word *miracles* is the word *Dunamis* (from which we get words like Dynamic, Dynamo). One definition of this gift calls it 'deeds of power' or miraculous miracles.

A hint of what Paul is getting at is found in Ephesians 1v19-20 *and his incomparably great power (dunamis) for us who believe. That power is like the working (energema) of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,*

Paul speaks of his apostolic ministry like this *To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, (energema) which so powerfully (dunamis) works in me.* Colossians 1:29

What is a Miracle?

Works contrary to nature, accomplishments of the impossible, sudden and unaccountable reversals of the order to which we are accustomed. Harold Horton.



Supernatural powers that go beyond what man can do.

For example;

*Parting the Red sea
Manna in the dessert
Three men in the furnace
Turning Water into wine
Feeding the 5000
Walking on Water*

These are associated with **protection** and **provision**, they display the Glory of God. They are given to enable God's will to be fulfilled.

Often people try to explain how these miracles can be scientifically explained, such an activity is futile. For example, the Quail that the Israelites eat in the dessert do migrate and a wind change could dump them in the Israelite camp. But if by an amazing coincidence they arrived at just the right time, isn't it still a miracle? Sometimes the miracle is in the timing.



The word energema is used almost exclusively of God's activities, (Matthew 14v2, Mark 6v14, Galatians 3v5, Philipians 3v21) or Satan's activities (2 Thessalonians 2v7,9, Ephesians 2v2) It has been suggested that this gift is especially operative in the conflict between God and Satan.

*Acts 13v9-11
Acts 5v5 cf v3*

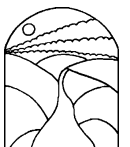
If this is so it would include the work of casting out demons.

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3**Another form of this gift is raising the dead.***Acts 9v40**Acts 20v9-12*

It is often pointed out that Acts records very few of these kinds of natural miracles, but it does record enough that we should expect them too. It is a relatively rare gift.

Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead? Acts 26:8

God is the God of the impossible - It is God who says what is possible.

“Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and out-stretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. Jeremiah 32:17 He also said *Nothing will be impossible for you, Matthew 17v20.* If God exists why shouldn't he do miracles?

?**What miracles have you seen or heard about?**

Many of us suffer from a small dose of Agnosticism, we do not believe that God will act on our behalf, somehow we believe God is weak, he needs our help. This unbelief dampens our faith and expectation and in the end fulfils itself. (If you don't believe in miracles you are less likely to experience them.)

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him. 2 Chronicles 16v8 KJV

But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin. Micah 3:8

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

There are frequent references to Signs and Wonders in the NT;

*John 4v48**Mark 16v17-18**Acts 2v22**Acts 2v48**Acts 14v3*

These are often Healings but also include Miracles, they help boost our faith. Sometimes they work in evangelism, they are “God's way of advertising”.

As someone once said “Remember, It's easy when God does it.”

Is everyone who does miracles from God?**2 Thessalonians 2v9***LORD, I have heard of your fame;**I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD.**Renew them in our day, in our time make them known;**in wrath remember mercy. Habakuk 3:2*

Bible Studies

Prophecy



To another prophecy, 1 Corinthians 12:10.

Prophecy has a very high profile; *Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.* 1 Corinthians 14:1.

Consider;

- Numbers 11v27-29*
- Joel 2v28a*
- 1 Corinthians 14v31*
- 1 Corinthians 14v39*

**Based on the above would you say prophecy was a restricted gift?
When Paul says, you can all prophecy, does that mean that all will prophecy?**

Some distinctions need to be made, Just because from time to time you prophecy, does not necessarily mean you have the gift of Prophecy, and Just because you have the Gift of Prophecy it does not automatically make you a prophet.

Prophecy speaks out to men, what God wants to say to them.
The Nature of Prophecy;

- 2 Peter 1v20-21*
- Jeremiah 1v5-9*
- Deuteronomy 18v18*

Who speaks?

Prophecy has two parts; **Forthtelling** and **Foretelling**. Forthtelling speaks what is on God's heart for us now, foretelling speaks what God is going to do in the future. often the two overlap.



Forthtelling

Paul expands on this kind of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14, he says;
But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their

- 1** *strengthening,*
- 2** *encouragement and*
- 3** *comfort. 1 Corinthians 14:3*

but he who prophesies edifies the church. 1 Corinthians 14:4,

For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be

- 1** *instructed and*
- 2** *encouraged. 1 Corinthians 14:31*

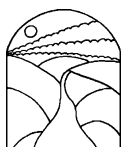
Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. Acts 15:32

What five things does prophecy do?

This kind of prophecy takes many forms and is often not recognised for what it is. It may be a few words someone says to you, a part of a sermon, a word given in the middle of worship, or even an action someone does.

General, it does not direct people, but it can exhort people to do what God has already layed on their heart, or is revealed in Scripture.

What might God say to us through Prophecy?



Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 1 Corinthians 14:29

Why should we weigh carefully what is said?

How do we judge prophecy?

The major test for prophecy is, *does it agree with the word of God?* If not, reject it. The second test for prophecy is; *does it fulfil it's five purposes?* A third test for prophecy is the gift of *discerning of spirits*.



Foretell

This is what we traditionally think of as prophecy, but it is forthtelling that takes the major role and is far more common.

Acts 11v28

Acts 21v10

How do we judge such prophecy?

Deuteronomy 18v21-22

Does this mean we believe everything he says?

Deuteronomy 13v1-3

Notice, that in Acts 11v28, the people acted on the prophecy, before it came to pass, Agabus, was tried and proven, from previous experience.

Other criteria for judgement; *is the prophet known? was it given in order? Does it focus us or divert us from ministry? Does it honour Jesus?*

Prophets of old, like Isaiah, filled both of these roles, *Isaiah 53*, for example foretells the sufferings of Jesus, while in *Isaiah 58*, he cuts through the spiritual facade the people of his day, had constructed for themselves.



The Dangers

Read again Acts 21v16-12

Did Agabus tell Paul not to go to Jerusalem?

Those around Paul, immediately assumed that Paul should not go, but we know he went to Jerusalem at God's direction, *compelled by the Spirit* Acts 20v22.

Lesson: We must be careful what we read into prophecy.

Read Acts 21v4

Is the Holy Spirit contradicting Himself? No, prophets of less experience added to the message, this is a very frequent mistake.

Lesson: Say only what God gives, don't add to it your own understanding or interpretation.

So why did the prophecy come if it was not to be acted upon?

Paul had many who opposed his work, God was ensuring that his arrest in Jerusalem could not be interpreted as divine judgement on his ministry.

Personal predictive or directive prophecy. A word of prophecy telling you what you should do, (eg go, stay, buy, sell), should not be accepted unless it **confirms** what God is saying to you. Personal prophecy **only ever confirms** it **never directs**. This is hard because often we want to hear from God through others, it is very attractive, but ultimately very destructive. **Read 1 Kings 13**, if you don't believe me.

Prophecy sometimes attracts those who are spiritual unbalanced, because it seems to be free from accountability of control, but this is not the case. *The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.* 1 Corinthians 14:32 No loose canons.

Do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Matthew 7:15-16

and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Matthew 24:11

We are called to be a prophetic people. A people who speak the word of God to the world around us. This is a role of OT prophets excelled in.

What do you think this means?

How do you think we do it?

Is it a matter of speaking or of action?

"For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10

Bible Studies

Discerning of spirits



To another distinguishing between spirits, 1 Corinthians 12:10

The KJV calls this *discerning of spirits*. It is the last of the three gifts of revelation, along with Wisdom and Knowledge it gives complete insight. God's Omniscience touching our limited abilities.

This is not the Gift of Discernment, ie Judging people, there is no such gift! This gift exclusively distinguishes between different spirits.

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 John 4v1

Three Spirits

God's Spirit

Man's Spirit

Demonic Spirits

These are the spirits which this gift distinguish between.

You may be surprised to see man's spirit included in this list. But man is a spiritual being to, man's spirit is the part of him that responds to God.

Proverbs 20v27

Isaiah 57v16

Zechariah 12v1

1 Corinthians 2v11

**If a prophecy is give that is not from God were else could it come from?
What is the most likely place?**

The gift of distinguishing between spirits help us to know what comes from God, man or the devil.

The gift gives a sensitivity to what is happening in the spiritual realm.

Areas of operation



Prophecy Distinguishing between spirits comes after the gift of prophecy and is often associated with judging prophecy. Eg 1 John 4v1b As we saw in a previous week prophecy needs to be judged, we gave several criteria for such Judgements. The chief of these was comparison with Scripture. But like all Gifts Discerning is not a question of weighing up the arguments it is direct revelation from God.

Is it possible for a prophecy to contain nothing but Scripture and still be wrong?

The enemy is a master at quoting Scripture to his own end.

How do you think this gift is operated?

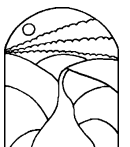
For me it is often just an uneasy feeling that I can't pin down, other times, I just know but have no idea how I know. Sometimes I physically feel something. Once I

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heard a audible voice mocking Christ, I was astonished to find out later that no one else had heard it! Often discernment seems to work in a vision.

2

Recognising the Enemies work. Sometimes the problem, spiritual and physical that we face are just what happens to everyone. Other times it is the activity enemy. We can say as in the parable of the weeds, 'An enemy did this,' Matthew 13:28. The source will determine how we deal with the situation.

3

Healing Often when Jesus healed, he dealt with physical ailments, but sometimes He identified the sickness as a spirit and cast it out.

Matthew 12v22

Mark 9v25

Luke 13v11

Does this mean that all illness is demon related?

Verse like Matthew 8:16 or Luke 7v21 differentiate between natural causes and spiritual causes; *and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick.*

Discernment tells when it is and evil spirit that needs to be cast out and when it is an illness that needs prayer.

4

Miracles The Scripture records miracles and counterfeit gifts of the Spirit done but evil force and warns that as the end of the age approaches they will become more frequent. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. Matthew 24:24. Discernment helps us know what is of the enemy.

Is Discernment the only way to spot the enemies work.

And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. 2 Corinthians 11:14-15

5

Deliverance Distinguishing of spirits, helps to identify where their is demonic oppression and to identify what spirits need to be dealt with. In dealing with such situations it is important to be sure it is demonic. Sometimes it is the Gift itself that seems to cause a spirit to manifest.

6

False teachers The Bible continually warns of false teachers;

Acts 20v29

Jude v4

2 Peter 2v1

1 Timothy 4v1

An example; Several years ago two young girls did the rounds of the Churches in town prophesying. We had be pre warned. They stood up and prophesied in our service too. I could not fault what they said scripturally, but the spirit in which they said it stunk. Normally I would have said something, but this time there was no need the whole congregation recognised where it was coming from. The gift of discernment was working in the church.

When might you need this gift?

Who might need it?

Bible Studies

Tongues



To another speaking in different kinds of tongues. 1 Corinthians 12:10

The Greek here is *glossa*, which means *language* or *dialect*, *Hetroglossos* (other tongues means *foreign language*). Different kinds of tongues has been translated as different families of languages. Some have called this gift “*ecstatic gibberish*”, but the Greek is not used for nonsense talk, but of real languages.

Harold Horton described the gift like this. *What is the Gift of diverse kinds of tongues, or speaking in tongues? It is supernatural utterance by the Holy Spirit in languages never learned by the speaker- not understood by the mind of the speaker- nearly always not understood by the hearer. It has nothing to do with linguistic ability, nor with the mind or intellect of man. It is a manifestation of the mind of the Spirit of God employing human speech organs.*

What does *is a manifestation of the mind of the Spirit of God* mean?

Tongues is not the ability to understand a language that you have never learned, (if it was Paul would have used it as such), nor is it eloquence in your own language. It is just speaking a God given language, that you do not know.

Jesus said: *And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; Mark 16:17*

Tongues has three different manifestations.



Initial evidence, Consistently in Acts we read that the infilling of the Holy Spirit was evidenced by speaking in tongues. The two exceptions are; Paul *Acts 9v17*, who later said “*I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.*” *1 Cor 14:18*, and in Samaria, where Simon the sorcerer was so impressed by what he saw, that he offered money to be able to impart the baptism of the Spirit. *Acts 8v18*. Clearly evidence of the Baptism of the Spirit is more than a warm fuzzy feeling. Prophecy is also noted as an evidence of the infilling, but it is tongues that is given as the sign.

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Acts 10:44-46



Personal Tongues, The Gift of the Spirit that is given to us when we are first baptised in the Spirit, stays with us for personal use. Praying in tongues, worshiping in tongues, singing in tongues. While this is sometimes done collectively, it is still of benefit only to the speaker.

Consider *1 Corinthians 14v2*

1 Corinthians 14v16-17.

Read 1 Corinthians 14v18-19

Paul spoke in tongues more than anyone, but in the Church he would rather have spoken 5 words of plain old Greek. **So when did Paul speak in Tongues?**

It appears that in the Corinthian Church, this personal use of tongues was dominating the services. Paul writes 1 Corinthians 14 to correct this misuse. Unless you realise the destination in the Gift of Tongues, this chapter makes no sense.

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Jude 1:20

Do not underrate this kind of devotional tongues, it is of great benefit.

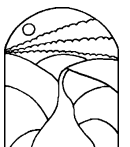
How does it benefit us?

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3

A message in Tongues. This is a short speech in an unknown language, given in the church and subsequently interpreted.

Read 1 Corinthians 14v26-28

How do we know that it is this kind of Tongues that is the Gift of 1 Cor 12?

It is because only this kind of tongues benefits the body as a whole. And that only when it is interpreted. 1 Cor 14v13.

It is therefore of the Gift (message) of Tongues that Paul says “*Do all speak in tongues?*” 1 Cor 12v30. This verse cannot be applied to tongues as initial evidence, or in personal usage. On the Day of Pentecost they did all speak in tongues.

If tongues are languages what kind of languages are they?

Acts 2v5-6

1 Corinthians 14v10

1 Corinthians 13v1

There have been many cases of languages being recognised, there have even been occasions when missionaries have preached in tongues and been understood by their hearers. This is not always the case, they many be ‘tongues of angels’. Foreign languages often sound like gobbledy gook, This is exactly the point that Isaiah makes in the passage that Paul quotes in 1 Cor 14v21 (Isaiah 28v10-11 see NIV footnote v10). These meaningless sound, were to be the real language of the Assyrians, whom God would use to punish Israel.



Speaking in tongues is speaking to God; *For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.* 1 Corinthians 14:2. It helps us communicate with God on a deeper spiritual level, it bypasses our limited vocabulary. It helps us to pray when we don't know how we should pray.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. Rom 8:26-27



Speaking in Tongues is declares God's greatness & praising Him, Acts 10:46.



Tongues: a new way of praising, a new way of praying, a new way of edifying.

Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 14, that the Gift of Tongues, should be part of our worship, but should not be overemphasised.

How do you think we do as a church in this regard?

He also teaches that a tongue is under the control of the person who gives it. It is not forced by the Spirit. It is your mouth, your lips, your voice, your control. The Spirit does not take over, but it is His words that are spoken. It is the Spirit who gives utterance Acts 2v4.

Why are we told not to prohibited speaking in tongues, 1 Cor 14v39?

Many people want to be filled with the Spirit, but they do not want to speak in tongues.

Why do you think this is?

Is there any reason to fear speaking in tongues?

We cannot dictate to God the terms on which we are baptised in the Spirit

If I speak in tongues privately, or in worship, does that mean I have to bring a message in tongues?

How important do you think tongues is?

Bible Studies Interpretation



And to still another the interpretation of tongues. 1 Corinthians 12:10

The gift of interpretation is not the ability to divinely interpret Scripture or to give a translation of a foreign language. It is Interpretation of Tongues, it exclusively explains the meaning of a message in tongues that has been given in the church.

He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified. 1 Corinthians 14:5

While 1 Corinthians 14 gives much instruction on tongues and interpretation, there is no example recorded for us in Scripture.

Tongues by itself can only edify the speaker, but tongues interpreted edifies the Church. *So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. 1 Corinthians 14:9.*

If the church overemphasises uninterpreted tongues it can do great harm because it isolates those who cannot participate. 1 Cor 14v11.

If you have the Gift of Tongues what should you also ask for?

1 Corinthians 14v13

In practice A message in tongues will be given, (this is quite distinctive from ordinary tongues) there may be a period of silence. Someone will receive an interpretation and will speak it out, sometimes there may be more than one interpretation. The one who speaks the tongue does not understand what he says, his *mind is unfruitful*, 1 Cor 14v14b. (There may be exceptions when the person does have a broad idea what they are saying.)



What is interpretation?

Interpretation gives the meaning of the tongue. It is not a translation, the length of the interpretation may be quite different. While the basic meaning of the Greek used here is to translate, it can mean to explain thoroughly.

Why is this the gift of interpretation not translation?

Such a meaning would have been common to Jews of the time, for a tradition of the *Targum* (Hebrew = to translate) was well established. This was teaching from Hebrews Scriptures, to an audience that could not understand Hebrew, by expounding at the same time as translating. Several *Targumim* in written form have survived to us.



An example: Read Daniel 5v22-25

This is not an instance of this Gift, but it does illustrate the point. If Daniel had interpreted the words, he would have said, Dollar, Dollar, Kilo, Division; and no one would have been any wiser. Instead he gave the interpretation, the meaning of the words, which was considerably longer than what it translation. Tongues can work like this.

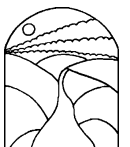
Sometimes interpretation is a literal translation of a tongue that was a 'real' (human) language, I have heard this, but it is the exception rather than the rule.

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What sort of message will it be?



Paul says **two things**; *For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God.* 1 Corinthians 14:2a. This means that the tongue could be a prayer to God or worship and praise of God (as it was at Pentecost and Cornelius' house).



Secondly it can be a word very similar to prophecy; *Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.* 1 Corinthians 14:2b Paul's use of the word *Mystery* means a revelation of the truth of the gospel, ie a word of correction or rebuke. Clearly tongues is not exclusively aimed at God for it can also *edify (Strengthen, encourage, comfort. Instruct) the church.* 1 Cor 14v5.

The interpretation of a tongue can be, pictorial, parabolic, descriptive or literal. Like prophecy, an interpretation can be received as a vision, burden or suggestion. Often only the first few words are 'received' and the speaker must step out in faith in order to receive the bulk of the interpretation.

Like Prophecy the Holy Spirit does not override the personality of the interpreter, one may say "*Thus Says the Lord...*" while another may say "*I think that the Lord is saying...*". the way of expression could be very different, with different people, but the kernel of the message is the same.

We had a good example of this recently. An interpretation was given. It had to do with taking off Lazarus' grave clothes. I also received an interpretation. It had to do with leaving the dead to do what dead people do. Totally different words, same metaphor same message.

This is a good way to start with either Prophecy or Interpretation, If you have in mind something similar to what someone else has spoken out, it could be that God is using you in this gift. Next time have the courage to speak out yourself.

If the person stutter or trips over their words does this mean it is not from God?

What should you do if there is no one present to interpret? 1 Cor 14v29

Does this mean the gift is under the control of the user?



Who gives the interpretation?

Normally it is someone other than the person who gave the tongue. It is also good for a variety of people to interpret, rather than it always be the same person.

Why?

There are usually people in the Church who can interpret, if they do not the leadership will seek God for an interpretation, finally the person who gave the tongue should seek for the interpretation.

Is it the end of the world if it is not interpreted?

What should we do in such a situation?

Can the Tongues be sung and then interpreted in song?

Often when you sing in tongues the interpretation just seems to flow on.