

Pneumatology  
*The Doctrine of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*

**THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

**I. Introduction**

- A. Of all the instruction the Lord has given us on the church, one of the most talked about and least understood subjects is that of spiritual gifts.
- B. Spiritual gifts are given to every member of the universal church and are to find their expression through the ministry of the local church.

**II. Major Passages:** (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4; 1 Pet. 4)

**III. Concept of Christ and His Body, Which is the Universal Church**

- A. Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18).
- B. The Church is the Body of Christ (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:23).
- C. The Body of Christ is formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).
- D. The body of Christ is made up of individual believers (1 Cor. 12:27; Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 5:30).
- E. Gifts are given to the individual members of the Body that it might function properly (1 Cor. 12:11 cf. Context of 1 Cor. 12:7-11).

**IV. Definition of a Spiritual Gift:** A supernatural gift or ability given by God to believers for the purpose of service.

**General Statements about Spiritual Gifts**

- A. Probably most gifts are sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation (1 Cor. 12:11; 12:18). However it may be that some gifts are given after salvation (1 Cor. 12:31 – “but be coveting earnestly the best gifts . . .”)
- B. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:7; 12:11; 1 Pet. 4:10 – “a gift”). NOTE: There is no such thing as a Christian without a spiritual gift.
- C. Any Christian may, and probably does, have more than one gift (2 Tim. 1:11; 4:5). Paul had the gifts of apostle, evangelist (*karux* - herald or preacher) and teacher.
- D. Gifts differ in value to the body but all are important (1 Cor. 12:28; 14:5).
- E. Gifts probably differ in degree as seen through general observation from Christian experience. NOTE: One man may be more effective than another when both may have the same gift and are filled with the Spirit.

- F. Gifts are to be used in love (1 Cor. 13).
- G. It is possible that there are many spiritual gifts that are not listed in Scripture (argument from silence).

## VI. Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

- A. To promote the unity of the Body (1 Cor. 12:25 – “no schism”). NOTE: Read the context of 12:14-25.
- B. To promote the growth of the Body (Eph. 4:13-16).
- C. To promote the evangelization of the lost (Eph. 4:11-12).
- D. To bring glory to God (1 Pet. 4:11).
- E. To be an encouragement to other members of the body (argument from silence).

## VII. Description of Ordinary or Common Gifts

- A. Introduction: Many commentators agree that there are some spiritual gifts mentioned in Scripture which were either temporary first century gifts or are inactive today in the church. These gifts are: apostle, prophecy, miracles, healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues, discerning spirits. NOTE: These gifts will be dealt with later.
- B. Evangelism: Effective teaching of the gospel message to the unsaved and the training of the saints for the work of evangelism (Eph. 4:11).
- C. Pastor-Teacher: One who provides, cares for, protects, rules and teaches a flock of believers (Eph. 4:11). NOTE: No evangelist should hold a pulpit because this is not his gift. Today there is too much arguing between evangelists and pastor-teachers because of ignorance of spiritual gifts.
- D. Exhortation: An ability to encourage, comfort, admonish and entreat Christians (Rom. 12:8).
- E. Giving: The distribution of one’s own money to others (Rom. 12:8).
- F. Showing Mercy: Special gift of working with the sick and afflicted (Rom. 12:8).
- G. Faith: An outstanding ability to believe God’s power to supply and provide (1 Cor. 12:9).
- H. Ministering: The gift of helping in the broadest sense of the word. This would include such things as hospitality, concern for others, ministering to the physical needs of others, etc. (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28).
- I. Administration: The ability to rule in a local church; this would include leadership abilities and the ability to organize.
- J. Word of wisdom: Practical application of divine truth (1 Cor. 12:8 -- may equate with the pastor).
- K. Word of knowledge: Theoretical and philosophical use of the Word (1 Cor. 12:8 – may equate with the teacher).
- L. Helps: Helping in any capacity (1 Cor. 12:28). NOTE: This is one of the most needed gifts and there are many who have it. Not all can be chiefs for some have to be Indians.
- M. Teacher: Ability to explain and apply truth of the Word of God, probably in a formal and informal manner (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28).

## VIII. The Application of Spiritual Gifts to the Life

- A. However small the gift or insignificant the place, every Christian is essential to the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:22). NOTE: Every believer has a place in the body of Christ that no other Christian can fill. Each person is unique to the Body.
- B. There is a divine purpose in the life of every Christian and spiritual gifts are in keeping with that purpose.
- C. Every Christian has a ministry to fulfill for which he has been equipped by God and for which God holds him responsible. NOTE: It is sin not to know and be using our spiritual gifts.
- D. Spiritual gifts are only effective when one is controlled by the Spirit of God. Great gifts do not make great Christians. One must be yielded to the Spirit for the gift to be fully operative.
- E. The Head of the Body of Christ, which is the church, is dependent upon the members to carry out His direction.
- F. The members are dependent upon the head, Christ, for leadership and upon each other for cooperation.
- G. When a believer is not using his gift for the glory of God, then the whole Body suffers. NOTE: If you see a lame and sick church today, it may be because you are not exercising your gift (1 Cor. 12:26).
- H. Read 1 Cor. 12:12-31 in light of these notes.

## IX. How to Discover Spiritual Gifts

- A. Do you have a desire for a particular gift? It would seem strange for God to impart a gift and the give no desire for it. NOTE: A person may have a gift and a desire but be afraid to try something new or be frightened of people. Failure is no shame; it may simply show that you do not have the gift in an area and the you seek to find what your gift is.
- B. Others should recognize that you have a gift.
- C. Others should be blessed by the use of your gift.
- D. There should be fruit in the particular area of your gift.

## X. Development of Spiritual Gifts

- A. Although gifts are supernaturally bestowed, they must be developed (1 Cor. 12:31; Rom. 1:11; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; Eph. 4:7-13).
- B. An individual may be ambitious to exercise certain gifts which ambition can only be fulfilled by study and hard work.
- C. Never measure your gift by your fruit now. Fruitfulness comes with the gradual development of your gift. NOTE: Set out to find your gifts and then in patient endurance seek to put them to work in the Lord's service (preferably in the local church).

## XI. Gifts and Christian Responsibility

- A. Spiritual gifts are special abilities in certain areas of Christian endeavor, but all Christians are to exercise responsibility in these areas. NOTE: There is a gift of evangelism, but all Christians are to be faithful witnesses. This same principle can be carried to giving, teaching, mercy, faith, etc.
- B. These special gifts are given to be an encouragement to other Christians in their service for the Lord.
- C. The purpose for gifts and responsibility is that the lost may be reached for Christ and that the saved may be built up in Christ.
- D. POINTS TO PONDER:
  - 1. What is the distinction between natural abilities and spiritual gifts? Answer: Spiritual gifts are necessary to the functioning of the Body, but natural abilities are not.
  - 2. Is music a spiritual gift or natural ability? Answer: Music is a natural ability but can be mightily used by God in evangelism and edification.
  - 3. How can a local church motivate people to discover their spiritual gifts?
  - 4. How does a highly organized church program effect the functioning of spiritual gifts.

## XII. Spiritual Gifts and the Ministry (Eph. 4:7, 11-16)

- A. Introduction [See **Chart 8**]
  - 1. The average Christian today thinks that the clergy is to do the work of the ministry and his job is to pay the clergy to do it. But the Bible teaches that the saints (laymen) are to do the work of the ministry.
  - 2. A failure to see that the role of the clergy is to train the saints to do the work of the ministry has resulted in untold damage to the Christian Church in general.
  - 3. The concept of ministering saints must be driven home again and again to Christians until they understand that God has placed upon them the responsibility of the ministry.
- B. Gifted Men to the Church (4:7, 11).
  - 1. Spiritual gifts have been given to every Christian by God's grace. The general subject of the context is spiritual gifts.
  - 2. Christ has given gifted men to the church: apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers. Some feel that "apostles" and "prophets" are used in a special sense and refer to the first century gifts of apostle and prophet which are not now operative in the church. However, others take "apostles" and "prophets" in a more general sense and refer them to gifts of missionaries (church starters) and proclaimers of the Word. The gift of evangelist is a special gift of reaching the lost and bringing them into the Body of Christ, the church. Note also that an evangelist probably has the responsibility of training the saints to be evangelists (cf. Context). The pastor-teacher has the duty of caring for and instructing believers.
  - 3. Notice carefully that these gifted men have been specially gifted by Christ to perfect the saints.
- C. Gifted Men are to Equip the Saints (4:12a)
  - 1. The gifted men (i.e. clergy) are to perfect the saints. The word "perfect" can be translated complete or equip. The job of the gifted men is to equip or train the saints to do the work of the ministry.

2. The word “for” is the Greek word *pros*, and in context, speaks of the immediate or near goal which is to be attained; that is, the equipping of the saints.
  3. POINT: Saints can only be equipped as they are grounded in the Word of God and encouraged to put this knowledge to work in their experience. It involves not only teaching but showing them how to do the work of the ministry.
- D. The Saints are to Reach the Lost (4:12b)
1. Saints are to be trained “for the work of the ministry.” The ministry here probably refers to reaching the lost for Jesus Christ.
  2. The “for” here is the Greek word *heis*, which in context refers to the far or distant goal; that is, saints reaching the lost with the gospel.
  3. POINT: The world will never be reached for Christ until the saints do it. No local church will ever be truly evangelistic until the saints become personally involved in reaching the lost for Jesus Christ.
- E. The Saints are to Build the Church (4:12c)
1. Saints are to be trained “for the edifying of the body of Christ.” The word “edifying” refers to the building of the church spiritually. Thus the saints are to build one another in the things of Christ (1 Thess. 5:11).
  2. The “for” is the Greek work *heis*, indicating in context that this is the far or distant goal; that is, the building of the Body by the saints.
  3. POINT: The pastor is not to do all the visitation, sick calling, instruction, etc. It must be done by the saints or no local church will function properly.
- F. The Process of Gifted Men Training the Saints for the Ministry Produces Maturity (4:13-16)
1. This process is to continue until all Christians exercise unity in the Faith, demonstrate a full knowledge of Christ and reach ultimate maturation, experiencing the fullness of Jesus Christ. **NOTE:** This process will never be complete until the Lord Jesus returns for His church (4:13).
  2. The maturing process is to keep the Christian from doctrinal instability and false teaching (4:14).
  3. The maturing process is to develop the Christian in love, so the believer may learn to speak the truth in love (4:15-16).
- G. Conclusion
1. Any local church which operates on the principle of the clergy training the saints to do the ministry will be a thriving assembly. NOTE: The big problem is getting people to believe the system will work. NOTE: Folks are so bogged down in traditionalism and churchianity that they miss the blessing of this truth.
  2. To have this system work there must be dedicated saints who really believe that the work of Jesus Christ is the single most important thing in life. NOTE: They put Christ first in the priority of important things a Christian must do. If Christ is not first in one’s life, He most certainly won’t be second; He will be way down the list somewhere.
  3. To see this system work, there must be an attitude of faith on the part of the saints who will be willing to try it and make mistakes in the learning process. To see this system work, the clergy must refuse to do anything in the local church that the saints can do. This takes real faith and discipline on the part of the pastor-teacher.