

What You Really Need to Know About the Gifts of the Spirit

The gifts of the Spirit are supernatural and they “come upon” a believer suddenly in what is known as a “manifestation of the Holy Spirit.” They flow through a yielded, obedient servant of God.

They have nothing to do with human ability, natural talent or learned behavior. God never intended to accomplish the work of the church through human effort, but through believers endowed with special spiritual qualifications whom the Spirit could direct and through whom He could work. The gifts are not “extras” or bonuses for those who are super spiritual. They are essential operations in a properly functioning body of believers.

First Corinthians 12:4-11 lists the traditional nine gifts of the Spirit:

- Word of wisdom
- Word of knowledge
- Faith
- Gifts of healings
- Working of miracles
- Prophecy
- Discerning of spirits
- Different kinds of tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not carefully planned actions or well thought out words. Neither are they natural abilities to be used at a believer’s discretion. The gifts of the Spirit are the divine tools or equipment that God gives to believers so that they will be effective witnesses for Christ.

The gifts of the Spirit are “part of the package” believers

receive when they are filled with the Holy Spirit. We could picture them as being in a toolbox that the Holy Spirit hands us when we are filled with the Spirit, i.e., receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They are the “tools” that will get the job done as God intended. These gifts, like the tools in a toolbox, may require instruction as to their correct use, and those who are proficient in their use can help the beginner.

The gifts of the Spirit are not the same as the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to his followers after his death on the cross and His resurrection. “When He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ ” (John 20:22). Then, just before he was taken up in a cloud and ascended to heaven, He told His followers not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the Promise of the Father ... “but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now ... you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses ...” (Acts 1:5-8). The gifts (tools) we receive are “power tools.”

Gifts are the “shining forth” of Him who is within the believer.

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