

Why You Should Seek These 3 Charismatic Gifts This Christmas

I don't know about you, but with recent Black Friday sales, followed by additional sales on Cyber Monday and charitable appeals for Giving Tuesday, my online inbox has been packed with seasonal offers, promotions and opportunities.

Unsurprisingly, with a hot stock market and very low unemployment, it would seem logical that Thanksgiving weekend sales appear higher than last year. The National Retail Federation reported that Black Friday sales rose 14% over last year and total weekend sales increased by 16%.

The Gift From Father God

This hyper-commercialization of what was intended as a God-centered season for thanksgiving and celebration is more than a little disconcerting. It overshadows the biblical reality that on the original "Black Friday," God the Father gave His Son in order that we may have eternal life (Rom. 6:23).

The apostle John explained: "For this is how much God loved the world—he gave his one and only, unique Son as a gift. So now everyone who believes in him will never perish but experience everlasting life" (John 3:16-17, TPT).

The above translation offers this explanatory footnote about "believing": "Salvation and regeneration must be by faith. True faith (Greek *pistis*) has a number of components: acceptance, embracing something (someone) as truth, union with God and His Word, and an inner confidence that God alone is enough."

This kind of saving faith compels and sustains believing

saints to “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” throughout the ages and especially in the face of end-times trials and tribulations (Rev. 12:11, 17; 14:12).

Father God also destined that each one of His children would be “wired” with certain “creational” gifts, which make us unique and special in His sight. These gifts are described in Romans 12:3-8 and seem to be foundational to our own emotional makeup and personalities. They reveal how we are primarily motivated and tend to operate in life. They also explain why we respond to events and people as we do.

Peter taught that these motivational gifts tend to find expression as either spoken or serving efforts (1 Pet. 4:10-11). We are personally fulfilled when we function in these giftings and the responses from others testify to the fruitfulness of our efforts.

Gifts From the Son

Not only is Jesus Christ of Nazareth the incarnated Son of God come down to earth in human form, but He also promised to request the Father to send us another one, like Himself, to abide in us and to come alongside us (Greek *paráklētos*) to encourage and equip us for service and ministry in the kingdom of God (John 14:16-17).

While Jesus is the Savior from the guilt of sin, the Holy Spirit is the one like Him who saves us from the power of sin by living in and through us, producing Spirit-filled fruitfulness.

This kind of spiritual growth is a prerequisite for those who would desire to serve the body of Christ (the church) in leadership offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher (or pastor-teacher). These roles are actually gifts (Greek *domata*) to the church by its founder, Jesus Christ himself (Eph. 4:8-16) and are placed in the church to equip

“the saints for the work of service, and for the building up of the body of Christ” (v. 12, MEV).

Gifts From the Holy Spirit

This third member of the Trinity is the active agent of the godhead. It was actively “hovering over the face of the waters” at creation (Gen. 1:2). This “moving” or “sweeping” action suggests giving creative energy or power to the transformation of the earth below and the heavens above.

We must embrace this Spirit-gift and welcome His empowering work to equip us (fit us together) for the ministry of service (Eph. 4:18,19) to the body of Christ, the church.

To accomplish this sovereign purpose, the Spirit of God gives spiritual manifestations to men as He chooses (1 Cor. 12:7-11). These nine gifts of the Holy Spirit are not all of the grace gifts (*charismata*) seen in Scripture. But they are the ones which are specifically identified as being designed and distributed at the Spirit’s direction “for the profit of all” (v. 7, NKJV). They are not heightened natural abilities but a visible evidence and expression of the Spirit’s activity, as and to the degree He wills (vv. 4-6, 11).

In verses 8-10, three groups of three charismatic gifts each emerge:

1. Discerning gifts (gifts of revelation: the power to know what to do or to say).
2. Dynamic gifts (gifts of power: the power to do according to divine enablement).
3. Declarative gifts (gifts of inspired utterance: the power to speak publicly to minister edification, exhortation and comfort [14:3] to one another).

Gifts From the Godhead This Christmas

Perhaps we can use this review of gifts—from Father God, His

Son, Jesus (the Jewish Messiah and our Savior), and the blessed Holy Spirit, who transforms us from who we were to who He has designed us to become—to stir our hearts this Christmas!

Instead of allowing Christmas to be commercialized in our hearts, let us determine to make it spiritualized. Let us remember that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no change or shadow of turning” (James 1:17, MEV).

These gifts from the godhead were summarized in the lyrics of this simple chorus from Pastor Jack Hayford: “Thank you, God, for sending Jesus/ Thank you, Jesus, that you came/ Holy Spirit, come and help us/ glorify the Savior’s name.”

*Ordained to the ministry in 1969, **Gary Curtis** is a graduate of LIFE Bible College at Los Angeles (soon to become Life Pacific University at San Dimas, California). He has taken graduate courses at Trinity College in Deerfield, Illinois, and Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California. Gary served as part of the pastoral staff of The Church on The Way, the First Foursquare Church of Van Nuys, California, for 27 years (1988-2015); and served for the last 13 years as the vice president of Life on The Way Communications Inc., the church’s not-for-profit media outreach. Now retired, Gary and his wife have been married for 50 years and live in Southern California. They have two married daughters and five grandchildren.*