

What's Causing the Drought of Spiritual Gifts?

After many years of full-time evangelism and meeting tens of thousands of people from 10 major denominations, I have pinpointed the main reasons why there is a shortage or a drought of spiritual rain and spiritual manifestations in many churches.

Any spiritual gift must operate through a human vessel; it does not supernaturally float through the atmosphere in some mystical type of fog. The need for a human vessel brings me to the first common reason for lack of gifts: *They have been neglected by the vessels (people) themselves.*

The gifts can be *neglected*. In Greek the word for *neglect* means to be careless, make light of, or have no regard for. We will neglect what is not important to us. Just as a muscle on the body that is never used will, if neglected, eventually cease to do what it was created for, then spiritual gifts can be neglected and thus deactivated. The danger is that something can be neglected for so long that eventually you will not miss it. To prevent being neglected, the gifts must be “stirred up” (see 2 Tim. 1:6-7).

To *stir up* is to *rekindle a fire with the remaining embers*. All it takes are a few burning embers and some fuel to cause flames to leap again and burn brightly. If people neglect spiritual gifts and allow the flames of zeal and desire to die, then there will be a dearth in the operation of gifts. God works through people, which leads to the second reason gifts have appeared to cease: *people cease to flow in the Spirit.*

When the clear voice of the Spirit becomes muffled in the spirit of a person and there is no clarity that the Lord is

speaking, then the person says, "Is this the Lord directing me, or is this just me?"

The Holy Spirit will never tell you to function outside of the boundaries of the Bible, so judge what you hear by what is revealed in the Word. Do you think the adversary would tell you to go and witness to a man sitting on a park bench? Should you question if it is the Lord or just you to give a poor person a meal to eat or some money? God's voice agrees with His Word, and the Holy Spirit always agrees with God.

On a more humorous note, a few times when God could not find a person to speak, He used what was available—including animals! The prophet Balaam was stubborn, ignoring God's will, so God opened the mouth of his donkey to rebuke him. The odd part is that instead of realizing the supernatural element of a talking animal, Balaam began to argue with the dumb beast (Num. 22:25-30). In the New Testament a rooster crowed three times, and Peter came under conviction and repented for denying the Lord (Mark 14:72). God will use whom and what is available to enact His purposes and lay out His will.

The third reason gifts can be neglected is that *if these manifestations are not permitted by the leadership in the local congregations, then the members are to be under their leaders' authority and follow the instruction of those who are over them in the Lord* (1 Thes. 5:12-13).

A person who believes in the gifts should avoid sitting in a congregation where gifts are publicly discouraged and rejected and then attempt to use them. This brings confusion.

The fourth and very common reason that gifts cannot operate is because of *the atmosphere of unbelief and skepticism in the church*. I remember showing a "Christian" man, a church member for more than 50 years, certain verses in the Bible that crushed his theology of unbelief. He looked at me and said, "I don't care what the Bible says; I don't believe it, and I will

believe it my way!" I was thinking at that moment that I had officially met a Pharisee of Pharisees, as this was the same attitude as the elite Jewish Pharisees in the time of Christ—"if it doesn't fit my theology, *it's not of God.*"

The fifth observation is that *gifts cannot operate when people have no knowledge of their availability.* In America Christians often assume that about everyone born in America has already heard the gospel at least once, which is a total misconception. Among full gospel people many assume that everyone sitting in a full gospel church has heard of or experienced the infilling of the Spirit based upon Acts 2:4. This is also a misconception.

According to the apostle Paul, we are to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Cor. 12:31, KJV). I believe the best gift is what is needed at the particular moment to meet the spiritual need of the seeker.

When desiring a spiritual gift, we must keep in mind that the gift is not given to show that we are more superior to others or more spiritual, and certainly must not be operated with pride. The gifts are for the edification, exhortation and comfort of the church, and to assist in ministering to the unsaved, revealing the living God.

We are presently living in the church age, or prophetically the four months from Pentecost to Trumpets. In Israel as one got closer to the fall Feast of Trumpets, the atmosphere began to change as the rain prepared to fall. As we move closer to the coming of Christ, the world will be engulfed in the latter rain outpouring of the Spirit! The dry spells will be broken.

✠ Adapted from *The Code of the Holy Spirit* by Perry Stone, copyright 2013, published by Charisma House. Whether you've been taught a doctrine, embarked on your own study of Scripture, observed others operating under the Holy Spirit's power, or had a personal life-changing experience, this

insightful book will give you a deeper understanding of this member of the Godhead than you've ever had before. To order your copy, [click here](#).

PRAYER POWER FOR THE WEEK OF 7/15/2013

This week ask God to make you a vessel through which His gifts can operate. Study His Word to see what He has made available and build up your faith by declaring its Truth. Ask the Lord to connect you to those who believe Him to do what He's promised and who by faith allow the Holy Spirit to use them however He desires. Thank Him for what He is going to do through you to reveal the living God to the unsaved, exhort and comfort the church, and bring Him glory. Continue to pray for revival that brings repentance and a harvest of souls. Remember Israel, the persecuted church and those in authority over us. 1 Cor. 12:31, 2 Tim. 1:6-7, 2 Chron 7:14