

# Specific Spiritual Gifts

The very Greek word employed in the New Testament description of the gifts (*charismata*) indicates that these gifts are chosen “graces” that are bestowed upon His Bride, the church. These “graces” are not earned in any way but rather graciously given to us by the Holy Spirit for two general purposes: *to teach us to depend upon Him and His work in our lives; and to equip us to be better servants*. It is He who decides to whom He gives what and when. We do not believe that any one individual will possess all the gifts, nor that all will have any one particular gift – it is the Spirit that gives in accordance with the Father’s plan for the body.

I have observed very well intentioned church leaders emphasizing a particular gift or two, then trying to manipulate the environment and the individual so that he appears to outwardly manifest what looks like it might be a real spiritual gift. The problem is, there is no Biblical precedent for this kind of “pump priming” in the Scriptures, either by teaching or by example. Even the most lengthy section of the Word regarding gifts (1 Cor. 12-14) is written to give proper parameters & limitations for the exercise of certain gifts and to correct fleshly excesses in their manifestation.

Here at Calvary, we believe that all the gifts mentioned in the New Testament still exist and are available for the church today. In our public services, however, our emphasis is on the teaching of the Word of God rather than gift manifestations. Expression of various gifts is encouraged in one’s own private and corporate walk with the body, in our home fellowships and in our prayer groups . To better understand the way the Holy Spirit uses the gifts to get the body ministering to the body, below are presented the two New Testament lists of the gifts, and suggested definitions.

## LIST OF GIFTS AND SUGGESTED DEFINITIONS (*from Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12*)

### 1. Prophecy –

The ministry of communicating a message that has been received from God supernaturally. It is more for encouragement, consolation, or confrontation than for the expression of doctrine. The message should always be evaluated by the Word of God. Although the message could deal with the future (foretelling), the more common biblical example is that of communicating information that God has for us in the present (forthtelling). In practice, the gift often seems to serve to direct the body to a truth that God has already revealed in His Word that somehow meets a very specific spiritual need of the moment. Though it does not appear that all have prophecy as a primary gift, it is possible that all may prophesy at some point in our life (1 Cor. 14:31).  
Examples: Acts 11:27-28; 5:1-11.

### 2. Service –

The ability to perform any task or responsibility with joy which benefits others and meets practical or material needs that exist.  
Examples: Acts 6:1-3; Heb. 1:14; 2 Cor. 8:19, 20.

### 3. Teaching –

The ministry of explaining and clarifying God’s truth in a way that the hearers gain an understanding of the truth and it’s application, thereby growing in their experience of walking together in the Spirit without unnecessary divisions (1 Tim. 1:5).  
Examples: Acts 18:24-26; 18:27-28.

### 4. Exhortation –

The ministry of stimulating another believer to put their faith into practice. It often will include a reproof, encouragement, comfort, or specific counsel to trust in the Lord and to live in obedience to Him. Example: Acts 9:26-27.

### 5. Giving –

The ministry of sharing your resources – financial, material, or otherwise – with a group or individual brother or sister. This exercise of this gift is accompanied by great joy and eagerness in the heart of the giver with no desire to receive personal recognition for the gift given.

## **6. Leadership –**

The ministry of setting proper goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate them in such a way that the people voluntarily and harmoniously work together for their accomplishment.

## **7. Mercy –**

The ministry of compassionately feeling the necessities of others – especially those who are suffering in some way. This special sensitivity results in cheerfully done deeds that serve to reflect Christ's love which may also alleviate some of the person's suffering.

## **8. Word of Wisdom –**

A supernatural Holy Spirit revealed insight on how specific knowledge is to be applied or acted upon (James 1:5-6).

## **9. Word of Knowledge –**

A supernatural revelation of some particular information that would not be known at the moment apart from the Holy Spirit's direct revelation. It results in an ability to better render service to the one about whom the knowledge is pertaining to. The "word" (logos) could be any symbolic representation of that which is to be communicated and could be in the form of a word picture, a vision, a voice, or any other symbolism God would choose to employ in communicating something to an individual. In practice, the gift seems to be especially related to the exercise of some of the other gifts like healing, prophecy, faith or service. Examples: Acts 10:10-13; 27:23-24.

## **10. Faith –**

The supernatural ability to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purpose of God and to remain steadfast in trusting Him in the midst of seemingly impossible circumstances.

## **11. Healing –**

The supernatural ministry and ability to serve as an intermediary through whom it pleases God to cure an illness and restore physical health apart from the use of the ability of man or natural means.

## **12. Working of Miracles –**

The ability to perform a supernatural act outside of the ordinary course of nature. This appears to be seen more often in two types of situation: God simply demonstrating His love and compassion for ones who are needy, and as a clear demonstration that God's power is greater than that of Satan – often occurring in situations where believers have proclaimed God's message of salvation in Christ within a context where the gospel has not previously penetrated and the people are held in clear bondage by demonic power or influence. This latter is often referred to as a Power Encounter in Missions literature and is well documented to occur especially in tribal, animistic areas (see writings of Don Richardson and Bruce Olson for examples).

## **13. Distinguishing of spirits –**

The supernatural ability to immediately know the nature of the force prompting another to behave or speak out a certain message, or even when a written message is reviewed. An immediate identification is made that the action is led by the Holy Spirit, the flesh, or Satanic empowerment. The manifestation of this gift is frequently accompanied by an unexplained sense of joy and peace when discerning the Holy Spirit's prompting; or by a sense of anxiety, uneasiness, or bondage when the movement of satanic forces is discerned. Example: Acts 5:3.

## **14. Speaking in Tongues –**

The supernatural ability of being able to speak praises to God in a language never learned by the one speaking. The exercise of this gift is always subject to the control of the individual (1 Cor. 14:28) and is always a means of communicating praise and blessing to God, or praying to God, rather than a message to people (Acts 2:11; 1 Cor. 14:2, 16, 17). The tongue, or language, spoken may be understood naturally by those who hear (Acts 2:11), or it may be understood by none of the hearers (1 Cor. 14:2). The exercise of the gift is restricted in the public gatherings of the body and even prohibited in open services if not accompanied by the gift of interpretation. There appears to be Biblical allowance also for the exercise of the gift without interpretation in a group setting if there are no unbelievers present, or if there are no believers who are either “ungifted” or “unaware” of the gift/purpose/exercise of speaking in tongues. In one’s own private exercise, a major value of the gift is personal edification resulting from the free, spiritual expression (in song, prayer, or verbal expression) of praise and blessing, or prayer, to God. There is no clear biblical teaching or precedent that any communication other than praise or prayer to God is involved. It is always the communication of the heart of the redeemed to the Redeemer.

## **15. Interpretation of Tongues –**

The supernatural ability to understand and communicate the praise message of one who has spoken in tongues in a public context. This will be accomplished without the “gifted” party having previous knowledge of the tongue, language spoken, or content of the praise message. The result of the exercise of this gift is the building up of the Body (1 Cor. 14:5) as the hearer(s) will then be able to understand God and His love and involve themselves in the nature and content of the praises lifted to the Lord. As the hearer(s) know(s) what is being spoken in the tongue, he will then be able to respond with the “Amen”, or agreement, to the blessing spoken.