

Spiritual Gifts - Part 3

1 Cor 12:8-10

Last week we began to look at specific gifts. We talked about the gift **Word of Wisdom** as the ability to communicate insight into and the understanding of the God's truth. Also **Word of knowledge** as teaching the principles and methods for practical application of God's truth. Then **Faith** as the type of faith that Jesus spoke about that could move mountains. Finally, **Healing**. That special ability, that coupled with faith causes God to lay His healing hand on another's body. Matt. 8:5-13 Along with Faith and Healing is the third in this group of special gifts that affect the physical world.

5. **Effecting of Miracles** Much of what we think here was limited to the early church. This is not a gift that the guy on TV has who is going to wave some magic wand or give you some special cloth, and you will become rich. It is, instead, **the ability to trust God for things that are beyond our own human finite ability**. Look at what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. Acts 5:8-10 ; Acts 13:8-11
6. **Prophecy** This is a gift that is defined two different ways. The first is to say that the gift of prophecy is the same here as in the Old Testament. And there is proof of that. Acts 11:28. Agabus fore told of a coming famine. However, there seems to be less occurrence of this kind of prophecy in the New Testament than in the Old Testament. Don't forget the real purpose of a prophet. It is one who tells the future coming of Christ. All prophecy pointed to the Messiah in some way. In the New Testament, there is no need for that kind of prophecy. Christ has come. The second definition of prophecy is to testify. That is to tell what God has done for you. To "preach", if you will, about the revealed word of God to those who need to hear it. Acts 19:6.
7. **Distinguishing of Spirits** This is very closely associated with the gift of prophecy. Just as there are true, spirit lead teachers and preachers, there are also false teachers. This gift is one that we all would do well to look for. If you don't have this gift, find someone who does, and make that person your friend. You will need it, in this day and age. God reveals Himself to all of us in different ways, and to some He gives a unique look at how to discern between a true believer and a false teacher.
- 8 & 9. **Various kinds of Tongues** This gift is probably the most misunderstood and misused gift of all of God's gifts. It alone has spawned entire denominations and group of churches around the world. More has been

written about this one gift than all the others combined. So I am not going to belabor the point. Again, there are two general thoughts about what the definition of tongues is. First, some think that the **word means known language**. That some have the gift to speak several known languages in order to be good translators and witnesses around the world. Second, others believe it to mean unknown language. I believe this is the correct definition. Two reasons why. (1) **We wouldn't need part B of this verse if it was a known language.** (2) **God says that we can have a prayer language that only He can understand through the Holy Spirit.** Now the problem comes along by not understanding the purpose of this gift, just as it is with all the others. No gift is to be used for personal gain or glory. No gift is to bring shame on God's name. No gift will contradict the word of God. All gifts must bring glory to God and build up and unite the church of Jesus Christ. So, what does the gift mean? I believe it means just what it says. Some folks have the ability to communicate with God through a language that is very private and very special. To be used only when the spirit is interceding for them. I do believe that in the early church there may have been a time when someone who was testifying was speaking with words that the listener would not have necessarily known but understood. That is the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul says that unbelievers are spiritually blind and can not understand spiritual things. Yet an unbeliever can understand his need for Christ and the nature of his sin. After all, that is what Pentecost was all about.

Now look over at 1 Cor. 12:31. Paul says, all these gifts are good, necessary and are important. **But there is something that is better than all.** Next week we will look at the gift that is above all others.