

Message #44

I Corinthians 12:8-11

God has sovereignly directed each person to the local church. Each person has a specific gift given by God. These are gracious grants and entrustments, enabling the believer to faithfully serve God and accomplish His will in the church. Every believer has a specific God-ordained job to do and every job is important.

A DIFFERENT SPIRITUAL GIFT IS GIVEN TO EVERY BELIEVER BY THE SAME SPIRIT OF GOD THAT EVERY BELIEVER MIGHT PROFIT THE PROGRAM OF GOD.

God has given various gifts, service ministries and abilities to every believer. He has used His One Spirit to do it so that the believer might be used by God in the ministry of God's church.

Observation #1 - This list of spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12:8-11 is a partial list , not a complete list.

In this immediate text, there are nine spiritual gifts listed. The reason this is so important is because many look to just one or two passages for their information on spiritual gifts.

Observation #2 - Some spiritual gifts are specifically said to be temporal and some are specifically said to be permanent .

For example, I Cor. 13:8 specifically lists three gifts and specifically states that these three are temporal. On the other hand, I Cor. 13:13 lists faith as being an abiding gift, one that is permanent. We can legitimately conclude that some spiritual gifts are temporal and some are permanent.

Observation #3 - Some spiritual gifts are specifically said to be apostolic .

Hebrews 2:3-4 says, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will."

II Corinthians 12:12 says, "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles." Both of these passages make it very clear that certain gifts were given during apostolic times.

Observation #4 - Spiritual gifts need to be studied in view of the completed Bible .

I Corinthians 13:10 does allow us to see a connection between spiritual gifts and the completion of Scripture.

In the chronology of the four major passages that deal with the subject of spiritual gifts, the order is: I Corinthians (A.D. 54); Romans (A.D. 58); Ephesians (A.D. 60); I Peter (A.D. 64). It is very clear that as the N.T. books increased, the gifts list decreased. For example, I Corinthians lists at least 14 spiritual gifts, Romans lists 8, Ephesians lists four and I Peter lists 2. Furthermore, in the chronology of N.T. books, when Paul wrote I Corinthians, only three other letters could have possibly been in print: Galatians and I and II Thessalonians. This means that I Corinthians was written prior to 23 other N.T. books.

Observation #5 - Some spiritual gifts are speaking gifts and some are non-speaking gifts.

I Peter 4:11 clearly makes this distinction by stating: “Whoever speaks, let him speak as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies....”

GIFT #1 – The word of wisdom. **12:8a**

The specific word used for “wisdom” indicates that this is a reference to a very intelligent and skillful level in the things of God. The words “word of” indicate that this was a speaking gift, in which one had a supernatural ability to intelligently and skillfully communicate the truth and principles of God to others as it related to various matters and issues in life.

There can be no doubt that this particular gift was definitely associated with the apostles (i.e. I Cor. 2:6-7) as they were the ones who supernaturally communicated and wrote the Word of God in the most intelligent and skilled manner possible. At this particular time, the “word of wisdom” would have come as a direct revelation from God. It would have been a direct message from God.

Now there is no question that we need God’s wisdom today. In fact, we learn from further written revelation that when we lack wisdom, we are to ask God for wisdom (i.e. James 1:5; Prov. 2:1-6). God promises to give a generous supply to those who ask. However, God’s wisdom has all been put in writing; therefore, the one who wants to speak wisely will be praying, asking God for wisdom and studying, carefully attempting to understand all that God has put in writing for then one is able to speak wisely.

As a specific revelation, the “word of wisdom” is no longer operative.

GIFT #2 – The word of knowledge. **12:8b**

The word “knowledge” refers to a high level of understanding in the things of God. The word literally means understanding or intelligence. As near as I can determine, one distinction would be that wisdom emphasizes the level of skill, whereas knowledge emphasizes the level of comprehension. Joseph Thayer, who has written a Greek lexicon, says the difference is that wisdom is able to reason truth, whereas knowledge is able to apprehend truth. Wisdom has to do with getting and giving information, knowledge has to do with grasping information.

Now the words “word of” again indicate that it is a speaking gift and I Cor. 13:8 clearly indicates that it was a temporal gift.

Knowledge today DOES NOT come by direct revelation; it comes from written revelation. In fact, Paul prayed that God would continually allow the Ephesians to grasp the revelation of God (Eph. 1:16-17).

GIFT #3 – The gift of faith. 12:9a

The gift of faith is a supernatural ability to trust God and have confidence in God and His promises in the face of situations and circumstances that are humanly impossible (i.e. 13:2). From the context of I Cor. 12-13 and on the basis of I Cor. 13:13, the gift of faith IS an abiding gift, NOT a temporal one.

Every believer has a certain measure of faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Every believer has been saved by faith and continues to live by faith. However, the gift of faith is a special supernatural spiritual gift. It is a supernatural ability to believe in God and His promises in the face of nearly impossible circumstances. It goes far beyond the average faith level.

They are supernaturally empowered visionaries who are able to step out by faith and accomplish some amazing things. The gift of faith is an abiding gift and one that is desperately needed in the church.

GIFT #4 – The gift of healing. 12:9b

The gift of healing was a supernatural ability to heal someone by restoring health or life. This was most definitely an apostolic gift.

When the early church as being formed, the Apostle Peter could heal (Acts 3:6-7) and so could the Apostle Paul (Acts 20:9-12.) We know that Christ specifically gave his 12 the power to heal before His crucifixion (Luke 9:1-2) and He gave another 70 the same supernatural ability (Luke 10:1-9). However, this gift was temporal even for the apostles because in the later writings of Paul, he could no longer heal people, even those he loved most: Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:27); Timothy (I Tim. 5:23); or Trophimus (II Tim. 4:20). Toward the close of the first century, the Apostle John could not heal Gaius, but he did pray for him (III John 2). The gift of healing was clearly an apostolic gift that had disappeared well before the end of the first century.

GIFT #5– The gift of miracles. 12:10a

The gift of performing a miracle was a supernatural ability given by the Spirit of God that enabled a person to do something miraculous that went way beyond the realm of natural laws. This particular gift was also an apostolic gift given to authenticate their message (II Cor. 12:13; Heb. 2:3-4). This was a temporal gift.

Well if both healing and miracles are apostolic gifts, which were temporal, how do we explain some today who claim they can heal or that they have a special gift of healing or miracles?

I believe one answer is found in Matt. 7:21-23. Those who can truly do these things are doing them by the power of Satan. These two gifts were apostolic and temporal, which means those claiming they have them today are either silly or shysters or satanic.

You are an important person here today and God has granted you physical life and He will grant you spiritual life if you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation. If you have believed on Christ, you need to know you are needed in this church and you are gifted for this church.