

WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS - PART 2

TEXT: I CORINTHIANS 12:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

1. First Corinthians 12—14 deal with the subject of spiritual gifts (12:1).
2. Last week we looked at two of the gifts – the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge (12:8).
3. Tonight, we will look at some of the other spiritual gifts.

I. FAITH

1. All believers possess faith in some measure because one cannot be saved apart from faith. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8, 9).
2. Galatians 5:22 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith...”
3. First Corinthians 13:13 says, “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”
4. The gift of faith is not mere intellectual assent. James 2:19 says, “The devils also believe, and tremble.”
5. And the gift of faith is not the same thing as saving faith, but one cannot receive the gift of faith if he doesn’t have genuine saving faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, that without faith it is impossible to please God.
6. The gift of faith is a gift that God bestows upon some believers to lay hold upon the promises of God. Some have referred to this gift of faith as “mountain-moving faith” (cf. I Corinthians 13:2; Matthew 17:19-21; 21:21, 22).
7. Many people said that George Mueller had the gift of faith but he himself denied it. He wrote in his autobiography:

Think not, dear reader, that I have the gift of faith, that is, the gift of which we read in I Corinthians 12:9 and that is mentioned along with “the gifts of healing,” “the working of miracles,” “prophecy” — and that on that account I am able to trust in the Lord...From my inmost soul I do ascribe it to God alone that He has enabled me to trust in Him, and that He has not suffered my confidence in Him to fail. But I thought it needful to make these remarks, lest anyone should think that my depending upon God was a particular gift given to me, which other saints have no right to look for; or lest it should be thought that

this, my depending upon Him, had only to do with the obtaining of *money* by prayer and faith. By the grace of God I desire that my faith in God should extend towards *every* thing: the smallest of my own temporal and spiritual concerns, and the smallest of the temporal and spiritual concerns of my family, towards the saints among whom I labor, the Church at large, everything that has to do with the temporal and spiritual prosperity of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, etc. Dear reader, do not think that I have attained in faith (and how much less in other respects!) to that degree to which I might and ought to attain.

Lastly, let not Satan deceive you in making you think that you could not have the same faith, but that it is only for persons who are situated as I am. When I lose such a thing as a key, I ask the Lord to direct me to it, and I look for an answer to my prayer; when a person with whom I have made an appointment does not come at the fixed time, and I begin to be inconvenienced by it, I ask the Lord to be pleased to hasten him to me, and I look for an answer. When I do not understand a passage of the Word of God, I lift up my heart to the Lord, that He would be pleased, by His Holy Spirit, to instruct me, and I expect to be taught, though I do not fix the time when, and the manner how, it should be. When I am going to minister in the Word, I seek help from the Lord, and while I, in the consciousness of natural inability as well as utter unworthiness, begin this His service, I am not cast down, but of good cheer, because I look for His assistance and believe that He, for His dear Son's sake, will help me. Oh! I beseech you, do not think me an extraordinary believer, having privileges above other of God's dear children that they cannot have; nor look on my way of acting as something that would not do for other believers.

8. Next, we read in verse 9, "to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit." This is very important.

II. HEALING

1. I believe in healing, but not in so-called "faith healers." We see in the New Testament that the apostles had this gift (cf. Acts 3:1-11).
1. Before He ascended into heaven, Jesus said that His followers "shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:18).
2. James 5:15 says, "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

3. Notice: “the prayer of faith shall save the sick.” Acts 14:9 says, a crippled man in Lystra “heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed.”
4. Jesus often said, “Thy faith hath made thee whole” (Matthew 9:22; Mark 10:52; Luke 17:19).
5. The Bible teaches faith healing, but not “faith healers.” Faith healers, like Benny Hinn, are fake.
6. If these modern-day “faith healers” were genuine, they would go into hospitals and heal sick people instead of renting out big auditoriums, and going on television and asking gullible people to send them money.
7. Phony faith healer Peter Popoff used to accurately announce specific illnesses of audience members during his “healing crusades.” He claimed that God had supernaturally revealed this information to him.
8. But in reality, Popoff was wearing a tiny receiver in his left ear, and his wife was feeding him the information through a wireless communication system. Popoff’s wife and other employees had already gleaned the names and addresses and illnesses of the sick people before the meeting started by walking around and talking to people in the audience.
9. A skeptic named James Randi exposed Popoff on television and the faker soon filed for bankruptcy. Unfortunately, he is still in business, which proves P.T. Barnum was right – “There’s a sucker born every minute.”
10. Surprisingly, when Senator Chuck Grassley singled out the six most crooked televangelists for investigation regarding mishandling of finances, Popoff was not included.
11. The dirty half-dozen that Senator Grassley identified as being under investigation by the Senate investigation committee were Paula White, Joyce Meyer, Creflo Dollar, Eddie Long, Kenneth Copeland and Benny Hinn.
12. Before we move on to some of the other gifts, and I want to emphasize that it is not always God’s will to heal the sick. For example, I Timothy 5:23 refers to Timothy’s frequent infirmities.
13. In Philippians chapter 2, Paul says that Epaphroditus, his dear friend and “companion in labor,” “was sicknigh unto death” (2:25-30).
14. Second Timothy 4:20 says that Paul left Trophimus sick in Miletus.
15. Christians have wondered why didn’t Paul, who had the gift of healing, and who had raised Eutychus from the dead in Troas (Acts 20:10), heal Trophimus?
16. The only explanation seems to be that the gift of healing was being phased out, because in Paul wrote the epistle of II Timothy at the end of his ministry.

III. THE WORKING OF MIRACLES (12:10; cf. 12:28)

1. The next spiritual gift is “the working of miracles” (12:10; cf. vs. 28).
2. What is true of the gift of healing also applies to the “working of miracles.” Just as God does heal people today, He also performs other wonderful miracles today.
3. God is able to do supernaturally anything He wills to do, just as He did in the days of the apostles, but we must be careful because many so-called “miracle workers” are con-artists like Peter Popoff and Benny Hinn.
4. In addition to fakery, we also need to remember that Satan’s ministers can often perform genuine miracles. Jesus said in Matthew 24:24, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (cf. Exodus 7:8-12; Revelation 13:11-18).

CONCLUSION:

1. Many people want to see miracles, but they are not interested in getting right with God. A good example would be Herod. Luke 23:8 says that Herod had hoped to have seen some miracle done by Jesus, but when he questioned Jesus, “he answered him nothing” (23:9), because our Lord knew that Herod was not interested in the truth.
2. The rich man in hell wanted Lazarus to leave Paradise and go talk to his brothers. That would have been a great miracle!
3. But Abraham rejected the idea, and said, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:31).