

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-29 Gifts of the Spirit

People who are cranky and mean don't often have many friends. Others tend to avoid them. On the other hand, kind and cheerful people usually attract many friends. During His days on earth, Jesus attracted people by His gracious words, His mighty works, and His beautiful life. Today, we, as God's missionary people, are called to represent Christ to lost humanity. We seek to attract people to Him and His church. We can do this by exhibiting in our lives the same things Jesus exhibited in His—gracious words, mighty works, and beautiful lives.

The Spirit will enable us to represent Jesus by giving to us spiritual gifts and spiritual fruit. Through these gifts and fruit, the Spirit enables us to display the full character of Christ. Through the exercise of spiritual gifts, we are enabled to display the gracious words and mighty works of Jesus. Through the manifestation of spiritual fruit, we are enabled to emulate His beautiful life. In this lesson, we will focus our attention on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the next lesson, we will focus on the fruit of the Spirit.

In First Corinthians 12:7-10, Paul lists nine gifts (or “manifestations”) of the Spirit. He says, “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the *message of wisdom*, to another the *message of knowledge* by means of the same Spirit, to another *faith* by the same Spirit, to another *gifts of healing* by that one Spirit, to another *miraculous powers*, to another *prophecy*, to another *distinguishing between spirits*, to another *speaking in different kinds of tongues*, and to still another *the interpretation of tongues*” (1Cor 12:7-10, emphasis added).

These gifts represent the various ways the Spirit of God manifests His presence and power in the midst of His people. These nine gifts of the Spirit can be defined as *supernatural anointings given by the Spirit of God through Spirit-filled believers to accomplish the will of the Father*. In his epistles, Paul introduces and names the gifts. In the Book of Acts, Luke demonstrates them in action. By comparing what each biblical author teaches about these gifts, we get a full picture of what they are and how they are manifested. We also discover that God gives these gifts for two purposes, to build up the church and to advance His kingdom in the earth.

Bible scholars often place these nine spiritual gifts into three categories, with three gifts in each category. The three categories are revelation gifts, power gifts, and prophetic gifts. The revelation gifts are the word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and distinguishing between spirits. These three gifts are given so that the Spirit might reveal to His people something He wants them to know. The three power gifts are the gift of faith, gifts of healing, and the gift of miraculous powers. These gifts are given so that the Spirit can work through His people. The Spirit thus displays God's mighty power and accomplishes a work He wants done. The three prophetic gifts are prophecy, different kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. These vocal gifts are given so that God may speak through His people a message He wants them to hear. Every Spirit-filled believer should expect the Spirit to move through them, manifesting one or more of these

gifts. Paul said, “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1Cor 12:7).

We should all desire spiritual gifts, and we should anticipate releasing them in ministry. But how do we do this? We can begin by realizing that spiritual gifts are simply manifestations of the Spirit of God who empowers committed followers of Jesus. When a person is born again, the Holy Spirit enters and dwells inside that person. Later, when they are baptized in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God fills them and empowers them to do God’s work. As a result of these two potent spiritual experiences, the Holy Spirit is powerfully at work inside them. All the gifts of the Spirit reside in the Spirit. So, it is clear that one who is full of the Holy Spirit has all the gifts residing inside them.

Consequently, if a Christian will walk in the Spirit, the Spirit of God can use them in any way He sees fit. He can release through them any gift He chooses. The question one must ask, therefore, is not, “What is my spiritual gift?” but “How can I live in such a way that the Spirit can manifest His gifts in my life as they are needed?”

We must further realize that spiritual gifts come as “anointings” from the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Spirit comes upon and works through an individual believer. It may be for a brief period, to release God’s power and grace into a situation. This is what happened to Paul in the city of Pathos. He was being opposed by a sorcerer named Elymas. The Holy Spirit filled Paul and revealed to him what God was about to do. Paul spoke directly To Elymas and said, “Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun” (Acts 13:11). The miracle occurred just as Paul had predicted. Then Sergius Paulus, the governor of the island, was amazed and turned to the Lord. In this instance, Paul was likely manifesting the spiritual gift known as a word of knowledge.

Thus, when the Holy Spirit wants to manifest himself through a particular spiritual gift, He will come as an anointing on a yielded believer. Once the believer senses the anointing, it is his or her duty to act in faith to release the spiritual gift. The act of faith could be to say or do a particular thing. This could be a humanly impossible act. Nevertheless, the believer must step out in faith. Once he takes such a step of faith, the anointing is released, the spiritual gift is manifested, and the work is accomplished.

This lesson is **important** because it gives instruction about the gifts of the Spirit and how they are exercised in ministry.

The **main truth** we learn from this lesson is that every Spirit-filled Christian can and should allow the Holy Spirit to use them in the manifestation of spiritual gifts.

Let’s **review** some important truths we have learned from this lesson:

1. Define spiritual gifts.

A. [PAUSE] If you answered that spiritual gifts are *supernatural anointings given by the Spirit of God through Spirit-filled believers to accomplish the will of the Father*, you are right.

2. Name the three categories of spiritual gifts mentioned in this lesson.
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “The three categories of spiritual gifts are revelation gifts, power gifts, and prophetic gifts,” you are correct.

3. Whom can the Spirit use to manifest spiritual gifts?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that the Spirit can manifest himself through any Christian who is walking in the Spirit and committed to fulfilling God’s will, you answered correctly.

4. What do we mean when we say that spiritual gifts come as “anointings”?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “We mean that the Spirit comes upon and works through an individual believer for a brief period to release God’s power and grace into a situation,” you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to teach others about what you have learned. Be sure to lead them in a discussion concerning how they may prepare themselves to be used by the Spirit in manifesting spiritual gifts. The following verse is important to memorize and use in your sharing, “Now to **each one** the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (First Corinthians 12:7).