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# The Holy Spirit—Our Helper

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, January 8, 2011

## The Spirit Who ‘Gifts’ The Church

*“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).<sup>1</sup>*

In this portion of our study of the Holy Spirit’s ministry, we take up the subject of His gracious “gifting” of the Church. The “spiritual gifts” can be defined as: “special enablements, bestowed on each believer, as the Holy Spirit chooses, for the purpose of empowering those individual believers to fulfill their ministry to others in the church.”<sup>2</sup>

### I. THE “GIFTS” AND THE “FRUIT” OF THE SPIRIT.

- A. The “gifts” of the Spirit are sometimes confused with the “fruit” of the Spirit. As Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” The “fruit” and the “gifts” are not the same thing, and should be kept distinct in our thinking.
- B. Nevertheless, the two things are related vitally to one another. The fruit of the Spirit describes the kind of person we are to be as members of the body of Christ; and the gifts of the Spirit describe the kinds of things that the Spirit empowers those members do in service to one another. The “gifts” of the Spirit--as empowered by the Holy Spirit--are to be expressed in us in a way that is consistent with the “fruit” of the Spirit. In other words, the Spirit will never lead us to exercise the gifts--or will never bless their use--in a way that’s unloving, joyless, unpeaceful, impatient, unkind, evil, unfaithful, harsh, or out-of- control.

### II. THE VARIOUS MEANINGS OF “GIFT” IN SCRIPTURE.

- A. The Greek word *dōrea* is a word that refers to something that is given freely from one person to another. Paul was thrilled to talk about the unique ministry God gave him of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. He considered his ministry to be a great honor, and called it “the gift [*dōrea*] of the grace of God given to me” (Ephesians 3:7). But he wasn’t alone. He also affirmed, “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift” [*dōrea*] (Ephesians 4:7).
- B. A similar word is *dōma*. It simply means “a gift”. Paul used it to describe a sacrificial monetary gift he was once given by some believers to support him in his work. He was grateful; but told them, “Not that I seek the gift [*dōma*], but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account” (Philippians 4:17). But he also used it to describe what Jesus has given to us: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts [*dōma*] to men” (Ephesians 4:8).
- C. Sometimes, the Bible simply uses the word *pneumatikas*, which is an adjective that means “spiritual”. When using it in reference to the gifts, it uses it as a substantival adjective--that is, the word “gift” doesn’t appear; but is implied in the word “spiritual”. Paul introduced his great discourse on the spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:1 by writing, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant” (the word “gifts” being supplied in the English). Similarly, he wrote, “Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts . . .” (14:1). This emphasizes the divine origin of these gifts, as well as their nature.

D. The most common word used is *charisma*. A whole movement in the Christian family that identifies itself with certain spiritual gifts has called itself “Charismatic” (although most of our Charismatic brethren would agree that all genuine believers in Christ are given spiritual gifts and, in that sense, are truly ‘charismatic’). A standard New Testament Greek dictionary defines *charisma* as “special gifts of a non-material sort, bestowed through God’s generosity on individual Christians”.<sup>3</sup> This word is related to another important word--*charis*, which means “grace”. The apostle Peter used both words when he wrote, “As each one has received a gift [*charisma*], minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace [*charis*] of God” (1 Peter 4:10); as Paul also does in Romans 12:6 (“Having then gifts [*charisma*] differing according to the grace [*charis*] that is given to us, let us use them . . .”). *Charisma* is used by Paul to describe the spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:4 (“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit . . .”), verses 9, 28 and 30 (“ . . . gifts of healings . . .”), and verse 31 (“But earnestly desire the best gifts.”).

### III. SOME BASIC BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES ABOUT THE SPIRIT’S “GIFTS”.

- A. Each believer has been uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit. That of course includes you. You may not think that you have anything unique to offer to the Body of Christ; but the Bible clearly teaches otherwise. The Bible specifies that “each” believer has a spiritual gift (Eph. 4:7; 1 Peter 4:10). You may not yet know what that gift is, or understand yet how God wants you to use it. But you can take God at His word that you have already been gifted by the Holy Spirit in some unique way.
- B. Each believer has been gifted as the Holy Spirit chooses. Neither you or I can choose our own spiritual gifts. We can’t look over the list of spiritual gifts that the Bible describes, and decide which one we would like. Rather, “one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11).
- C. The gifts are given to individual believers by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the rest of the church. This is very important. The spiritual gifts that you have been given have not been given mainly for your benefit. They have been given mainly for the benefit of others in the Body of Christ. “. . . [T]he manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all . . .” (1 Corinthians 12:7). They are given in accordance with Christ as the Church’s Head, “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:15-16).
- D. It’s up to you to put your spiritual gift(s) to work and grow in your use of them. In fact, we are given a command in the Scriptures: “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10). It’s a gift that has been given to you to be used, in obedience to God, for benefit others in the Body of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup>All Scripture readings are taken from *the Holy Bible, New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

<sup>2</sup>Much of the material for this study was adapted from “Your Giftedness to The Body: A Biblical Study of The Nature, Purpose, and Use of Spiritual Gifts” from Bethany Bible Church, 2005.

<sup>3</sup>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (*BDAG*), 3rd. Ed., p. 1018.