

Gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT

HOLY SPIRIT
Volume 2

Kenneth E. Hagin

Unlocking the Mystery to Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual Growth Series | For Individual or Group Study



Gifts of the Holy Spirit

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

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ISBN-13: 978-1-60616-756-4

ISBN-10: 1-60616-756-1

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Electronic Edition Published 2013.

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Lesson 1

The Gifts of the Spirit

Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 12:1–14

Central Truth: The gifts of the Spirit are given to profit the whole Church.

Paul, inspired by the Spirit to write to the Church at Corinth, said, “*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant*” (1 Cor. 12:1).

If the Spirit of God, through Paul, said He didn’t want the Church at Corinth to be ignorant concerning spiritual gifts, I certainly do not believe He wants the Church today to be ignorant concerning spiritual gifts. Yet a gross ignorance does exist concerning these things.

In some places people know nothing at all about them—not even that such gifts exist. They think these gifts have been done away with. In other places they know something about some of them, but their knowledge is very limited.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:1–14

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

The Epistle of First Corinthians is not a letter written to an individual; it is a letter written to the whole Church. Some have thought these verses apply to an individual, but Paul was telling the whole Church to covet these gifts. Then, as the whole Body covets them, the Spirit will divide to every man severally as He

wills.

Paul infers here that not every man is going to have all these gifts, because he said, *“For to one [not to everybody], is given a word of wisdom, to another a word of knowledge. . . .”*

Some have taken this out of its setting and have thought the Bible was telling the individual to desire all of these gifts. Actually, Paul was telling the Church as a group to covet them. Then if they do, the Spirit will divide to every man severally as He wills—not as I will, not as you will, but as the Spirit wills.

Gifts of the Spirit Proclaim Jesus as Lord

The Church at Corinth had some peculiar things about it that do not exist among us today.

Paul said, *“Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led”* (v. 2). These people previously had worshipped idols. In this idol worship, motivated by the wrong spirit, they said a lot of things in error.

Church history tells us that some of them came into the Christian assembly, and when the Spirit of God began to manifest Himself, they would say things under the influence of the wrong spirit. Some of them even would arise in the service when the gifts of inspiration and utterance were in operation and would say that Jesus was accursed.

Paul said that when the Holy Spirit is in operation, He will proclaim Jesus as Lord (v. 3). If it is an utterance gift, then of course the Holy Spirit will say that Jesus is Lord. Or, if it is any of the gifts, they will always uplift the lordship of Jesus, not the lordship of some man. *They will not attract attention to man, but rather to Christ.*

“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed” (v. 3). You can be sure that if one is exercising one of the vocal gifts and calls Jesus accursed or speaks against Him in any way, that is not the Holy Spirit speaking!

Then Paul said that no man can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. He is saying that if a man is speaking by the right spirit, he will say that Jesus is Lord.

Lacking understanding, many people try to operate a gift without the Spirit. Perhaps the gift has been manifested in their life on occasion and they think, *I have it now, and I can operate it at will.* However, when they do, they invariably get into trouble. They are throwing themselves wide open to satanic deception. When we get away from the Word, Satan will accommodate us.

Diversities of Gifts

Paul went on to say, *“Now there are diversities of gifts. . . .”* The word

“diversities” simply means “different.” In other words, Paul was saying, “There are different gifts but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And differences of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”

There are two theories on this particular scripture, and I can see merit in both of them.

One line of thought says these gifts are administered to different ones in different ways. They say diversities of operations means the gifts of the Spirit *operate* in different ways and not always the same way in different individuals.

On the other hand, there are those who believe that diversities of operations is not referring to gifts at all. These people maintain that just as there are different *gifts* of the Spirit, there are also different *administrations* of the Spirit, as well as different *operations* of the Spirit. They say Paul is talking here about three different things—gifts, administrations, and operations—not just about gifts.

“*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal*” (v. 7). Notice he is calling these gifts “manifestations”—the manifestation of them is given to profit withal. They are given to profit the whole Church, not an individual.

Then Paul went on to say, “*For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge . . .*” (v. 8), and he goes on to list nine manifestations.

Three Categories of Gifts

The simplest way to describe these nine gifts is that three of them *say* something, three of them *do* something, and three of them *reveal* something.

The three gifts that *say* something are the *gifts of utterance*. They are: prophecy, divers kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

The three gifts that *do* something are the *gifts of power*. They are: the gift of faith, the working of miracles, and the gifts of healings. In the original Greek, every time this third power gift is mentioned, both “gifts” and “healings” are in the plural: gifts of healings. (This isn’t always translated correctly in the *King James Version*.) There is no such thing as “the gift of healing.”

The three gifts that *reveal* something are the *gifts of revelation*. They are: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits.

These gifts are listed in the order of their importance. Of the three gifts of revelation, the word of wisdom is the best gift.

Of the three gifts of power, the gift of faith is the best gift.

Of the three gifts of utterance, the gift of prophecy is the best gift.

Of course, the best gift in any situation is the gift that is most needed at that time.

Memory Text: “*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.*” —1 Cor. 12:1

Lesson 2

The Gift of the Word of Knowledge

Bible Texts: Acts 9:10–12; 10:9–20

Central Truth: The word of knowledge is the supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit of certain facts in the mind of God.

First, let us note the fact that this gift is called the “word of knowledge,” not the “gift of knowledge.” *“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit”* (1 Cor. 12:8). There is no such thing as a spiritual “gift of knowledge.” The word of knowledge is the supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit of certain facts in the mind of God.

God is all knowledge—He knows everything. But He doesn’t reveal everything He knows to man. He gives him just a word, or a part of what He knows. A word is a fragmentary part of a sentence, so a word of knowledge is simply a fragmentary part of knowledge. God is all knowing. He has all knowledge. But He doesn’t impart *all* knowledge to us, nor does He impart *knowledge* to us; He imparts a *word* of knowledge to us—just that part which He wants us to know.

The Gift Is Supernatural

Also this word of knowledge is a supernatural manifestation, as are all of the gifts of the Spirit. None of them is a natural gift. If one of them is natural, then all are natural. If one of them is supernatural, then all are supernatural.

There are those who say that First Corinthians 12:8 refers to natural knowledge. If that were true, then the gifts of healings would not be supernatural healing, but would simply be healing through the advancements of medical science. We certainly believe in medical science and thank God for all it can do. But this scripture is talking about *supernatural* healing.

If the gifts of the Spirit were only natural gifts, then divers kinds of tongues would refer simply to those languages which people had learned naturally. Then even unsaved people could have this gift. But we know that these “divers kinds of tongues” are *supernatural*, for we are able to speak in languages which we have never learned; they are given by the Holy Spirit. Also, we know that this gift of healing is not natural healing; that is, it is *not* man’s ability through

medical science to assist nature. It is supernatural healing—imparted by the Holy Spirit.

I believe that if two out of the nine gifts are supernatural, then all nine are supernatural. Therefore, this gift is not natural knowledge, but it is supernatural knowledge—a supernatural revelation from the Spirit of God.

Confusing the gift of the word of knowledge with natural knowledge, someone said, “We don’t need some of these lesser gifts. We have the gift of knowledge.” The knowledge they’re bragging about is intellectual knowledge—knowledge gained apart from the Holy Spirit and apart from the Word of God. However, the knowledge Paul is referring to in First Corinthians 12:8 is a supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Gift Manifested Through Visions

We see an example of the manifestation of the word of knowledge through a vision when John was on the Isle of Patmos. John wrote that he was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and Jesus appeared to him in a vision. In this vision Jesus revealed to John the condition of the seven churches in Asia Minor, as recorded in the Book of Revelation. Although there is a prophetic message for us today in this revelation, these seven churches actually existed at that time in Asia Minor. John, exiled to the Isle of Patmos, couldn’t possibly have known what was going on in these cities or churches; but Jesus revealed their spiritual condition to him. That was a word of knowledge.

Another example of this gift in operation is found in the ninth chapter of Acts.

ACTS 9:10–12

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Here again the word of knowledge was manifested in a vision, but this time it came to a layman. Ananias wasn’t an apostle, as was John. He wasn’t a pastor or an evangelist. Ananias wasn’t even listed as being a teacher. The Bible calls Ananias a disciple. He was just a member of the church at Damascus. If the Lord wills, laymen as well as ministers can have a manifestation of the word of knowledge.

In this vision the Lord told Ananias to go to a certain house and pray for Saul. At the same time He appeared to Saul in a like vision, showing Saul that Ananias was coming to pray for him “that he might receive his sight.”

Ananias couldn’t have known in the natural that in a certain house on a certain street, a man named Saul was praying at that very moment. He couldn’t have

known this any other way than by supernatural revelation: a word of knowledge.

ACTS 10:9–20

9 . . . Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Here again the word of knowledge was manifested through a vision. Peter had fallen into a trance and saw a vision. While he was thinking about what it meant, the Holy Spirit said to him, “Three men seek thee.” Peter did not know the men were there. He had no way of knowing that they were, except that the Spirit of God told him. That was a word of knowledge—a supernatural revelation.

The Gift Manifested Through an Inward Revelation

Sometimes the word of knowledge comes by an inward revelation. When Jesus dealt with the woman at the well in Samaria, He used the word of knowledge to convince her, a sinner, of her need for a Savior (John 4). This woman asked Jesus who He was, and He answered, “If you knew who I was and you would ask me, I would give you water that you need never thirst.”

“Give me this water, so I won’t have to come here and draw,” she said, thinking about the water in the well.

Jesus said, “The water I give you will be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

The woman wanted *that* water. Jesus told her to go get her husband. When she answered that she didn’t have a husband, He said, “You are right about that. You have had five husbands, and the man you are living with right now isn’t your husband.” Jesus knew this by an inward revelation—a word of knowledge—and used this gift to point her to salvation.

The word of knowledge can be manifested in a number of different ways. It may come through tongues and interpretation, through the gift of prophecy, or an angel may come to deliver a word of knowledge. God has many ways of doing things. Often these gifts operate together—we just separate them in order to define them.

Sometimes this gift of the word of knowledge is confused with a profound

knowledge of the Bible. One minister told me that he had the word of knowledge because he had studied the Bible so much! While it is true that God helps us to understand His Word, and we receive knowledge from studying it, that kind of knowledge is not a supernatural gift. The word of knowledge does work in connection with the Bible; God does reveal things in connection with His Word which we don't know. But if that were all there were to it, we wouldn't have to study. Yet Paul told the young minister Timothy to study. In his letter to this young pastor of a New Testament church, Paul said, "*Study to shew thyself approved . . .*" (2 Tim. 2:15). So this particular kind of knowledge of God's Word comes by studying, but the word of knowledge comes by supernatural revelation imparted by God.

Another mistaken idea about the gift of the word of knowledge is that it is that very real knowledge which comes by walking with God. While it is true that one does gain a knowledge of God by walking with Him, that knowledge is different from supernatural knowledge.

An example of the difference between the word of knowledge and natural knowledge is found in the Old Testament story of how God spoke to the boy Samuel (1 Sam. 3:4-10). Samuel was in the Temple helping the prophet Eli. One night Samuel heard a voice call his name. Thinking it was Eli calling, he got up and went to him. Eli told him he hadn't called him, so Samuel went back to bed. Again he heard a voice calling, "Samuel, Samuel." Again he ran to Eli and again Eli sent him back to bed. When this happened the third time, Eli realized that God must be talking to the boy, and Eli told Samuel to answer the next time the voice called his name.

Eli had been walking with God, but he hadn't been as faithful to God in rearing his children as he ought to have been. He had known the things of God, but he hadn't heard God's voice that night.

So we see that the word of knowledge does not come by long experience with God. There is a knowledge of God that is obtained through close fellowship with Him and experience of His ways, just as there is when we walk with a friend and become better acquainted. As we walk with God, our knowledge of Him increases. But that is not the same as this supernatural manifestation of the word of knowledge.

This manifestation of the Spirit of God isn't just for yesterday; it is also for today. A Spirit-filled Baptist brother who is president of his local chapter of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, once told me of an experience he'd had. He said, "I passed by a large Roman Catholic church, and something seemed to tell me to stop. So I pulled into the church parking lot, stopped, and sat there praying for a little while.

“Something seemed to tell me that the priest would be praying in his office and that I should go in, lay hands on him, and he would be filled with the Holy Spirit. I hesitated. I didn’t want to make a fool of myself. I sat there and prayed awhile longer. Then I decided it wouldn’t hurt just to go see if I could find the priest, and see if God was really leading me.”

This business executive found his way inside the church and knocked on the door of the priest’s study. He heard a voice inviting him to come in, and he opened the door to see a priest sitting at a desk with some books open in front of him. As he entered, the priest got up and greeted him, and they introduced themselves to each other.

When the priest heard that his caller was president of the local Full Gospel chapter, he immediately said, “Praise the Lord! I was just reading about what God is doing in these days in this move of the Spirit. I was reading about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, and the Lord witnessed to my spirit that this is what I need. I am conscious of my spiritual lack. Only ten minutes ago I bowed my head and said, ‘Lord, I don’t know anyone in this town who has this experience. Send somebody by to pray with me.’ And here you are!”

The business executive told me, “That priest got down on his knees, I laid hands on him, and he started speaking in tongues almost instantly, lifting both hands to heaven.”

It is amazing what is happening in this day. God is visiting hungry hearts everywhere. He is not going to pay attention to any of the old boundary lines of denomination that we have set up and the labels which we go by. You can put any kind of label on an empty can, but that won’t put anything inside the can. It’s not the label that counts; it’s what’s inside.

Here was a supernatural manifestation of the word of knowledge very similar to those occurring in the Acts of the Apostles—happening because the Holy Spirit is still manifesting Himself among those who believe. We need supernatural manifestations today just as much as the early Christians needed them!

Memory Text: *“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.”—1 Cor. 12:8*

Lesson 3

The Gift of the Word of Knowledge in the Old Testament

Bible Texts: 1 Kings 19:2–4,14,18; 2 Kings 5:25–26; 6:9–12; 1 Samuel 9:3–4,6,19–20; 10:21–23

Central Truth: Through the word of knowledge, the discouraged can be comforted, the saints gladdened, lost property recovered, the enemy defeated, and the Lord Jesus Christ glorified.

Supernatural manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit occurred in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. In fact, all the gifts of the Spirit except tongues and interpretation of tongues, were in operation in Old Testament times. (We will cover the reason for this when we study those gifts.)

The other gifts were first manifested in the New Testament under the ministry of Jesus. Then, after the Day of Pentecost, tongues and interpretation of tongues began to be manifested as well.

Word of Knowledge Used to Enlighten a Discouraged Servant

1 KINGS 19:2–4,14,18

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

3 And when he [Elijah] saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. . . .

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. . . .

18 Yet I [God] have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

The prophet Elijah was very bold up on the mountaintop when he prayed fire down from heaven. But when someone told him, “Queen Jezebel said that by this time tomorrow she is going to have your head,” Elijah became fearful.

He sat down under a juniper tree and begged God to let him die. He told God,

“Everybody is backslidden but me. Everybody has bowed their knee to Baal, and I am the only one left.”

But God gave him a word of knowledge which encouraged him. He said, “No, you aren’t the only one left. I have seven thousand who have not bowed unto Baal, reserved to myself.” Elijah couldn’t have known that any other way. I am sure it encouraged him to know that he wasn’t the only godly person left; that God had seven thousand who had not bowed their knees to Baal.

Word of Knowledge Used to Expose a Hypocrite

2 KINGS 5:25–26

25 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.

26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?

After Naaman was healed of leprosy, he wanted to give the prophet Elisha changes of raiment, silver, gold, and other gifts to express his gratitude. Elisha, however, refused the gifts. But Elisha’s servant, Gehazi, ran after Naaman and lied to him, saying, “After you left, two young prophets came, and although my master wouldn’t take anything for himself, he said it was all right to take some changes of raiment and some talents of silver and gold for these prophets.” Naaman was so thrilled to be healed that he gave Gehazi twice as much as he asked for. Then Gehazi hid the gifts because he was a thief as well as liar.

When Gehazi returned and Elisha asked him where he had been, he said, “Nowhere, my master.”

Elisha said, “My heart [my spirit] went with you when you caught up with that chariot. I saw you.” How could Elisha, sitting in his own house, know what was going on several miles away? God revealed it to him! God gave Elisha a supernatural revelation of what had happened, thus exposing a hypocrite.

Word of Knowledge Given to Warn a King of the Enemy’s Plan

2 KINGS 6:9–12

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?

12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

Every time Syria set up an ambushment against Israel, the prophet of God revealed their plans to the king of Israel. Finally the king of Syria called his

cabinet together and said, “There must be a traitor among us who is giving us away.”

The king’s servants replied, “No, there is no traitor among us. A prophet of God in Israel tells the king what you speak in your bedchamber.”

This information regarding the ambushments of Syria was a supernatural revelation. The prophet Elisha couldn’t have known the enemy’s plans. He was not in Syria. The enemy’s plans were revealed to him supernaturally through a word of knowledge and his country was saved from danger.

Word of Knowledge Used to Help Recover Lost Property

1 SAMUEL 9:3–4,6,19–20

3 And the asses of Kish Saul’s father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

4 And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found them not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and there they were not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found them not. . . .

6 And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go. . . .

19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me today, and tomorrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father’s house?

While Saul was out looking for his father’s donkeys, which had either strayed or were stolen, someone suggested, “Why don’t you go ask the prophet, Samuel? He would know.” (Of course, Samuel would know only what God would reveal to him, because if he knew *everything* he would be omnipotent.) When Saul asked him concerning the donkeys’ whereabouts, Samuel told him, “They have already been found.”

Word of Knowledge Used to Discover a Man in Hiding

1 SAMUEL 10:21–23

21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.

22 Therefore they inquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come thither. And the Lord answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence. . . .

Although Samuel had already anointed Saul to be king of Israel, when it came time to cast lots determining the next king, Saul hid “among the stuff.” When the people couldn’t find him, they inquired of the Lord instead of sending everybody looking for him. That was the quickest way. They knew that the Lord knew

where Saul was. And the Lord told them exactly where Saul was, and when they looked there, they found him. That was the word of knowledge in operation. The word of knowledge reveals facts.

The word of knowledge can also be used to reveal sickness and demon possession. Remember that the revelation the word of knowledge brings is never about the future. The word of knowledge brings revelation concerning things *past* or *present*. The word of wisdom, on the other hand, brings revelation pointing to the *future*, including the plan and purpose of God.

By the manifestation of the gift of the word of knowledge, the discouraged can be comforted, the saints gladdened, lost property recovered, the enemy defeated, and the Lord Jesus Christ glorified.

Memory Text: *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.” —1 Cor. 12:8*

Lesson 4

The Gift of the Word of Wisdom (Part 1)

Bible Texts: Acts 9:10–16; 8:26–29

Central Truth: The word of wisdom is a supernatural revelation by the Spirit of God concerning the divine purpose in the mind and will of God.

In studying the nine gifts of the Spirit, the Scriptures plainly state that all these work “ . . . *that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will*” (1 Cor. 12:11).

As the Body of Christ, we are to desire that the gifts of the Spirit be made manifest among us and then leave it up to the Holy Spirit to use those whom He will.

The Holy Spirit will not use everyone in the same way. He plainly stated that He divides to every man severally as *He* wills. Therefore, we must stay open to Him and let His will be done, even in the distributing and manifesting of spiritual gifts. We will get into trouble by wanting to do any of this ourselves.

Not everyone will have *all* the gifts of the Spirit in manifestation, because the Bible says, “*For to ONE is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to ANOTHER the word of knowledge by the same Spirit*” (1 Cor. 12:8). It is quite obvious, then, that all the gifts aren’t given equally to everyone. As the Body of Christ, let us desire these manifestations and let us allow the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself in our midst as *He* wills.

Regarding this scripture, “. . . *to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit . . .*,” people sometimes call these manifestations the *gift* of wisdom or the *gift* of knowledge. That is not correct, however. We must call them what the Bible calls them or we will become confused. If you called a dog a cat, you would confuse people. This scripture is not talking about wisdom or knowledge in the general sense. It is talking about just what it says—the *word* of wisdom and the *word* of knowledge.

God has all wisdom and all knowledge. He knows everything, but He never reveals to anybody *everything* that He knows. He just gives them a *word* of what He knows. A word is a fragmentary *part* of a sentence. And so it is with wisdom. It is not the *gift* of wisdom, it is the gift of the *word* of wisdom that God reveals

to man—only the word, or part, that He wants him to know.

For example, if you needed legal advice, you would call a lawyer. But the lawyer wouldn't give you all the legal wisdom he has, because you wouldn't need *all* of it. He would just give you a *part*—a word—of the legal wisdom that fits your particular case. He gives you a “word” of wisdom, legal wisdom, and that is really all you need.

The *word of knowledge* is a supernatural revelation by the Spirit of God concerning certain facts in the mind of God, relating to people, places, or things. The *word of wisdom* is a supernatural revelation by the Spirit of God concerning the divine purpose in the mind and will of God. The difference between these two gifts—the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom—is that the revelation which the word of knowledge brings is always *present* knowledge, or it is knowledge of something which happened in the *past*; the word of wisdom, on the other hand, always speaks of the *future*.

Word of Wisdom and Word of Knowledge Often Operate Together

In teaching about them, we usually divide these two gifts and deal with them separately; however, they frequently operate *together*.

For example, as we pointed out in Lesson 2, when the Lord spoke to John on the Isle of Patmos, it was in the form of a vision. Jesus appeared to John and told him about the condition of seven churches in Asia Minor at that time. The knowledge about the present condition of these seven churches was a manifestation of the word of knowledge.

Then the Lord went on to give John a word of wisdom. Jesus instructed each church as to what to do in the future according to His plan and purpose for each one.

We see another example of these two gifts operating jointly in the case of a layman, Ananias.

ACTS 9:10–16

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

In this passage we see both the gifts of the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom in operation. The Lord told Ananias where to go to find Saul, and that Saul had been praying and had seen a vision. The Lord even told Ananias the very street, the very house, and the very person to go to. These were all present facts. The Holy Spirit also revealed to Ananias that in Saul's vision, Saul had seen a man called Ananias come in and lay his hand on him that Saul might receive his sight. This, too, was a revelation, given by a vision, to Ananias concerning present facts about Saul. Therefore, this was the word of knowledge in operation.

But a further revelation was also given to Ananias. This other revelation was a word of wisdom because it revealed God's plan and purpose, as we read in verse 15: *"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."*

Giving even further revelation, the Lord said to Ananias, *"For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."* That didn't mean Saul (later named Paul) was going to be sick for Jesus' sake, but that he would suffer much persecution and physical hardship. And he did. He was stoned and left for dead. Five times he was given thirty-nine lashes by the Jews. He was shipwrecked three times. Everywhere Paul went, people stirred up things against him, and he suffered many things for God. This revelation given to Ananias concerning the great things Paul would suffer, was also a manifestation of this supernatural gift called the word of wisdom.

In the eighth chapter of Acts, we have another example of this gift of the word of wisdom in operation through a layman. At this time, Philip was still a deacon; he was appointed to serve tables. Later God made an evangelist out of him.

ACTS 8:26-29

26 And THE ANGEL OF THE LORD SPAKE unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

God revealed His plan and purpose to Philip through an angel's message. In this message, God directed Philip as to what to do—just as anyone might be led of the Spirit. And in the message, God told him to go to the desert, and Philip had to go by faith. The angel's message was a revelation which revealed something about God's purpose and plan; not the whole of God's plan, but just a part of it—just a *word*. Therefore, this was the word of wisdom in operation.

Natural Wisdom

The word of wisdom often is confused with simple wisdom used in dealing with the affairs of life. But wisdom in dealing with the affairs of life is not a spiritual gift of the Holy Spirit.

In the beginning of Joshua's ministry, God told him the key to his success would lie in meditating on the Word of God: *"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success"* (Josh. 1:8).

Another translation says, "Thou shall make thyself prosperous and thou shalt be able to deal wisely in the affairs of life."

Yes, there is a wisdom to be gained through the knowledge of God's Word, but that wisdom is not the supernatural manifestation of the gift of the word of wisdom.

Some people think Solomon's wisdom was a manifestation of the supernatural word of wisdom, but it wasn't. Solomon's wisdom was given to him by God. This same kind of wisdom is promised us in James 1:5, *"If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."*

The wisdom James is talking about is the wisdom to deal wisely in the affairs of life—wisdom to know how to conduct oneself as a Christian. God has promised that this wisdom—which I call general wisdom to deal in the affairs of life—is available to everyone who will ask for it. God does impart wisdom, but it still is not the supernatural manifestation of the *word of wisdom*.

In writing to believers, James said that if *any* lack wisdom, let him ask of God for it. Yet Paul said in our text, "To *one* is given the word of wisdom"—to *one*; not to *all*, but to *one*. This infers that not everyone is going to have these manifestations. Paul concludes by saying that manifestations of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit are given only as the Spirit wills.

When God sees fit to reveal His own mind and purpose and plan to man in a supernatural way, He does so by the supernatural manifestation of the word of wisdom. And that gift of the word of wisdom is to be distinguished from the general wisdom in dealing with the affairs of life that He will give to all who ask.

Memory Text: *"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom. . . ." —1 Cor. 12:8*

Lesson 5

The Gift of the Word of Wisdom (Part 2)

Bible Texts: Acts 11:28–30; 21:10–11

Central Truth: God reveals His purpose and plan for the future through the word of wisdom.

Sometimes what we call prophecy is not the simple gift of prophecy at all. If what is spoken forth has an element of revelation to it, it is actually a *word of knowledge*.

There is no revelation in the simple gift of prophecy. According to First Corinthians 14:3, the gift of prophecy “. . . speaketh unto men to *EDIFICATION, and EXHORTATION, and COMFORT.*” If a person is used only in the simple gift of prophecy—if he does not have manifestations of the other gifts in his ministry—then his prophecies will deal only with edification, exhortation, and comfort.

The Old Testament prophets, on the other hand, had to have the gifts of the Holy Spirit in operation in their lives in order for them to stand in the office of the prophet, because they made predictions concerning the future. And as we have seen, the simple gift of prophecy has no prediction in it. Therefore, the prophets’ predictions, even though they came through prophecy, were actually words of wisdom. For example, we ride in an automobile, but we are not an automobile. In the same way, sometimes a word of wisdom is conveyed by prophecy, but it really isn’t prophecy. It is a word of wisdom.

Word of Wisdom May Come in Many Forms

The word of wisdom, like the word of knowledge, may be given by an audible voice, a vision, or a dream. It also may come through the vocal gift of prophecy, or through tongues and interpretation.

In the Old Testament, Joseph received a word of wisdom through a dream which revealed God’s plan and purpose for the future.

Moses received the revelation of the law in an audible voice as God gave it to him. This law concerned God’s purpose for Israel; therefore, it had to be the word of wisdom which was exercised.

This is also true of the prophets of the Old Covenant who prophesied many things concerning Israel’s future, the New Covenant, the coming Messiah, and

even events yet to be fulfilled. They conveyed it through prophecy, but it was actually a word of wisdom they received.

Throughout the Old Testament as the prophets would prophesy, the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge would flow together. In the New Testament we see the same thing in operation.

ACTS 11:28–30

28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Agabus prophesied that a drought was coming, and the people believed him because he was a man of integrity who had a proven ministry. (We can't believe everything that everyone says. We must have some discernment in order to judge things in line with God's Word.) But when Agabus prophesied about the drought, the people immediately began to prepare to send relief to the victims of the drought.

We again read of the prophet Agabus in the 21st chapter of Acts. Paul and his company, including Luke, the writer of the Book of Acts, were at Philip's house.

ACTS 21:10–11

10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

Notice that something was revealed. *When any REVELATION comes, it is always a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, or discerning of spirits* because these are the only three gifts of revelation. No others are listed in the Bible. The revelation concerning Paul was not a word of knowledge, because it dealt with the *future*. "Knowledge" encompasses past and present facts and events given to us through the Holy Spirit of God. A word of "wisdom" is revelation of the future given to us through the Holy Spirit; God in His divine wisdom knows all about the future.

Then Luke said, *"And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus"* vv. 12–13).

After that Luke said, *"And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done"* (v. 14). This was a revelation of the will of God which was to come to pass in the future; therefore, it was a word of wisdom. And it came to pass.

Word of Wisdom Can Be Conditional

There are some instances in the Old Testament when the prophet received a word from God which did not come to pass. Some things are conditional. In the case of King Hezekiah, God told Isaiah to give him a word of wisdom concerning the future—the plan and purpose of God under the present conditions. Isaiah told Hezekiah, “. . . *Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live*” (2 Kings 20:1).

Isaiah delivered the message and started to leave the palace. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, repented of his wrong doings, cried and prayed to God, and reminded Him that he had walked with God and had kept His commandments in times past.

The word of the Lord came to Isaiah before he even got out of the courtyard, instructing him to go back and give Hezekiah another word of wisdom. (It was a word of wisdom because it concerned the future.) “Tell him I am going to give him fifteen more years,” God said.

God also spoke to the prophet Jonah and gave him a word of wisdom that Ninevah was going to be destroyed. It was a word of wisdom because it concerned the plan and purpose of God for the future.

Jonah didn’t care if Ninevah was destroyed or not! He didn’t want to go warn the enemies of Israel. God dealt with him, however, until he was obedient to go and preach to the people of Ninevah, warning them of impending judgment if they didn’t turn to God. They repented and judgment didn’t fall on them in that generation (although it came eventually).

Word of Wisdom Used to Set Apart Those for Special Ministry

The gift of the word of wisdom is also used to reveal God’s plan to those He wants to use in ministering. We saw an example of this in our last lesson. God sent Ananias to pray for Saul, telling him, “. . . *he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel . . .*” (Acts 9:15).

Word of Wisdom Used to Assure of God’s Protection

The word of wisdom is also given to assure of coming deliverance in a time of calamity. When Paul was aboard a ship en route to Rome to appeal his case to Caesar, a violent storm arose. Paul had had a word of wisdom for his fellow passengers even before they set sail. He had said, “. . . *I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage . . .*” (Acts 27:10). But because the south wind was blowing softly, they disregarded Paul’s warning and set sail.

If they had listened to Paul, they would not have lost their ship and all their

merchandise. Failing to heed his warning, however, they had to throw everything overboard. Finally, all hope was gone. But in the midst of such calamity, Paul stepped forth. He had heard from heaven!

Paul said, *“There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul . . . God hath given thee all them that sail with thee”* (Acts 27:23–24). Paul said, “The ship is going down and will be lost. Listen to what I am telling you, for you will have to stay with the ship.” They were about to leave it, but they all stayed with it, and not one man was lost.

How desperately we need such supernatural manifestations today! Thank God, *we can and do hear from heaven through the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit!*

Memory Text: *“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom. . . .” —1 Cor. 12:8*

Lesson 6

The Gift of Discerning of Spirits

Bible Texts: Exodus 33:20–23; Acts 16:16–18

Central Truth: The discerning of spirits gives insight into the spirit world.

By way of review, the nine gifts of the Spirit can be divided into three categories: three gifts which *reveal* something, three gifts which *do* something, and three gifts which *say* something.

The three gifts of revelation—gifts that *reveal* something—are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and the discerning of spirits.

The three power gifts, as they are often called—gifts that *do* something—are the gift of faith, the working of miracles, and the gifts of healings.

The three inspirational gifts, or vocal gifts—gifts that *say* something—are the gift of prophecy, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

Often these gifts work together, as in the case of tongues and interpretation. But we divide them here in order to distinguish them and study them.

Our previous lessons have dealt with two of the three gifts which reveal something: the *word of wisdom* and the *word of knowledge*. In this lesson we will cover the third revelation gift: *discerning of spirits*.

The most important of the three revelation gifts, of course, is the word of wisdom. Listed in the order of their importance they are: (1) the word of wisdom, (2) the word of knowledge, and (3) discerning of spirits.

Everything within the realm of knowledge—facts, events, purpose, motive, origin, destiny; human, divine, or satanic; natural or supernatural; past, present, or future—comes within the focal range of these three gifts. They include in their comprehensive scope all that God knows. *And there is nothing God knows that may not be made known to man as the Spirit wills through the agency of one or more of these three gifts!*

The *word of wisdom* gives us a revelation of the mind and purpose of God. We can understand why this gift would rank first, because it is more important to have a revelation of the mind and purpose of God than anything else. The word of wisdom deals with the future.

The word of knowledge gives us a revelation of things in the present or past.

The *discerning of spirits* gives us insight into the spirit world. It actually has a more limited range than the other two revelation gifts, because its revelation is limited to a single class of objects—spirits. Revelations that the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge bring are broader and apply to people, places, and things, whereas the discerning of spirits gives supernatural insight into only the realm of spirits.

Let me say right here that it is not “discerning of devils,” nor is it the “discerning of *evil* spirits.” To say that the discerning of spirits has to do only with devils is misleading. It is supernatural insight into the realm of spirits both good and bad. The discerning of evil spirits is included, but too many people have thought discerning of *evil* spirits is all this gift refers to, and so they have been misled.

Discerning the Similitude of God

God let Moses look into the realm of spirits. He said to Moses, “You can’t look on my face, but I am going to hide you in the cleft of the rock and put my hand over your face; I am going to pass by and let you see my back parts.”

EXODUS 33:20–23

20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

21 And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:

23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

This is an example of Moses seeing into the spirit realm. He was able to see the similitude (or likeness) of God.

All through the Word of God we encounter people who in visions have been able to see the similitude of God. They didn’t see God; they saw the likeness of God. As He was revealed, they were seeing into the spirit world. For example, Isaiah said, “*In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up . . .*” (Isa. 6:1). That was a manifestation of discerning of spirits.

Discerning the Risen Christ

Through the discerning of spirits, or seeing into the spirit realm, one may even discern the risen Christ! No one has actually seen Him *physically* since His Ascension and seating on high. He is seated on the right hand of the Father, where He “ever liveth to make intercession” for us (Heb. 7:26). But through this supernatural gift of discerning of spirits, people have sometimes been able to see into the spirit realm and see Jesus.

Discerning the Holy Spirit

John, in his vision on the Isle of Patmos, saw the Holy Spirit as seven spirits before the throne of God. That simply meant that John was seeing into the spirit realm and seeing seven aspects of the Spirit of God.

All such visions would be a manifestation of the gift of discerning of spirits. A vision might bring with it a word of wisdom and/or a word of knowledge. But the vision itself would be the gift of discerning of spirits in operation because that person would at that time be seeing into the spirit world. To “discern” means to “see,” so a person is discerning or seeing into the realm of spirits. And in the spirit world there are both divine spirits *and* evil spirits.

Discerning of spirits also means the discerning of cherubim, seraphim, archangels, the host of angels, or the discerning of Satan and his legions. It also refers to the discerning of the human spirit, with its good or evil tendencies.

Discerning of Spirits

The gift of discerning of spirits also reveals the kind of spirit behind a supernatural manifestation—whether evil or good. An example of this is found in the Apostle Paul’s ministry.

ACTS 16:16–18

16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said TO THE SPIRIT, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

By the discerning of spirits, Paul knew that this young woman who was following his group through the streets of Philippi had a spirit of divination. When the gift of discerning of spirits was in operation, Paul turned to her and spoke directly to the spirit, commanding it to come out of her. Notice that Paul dealt with the spirit involved; not the person. (And after her deliverance, the girl couldn’t tell fortunes any more: That spirit of divination had left her!)

Supernatural manifestations in the realm in which we live originate from one of two sources: God or the devil. *Many things which seem miraculous to us actually do not come from God.* We must not forget that Satan is a supernatural being also. Too often people are ready to follow anything, whether it is backed up by Scripture or not!

We can correctly identify a genuine manifestation of the Spirit of God if discerning of spirits is in operation. Through this gift, we can know the spirit behind the operation. On the other hand, we can correctly identify the source of the manifestation even without having discerning of spirits in operation in our life. How is this possible? Because if we know the Word of God and are walking in the Spirit, we will have an inward witness that will lead us and distinguish the

true from the false.

Romans 8:14 tells us, “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” This verse implies that *all* the sons of God can be led by the Spirit. But the Scriptures certainly don’t imply that *all* the children of God would have the gift of discerning of spirits. First Corinthians 12:8–10 says, “*For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge . . . to another the discerning of spirits. . . .*” This doesn’t state or even imply that everybody would have these gifts, but it does imply that every believer can be led by the Spirit. We need to distinguish the difference between the two: Some things are revealed to us by the inward witness, and some things are revealed to us by the discerning of spirits.

‘Discerning’ Not Mind Reading

Someone has said that the best way to find out what something is, is to find out what it is *not*. So let us look at some things the gift of discerning of spirits is not.

First, discerning of spirits is not “discernment.” People say, “I have the gift of *discernment*.” Actually, there is no such gift mentioned in the Bible. The Bible calls this gift the *discerning of spirits*. Many times what people call “the gift of discernment” is really the gift of the word of knowledge in operation. People *know* things by the Spirit of God and mistakenly call the gift of “discernment.”

Discerning of spirits is not a kind of spiritual “mind reading.” Nor is it psychological insight, mental penetration, or the power to discern the faults in others; for this faultfinding, I have noticed, is possessed not only by believers but by unbelievers as well! You don’t even have to be converted to get this “gift.” However, this “gift” is forbidden in the Scriptures: “*Judge not, that ye be not judged*” (Matt. 7:1).

One purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to destroy this critical attitude and to replace it with the sweet attitude of gentle forbearance. The gift of discerning of spirits is not a gift of faultfinding. If those who think they have this gift would just turn it on themselves for a few minutes, they would never again use it. The gift of discerning of spirits is not discerning of *character* or *faults*. It is not the discerning of *people*. It is the discerning of *spirits*.

The Christian should walk in love, for love covers a multitude of sins. Paul said, “*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you*” (Eph. 4:32).

The noted English Bible teacher, Howard Carter, wrote in *Questions & Answers on Spiritual Gifts*, “The word of knowledge gives one a revelation of anything that can be classified as existing or having existed, so the fact of a spirit

possessing a body could be revealed by this gift, but the one so informed would have no vision of the spirit, he would not ‘discern’ it. By the discerning of spirits we see beyond the sphere for which we have been created, since we are natural beings. It is only by the revelation of the Holy Spirit that we can perceive the beings that live in the spirit world.”

Memory Text: “*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*” —1 Cor. 12:7

Lesson 7

The Gift of Faith (Part 1)

Bible Texts: Ephesians 2:8; Romans 12:3; Galatians 5:22–23; 1 Corinthians 12:9

Central Truth: Those who possess the gift of faith believe God in such a way that He honors their word as His own, and He miraculously brings it to pass.

Having covered the three revelation gifts—the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and the discerning of spirits—in previous lessons, we will go now to the three power gifts.

The power gifts—those that *do* something—are: *the gift of faith*, *the working of miracles*, and *the gifts of healings*. In this lesson we will discuss the first of these: the gift of faith, or special faith. (Read First Corinthians 12:4–12.)

Let me emphasize that the gift of faith, like all the other gifts of the Spirit, is supernatural; it is not natural. There are those who say that some of the gifts of the Spirit are natural and some are supernatural. However, if *one* is supernatural, then *all* are supernatural. I believe that every one of the gifts is a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit! (See First Corinthians 12:11.)

The *gift of faith* is the greatest of the three gifts of power. It is a gift of the Spirit to the believer so that he might *receive* miracles. The *working of miracles* is a gift of the Spirit given to the believer so that he might *work* miracles. One gift *receives*, and the other gift *does* something. One gift is passive; it receives. The other gift is active; it works. Notice that the scripture says, “*To another the WORKING of miracles. . .*” (1 Cor. 12:10). When you *perform* a miracle, that’s “working” a miracle. But when you *receive* a miracle, you don’t “work” it, and that’s the gift of faith in operation.

And we must remember too, that these *power gifts* are very closely associated, just as the *revelation gifts* are closely associated, and the *utterance gifts* (prophecy, divers kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues) are closely associated. In fact, the Bible plainly tells us in First Corinthians 14:5, that tongues with interpretation is equal to prophecy. We differentiate between these gifts and list them separately in order to better define them.

Furthermore, we also find that faith, like prayer, is often confused in some people's minds. We have a tendency to put all kinds of faith in the same sack, mix them up, and shake them all out together. But we must differentiate between them.

Thus, we learn that there are four different kinds of faith:

1. *Saving faith*, which leads one to salvation.
2. *General faith*, which every believer has.
3. The *fruit of faith*—or faithfulness—the fruit of the recreated human spirit, which comes after salvation.
4. The *gift of faith*—or special faith—a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit, which is imparted after the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit wills.

And as someone once said, sometimes the best way to find out what something is, is to find out what it's *not*.

Saving Faith

EPHESIANS 2:8

8 For by grace are ye saved through FAITH; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. . . .

The faith by which we are saved is a gift of God. It is imparted to us through the Word: “*So then faith [saving faith] cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom. 10:17). However, the kind of faith which we will be discussing in this lesson—the gift of faith, or special faith—is different from saving faith.

General Faith

ROMANS 12:3

3 . . . God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

There is a type of faith—I call it *general faith*—which all believers have. This general faith can be increased as Christians feed on the Word of God and exercise it in the arena of life. We can all have this ever-increasing general faith. The *gift of faith*, however, is one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit, given as the Holy Spirit wills.

Furthermore, general faith is the faith by which we ordinarily receive answers to prayer. For example, we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit *by faith*; and we receive answers to prayer *by faith*, because Jesus said, “*What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, BELIEVE that ye RECEIVE them and ye SHALL HAVE them*” (Mark 11:24).

Many of us received answers to prayer by faith—general faith—even before we received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These answers came because we

believed God *by faith*, but that is not the same as the *gift of faith* in operation.

In fact, if the gift of faith had to be in operation in order to get an answer to prayer, to receive healing for the body, or to have a financial need met, then we could never get any prayers answered until *after* we had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, because that's when this kind of faith—the gift of special faith—is received. But even then, it's only as the Spirit wills.

However, we know that many of us did receive answers to prayer *by faith*—general faith—before we had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Many of us, for example, were healed based on faith in God's Word *before* we ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We exercised general faith to receive these answers to prayer.

And following this same line of reasoning, if it required the gift of faith—special faith—to receive answers to prayer, then not everyone—even those filled with the Spirit—could be assured of having their prayers answered. Why? Because not every Spirit-filled believer is promised this gift of special faith. The Scripture says, “*For to ONE is given... the word of knowledge...; To ANOTHER FAITH by the same Spirit...*” (1 Cor. 12:8–9).

Regarding this gift of faith, Paul sums up at the end of the chapter, “... *are ALL workers of miracles?*” (v. 29). “*Have ALL the gifts of healing?*” (v. 30). The answer is no. Then we can add to it, “*Do ALL have this GIFT OF FAITH?*” The answer is again, no.

So we can see that the gift of faith is not the same as general faith which every believer has; for if we had to rely on the gift of special faith to get our prayers answered, then not everyone could receive answers to prayer.

The Fruit of Faith

GALATIANS 5:22–23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The *fruit of faith* is also different from the gift of faith. We read about the fruit of the Spirit (one of which is faith) in Galatians 5:22–23, quoted above. In the original Greek, however, this fruit of faith is not called faith at all, but “faithfulness.”

While the *fruit* of the spirit are for the development of Christian character, the *gifts* of the Spirit are to produce power in the believer's life.

Fruit is something that grows. Faith—or faithfulness—is a fruit that *grows* in the life of a Christian to establish him in spiritual character. But the gift of special faith is a *gift* given by the Spirit of God, as the Spirit wills.

Concerning the gift of faith, Weymouth's translation says, “... *to a third man,*

by means of the same Spirit, special faith” (1 Cor. 12:9).

I have heard people say, “Well, if God gives me *faith*, I will have it, and if He doesn’t, I won’t.” They read the scripture, “...*To another* [is given] *faith* and they think that this is the way to get “faith.” However, the faith referred to in this scripture is the gift of faith, or special faith.

The Gift of Faith

1 CORINTHIANS 12:9

9 To ANOTHER faith by the same Spirit. . . .

So we see that the gift of faith is not imparted to all, but only as the Spirit of God wills. Also, it is a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit to receive a miracle. By the gift of faith one does not work a miracle, but passively receives a miracle.

The gift of faith is distinguished from the other kinds of faith in that with this special faith there is a manifestation of the evidence of the supernatural. One can supernaturally, and against all odds, believe God for a miracle.

Of the three power gifts—the gift of faith, the working of miracles, and the gifts of healings—the gift of faith is the greatest.

And we have also seen that the gift of faith, or special faith, is separate and distinct from saving faith which leads one to salvation, general faith which every believer has, and the fruit of faith which develops one in Christian character.

We will see in the next chapter, that by the gift of faith one is given a supernatural ability to receive a miracle from God; whether it be for supernatural protection, supernatural sustenance, the casting out of unclean spirits, the raising of the dead, or the impartation of supernatural manifestations, such as in the laying on of hands for the Holy Spirit, or pronouncements of blessings.

Memory Text: “*For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom. . . . To another faith by the same Spirit. . . .*”

—1 Cor. 12:8–9

Lesson 8

The Gift of Faith (Part 2)

**Bible Texts: Daniel 6:16–17, 19–23; 1 Kings 17:2–6;
Galatians 3:5**

Central Truth: The gift of faith is a supernatural endowment by the Spirit whereby that which is uttered or desired by man, or spoken by God, shall eventually come to pass.

The gift of faith is different from the gift of working of miracles, although both gifts produce miracles. The gift of working of miracles is *active*, whereas the gift of faith is *passive*. It doesn't work; it receives. In other words, the difference between the gift of working of miracles and the gift of faith is that one *does*, and the other *receive*.

When the gift of faith is in operation, whatever is spoken or desired by the individual being used in this gift will come to pass. Whether it be an utterance by God or man, a miracle, assurance, *curse* or *blessing*, creation or destruction, removal or alteration, it will ultimately come when it has been spoken by this gift of faith.

The working of miracles is more of an action, and the gift of faith is more of a process. The gift of working of miracles *performs* a miracle, whereas the gift of faith *receives* a miracle. This is because the working of miracles utilizes faith which actively *works* a miracle, but the gift of faith utilizes faith which passively *expects* a miracle, a prolonged or ongoing miracle. Also, when the gift of faith is in operation, the believed-for miracle may not manifest immediately. It may manifest over a long period of time.

The Gift of Faith for Supernatural Blessings

The gift of faith was used by the patriarchs of old for direct supernatural blessings or fulfillment of human utterances. When these patriarchs were about to die, they would lay their hands on their sons and would command blessings upon them. Often these blessings did not come to pass until many years later. We see this in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph. These patriarchs believed

their pronouncements would come to pass at the appointed time in the future. This was the gift of faith in operation.

The Gift of Faith for Personal Protection

DANIEL 6:16–17,19–23

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. . . .

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no matter of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

Daniel received a miracle while he was in the lions' den. In those days, and throughout history, many others were thrown to the lions—and they were killed. Why didn't these lions harm Daniel?

The Bible says that Daniel "believed in his God." There is no doubt that God gave Daniel special faith—a special manifestation—to *receive* deliverance. Daniel didn't *do* anything: He just lay down and went to sleep. Notice that Daniel's faith was passive rather than active, yet he received a miracle. This was the gift of faith in operation.

In just the same manner, Jesus exercised the gift of faith in the face of great danger. During a raging storm Jesus slept on a pillow in the back of the ship. This was the gift of faith in operation which simply expects a miracle.

Someone might argue, "Yes, but that was Jesus. He was the Son of God."

However, we know that Jesus never did anything except by the power of the Holy Spirit. He stripped Himself of the power He had as the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and anointed Him when He was baptized by John in the Jordan River. Jesus was just as much the Son of God before the Holy Spirit came upon Him as He was afterwards. Yet the Bible tells us He had never worked any miracles prior to His baptism (John 2:11). Afterwards, Jesus ministered as any man anointed by the Holy Spirit would minister.

If Jesus had worked miracles by some power **INHERENT** within Himself as the Son of God, then He could not have told us we would do the works that He did! But Jesus plainly said, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall be do also...*" (John 14:12). However, if Jesus did these works as a man anointed by the Holy Spirit, then certainly under the inspiration and anointing of the Holy Spirit, believers can do the same thing!

While the storm swept across the sea, Jesus slept. He wasn't bothered by the storm. While hungry lions roamed about Daniel, he lay down and slept in the face of that danger. Throughout the Bible, we see such instances where the gift of faith worked for individuals in the face of great danger. They possessed a calmness which was supernatural; and by that supernatural faith they received a miracle.

The Gift of Faith for Supernatural Sustenance

1 KINGS 17:2-6

2 And the word of the Lord came unto him [Elijah], saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and did according unto word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

Here we see an instance where the gift of faith was used for supernatural sustenance in the time of famine, Elijah's faith had to be given to him supernaturally by God, because it was beyond human reasoning to expect ravens to feed a human. Nevertheless, ravens brought food to Elijah morning and evening. And by this supernatural faith, Elijah received a miracle.

The Gift of Faith for Raising the Dead

As we mentioned before, the gifts of the Spirit often operate together. In the case of raising the dead, three gifts operate together—the gift of faith, the working of miracles, and the gifts of healings. This is one reason we don't see too many people raised from the dead. Some Christians may have one or more of these gifts in operation in their lives, but not too many have *all* of them in operation.

First of all, in the raising of the dead it takes supernatural faith—the gift of faith—to call a person's spirit back when it has left the body. It takes a working of miracles to raise the person, and it takes the gifts of healings; otherwise, if the person is not healed, he would immediately die again. Therefore, *all three of the power gifts are in manifestation when someone is raised from the dead.*

According to Albert Hibbert, as many as fourteen people were raised from the dead during Smith Wigglesworth's ministry.

The first instance occurred while Wigglesworth was still working as a plumber. (He had already received the baptism in the Holy Spirit then, but he wasn't out in the active ministry as yet.)

One night he was called to the home of a young woman who was dying of tuberculosis. Wigglesworth started praying for her at 1 o'clock. At 3:30 a.m., she died.

“It was a time when I would not have ‘No,’ and God said ‘Yes,’” Wigglesworth recalled. The face of Jesus appeared at the window of the room where Wigglesworth was praying. Color returned to the face of the girl. She rolled over, fell asleep, and later awakened totally well.

Another case concerned a neighbor who had died just before Wigglesworth arrived at the man’s home. Mrs. Wigglesworth was already there. As Wigglesworth began to pray for the dead man, Mrs. Wigglesworth shook her husband, pleading, “Don’t, Dad! Don’t you see that he is dead?” But Wigglesworth continued to pray.

“I got as far as I could with my own faith,” Wigglesworth said, “and then God had hold of me. Oh, it was such a laying hold that I could believe for anything. The faith of the Lord Jesus laid hold of me and a solid peace came into my heart.” The man returned to life!

A third case Wigglesworth told about, was a woman who died immediately after Wigglesworth and another man had prayed for her. “You may think that what I did was absurd,” Wigglesworth said, “but I reached over into the bed and pulled her out. I carried her across the room, stood her against the wall and held her up.”

Wigglesworth commanded the corpse, “In the Name of Jesus, I rebuke this death!” The woman’s body began to tremble. “In the Name of Jesus, I command you to walk!” he said—and the woman walked. She was restored to life!

This is beyond anyone’s ordinary faith. With ordinary faith we could pull a dead person out of bed as Wigglesworth did, stand the body up, and tell the corpse to walk. But with ordinary faith I don’t believe that corpse is going to walk. It takes a supernatural manifestation of God’s power to receive a miracle such as this.

Many times if we will take a step of faith—ordinary faith—the faith every believer has, when we come to the end of our own faith, this *supernatural* faith will take over. The reason this hasn’t happened with a lot of people is because they haven’t used the faith they already have.

The Gift of Faith for Casting Out Evil Spirits

The gift of faith may be used, on occasion, to cast out unclean spirits from those whose bodies have been defiled by them. Here again, more than one gift must be in operation. The gift of discerning of spirits and/or the word of knowledge will be manifested as well as the gift of faith. If one doesn’t discern or “see” the spirit, often the spirit is revealed through the word of knowledge. But the gift of faith still will be exercised to cast out the evil spirit. Of course, we know from Mark 16:17 that general faith also is effective in casting out evil

spirits.

The Gift of Faith for Ministering the Holy Spirit

GALATIANS 3:5

5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

This gift of faith comes into operation in the laying on of hands for people to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Any believer can lay hands on people in *general faith*, and appropriate God's promises, and believe God. But there is a difference between believing God with general faith and appropriating His promises, and that *supernatural manifestation* which is passed from one individual to another through the gift of special faith.

Now it is possible, in general faith, to lay hands on a person for healing or any other blessing; and although nothing may be *perceptibly* manifested, if it is received, it is still a demonstration of God's power.

However, if when one person lays hands on another and there is ministered through them healing, or the infilling of the Holy Spirit by *supernatural manifestation*, then that is the gift of special faith in operation.

So God works in both these ways: by our general faith appropriating the promises of God and receiving His power that way; and, on the other hand, by a supernatural manifestation of God ministered from one person to another—which is the gift of faith in operation.

Memory Text: “*For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom....To another faith by the same Spirit....*”

-1 Cor. 12:8-9

Lesson 9

The Gift of Working of Miracles

Bible Texts: 2 Kings 2:9–14; 1 Kings 17:12–16; Acts 5:1–5

Central Truth: A miracle is a supernatural intervention in the ordinary course of nature; a temporary suspension of the accustomed order through the Spirit of God.

In our studies on the gifts of the Spirit we come now to the gift of *working of miracles*. First of all, let us define “working of miracles.” As with many words in the English language, when we use the word “miracle,” it means one thing generally speaking, but used specifically it means something else.

Sometimes the word “miracle” is used as a figure of speech. We talk about “miracle fabrics,” “miracle drugs,” and “miracle detergents.”

In nature we might see a beautiful sunrise and say, “That’s a miracle.” We might look at a beautiful rose garden ablaze with glorious color, the perfume of the flowers ascending into the heavens, and say that is a “miracle” of nature. None of these things are a miracle specifically speaking, but generally speaking they are. In the magnificent sunrise, the sun is doing exactly what it ought to do according to the laws of nature. The rose is doing exactly what it was meant to do according to the laws of nature.

Every one of the gifts of the Spirit is miraculous. They are supernatural. In the general use of the word “miracle,” all gifts of the Spirit are miracles. But specifically speaking, they are not. The working of miracles, then, is a specific act, such as Elisha’s dividing a river by the sweep of a mantle.

After Elijah ascended to heaven in a chariot in the whirlwind, Elisha received his mantle and smote the Jordan River with it. Dividing the waters by a sweep of his mantle was actually working a miracle—an intervention in the ordinary course of nature.

2 KINGS 2:9–14

9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

In the realm of healing, miracles are often received, but they are not the result of working of miracles; they are healing miracles. Everything that God does is miraculous in a sense, but it is not a miracle as in the case of turning water into wine just by speaking a word—that is the working of miracles.

Water turned into wine by the process of nature is a natural miracle. But water turned into wine by speaking a word, as Jesus did in John 2:1–11, is the result of the spiritual gift of the working of miracles.

A miracle, therefore, is a supernatural intervention in the ordinary course of nature, a temporary suspension of the accustomed order, an interruption of the system of nature as we know it, operated by the force of the Spirit of God.

Working of Miracles in the Old Testament

Working of miracles was more prominent in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. Although people were healed and gifts of healings were in operation in the Old Testament, gifts of healing were more prevalent in the New Testament.

The working of miracles was used for the miraculous deliverance of God's people from Egyptian bondage. We see this gift used when God convinced Pharaoh to let Israel go. A number of miracles were wrought there.

When Aaron threw down his rod and it was turned into a serpent (Exod. 7:10), that was the working of a miracle. When the dust was turned into insects (Exod. 8:16), and the other plagues followed, this was the gift of working of miracles in operation.

Coming out of Egypt, the Israelites faced the Red Sea with Pharaoh and his hosts close behind, ready to make them slaves again. Mountains loomed on one side, the wilderness was on the other, the sea was in front of them, and the enemy was behind them—their situation seemed hopeless. But Moses looked to the Lord, and the Lord told him to stretch forth his rod. Moses obeyed, and the sea divided. That was the working of a miracle—divine intervention in the ordinary course of nature.

Actually, two gifts of the Holy Spirit were in operation in this instance. The working of miracles divided the sea, but it took the gift of faith to keep it divided! That was a continuing miracle. The people walked over dry-shod to the other side. When the enemy attempted to do the same, the waters came together

and the Egyptians were drowned.

Another scriptural use of the working of miracles was to provide for those in want.

1 KINGS 17:12–16

12 And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.

It also was a working of miracles in Elisha's ministry when a widow's pot of oil kept flowing until she had filled every vessel she owned. She then borrowed her neighbors' vessels and filled them with oil too. (See Second Kings 4:1–7.)

Working of Miracles in the New Testament

We see the working of miracles in manifestation when Jesus took a little boy's lunch, fed the five thousand with it—and then gathered up twelve baskets of leftover food after the people had eaten (John 6:6–14).

The working of miracles was also used to confirm the Word that was preached. When Paul was preaching in Cyprus, Elymas the sorcerer withstood him. Paul, through the power of God in the operation of the gift of working of miracles, struck him blind for a season, and that was a sign to others (Acts 13:4–12).

This gift was also used to deliver people from unavoidable danger. The gift of faith will carry a person through the danger without his being harmed at all, but the working of miracles is different: It will actually change the circumstances causing the danger.

For example, when Paul was shipwrecked, the storm did not cease until it blew itself out (Acts 27). Paul didn't stand up and say, "Storm, you stop!" But because God spoke to him, he had supernatural faith to believe for divine protection. That was the gift of faith in operation, and he received safety for every man, although the ship was lost.

However, when Jesus stood on that ship during a storm on the Sea of Galilee and said, "Peace, be still" (Mark 4:39), that worked a miracle. That changed the very circumstance causing the danger.

The difference between the gift of faith and the working of miracles is that the gift of faith RECEIVES a miracle and the working of miracles WORKS a miracle.

The working of miracles is used to display God's power and magnificence. In Young's *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, the Greek word used for "miracles" is "powers." In other words, the working of miracles is called "the working of powers." The Greek word, according to the Greek concordance, means, "explosions of almightiness." It means impelling, staggering wonders and astonishment. In other words, the Greek could read, "The working of impelling, staggering wonders or astonishments, or the outworking of explosions of almightiness."

In his book, *Questions & Answers on Spiritual Gifts*, Howard Carter said, ". . . the working of miracles is a very important manifestation of the Spirit. It is the mighty power of God flowing through a person." We might say that the individual participates in the same power of God that was in manifestation when God created the world, because He surely worked a miracle when He spoke the earth into existence.

When the Lord permits an individual, through the power of the Spirit, to speak the word and the river is divided—the same God who created those waters lets a little bit of that omnipotence, as the Spirit wills, be manifested in that person.

This working of miracles is indeed a mighty gift, glorifying "the God of all power," as Howard Carter said, thus stimulating the faith of His people, and astonishing and confusing the unbelief of the world.

Memory Text: *"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom. . . . To another faith by the same Spirit. . . ." —1 Cor. 12:8–9*

Lesson 10

The Gifts of Healings

Bible Texts: Acts 10:38; 1 Corinthians 12:28–30

Central Truth: The purpose of the gifts of healings is to deliver the sick and destroy the works of the devil in the human body.

The *gifts of healings* are given by God for the supernatural healing of disease without natural means from any source. Every one of the nine gifts of the Spirit is supernatural.

We may have some difficulty, because of our limited knowledge, in defining some of the other gifts, but there should be little difficulty in defining the gifts of healings. Nearly everyone understands about healing. Of course, Jesus brought healing into prominence by His own ministry. He also gave authority to His disciples to heal the sick (Matt. 10:8).

We want to emphasize the supernatural character of all the gifts of the Spirit, including the gifts of healings. These gifts have nothing to do with medical science or human learning.

Luke, the Beloved Physician, was with Paul on many of his missionary journeys. Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles as well as the Gospel which bears his name. He was with Paul when he was shipwrecked on the Island of Melita (Acts 28). Yet nothing is said to the effect that Luke ministered to the people with his *medical* knowledge. In fact, Luke records that the father of the chief man of the island was sick, and Paul laid his hands on the man, and he was healed—by supernatural power. Then the people brought the sick from throughout the island for Paul to minister to them, and they were healed.

Of course, we believe in medical science, and we thank God for what it can do. We are certainly not opposed to doctors. But some people confuse medical science with the gifts of healings. I've heard some say that the gifts of healings were the doctors and medical knowledge which God has given them.

If medical science is God's method of healing, however, then doctors should not charge—their services should be free. This is not the case, however, as anyone knows who has had any experience with them. Also, if medical science were God's method of healing, it would be free from errors. Doctors would

make no mistakes.

We thank God for medical science and what good doctors and hospitals can accomplish. We would not speak disparagingly of them or the great advances made in modern medical technology. We also thank God for the many good Christian physicians who have the interests of their patients at heart and minister skillfully to them. But supernatural healing comes not by diagnosis or by prescribing treatment; it comes by laying on of hands, anointing with oil, or sometimes just by speaking the Word. I believe in natural healing and I thank God for it. But I also believe in supernatural healing.

Jesus' Ministry of Healing

ACTS 10:38

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Jesus ministered not as the Son of God, but as a prophet anointed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was just as much the Son of God when He was 25 as when He was 30 years old. Yet at age 25, He had not healed anyone, and not one miracle of healing had been wrought under his ministry. He was just as much the Son of God when He was 29 as when He was 30; yet throughout His 29th year no one was healed, nor had He wrought one miracle of healing.

When Jesus was 30—even on the day before He was baptized by John in the River Jordan and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him to anoint Him to minister—Jesus was just as much the Son of God as He was afterwards. Yet until that happened, He had never healed anyone. There was no manifestation of power operating in His life.

It was only after the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove to anoint Him to minister that these things began to happen. In fact, Jesus Himself never claimed to do the works. He said, “... *the Father that dwelleth in me, be doeth the works*” (John 14:10).

Jesus stood up and read in His hometown synagogue, “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me...*” (Luke 4:18). Years later, Peter, preaching to Cornelius and his household, said, “*How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power...*”(Acts 10:38).

Although Jesus was always the Son of God, He never healed anyone until *after* He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power.

This should prove conclusively that He wasn't healing by some power which was inherent in Him as the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, but that he was healing the sick just as any believer would minister to the sick today—by the anointing of the Spirit through the manifestation of the gifts of healings.

A Full Measure of the Spirit in Jesus' Ministry

The Bible tells us that Christ had the Spirit without measure. “...*he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him*” (John 3:34). Therefore, we would see manifestations of things in His ministry which we wouldn't see in anyone else's because He had the Spirit without measure; no other individual does. However, it seems to me this text infers that the entire Body of Christ—collectively—has the same measure of the Spirit which Jesus had. Consequently, an individual would not have the same measure of success in ministering even the gifts of healings which Jesus had, because He had the Holy Spirit without measure. And having the Spirit without measure, Jesus would have the manifestation of all these gifts of healings.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:28–30

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

Notice that in verse 28, both the words “gifts” and “healings” are plural. This is the way it should be in every one of the verses, for this is the way it is in the Greek.

Notice, too, this is the only one of the gifts of the Spirit which is in the plural. All the others refer to only one gift.

Why are they “gifts of healings” and not the “gift of healing”? I really don't know, but I have my opinion. I don't think any of us could know for a certainty, because the Scripture doesn't tell us specifically, but I think there are gifts of healings because there are different kinds of diseases—and one gift wouldn't heal all kinds.

I have noticed in my ministry, as well as in the ministries of others, that where these gifts are in operation, there is a greater degree of success in some areas of healing than in other areas. And other ministers tell me there are certain kinds of diseases which are seldom healed in their ministries, yet certain other diseases are nearly always healed. “Why?” I don't know. Perhaps in the process of time we will know more about this, for we are here to study and to learn.

In the ministry of Jesus, every manner of sickness and every manner of disease was healed. All the gifts of healings were in manifestation, because Jesus had the Spirit “without measure.”

Two Different Manifestations of Healings

There is a difference in the manifestation of gifts of healings and simply receiving healing by our own faith in God's Word. God has taught me through the years the difference between the two.

When I received healing for my body, no one laid hands on me. I didn't really know there were any church groups that believed in divine healing. But as a Baptist boy on the bed of sickness, I read Grandma's Methodist Bible and I was healed—not just because I believed in divine healing necessarily; but I was healed by acting and standing on Mark 11:24, “...when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them.”

So I prayed and began to say, “I believe that I receive healing for my deformed heart. I believe that I receive healing for my paralyzed body. I believe that I receive healing from the top of my head to the soles of my feet.” Then God's healing power was manifested in my body.

My healing came directly from God. Gifts of healings are manifested through another person to you. All the healing is done by God, of course, but the difference is in the channel He uses to accomplish your healing.

Somebody has said that anytime one receives healing, it is the gifts of healing in operation. It is a gift, in one sense of the word, because anything we get from God is a gift, generally speaking. But it wouldn't necessarily be healing as a result of these gifts in manifestation.

Look again at First Corinthians 12:28. “*And God hath set some in the church...*” He is not talking here about spiritual gifts; He is talking about men *equipped with* spiritual gifts: “*God hath set some in the church, first apostles...*” “Apostles” isn't an individual spiritual gift which somebody might receive from God. It is a gift to the Church “...secondarily prophets...”

That is also a ministry, not to bless an individual, but a ministry given to the Church. “...thirdly teachers...” The teaching gift is not something given to you to bless you. It is something which is given to you to enable you to bless others. It, too, is a ministry.

Paul went on to talk about the working of miracles. He was saying that there are some in the ministry who are equipped with working of miracles and “...then gifts of healings...”

Then Paul asks the question, “*Are all apostles?* [Does everyone have the ministry of an apostle? Certainly not.] *are all prophets?* [Does everybody have the ministry of a prophet? No.] *Are all teachers?*” No, everybody doesn't have the ministry of a teacher. We could all teach to the extent of our knowledge, but there are those whom God has put in the Church who are equipped by the Holy Spirit with a teaching gift.

Then Paul asked, “*are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?*” Obviously, the answer is no, for the Spirit divides “*to every man severally as he will*” (1 Cor. 12:11).

Thank God for His Word, and for the privilege of believing and acting upon

His Word. Thank God for the supernatural manifestation of all these gifts according to His will.

Memory Text: *“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.” —Acts 10:38*

Lesson 11

The Gift of Prophecy

Bible Texts: 1 Corinthians 14:1–5; Acts 21:8–11; 1 Thessalonians 5:19–21

Central Truth: Prophecy is supernatural utterance in a known tongue.

Prophecy is the most important of the three gifts of inspiration or utterance. The reason it is the most important is because it takes the other two—divers kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues—to equal prophecy.

Paul said, “. . . *greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret . . .*” (1 Cor. 14:5), inferring that to speak with tongues and interpret is equivalent to prophecy. Therefore, prophecy is really the most important of these three gifts of inspiration or utterance.

Prophecy is supernatural utterance in a known tongue. Divers kinds of tongues is supernatural utterance in an unknown tongue. Interpretation of tongues is a supernatural showing forth of that which has been said in tongues.

The Hebrew word that is translated “to prophesy” means “to flow forth.” It carries the thought “to bubble forth like a fountain, to let drop, to lift up, to tumble forth, to spring forth.” The Greek word that is translated “to prophesy” means “to speak for another.” It means to speak for God, or to be His spokesman.

Gift of Prophecy for All

1 CORINTHIANS 14:1–5

1 Follow after charity [love], and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

In this passage of Scripture, Paul tells us to desire spiritual gifts, but especially that we might prophesy. That doesn’t mean we are not to desire the other gifts, but that we are to put this gift first. At the end of this chapter, Paul repeated, “*Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy.*” Thus, Paul, writing by the inspiration

of the Holy Spirit, emphasized the importance of prophecy.

The Gift of Prophecy and the Prophet's Ministry

The simple *gift of prophecy* should not be confused with the *prophetic office*. “*But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to EDIFICATION, and EXHORTATION, and COMFORT*” (1 Cor. 14:3). Thus, we can readily see that in the simple gift of prophecy there is no revelation. In the office of a prophet, however, we often find revelation coming forth even by prophecy.

It is also interesting to note the difference between prophecy in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, prophecy is essentially *foretelling* future events, whereas in the New Testament it shifts strongly to *forthtelling*. *In the simple gift of prophecy there is no foretelling whatsoever.*

Notice that Paul is telling the whole Church at Corinth to covet to prophesy and to desire spiritual gifts—but “*rather that you may prophesy.*” Yet Paul had just gotten through telling them in the 12th chapter of First Corinthians that God has set in the church, “. . . *first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers . . .*” (v. 28).

Then Paul asked, “*Are all apostles?*” The answer is no. “*Are all prophets?*” No, they couldn’t be. If prophesying made you a prophet, then Paul would be contradicting himself. However, *the fact that you have prophesied doesn’t make you a prophet*. It means that you have exercised the simple gift of prophecy.

For example, a rich man has money. All of us have at least some money, but that doesn’t make us rich. By the same token, a prophet would prophesy, but one who prophesies wouldn’t necessarily be a prophet. A prophet, for example, would have more of the gifts of the Spirit in operation than just the gift of prophecy. He would have revelation gifts operating along with prophecy.

Paul said in First Corinthians 14:29, “*Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.*” Then in verse thirty he said, “*If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by [that is, another prophet], let the first hold his peace.*” Here he is talking about revelation. The prophet would have these other revelation gifts operating.

Thus, to stand in the office of the prophet, a person must have operating in his ministry the gift of prophecy plus at least two of the revelation gifts: either the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and/or the gift of discerning of spirits.

Therefore, we should not confuse the office of the prophet with the simple gift of prophecy which all believers are told to covet. All can have the gift of prophecy, because God wouldn’t have told us to covet something that wasn’t available to us. All can prophesy, but we can’t all be prophets.

In Acts 21, we see a scriptural illustration of the gift of prophecy.

ACTS 21:8–11

8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

Note that all four of Philip's daughters had this simple gift of prophecy. These young women must have prophesied in the services held in their house; otherwise, Paul and his company would not have known that they prophesied. They spoke to the whole company to edification, exhortation, and comfort. Evidently they never prophesied to Paul. When the prophet Agabus came, however, he had something on a higher order which brought *revelation*.

Therefore, we see that the prophet may prophesy—but the message he brings may not be prophesying at all. It may come through the gift of prophecy, as he just speaks what he has from the Lord, saying, "Thus saith the Lord." In Acts 21:10–11 it was one of the revelation gifts—the *word of wisdom*—in operation through the gift of prophecy.

Some think that to prophesy means to preach. All *inspired utterance* is prophecy in some form or another, but prophecy isn't preaching. Sometimes there is an element of prophecy in preaching when one is anointed by the Spirit and is inspired to say things which come from the heart rather than the head; but that is only one phase of the operation of the gift of prophecy.

To preach means to proclaim, announce, cry, or tell. The scriptural purpose of the gift of prophecy is different from the purpose of preaching. Jesus didn't say men would be saved by the foolishness of prophesying, but by the foolishness of *preaching*. Supernatural gifts are given to arrest people's attention, not to save them. Even on the Day of Pentecost when people were talking in tongues, no one got saved until Peter stood up and *preached* to them.

Wrong Use of the Gift

1 THESSALONIANS 5:19–21

19 Quench not the Spirit.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Another area of confusion regarding the gift of prophecy is caused by the misuse of this gift. The Church at Thessalonica had so much misuse of the gift of prophecy they almost despised it. Therefore, Paul, writing by the Spirit of God,

had to say to them, “Despise not prophesyings.” If people would use this gift as the Scripture teaches, it would be a great blessing. But some hear a minister who has the prophet’s ministry bring forth revelation and they think they can do that too. So they try to bring forth some foretelling instead of just forthtelling, and they get into trouble.

As we saw, the gift of prophecy is given to edify the Church. “*He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to EDIFICATION, and exhortation and comfort*” (1 Cor. 14:3). “. . . *he that prophesieth EDIFIETH the church*” (1 Cor. 14:4). This gift is also given to exhort the Church. The word “exhort” here means in the Greek “a calling nearer to God.” Then our text says the gift of prophecy is given to *comfort*. A lot of what some people call prophecy never comforts anyone; rather, it discomforts them.

Prophecy and the Prayer Life

The gift of prophecy, like tongues, has to do with more than just public utterance. Prophecy can be used in your prayer life.

Many times while you are in prayer, God fills you with the Spirit and you speak with the Spirit and speak in tongues. Speaking with tongues is the beginning of these things, but God wants every Spirit-filled believer to do more than speak with tongues. He wants us to be able to interpret. And He wants us to prophesy.

Paul didn’t infer that just a few believers would speak with tongues. He encouraged the entire Church at Corinth to pray in tongues and worship God. Then he said, “. . . *let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret*” (1 Cor. 14:13). God wouldn’t tell us to pray for something we couldn’t have. And He also wants us to prophesy, because He plainly said, “. . . *desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy*” (1 Cor. 14:1). Then He said to covet to prophesy.

Through this gift of prophecy we can speak supernaturally not only unto men, but also unto God. Through prophecy we can enjoy fellowship with God in the Spirit which is beyond anything we have known before.

Memory Text: “*But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.*” -1

Cor. 14:3

Lesson 12

The Gift of Tongues

Bible Text: Mark 16:15–18

Central Truth: Divers kinds of tongues is supernatural utterance by the Holy Spirit in languages never learned by the speaker, not understood by the mind of the speaker, nor necessarily always understood by the hearer.

Our study now brings us to the *gift of tongues*, or “divers kinds of tongues.” The Scripture says, “. . . *to another divers kinds of tongues* . . .” (1 Cor. 12:10). The word “divers” is italicized in the *King James Version*, which means it was added by the translator. Actually, the verse reads, “. . . *to another, kinds of tongues* . . .” Later in this same chapter, Paul said that God set in the Church “*diversities of tongues*” (v. 28). Therefore, it would be acceptable to say “divers kinds of tongues,” or different kinds of tongues.

Divers kinds of tongues is supernatural utterance by the Holy Spirit in languages never learned by the speaker, not understood by the mind of the speaker, nor necessarily understood by the hearer. Speaking with tongues has nothing whatsoever to do with linguistic ability; it has nothing to do with the mind or the intellect of man. It is a vocal miracle!

The *gift of tongues* is the most prominent of the three vocal gifts or as they are sometimes called, gifts of utterance or inspiration—the *gift of prophecy*, *divers kinds of tongues*, and the *interpretation of tongues*. However, this doesn’t necessarily mean the gift of tongues is the best. But it is the most prominent for several reasons.

Why Are Tongues Emphasized in Some Circles?

A question often asked by some denominational people is, “Why do you Full Gospel people emphasize tongues?” The answer is, “We do not.” There are a number of reasons why it seems that we do.

1. We are often asked about tongues, and are therefore drawn into discussions about the subject.

2. Speaking in tongues is always manifested when people are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

3. Utterance in tongues in a public assembly is the least of the gifts, and is therefore the most widely dispersed and most frequently used gift.

4. The gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues are distinctive to this dispensation. We see all the other gifts of the Spirit—the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, discerning of spirits, special faith, working of miracles, gifts of healings, and prophecy—in operation in the Old Testament. In the ministry of Jesus we see all the gifts of the Spirit in operation except tongues and interpretation. The gifts of speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues are distinctive to the dispensation in which we live. Therefore, they are more in use.

5. Paul gave prominence to tongues. The reason he did was because then, as now, speaking with tongues was widely misunderstood.

Tongues—A Supernatural Sign

Jesus said in Mark 16:17, “*And these signs shall follow them that believe . . . they shall speak with new tongues. . . .*” One preacher, endeavoring to explain this, said, “This just means that a fellow who used to curse, and tell lies and vulgar jokes doesn’t do that anymore; he speaks with a new tongue.” This argument, however, is a little thin, because in reading the entire passage we see that every one of the signs mentioned here by Jesus is a supernatural sign!

MARK 16:15–18

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

No thinking person would doubt that if four of these signs are supernatural, surely the fifth would be too. Therefore, one reason we speak in tongues is because Jesus said this is a sign which will follow believers. It is the scriptural evidence; that is, it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

One preacher disagreed with this, saying, “John the Baptist was full of the Holy Ghost and he didn’t speak with tongues. Prophets of the Old Testament had the Holy Ghost, but they never spoke in tongues.”

I replied, “Yes, but we are not living under the Old Covenant.”

What happened back then is an example for us now. We desire the Holy Spirit in operation in our lives, according to the dispensation in which we live. Therefore, we have to start with the Acts of the Apostles. We can’t go back to the Old Covenant, because we are not living there.

John the Baptist was a prophet under the Old Covenant. Jesus Himself said

concerning John, “. . . *Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*” (Matt. 11:11).

In this dispensation, we have a *better* covenant established on *better* promises (Heb. 8:6), and particularly in the area of the Holy Spirit.

Tongues—A Devotional Gift

We need to put the emphasis on tongues where the emphasis belongs. Tongues is primarily a devotional gift.

When Paul wrote the Church at Corinth, “*I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all*” (1 Cor. 14:18), he was giving them the purpose of tongues and explaining what speaking in tongues would do for them. Tongues is primarily a devotional gift to be used in our prayer life in the praise and worship of God.

Paul was teaching that only a few believers will be used in what we would call the *public ministry of tongues*, because he said in First Corinthians 12:30, “*do all speak with tongues?*” Some take that out of context and say, “Speaking in tongues isn’t for everyone. You can be filled with the Spirit without speaking with tongues.” However, we must remember that Paul is talking about the ministry gift of tongues, because he began by saying, “*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues*” (1 Cor. 12:28).

Then Paul asked, “*Are all apostles?* [No, all aren’t.] *are all prophets?* [They are not.] *are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing?* [No, they do not.] *do all speak with tongues?*” The obvious answer is no. But Paul is talking here about *public ministry*.

We should not be too concerned about our ministering in tongues and interpreting. We should be primarily concerned with maintaining tongues in the place where they principally belong—as a devotional gift to assist us in the worship of God.

Howard Carter said, “We must not forget that the speaking with other tongues is not only an initial evidence of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling, it is a continual experience for the rest of his life, to assist in the worship of God. It is a flowing stream that should never dry up, and that will enrich the life spiritually.”

It seems to me Paul was saying that he never used tongues publicly, because he said, “*I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church . . .*” (1 Cor. 14:18–19). This seems to indicate that Paul’s speaking in tongues wasn’t done in the church. Paul continued, “*Yet in the church I had*

rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” (v. 19).

Tongues is not a teaching gift or a preaching gift. This is not its purpose. If I were to speak in tongues in the pulpit for an hour instead of teaching, it wouldn’t edify the congregation at all. It would edify me, but not the hearers. Therefore, it is more profitable that I teach in a known language in the church.

However, Paul was not belittling tongues when he said, “. . . *I had rather speak five words with my understanding. . . .*” He was merely distinguishing between the private and the public use of the gift of tongues. He said, “. . . *I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.*” He was saying, in other words, “You would get more good out of just those five words in a known language than the ten thousand words I would speak in tongues.”

Tongues in Public Ministry

God will use some people in public utterance in tongues, but that is a gift and is not intended for everyone. (This is the mistake the Corinthians were making and one that we often make.)

Discussing public ministry in tongues, Paul said, “*If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God*” (1 Cor. 14:27–28). In the Greek the words “two” and “three” are personal pronouns and refer to people.

Paul was simply saying that not more than two or three people should speak in a service. In the next verse he said, “*Let the prophets speak two or three. . . .*” There may be more prophets present who could speak, but in any one service only two or three of them should speak.

We need to be very careful to walk softly before the Lord. We need to remain open to Him as we walk quietly, honorably, and reverently about spiritual matters. And we need to invite the operation of the Spirit of God among us.

Memory Text: “*And these signs shall follow that believe...they shall speak with new tongues.*” -Mark
16:17

Lesson 13

Interpretation of Tongues

Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 14:13–15,27–28,40

Central Truth: The interpretation of tongues is the supernatural showing forth by the Spirit the meaning of an utterance in other tongues.

Our study of the gifts of the Holy Spirit has now brought us to the end of the list—the gift of *interpretation of tongues*.

We first covered the three gifts of revelation, or the three gifts which reveal something: the *word of wisdom*, the *word of knowledge*, and the *discerning of spirits*. Then we studied the three gifts that do something, or, as they are often called, the three power gifts: the *gift of faith*, the *working of miracles*, and the *gifts of healings*. Finally, we studied the three vocal gifts, or the three inspirational gifts—the three gifts which say something: *prophecy*, *divers kinds of tongues*, and *interpretation of tongues*.

As we have said, *prophecy* is supernatural utterance in a known tongue. *Divers kinds of tongues* is supernatural utterance in an unknown tongue. The *interpretation of tongues* is the supernatural revelation by the Spirit of the meaning of an utterance in other tongues. It is not *translation* of the tongues; it is the *interpretation* of tongues.

The gift of interpretation of tongues is the least of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit, because it is dependent upon another gift in order to operate. It does not operate unless the gift of tongues has been in operation. The purpose of this gift of interpretation of tongues is to render the gift of tongues intelligible to the hearers so that the Church, as well as the possessor of the gift, may know what has been said and may be edified. Paul said, “...greater is he that prophesieth than be that speaketh with tongues, except be interpret, that the church may receive edifying” (1 Cor. 14:5).

But can't God speak to us in some other way? Yes, He can and does. We have messages which are not an interpretation of tongues; they are a manifestation of the gift of prophecy. All these gifts operate by faith, but it takes more faith to prophesy than to give an utterance in tongues or interpretation of tongues, because those who operate in these gifts have another person to lean on. In other words, the person with the gift of tongues can lean on the one with the gift of

interpretation of tongues, and vice versa. However, the person who has the gift of prophecy has to have enough faith just to start speaking what he has received.

Interpretation, Not Translation

As we have noted, the *interpretation* of tongues is not *translation*. I am sometimes asked why it is that when someone speaks at length in tongues, an interpreter will occasionally give only a short interpretation. Because interpretation is simply showing forth supernaturally by the Spirit of God the *meaning* of what was said in tongues, the interpretation may not require as many words as the original message. Similarly, someone may give a short utterance in tongues, yet the interpretation may be lengthy. The same principle of clarity is involved: It may take longer to give the interpretation in order to clearly show forth the meaning of the message.

If the person who is interpreting tongues is also used in prophecy, he may finish the interpretation and go on into prophecy. (I do this quite often.) Most people who are keen in the Spirit can readily recognize the difference, because the instant one speaks forth prophecy, his words take on more authority and a greater anointing: There is more inspiration and a greater blessing to prophecy.

Interpretation in Private Prayer Life

1 CORINTHIANS 14:13–15,27–28,40

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. . . .

27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. . . .

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

According to verse 13, those who speak in other tongues are instructed to pray for the gift of interpretation. The reason Paul instructs us to seek this gift is not necessarily that we may interpret publicly, but rather that we may interpret our private prayers, if God so wills. Knowing what we are praying would greatly edify us spiritually—and if God wished to use us publicly to interpret messages in tongues, that would be an added blessing.

The way I first started interpreting tongues was in my private prayer life. I was praying one day when suddenly I realized I was speaking in English, and I knew what I had been praying about in tongues—I was giving the interpretation of it. (Of course, God knows what we are praying about in tongues, because we are talking to Him, but sometimes He wants *us* to know what we are praying about too.)

However, it is not necessary that *everything* we utter in other tongues in

private prayer should be made clear to our understanding, because Paul said, *“For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful”* (1 Cor. 14:14). Furthermore, we aren’t talking to ourselves; we are talking to God; what we are praying is clear to Him, and that is sufficient. *“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him, howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries”* (1 Cor. 14:2).

So we see that there is a private side to this gift of interpretation of tongues that can be very important to us personally. And there is a public side to the manifestation of this gift as well. But not all of us will be used publicly; it is only as the Lord wills.

Interpretation in Public Ministry

In the 27th verse of this same chapter, Paul said, *“If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by TWO or at most by THREE...”* Only three people should minister in tongues in public in any one service. (The words “two” and “three” in the Greek are personal pronouns.)

Some have asked, “Does that refer to three messages?” Actually, we do not find the expression *“messages in tongues”* anywhere in the Bible. This is just a phrase which has been coined to try to explain it. A better term would be *“utterance in tongues.”* However, this verse is talking about people, not messages or utterances.

Paul didn’t actually say how much people should or should not speak in tongues. He just said to let two or three speak, and let it be by course, or, in turn. This implies they shouldn’t all speak at once. (To me it implies that an individual may speak more than once.)

My advice to any congregation is that if three people have already spoken publicly in tongues, a fourth should not join in, no matter how strongly he may feel impelled of the Spirit to speak. If something else needs to be said, one of those who has already spoken should utter it. That maintains good order.

Notice Paul said, *“... let one interpret. . . .”* There is nothing in the Scriptures which would do away with the thought that one person may speak in tongues *and* interpret for himself. In fact, one of those giving an utterance in tongues publicly may interpret that utterance, even though there might be more than one person present who could interpret. Paul is admonishing us that we are not to have *competitive* interpretations. So there is nothing unscriptural with giving an utterance in tongues and interpreting it oneself, as long as there is only one interpreter.

‘Decently and in Order’

Paul devotes the entire 14th chapter of First Corinthians to the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Then he goes on to state, “*God is not the author of confusion...*”(v. 33). Paul means that in the use—or misuse—of prophecy, tongues, and interpretation there is sometimes confusion.

I have been in services where I have seen the misuse of these gifts and I have gone home confused. (These were not my services, because in my meetings I usually try to point out any errors and explain them to the people so they won’t go home confused.)

This doesn’t mean that the devil was working in those services. It just means that people can get things mixed up. If we learn to stay in the Spirit, walk according to the Word, and follow Paul’s admonition to “*Let all things be done decently and in order*”(v. 40), we will not have confusion in our services.

Sometimes we just need practical advice concerning these manifestations to help us maintain good order in our services. Then even visitors could understand and be impressed by our good order. More important, we would not grieve the Spirit of God. The Bible says, “*And grieve not the holy Spirit of God...*”(Eph. 4:30). He has been grieved at times in some churches—grieved by wanting to manifest Himself and not being permitted to do so, and grieved by the way some people do things out of order!

When someone is uttering a message in tongues, a person who is used in the gift of interpretation should immediately begin to be in tune with the Spirit (if he is not already), because the Lord may want to use him in the operation of that gift.

Sometimes I have waited for someone else to interpret and they have waited for me. Meanwhile, someone else waited for someone else. Any one of us could have interpreted the message in tongues, but we all lost it because we didn’t tune in to the Holy Spirit. (We will not get things from God unless we are tuned in to Him.)

This is the reason why we sometimes don’t have an interpretation of an utterance. When I have missed it, I’ve said to the person who gave the message in tongues, “Please give that again, and I will interpret it.” Then, when they started speaking, I got in the Spirit, and God gave me the interpretation.

A final point I want to stress about tongues and interpretation is found in First Corinthians 14:26, “*Let all things be done unto EDIFYING.*” When something is done in the Spirit—and this is one way to judge if it is in the Spirit—it will be edifying, inspiring, and it will be a blessing. (Of course, if we are out of tune with the Spirit, we are not in a position to judge.)

Manifestations of spiritual gifts do need to be judged, however. (After all, we do judge them, whether we do it publicly or not, because we either accept or reject them.) We can't always accept just any man's judgment, however; only the judgment of those who are sensitive to the moving of the Holy Spirit.

In conclusion, let me point out that all of the nine spiritual gifts operate by faith. They do not operate by the gift of faith; they operate by common or general faith. Also remember the Bible says that “...*all things are possible to him that believeth*” (Mark 9:23)—and if you believe, all things are possible to you!

Memory Text: “*Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.*” -1 Cor. 14:13

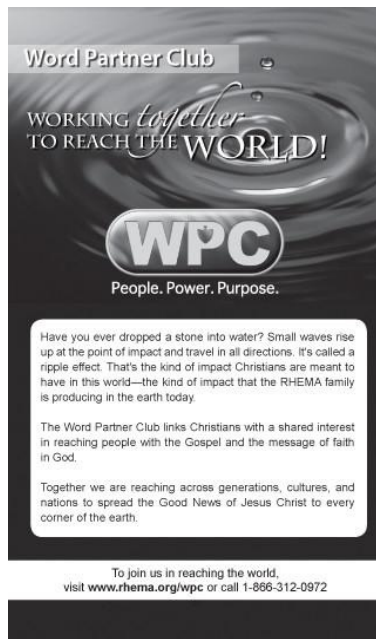
About The Author

Kenneth E. Hagin

Kenneth E. Hagin ministered for almost 70 years after God miraculously healed him of a deformed heart and an incurable blood disease at the age of 17. Even though Rev. Hagin went home to be with the Lord in 2003, the ministry he founded continues to bless multitudes around the globe.

Kenneth Hagin Ministries' outreaches include *The Word of Faith*, a free magazine; Rhema Bible Training College; Rhema Alumni Association; Rhema Ministerial Association International; Rhema Correspondence Bible School; and the Rhema Prison Ministry. Rev. Hagin's son and daughter-in-law, Kenneth W. and Lynette Hagin, co-host *Rhema Praise*, a weekly television broadcast; *Rhema for Today*, a weekday radio program; and *Living Faith Crusades* held around the world.

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Table of Contents

[Gfits of the Holy Spirit](#)

[The Gifts of the Spirit](#)

[The Gift of the Word of Knowledge](#)

[The Gift of the Word of Knowledge in the Old Testament](#)

[The Gift of the Word of Wisdom \(Part 1\)](#)

[The Gift of the Word of Wisdom \(Part 2\)](#)

[The Gift of Discerning of Spirits](#)

[The Gift of Faith \(Part 1\)](#)

[The Gift of Faith \(Part 2\)](#)

[The Gift of Working of Miracles](#)

[The Gifts of Healings](#)

[The Gift of Prophecy](#)

[The Gift of Tongues](#)

[Interpretation of Tongues](#)

[About The Author](#)

[More Infomation From KHM](#)