

What are 'Spiritual Gifts'? November 15, 2020

I Corinthians 12: 1— 6

Introduction — I love baseball..... You all know that. And one of the things I love is the planning, the tactics, of baseball. For instance: in 2001, the Oakland A's lost to the New York Yankees in the playoff games— then lost three stars to free agency. The usual way that major league baseball teams build a winning team is by hiring one or more powerful and notable great players to their team, and build the team's ability to win games on the skills and talents of their famous players. Or, they might recruit several promising rookies, and build the team around the growing skills and talents of these rising stars so that all 27 members of the team depend on the excellent skills of the 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 real stars.

The Oakland A's general manager Billy Beane had a dilemma: how could he field a competitive team when the A's player salaries total less than a third of the rich teams'? To the frustration of his team scouts, Beane hired and listened to Peter Brand, a recent Yale university graduate who evaluated players using Bill James' statistical approach. Beane assembled a team of decent, no big name players who, on paper, could get on base and score runs. The team was built around all 27 players working together, playing good ball, and a few of the no big name players getting on base, stealing bases or whatever, and scoring.

The Christian church is also a team that is working together for a goal— the goal and mission of winning the world to Jesus Christ, and training all Christians in the holy, humble, giving life of a disciple of the lord Jesus Christ!! and to accomplish our mission, God has not equipped us with bats and balls, gloves and home– run hitters!!! Instead, God has given us something even better— he has given us his spirit, his Holy Spirit, who equips us with all of the “tools” we need for carrying out our mission.

However, in recent years, people have wondered a great deal about “what does the Holy Spirit do?” So, this morning, we are going to look at some questions people ask about the holy spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

## I. Questions about the Holy Spirit

### A. Who is the Holy Spirit?

1. The Holy Spirit is God— the third “person” of the Trinity.
2. In John 14:16, Jesus said “the father will give you another helper (or comforter)....” Then, in John 16:7 , Jesus said “if I go (to death & resurrection), I will send [the comforter] to you.”
3. So the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to every believer !
4. Over a thousand years ago, the early Christians were trying to understand what Jesus was teaching, and make it clear what should be believed. Many Christian leaders met to spell out Jesus’ teaching about God and the Trinity, and they came up with ideas based on the New Testament letters, and especially what Jesus said in the gospels. They wrote: “the Holy Spirit, the lord, the giver of life, (remember the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse of Genesis— “the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters....”) who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and Son is glorified....” (Nicene Creed, U.M. Hymnal, #880)

### B. What does the Holy Spirit do??

1. Look back at John 14:16-17— Jesus said that the Holy Spirit, the “comforter” (or “counselor”) would come to “abide with you, and will be in you” that we might not be orphans !
2. And in John 14:26, Jesus said “the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that i said to you.”
3. So the Holy Spirit was the one who guided the writing of the New Testament, and the Old Testament as well (II Tim. 3:16— “all scripture is God-breathed” — like Adam & Eve!)

4. The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth Jesus said in John 16:13. Jesus went on to say, “[the Spirit] will glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall disclose it to you.” In other words, we will get what Jesus had on earth— the same power to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to preach the gospel!! If that’s true, then:

C. How do we “get” the Holy Spirit??

1. According to Romans 8:9-11, you already have him!! “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ (the H.S.), he does not belong to Christ (is not a Christian).”

2. Therefore, if you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit in your life— “for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2) you can’t be a Christian and not have the Holy Spirit ! !

3. But— not every Christian is led and empowered by the Holy Spirit to the extent that Jesus wants— that’s what the Bible calls “being filled with the Holy Spirit” — for, on the day of Pentecost 50 days after Jesus rose, it is said that “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” And when peter spoke to the Sanhedrin in acts 4:8, he was “filled with the Holy Spirit.” And in Ephesians 5:18, we are encouraged “do not get drunk with wine, but be filled with the spirit.”

D. How, then, can Christians “be filled with the Holy Spirit” ?

1. Are you a Christian ?

2. You are filled by the Holy Spirit by faith (Col. 2:6— “as you received Christ Jesus [by faith], so walk in him.”)

3. Be sure your heart is ready for the “filling of the spirit” — do you desire to live a life pleasing to the lord? (mt. 5:6— “blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”) — you must be willing to surrender control of your life to Christ according to Romans 12:1-2 = “...present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice . . . Do not be conformed

to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (by the Holy Spirit).” — you must always confess any sin which the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and claim God’s forgiveness (see i john 1:9).

E. Then, as you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you can begin to discover the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to you!!

II. What are the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit??

A. Are they weird?

1. No, they are not “weird,” like an “out-of-body” experience or something!!

2. But “gifts of the spirit” are not just natural talents. God’s spirit may transform and use natural talents to his glory (like singing), but they are not the same.

3. Spiritual gifts are not “the fruit of the Spirit.” The “fruit of the spirit” as described in Gal. 5:22-23 are elements of Christ-likeness that come with spiritual maturity; they can and should be true— or become true — in the life of every Christian ! !

B. Spiritual gifts— what are they and how many?!?

1. The main lists of the “gifts of the spirit” are in Romans 12:6-8; here in I Corinthians 12:8-10; and Ephesians 4:11-12.

2. A few spiritual gifts are mentioned elsewhere in the new testament; so several Bible scholars and missionaries list about 27 gifts of the spirit: prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues, apostle, helps, administration, evangelist, pastor, celibacy, voluntary poverty, martyrdom, hospitality, missionary, intercession, and exorcism.

C. I would categorize the gifts in three main “types:”

1. “Sign gifts,” like healing; speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues; miracles;

2. “Leadership gifts,” like apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher ;
3. . . . And the rest as “assisting gifts,” to help the Church in the work of the gospel.

Conclusion — this part of I Corinth. Is so crucial, about spiritual gifts and the body of Christ, and chapter 13, the “love chapter,” and how to use spiritual gifts — we need to look at it next week, also. we so often do not realize the presence and strength of the Holy Spirit to lead us and help us in daily life.

A lady went to a jeweler to have her watch fixed. He disappeared to the back and soon returned with it running perfectly. Surprised, she asked how he could fix it so soon. He told her it only needed a new battery. “Battery? Battery? Nobody said anything about a battery. I’ve been winding it every morning, for three years!” — A lot of Christians do not realize the inner power of the Holy Spirit to help them handle things, so they think they must take things into their own hands.