

Q: Do the miraculous spiritual gifts have a place in today's church?

A: First let's make sure that we are all talking about the same thing by giving some definitions.

Gifts: Specially endowed abilities that do not have to be learned, or practiced. These are different to our talents, which we must refine ... for example a gifted musician is still required to practice.

Miraculous: Something that occurs outside the laws of nature and in most cases occurs instantaneously. A prayer for healing that occurs after intervention, when the physician did not expect the intervention to work is outside the realms of our current understanding of science but is not necessarily miraculous.

Spiritual: From the Holy Spirit specifically for the building up of the Church, the entire body of Christ; the impact is on the entire body, and applicable to each member, each assembly of the body.

So the question could be put this way ... "Are people currently endowed with **gifts** that they do not have to learn or practice, that when seen in action **consistently defy all laws of science**, and when applied are for the **benefit of the Body of Christ: the Church**?"

Consider this:

In the 11th chapter of 1st Corinthians, the apostle Paul admonishes the church assembled there to remember that the Lord's supper commemorates the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He reminds them that they are feasting on Christ's body, on Christ's blood. On another occasion Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians that the church is the body of Christ.

Participating in the Lord's supper unworthily means not discerning the Lord's body (1 Cor 11:29). Paul is saying we come together for the **good of the body**.

He continues the theme of actions "**for the good of the body**" in 1st Corinthians chapter 12. Here he is speaking of Spiritual gifts; gifts (miraculously) received from the Spirit as against our own innate and/or learned giftedness. Gifts endowed this way are sometimes referred to as the "miraculous gifts". In verse 7 Paul reminds us that "the manifestation of the Spirit to each is for the profit of all"; for **equipping and edifying the church** and we know that the church is the body of Christ. (Eph 4:11-13)". He then moves on to speak of a more excellent way. He writes about love, describing what love is and what love is not. And then he pulls it all together by stating that love is eternal, "Love never fails"; but the spiritual (or the miraculously endowed) gifts are temporary "they will cease(fail)" (1 Cor 13:8).

Paul then speaks about putting away childish things when one is mature. The Greek word "teleios" can be translated as "perfect" or "complete" or "mature". By "childish" things Paul seems to be speaking about, the temporary things, the **Spiritual gifts that edify and mature** a growing body such as the early church.

Now we also know from 2 Tim 3:16-17, that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable** for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be **complete**, thoroughly **equipped** for every good work.”

So, we see in one place (1 Cor 12, Ephesians 4:11-13) Spiritual gifts as the means of equipping the Church and in another (2 Tim 3:16-17) all Scripture as the means. So, which is/was it? It would seem that the infant Church needed one and the maturing Church the other.

Scripture gives us the answer in 1 Cor 13:13...” But when that which is perfect (mature) has come, then that which is in part will be done away.” The “arrival” of the complete Scripture, the “all Scripture referred to in 2 Tim 3: 16” is that perfect, mature complete thing referred to in 1 Corinthians 13:13.

Author’s Note: The Holy Spirit is still the source, the comforter, the helper; He is still supernatural for He is fully God. We human beings are challenged in understanding how He can be supernatural in our lives without being miraculous. Perhaps we are challenged because God is God and we are not.