

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:8-11

1. **The _____**

Paul's description of the gifts of the Spirit is not intended to be a complete catalogue of every gift which He gives to the church (cf. Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28; Eph 4:11). These gifts were common for the experience of the local churches at the time, and so they would not have required such an exhaustive list (cf. Gal. 3:5). The gifts which Paul describes here, and the way in which he describes them, are part of the larger purpose of his corrective teaching in chapters 12-14.

2. **The _____** (vs.8-10)

A. **Word of Wisdom** (v.8a)

Wisdom is an important theme in this epistle and it can refer to that which is both bad and good (1 Cor. 1:21). The wisdom of God is manifest in the gospel of Christ which all believers possess and understand (1 Cor. 1:18, 21-24). This is the gift of "wise utterances" and it was most likely God's supernatural and direct way of telling believers how to apply the truth of the gospel.

B. **Word of Knowledge** (v.8b)

Similar to wisdom, knowledge has the potential to be either good or bad (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1, 7, 10-11). These "knowledgeable utterances" were given for the benefit of the Christian congregation (1 Cor. 14:6), they were a temporary gift (1 Cor. 13:8), and they were not characterized as giving complete knowledge (1 Cor. 13:9; cf. 2 Tim. 3:17b). This was most likely the supernatural and direct way in which God communicated theological truth to congregations of believers before the fullness of the Scriptures were given.

C. **Faith** (v.9a)

Saving faith is a gift from the Lord (cf. Phil 1:29), and it is the possession and experience of all Christians (John 3:16; Rom 3:22, 26). This gift of faith is most likely connected to the ability to trust in the Lord in the face of a seemingly insurmountable task (cf. Mt. 17:20; 1 Cor. 13:2).

D. **Healings** (v.9b)

Miraculous healings were common during the ministry of Christ and the early church, but they dwindled in prominence during the life of the apostles (cf. Acts 5:15; 19:11; cf. Phil 2:27; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20). The healings evident by the miraculous power of God were immediate, lasting, and indisputable (cf.

Luke 5:20; 9:2; Acts 3:1ff; 14:8-10).

E. **Effecting of Miracles** (v.10a)

This is a general description of the manifestation of the power of God that was evident to men and included supernatural healings, exorcisms, and other powerful acts (Matt. 7:22; 13:58; Acts 8:7, 13; Heb. 2:4). This general category of supernatural displays of power are described by John as signs (cf. John 2:11; 4:54; 6:2, 14, 26; 9:16; 12:18).

F. **Prophecy** (v.10a)

Prophecy is a word which describes both the proclamation of God's message (cf. Ex. 4:15-16) as well as foretelling future events (Acts 11:28). This is a gift of the spirit which is related to, but distinct from, revelation, knowledge, and teaching (1 Cor. 14:6) and it is connected to the faith of the prophet's (cf. v.9a; Rom. 12:6). Prophets, as an office in the church, were a gift of God for the foundation of the church (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph 2:19-20).

G. **Distinguishing of Spirits** (v.10b)

This is the supernatural ability to discern the presence of an evil spirit or the validity of a person's teaching (cf. 1 Tim 4:1; 1 John 4:1). It is also possibly related to the exorcism of demons (cf. Lk. 10:20; Acts 8:7).

H. **Various Tongues** (v.10b)

Paul addresses this subject at length later in this epistle (1 Cor. 14:2ff). When Paul uses this term in his other epistles he is referring to speech in known human languages (Rom. 3:13; 14:11; Phil 2:11). It was given as a sign for unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22) and may need an interpreter for all who are present to understand (1 Cor. 14:4). This gift of tongues, or languages, was God's enabling of a believer to miraculously and spontaneously speak a message directly from Him (cf. 1 Cor. 14:14-15) in a language unknown to the speaker (Acts 2:7-8; 10:46-47; 19:5-6).

I. **Interpretation of Tongues** (v.10b)

This is simply the divinely giving ability to interpret a person's speech in an unknown language in the congregation of believers (1 Cor. 12:30; 14:26-28).

3. **The _____** (v.11)

All of the supernatural gifts from the Holy Spirit that the church experienced were intentionally given for a specific purpose. The Corinthians are to see these gifts as evidence of the kindness and intention of the Lord and not a referendum on their own personal importance.

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