



# FOUNDATIONS

## The Gifts of the Spirit Part Three

*(1 Corinthians 12:4-11) Read these verses.*  
In our first study concerning the Gifts of the Spirit we looked firstly at those appointed by the Lord Jesus to equip the saints for the work of the ministry that He has set in the Church. Then in our second study we looked at the Gifts of Service given by the Lord Jesus to the local body of Christ. In this study we will now look at those manifestations of the Spirit that the Holy Spirit releases in the local church when its members come together for worship, ministry and for edification.

### **The Gifts exercised in public worship meetings and in ministry.**

In the New Testament worship meetings were never led by one person or by several people up the front. True worship in the New Testament involved every member of the local congregation ministering the Grace of God to each other in all its forms. The New Testament teaches the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and not a hierarchical structure.

The writer to the Hebrews put it this way, *"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the day approaching"* (Hebrews 10:24-25). This admonition was not given to the 'up front' ordained clergymen but to all the believers of the local church.

How can you edify a brother or sister when you are looking at the back of their head in church? Obviously you can't do it as effectively as you could by looking at them. Most churches have their congregation members looking towards the front because they have become used to looking at a person doing the entire spiritual ministry from the front of the church. In the early church every member was actively involved in worship and the gifts of the Spirit flowed freely between all of them collectively.

The apostle Paul also said, *"What then shall we say brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church"* (1 Corinthians 12:26).

In its context the whole chapter is speaking about the exercising of spiritual gifts in public worship meetings. Of course the use of spiritual gifts are not just confined to worship meetings but operate in the daily circumstances of a believer's life.

Paul lists these gifts in chapter twelve. Once again we need to see three things concerning the gifts.

Firstly, not everyone will manifest the same gifts. (Verses 4-6,29-31) Secondly, the gifts are for the benefit of others. (Verse 6) Thirdly, the Holy Spirit decides how He will distribute the gifts. (Verse 11)

Now lets continue in 1 Corinthians chapter twelve with verse eight and following.

### **a. The Message of Wisdom: (Verse 8)**

This wisdom literally means *“the love of wisdom.”* The apostle James says, *“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness”(James 3:17-18).*

Every believer needs God's wisdom in life and that wisdom is available to us in His Word and we can ask God for it. *(James 1:5-6)*

The message of wisdom that Paul speaks of here is when God speaks His Word into a particular circumstance in someone's life or in a difficult situation that is facing the local congregation. God's Word will always support the message of wisdom.

This grace gift will also operate in the ministry of a prophet because he lives in God's presence and is a diligent student of God's Word. Today there are those going around who are saying “I have a word for you” and multitudes of believers are flocking to these men to hear from the Lord. In reality it is fortune telling dressed up in Christian trappings.

If we claim to have a word from God for someone's life then we are responsible before the Lord for what happens in that person's life as a result. True and godly wisdom will always have its foundation built on God's Word. Most of us can receive God's wisdom by spending time in His Word. *(Psalm 19:7-11 119:9-11,105,130) (Proverbs 2:1-12)*

Sometimes a situation will arise in a believer's life or in the life of the local

church that requires wisdom and in this context the grace to know God's wisdom will be imparted to a person for that purpose. However we also need to keep in mind that the most of the New Testament was still being written and the canon of scripture was still not completed.

However, we must not assume that because we have the complete canon of scripture today that this grace gift has become obsolete. King Solomon had this gift. *(1 Kings 4:29-34)*

Every believer has God's wisdom available to them because of the indwelling Holy Spirit because He is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, however, some will have the grace to speak wisdom into certain situations. Of course this grace gift will operate in the other leadership ministries as well, whether a person is an apostle, a prophet, a pastor and teacher, an evangelist or in any member for that matter.

### **√b. The Message of knowledge: (Verse 8)**

This is the grace to know about a certain situation or problem in a believers life. This is primarily a pastoral gift. The pastor who knows the members of his congregation and carries them on his heart will have the insight from the Lord to know things about them that no one else knows about. The apostle Peter had this grace when he saw into the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira. *(Acts 5:3)*

The Lord Jesus Himself had this grace gift when He saw into the heart of the women at the well. *(John 4:18)* The message of knowledge works hand in hand with the message of wisdom. Sometimes wisdom is needed when a message of knowledge is given. It is one thing to see into a person's heart and another thing to show them the way out of their situation. Sometimes through a message of

knowledge a situation will be brought to light that needs to be fixed and a message of wisdom will provide the way to fix it.

### c. Faith: (Verse 9)

Every believer has faith but not every believer has the gift of faith. This is the grace to believe the Lord for something or some situation that is not specifically promised in God's Word. The person with this kind of faith has the inward certainty that what they are saying and believing for will come to pass.

We can all believe for what God has promised us in His Word but someone with this grace can believe God for something that is not specifically mentioned in the Word.

Now the person who has this grace from God does not have the right to ask for whatever they like but only for those things that the Holy Spirit has specifically laid on their hearts. People with this gift spend a lot of time in prayer and even fasting before the Lord. They will often have the grace to operate in the message of knowledge and wisdom as well.

This kind of faith is a passionate belief that all things are possible with God even in impossible circumstances.

David had this grace gift when he killed Goliath. Joshua and Caleb had this grace gift when they were more than willing to defeat the giants in the Promised Land. Moses had this grace gift when he commanded the Red Sea to part. George Mueller of the Bristol Orphanage had this grace gift. When they had no food he and the children would pray in faith and food would arrive on their doorstep. Praying Hyde had this grace gift and would see his prayers miraculously answered in differ-

ent situations around the world. Elijah had this grace gift when he stopped the rain and called down fire from heaven.

It is the kind of faith that believes that what God has said will come to pass. It is a faith that will dare for the good of others. It is a faith that turns visions into reality.

### d. Gifts of Healing (Healings): (Verse 9)

Healing in the Bible was not always instantaneous neither is everyone healed. Naaman the leper had to dip in the Jordan River seven times before the Lord healed him. (*2 Kings 5:14*) Jesus touched the eyes of a man twice before he saw clearly. (*Mark 8:22-26*) He told a blind man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam and the man went and washed and came home seeing. (*John 9:7*)

Now the Lord Jesus didn't heal everyone. At the pool of Bethesda he healed only one man even though there were many other sick people lying around. (*John 5:1-8*) Sometimes people were not healed for example Paul left Trophimus sick in Miletus. (*2 Timothy 4:20*) The great prophet Elisha died of a sickness. (*2 Kings 13:14*) On the other hand there are numerous accounts of people that were miraculously and instantaneously healed.

The word used in the Greek text is "healings" which would suggest that there are different gifts of healing for different kinds of diseases. Also it could indicate that all healing is not the same. Some will be healed instantaneously but for others the process will be gradual. This ties in with the pattern of healings in the Bible as we have already mentioned.

Another thing about healing is that the power of God needs to be present when healing occurs. We read about this in the ministry of Jesus where it says,

*"and the power of the Lord was present for Him to heal the sick"(Luke 5:17)*

We can pray for the sick and we should but if you are going to command someone to come out of a wheelchair or to rise up from their deathbed you had better have the power of the Lord present to heal them. The Lord Jesus only did what He saw His Father doing. Jesus was always led by the Holy Spirit in everything he did. *(Acts 10:38)* He didn't just go around healing everybody.

Someone with the grace to believe the Lord to heal others will be always led by the Spirit in their ministry.

Some people are not healed for a variety of reasons and even if someone prays for them in faith they are not healed. Sometimes it may be a lack of faith but at other times an unforgiving spirit or irreverence at the Lord's Supper as it was at Corinth or some sin left un-confessed. Lack of faithfulness can also hinder healing. The Bible says, *"To the faithful you show yourself faithful"(Psalm 18:25).*

Sometimes there is no sin or unbelief involved it is simply because the Lord in His sovereign wisdom has chosen not to heal that person at that particular time. Someone with this grace gift will not always see people healed that they pray for yet because they are the instrument through whom Jesus works He is able to do marvellous things through them.

Many today need emotional healing and we must not discount this kind of healing but in every case healing is a direct result of the Spirit's work and not the result of Psychology or human methods of counselling.

Only the Holy Spirit can reach down into the depths of the human heart and deal with deep-seated problems. Most problems people have are spiritual ones

because of the depravity of the human heart. *(Jeremiah 17:9)*

Emotional problems can lead to physical ones and sometimes the emotional ones need to be healed first in order for the physical body to recover. Sometimes a person just needs to repent before they receive their healing. Much more could be said about healing but the purpose of these studies is to give an overview of the Gifts of the Spirit.

#### **e. Miraculous powers: (Verse 10)**

Healings are not miracles. Miracles are deeds of power that transcend normal physical laws. For example Jesus changed water into wine. Elijah caused an axe head to float. Moses staff became a snake before Pharaoh. Joshua prayed and God set the sun back by a day. Handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched the apostle Paul were taken to the sick and they were cured and set free from evil spirits. *(Acts 19:11-12)* The Lord Jesus walked on water. These are deeds of power!

Usually those who have the grace to do these kinds of things would be evangelists or missionaries on the field where they are up against witchcraft and demon powers. Remember that Moses needed God's power to match Satan's power working through the magicians of Egypt. Jannes and Jambres.

In these last days believers will need to know this grace gift as the time of the Antichrist draws near. Remember that the coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders. *(2 Thessalonians 2:9)*

#### **f. Prophecy: (Verse 10)**

The believer who has the grace to prophesy will not necessarily be called into the

office of a prophet. A person who prophesies is a 'forth teller' and in the context of worship will receive the Word of the Lord for a particular person or for the local church as a whole. Any believer can have the message of Prophecy according to Paul in fact he encourages everyone to do this so that the whole church may be edified. (1 Corinthians 14:1-6)

A believer who has the grace to prophesy will be in control of what they say at all times because *"The Spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace."* (Vs 32-33a) Also this verse implies that true prophets will be able to discern the messages uttered by their fellow prophets in the local meeting of believers.

The Bible says, *"For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"* (Revelation 19:10b).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the living Word of God incarnate and the Bible is His word. When we are reading the Word of God we are reading the mind and the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we preach the Word of God under the anointing of the Holy Spirit we will have the spirit of prophecy!

Today most of what is called prophecy is not prophecy but false visions, divinations (fortune telling) idolatries (worship of money) and the delusions of their own minds. (Jeremiah 14:14) False prophets have always been around but in these last days they are multiplying like rabbits!

A real prophetic word will be primarily the public exposition of a scripture passage given in such a way as to address a current situation in the local church. It could be a word for someone personally or for the church as a whole but it will be from God's Word. Sometimes a prophecy will be quite personal and relevant to a

particular person in their present circumstances but it will always be backed up and endorsed by God's Word.

All prophecy is to be tested by those who have spiritual discernment and the discernment of spirits goes hand in hand with this grace gift. (Vs 29) All prophecies will be given decently and in order not by someone shouting others down in an overt manner! Much more could be said about this grace gift because the whole of One Corinthians chapter fourteen deals with its proper use. In chapter fourteen tongues are also linked to prophecy and when a tongue is interpreted it becomes prophecy. This subject is dealt with in verses 1-25.

The danger of false prophecy is that those who engage in it lay truth alongside of error in other words they always have cheese in the rat trap. (2 Peter 2:1-3)

This is the leaven of the Pharisees that Jesus warned us about. Jesus also said that if the eye were not sound then the body would not be sound. Eyes are the teachers that give light to the body. If the eye is full of adultery, greed, lust, pride and a love for money then the whole body will follow suite.

False prophets who are nothing more than ravenous wolves dressed in sheep's clothing are corrupting the body of Christ today! Especially watch out for Benny Hinn! He is a proven false prophet!

There are three main functions of the word of prophecy. Firstly, It may be a positive message to guide, edify and to advise. Secondly, a word of prophecy may be a negative message such as a warning or a rebuke concerning sin. Thirdly, a word of prophecy may be a prediction about future events. Sometimes a word of prophecy will contain all three elements.

Watch out for those who continuously prophesy blessing and prosperity. The false prophets in Jeremiah's time did the same thing. (*Jeremiah 23:16-18*)

The faith prosperity and Kingdom Now people are into this kind of thing in a big way! They are always prophesying revival but it never comes! In fact they don't even know what a real revival is! But that is another subject! (See our studies on Biblical revival on this website)

### **g. Distinguishing between spirits: (Verse 10)**

This is the God given grace to know when a person is speaking or acting out of the power of his or her own will or by the power of an evil Spirit. This is where discernment is needed. So often a false prophecy will have just enough scripture or truth in it to mask the real message. As we have already said Satan always puts cheese in the mousetrap.

Many believers, especially in Charismatic and Pentecostal circles today speak powerful words that they call prophecy and it can be very persuasive but when you examine it in the light of God's word there is something not quite right.

On the other hand when a prophecy is given in the Spirit's power it will not always be some kind of overtly outspoken word but very quiet yet firm and supported by scripture. Today there is just too much hype in this whole business and the tragedy is that it obscures the genuine work of the Holy Spirit.

Today God is releasing the gifts of the Spirit among His people as He did in the early Church but Satan is also counterfeiting these today through men like Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, Gerald Coates, John Avanzini, and many others. There are four tests you can use to dis-

cern a false prophet today. Firstly, is what they are saying grounded and affirmed by the Word of God? Secondly, are they always preaching about money? Thirdly, are they living a crucified lifestyle or living luxurious and self-indulgent lives? Fourthly, Do their predictions come true? If they fail in these tests then they have not been sent from the Lord!

These days the spirit of the Berean's has by enlarge disappeared from the Church. We read concerning them, "*For they received the message with great eagerness and examined the scriptures everyday to see if what Paul said was true*"(*Acts 17; 11*).

These days experiential theology and the opinions of men are replacing the plain teaching of God's Word.

The grace to discern between spirits needs to be exercised by every believer in these days but especially by our leaders. Many of them are compromising scripture especially where the Church of Rome, Ecumenism and the interfaith movement is concerned. The Word of God must always test every revelation, every prophecy, every utterance and every teaching. We desperately need this grace gift today.

### **h. Tongues and Interpretation: (Verse 10)**

Tongues and interpretation go together. One cannot function in public ministry without the other. What does the Bible teach about this grace gift? Can we speak in a tongue for private edification or in our prayer closet? How does it operate in the local church? Will everyone have the grace to speak in tongues? Can it be exercised publicly without being understood? To answer these questions we need to look at a separate study. To answer these questions you will need to look at our study called "What does the Bible really teach about speaking in Tongues?"

### Conclusion:

Not every believer will have the grace to exercise all of the gifts of the Spirit although the potential to exercise any gift is possible because we all have the same Holy Spirit. (Verses 4-6)

However, the Lord in His wisdom chooses to give the gifts and distributes them according to His will and not ours. Paul says, that God has prioritised these gifts and that tongues itself is the least important of them all. He also asks the questions, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work mir-

acles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts." (1 Corinthians 12:27-31).

When the questions are phrased in this way the text tells us clearly that not everyone will have the grace to exercise all the gifts including speaking in tongues. Paul says two very important things in his first letter to the Corinthians. "Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others... whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1corinthians 10:24,31b)

## BLOW THE TRUMPET IN ZION

" For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ "

