

# Transcription of 24ID3731

## 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 - The Gifts of the Spirit to Profit All

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Good evening. Let's open our Bibles tonight to 1 Corinthians 12. Hope you're all praying for our election – a lot - that God would not give us what we deserve.

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian church from Ephesus where he would spend three years planting that Ephesian church that you have learned so much about in the Scriptures. But he wrote it to a church that was, maybe, eight years old now. He had spent a year and a half there planting this church. Corinth was one of the most perverse cities on the planet. What happened in Corinth did never stay in Corinth; it seemed to go everywhere. And so imagine placing a church there with a bunch of new believers who are learning, for the first time, the things of God; no Jewish background for the most part, mostly Gentiles. And so it wasn't difficult to see how they could become the subject of and the prey to the sin that surrounded them, the idolatry as well.

Paul heard both from the elders and from some wonderful people that loved the church, that wrote to him. And Paul wrote three letters (at least) to them: one that we don't have (chapter 5:9 mentions it); in fact, as you read through this letter, you will read Paul saying several times in referring to their questions and then two letters that we do have; and all of them are fairly long. They are the letters of a loving pastor, a father to the saints that they would return to the things he saw when he was with them and that they would forsake the ways that they had been taken over by in many ways. And really every subject that he learned about, he spends a lot of time talking about.

In fact, we're going to spend the next several weeks going through chapters 12, 13 and 14, which is all about the church meeting together – church service – and how that selfishness and that fleshliness had crawled in to even the exercise of the gifts that God had given them to serve one another.

So we've gone through a lot of chapters. If you haven't been with us, they're all in the archives. But needless to say, Paul spent an awful lot of time talking to them about getting together for communion – recognizing the Lord's body and blood, getting together for love feasts and eating before people got there; a lot of the selfishness that was driving them; very proud of their liberal outlook towards sexual sins, allowing it in the church; lots of taking sides; demanding rights. It wasn't a very healthy place, but it was a place God had begun a work, and He certainly wasn't going to forsake it. And so Paul spends an inordinate amount of time – if you read these two letters together – just pouring his heart out to the saints in the hopes of and sending folks to them that they would listen and receive what the correction is. And I think....I'm sure it was on Paul's heart all the time.

So beginning tonight we're going to look at chapter 12, the first eleven verses – kind of will set us up for the next several weeks. But Paul again focuses upon when the church meets together. It is the longest set of verses in the Bible on a church gathering in public worship. It is the longest set of verses that we have on the gifts of the Spirit and especially the vocal gifts and how their use should be employed when there is a public gathering (and we'll get to that in particular in chapter 14). The problem for the church – because so much had been driven by this selfishness – was that these extremely valuable gifts from the Lord to the church as a whole, that we should be utilizing when He gives them to us, were being set aside and instead used for trying to prove you were more spiritual, more beneficial, more important than the next guy. And rather than the gifts being from the Lord for the sake of others, they began to use them to try to prove that they were somehow more important, more spiritual. It was a carnal, kind of selfish, spiritually-immature church. But Paul had lots to say to them.

Back in chapter 1, he said to the church, "I know that you didn't come short in any gift as you were waiting for the revelation of our Lord." God had provided them with so much. Unfortunately they had stopped using God's giftings for the consideration of others and were using them for their own self-glory. So, rather than a church filled with ministry, it was a church filled with chaos and abuse and selfishness and, certainly, misuse.

So we're going to go with us through these chapters together in the context. If you want more information, we did (a few years ago) a long, involved study on "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit" and the gifts of the Spirit. I think we spent five

months going through them. They are available in the archives. I know that we have copies of them in the bookstore. If you are interested, we take every gift that the Bible sets out and seek to understand it. Well, we'll go over them a little bit, at least some of the ones that Paul mentions here tonight. But I think there is a tremendous need for us to have a good understanding of what the gifts of the Spirit are.

Certainly one of God's promises to us is that when we are born again, His Spirit comes to live in our hearts, that He comes to reside within us to enable us in our ministry and in our lives; and that the gifts of the Spirit would follow the believer. If you read the end of Mark 16, Jesus said, "These signs will follow those who believe: In My name....." and He gives us a list of them there; not a complete list but just the power of God's Spirit upon the lives of His people. When Jesus commissioned His disciples on Easter evening when they were saved and they were given the Holy Spirit, He told them "to wait for the Promise of the Father which would be poured out upon them not many days from now" (Acts 1). And though they were given the job and the privilege of going out into the world to preach the gospel, to preach the cross, they were told they were not to go until they would be receiving power from on high. And so when you get saved, certainly the Holy Spirit comes to live within you, but there is a baptism in the Holy Spirit; and it is delineated not only in the book of Acts and in the gospels here (in the gospels in various places), and also in the epistles so that we might understand that we are saved, and God comes to dwell in us, and when we're saved, we look to the Lord for His power to be upon our lives to be a witness. In fact, that was really the main thrust of Acts 2, that you would wait until God enabled you to have power to be a witness for Him. And that was certainly the commissioning there in John 20 and in Luke 24.

So, when the Lord comes to dwell within us, the greatest evidence of that is not a gift, by the way, it's His love. Right? John 13:35, that "all men will know that you are My disciples." When God's nature moves into your heart, He is love, and it's the first thing that you see change. I was so amazed when I got saved that I cared for somebody else, 'cause I never did; I cared for me, that's how it worked. And now all of a sudden I was caring for other people. It really slowed me down, but God does indeed do His work.

But there are gifts, and we need His gifts, and we need the work of God's Spirit so that the church can be well and whole and effective. What we will learn over the next seven or eight weeks is that the gifts of God are tools for service. They are not jewels of adornment for your life. They are gifts that cannot be manufactured and oftentimes not stored up. The gift of tongues is a gift to you personally. I think that is something you can call upon privately (and hope you will). But as for most of the gifts, they are given to us by God's grace; they are meant for the use of others rather than ourselves. So you might find that you have a gift one time and you don't have it the next; and the next time it doesn't show up at all.

So here in our chapter tonight – and especially the first eleven verses – Paul will refer to the questions they had asked in a letter, and he will always use the word "now concerning," and then he will describe it. You can read that in chapter 7:1, 7:25, 8:1, 12:1, "Now concerning," and it is this Greek wording for the response to something that he's been asked. So this was an issue that needed to be dealt with. And, like I said, Paul has a lot to say about the gifts. But tonight we really get, in eleven verses, kind of the overview that should then govern our understanding as we go forward.

So verse 1 says this, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant." And I'm glad that he doesn't want me to be ignorant. The word "gifts" should be in italics in your Bible. It is not in the original; it is placed there by translators to give the sentence more clarity. The word "gifts" is there in verse 4. But the word in verse 1, "spiritual," is the Greek word "pneumatikos," and "pneumatikos" literally means things of the Spirit. If you look at classical Greek language, that is a word – "pneumatikos" – that doesn't appear in Greek until the New Testament. It is a.....I don't want to say a made-up word for the church, but it's a made-up word for the church. It's the first time that we read it, here. It is truly a New Testament word. If you look at chapter 14:1 (where we'll get to in a little while), you will read, "Pursue love, and desire 'pneumatikos.' Desire those gifts of the Spirit," and then Paul will begin to say, "Here's a gift that would be great for us in our use when we meet together as a church." "I don't want you to be ignorant, brethren." I love the fact Paul calls us "brethren." For all of the infighting going on in this church, he's not forsaking them as his family, and I think that that's important. "I don't want you in the dark. I don't want you to be ignorant about the gifts and the use of them in the church."

I should say to you there is a tremendous confusion today about the gifts of the Spirit: are they for today, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the speaking in tongues, a prayer language? I don't think the Bible is very confusing, but people are confused. And I think what usually happens is that much of the confusion seems to be preconceived notions rather than solid Bible study. If you can just go to the Bible and go, "This is all I know, this is all it says," then I think we'll be fine. But unfortunately there's a lot of struggle which means that the church then suffers the lack of the very things God provides so that we can do a better job of ministering to one another and reaching to the lost. And so we need to be wise concerning the use of the gifts. I hope that you understand

them well; if not, that you put in the time to study your Bible. The proper use of them in your own life and in that of the life of the church, as we gather for worship, is essential. Paul doesn't want you to be ignorant; neither does the Lord. Paul wants you to desire to have these spiritual gifts in your life; so does the Lord. And isn't it great to be a vessel through whom God can speak, through whom God would use you? Now, you might say, "I've got nothin' to offer," and I would agree – you probably don't. Right? We don't amount to much. But when the Lord moves in, we're pretty good because we're His vessels, and He can then get the honor.

So the problem for this church wasn't that they didn't have the gifts from God but that the abuse and the carnality in the church was rendering them null and void and really leaving them without much clear direction or hope.

So Paul says this in verse 2, "You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." I suspect, just from the answer, that Paul is saying to them the old life of the Gentile Corinthian was worship of dumb idols. Whatever came with them, whatever legends were tied to them, there was just this mindless kind of association with these false gods. But now many in the church were saved, and the Holy Spirit had come to dwell in them. And it could very well be – at least the way Paul writes it – that the suggestion had been that there were some walking with the Lord who began to say things that were blasphemous against the Lord, and now they began to blame this gift from the Lord as opposed to blaming what was really going on – that idolatry in the heart. And Paul's point is you've got to be distinguished, now, from what your old life was like because now we're not in front of dumb idols; now we're being led by a live, living God, and His Spirit will work in us. Maybe when you followed pagan gods, you could speak evil. But now, being led by the Holy Spirit, you could never speak evil of Jesus. In fact, you can't, in honesty, call Him your Lord without the Holy Spirit working in your heart.

Maybe there are those who suggest that speaking in tongues opens you up to the work of the devil. I've been told that. And I went, "I don't think so." I always read Luke 11:9-13 to them where Jesus said to the boys, "Seek and knock, and the door shall be opened. And ask, and you'll receive. If a son asks bread from his father, will he give him a stone? If he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion?" Then Jesus said, "Well, then you, even though you're evil, know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will the Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask?" So, I'm not afraid to say, "Lord, give me everything You've got." And it's not going to be wicked, and I'm not going to open myself up to difficulty or evil. No. I'm going to Jesus who has only good things for me.

But I suspect, in reading verses 2 and 3, that there was at least some confusion or story being told. And maybe you've had weird stories heard as well. But God is good and so are His gifts and so are His intentions. And if He has gifts for you, don't you want them? If God can use you in miraculous and supernatural ways, wouldn't you want that for your life? Of course you would!

"I don't want you to be ignorant," says Paul. It is only through and by the work of the Holy Spirit that we can honestly be saved. He convicts us of our sin, He points us to Jesus, He teaches us His Word, He anoints us with His power. In reality, it is this work of God's Spirit in our lives. It's not the gifts. In fact, if you go to 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, the gifts of the Spirit can be faked by the devil. But the heart of the believer who wants to serve the Lord cannot. His love in your heart cannot. Obedience cannot be faked.

Towards the end of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:21-23), Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven," and then He says, "but those who do the will of My Father." And He said, "There's going to be those in that day who will argue, 'Lord, we prophesied, we cast out demons, we did many wondrous things,' " and the Lord says, "I don't know who you are." So though the gifts can certainly be faked, the heart of a believer in love with God and obedient to Him and the work of God's Spirit in the heart of a saint who's open to them is always going to be to the glory of God and nothing else. The gifts of the Spirit are available to everyone who loves the Lord. It was John who came to Jesus, there in Mark 9:38-40, and he said, "We found a guy casting out demons in Your name, and we told him not to do it anymore because 'you're not one of our group.'" And Jesus said, "Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Wait! If he's not against us, he's for us." In other words, if the Lord is doing a work.....look, they're open to all. God is willing to work with any of us, even the likes of us.

Well then he says this, beginning in verse 4, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all." Two important truths to know about the gifts of the Spirit

before we get to them are that God, the Holy Spirit, works in many different ways to accomplish His work; He works in many different manners. He works in many different operations or activities. He uses many different vessels in different manners. It is the same Spirit, though, and that's the lesson, isn't it? It's God's Spirit working for the benefit of the body as a whole. And so notice you read here: same Spirit, same Lord, same God. So that we don't, when we get to Paul's words to the Corinthians who had valued gifts based on what they thought was the better one, it doesn't matter. God works, and He gets the glory, He gets the credit.

In verse 4, we read the "diversities of gifts." Simply, there are many different gifts. The word "gifts," "charismata," is a word that means divine enabling of God's grace, and it is always a gift that is freely given. So, there are diversities of God's gifts of grace to His people. In fact here, in this letter, Paul will give us a partial representative list of the gifts to God's people. They're not all here. There are others listed in Romans 12. There're a bunch of others listed in Ephesians 4. But in all of them, you can apply these four verses and that is, it's the Lord's work, and He works for the same purpose.

In verse 5, we read the words "differences of ministries." The word "differences," here, is the same word as "diversities" in the previous verse and in the following. So, the word "ministries" is "diakonia." It means to be a servant, and it says the Holy Spirit, in the lives of His people, will lead us in different ways to accomplish His work and that one is not more valuable than the other. One is no more desirable than the other. In fact, one's not more anointed than the other. There are just different places for us to serve. If you're called to be an usher, be a good usher with the power of God's Spirit. We have a bunch of wonderful Sunday school teachers working with our kids tonight. Aren't you glad they're there? You know what a zoo this would be if all those little children were in here? I mean, it'd be cute, but we'd get nothin' done. Maybe you're a café worker or a sound ministry folks. What gift is more important? They're all important, and they're all the work of God. Pastors get a lot of the credit. They stand up front and shoot their mouths off and, "Oh, pastor!" (Pastor Jack claps) Yeah, if he's not faithful to his calling, he's not going to get any more rewarded than you doing your faithfulness in the place God sets you.

So we read here of the different ministries, the difference in activities, the diversity of gifts and then the "diversities," verse 6, "of activities." The word "activities" is the word "energy" in the Bible, which means the Holy Spirit takes different approaches or levels of energy to accomplish His will. But it is still the work of the Lord. And the point is – and I think Paul will beat it to death in four chapters, but I think we need it – that the Lord cannot be boxed in to any kind of particular approach or style where, somehow, we say, "Well, that's better than something else." Let me give you a couple of examples. There are folks who are filled with the Spirit who are tremendously flamboyant when they talk. Maybe you know some of them. It's not me. I pretty much like to talk to you like I'd talk to you if I was sitting across from you. But there are some real flamboyant people, and you go, "Oh, that's a little weird." Maybe it is. But maybe it's just the Lord. Some people are loud, some people are emotional. Others are quiet and soft-spoken. But behind them, if their heart is right with God, is the work of God. Look, J. Vernon McGee was a different dude on the radio. You probably like him. But he's not exactly the most dynamic guy. When you listen to him, "Yeah, a writer from New Jersey," (Pastor Jack imitates J. Vernon McGee's accent). "Okay, let's get to it. Come on." And yet he's the first pastor in modern American history to make a living being on the radio, and he's been dead for a long time. (Well, he's alive, but he's not been with us for a long time.) And he's still able to be on the radio and employ tons of folks that just churn out what? What God gave to him years ago. But his style was very unique. I love listening to him, I like his iconic style. But there are folks, I must admit to you, that when I hear them I go, "Ohhh. KLOS." (Laughing) "Back to rock." Maybe you do that with me. Don't tell me if you do it. (Laughing) I don't need the abuse. What I need to know is God works in many different ways. If you're trying to model yourself after somebody else, don't do that. Let God use you – your personality. God made you the way He did. Some of you, if you came up here and sang, we'd all leave. (Laughing) It would just be horrible! The fact that God is tone deaf doesn't mean we are. (Laughing) And others of you, we could listen to you all night.....we're so blessed. God works in different ways with different folks. Our faith must be in the Lord, looking to His work, realizing He is diverse as long as those in ministry do not draw their attention to themselves.....the water doesn't taste like the garden hose, you know? And we're walking in His love and teaching His Word, God can use any of us, any of us, in the manner that He chooses.

And so, to a divided and carnal church, that were hailing some gifts over others, and they had lost sight of all of God's work to begin with – that it had been the Lord. So He's diverse enough to reach every one of us. That's important. Had someone sang or played a piano concerto for me with all the beautiful words, I probably wouldn't have listened. I couldn't hear it. So I got saved in the hippie generation with Larry Norman singing stuff about gonorrhoea on Valentine's Day. Come on, how's that possible?! And yet I got saved listening to these guys. It was my life, man. That's where I was. I don't know how you got saved. My father, bless his heart, got saved years later in the only way he might have been reached. I mean, God has a way of just using you uniquely so. But it is to His glory, isn't it? To His glory. I needed rock and roll and a long-haired guy with a testimony. That's how I

got saved. I don't know what you need. Maybe you need.....which is why I think there're a lot of churches. God.....we're not all the same, we're not all the same.

The first lesson is vital. "The Holy Spirit," verse 7, "is manifest" (made known, made visible) "by the gifts that He gives to His church so that we all might profit." How important you underline that, that the Holy Spirit and the gifts that He gives are given for – not the profit of an individual but for the profit, collectively. Remember when Simon was there in Acts 8, when he saw Peter and John laying hands on folks, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit? And he offered money. He said, "I'd like to have that power. I'd really like to have that power to lay hands on people." And Peter said, "Your money can perish with you. You think that you can buy the gifts of God with money." Often when the Holy Spirit moves through our lives and touches others, they are thankful for that ministry and they want to give back to you. And I always think of Naaman, the Syrian, wanting to go pay off Elisha for his being cleansed (2 Kings 5).

But inherent to this chapter is the fact that we should never seek benefit when God uses us; we should just be thankful to be used. God uses me, that's an amazing thought that the Lord would use my life. In fact, the only gift given to profit you is the gift of tongues. It is for your profit. You are to use it for your benefit. Unless you come to the church. Now you need an interpreter so that others can benefit. But in your prayer language with the Lord, in your private devotion – and I'm not going to get into that tonight, but in chapter 14 we'll spend the evening just talking about that if you like. Remember these words: the Holy Spirit gives to all; He does everything in very distinct and different ways. It can still be the Lord. I don't know if you ever watched Katherine Kuhlman years ago. She was an odd little lady. Loved Jesus, though. Got to know her a little bit. She just loved the Lord. But she was very weird in her approaches. We'd watch her and go, "Oh, that's weird," and yet people'd get saved....the draw was great, and she was so proud of God's work in her life. And you just want to say, "Stand up straight and quit going 'Ooooh' a lot." But that was her, man. That was the Lord's work in her life. Blew my mind.

So, good verses to remember. As we then get to....if that's the principle, Paul then begins to list for us some manifestations of the Spirit (verse 7) that would profit all. And he begins to give us a list from verse 8 down through verse 11. They are a representative list in the sense that what you read continually are the words "through the Spirit" and "the same Spirit." "Through the Spirit" and "the same Spirit." Whatever gift God gives you, lets recognize that it is the Lord's gifts to profit all. And, like I said, in that long series of studies we did, we spent several weeks on these gifts. But I'll give you a taste of them, hopefully, tonight, a little bit.

Verse 8 says this, "for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit." In Greek, by definition, the word "sophia" or "wisdom" is knowing what to do. Right? Wisdom is the ability to know what to do or, if you want, wisdom is the proper application of knowledge. This gift, like the others, is not a gift that comes with a reservoir. You will not be able to say to me, "I have the gift of wisdom." And you go, "Well, you didn't sound very wise yesterday. You're kind of a knucklehead." Right? But there are times when, in the place that you are serving, you need to know what to do. And as you seek the Lord, there may be times when God gives to you – supernaturally, without you earning it, without you saying, "Look at me" – for your use and for His glory and maybe for the benefit of others, this gift of knowing what to do. I think sometimes, unfortunately, we don't recognize the gifts that God gives to us because God, though He moves supernaturally, does so in very natural ways.

I can tell you that there have been six times in my life that I would have said to you, "The Lord told me to do this, and I'll die if I don't do it" like I was that convinced. There have been a million times when I believed the Lord was leading me, and it took steps of faith, and sometimes it turned out to be the burrito that I had the night before; and other times, it turned out to be God's Spirit, and I went, "Oh, that was so good that You told me." And you learn as you go, don't you, to hear what the Lord is saying. Look, go to Peter before he was saved. But Peter had a tough time distinguishing between a revelation from the Father and a lie of the devil; and they occurred, there in Matthew 16, about three minutes apart. And the Lord was there to point both of them out. "You didn't come up with this on your own. The Father in heaven revealed this to you," and, "Get behind Me, Satan." It came in three minutes. Peter must have said, "Oh, I'm not that good at this!" And, unfortunately, that's sometimes what we need. We need spiritual Q-tips. When Paul wrote to the Hebrews in chapter 5:12-14, he said, "At a time when you ought to be teachers, you have need for someone to teach you again the first principles of the Word or the oracles of God; that you need milk and not solid food. Everyone that just drinks milk is unskilled in the Word and in the words of righteousness. He's just a baby. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to be able to discern between good and evil." Or, if you will, it takes practice to hear God's voice, and sometimes the only way that I begin to learn that is take a step and see what the Lord might want to do. Practice hearing.

You see this wisdom portrayed, for example, in Acts 15 when the Jerusalem Council got together with the elders and with some of the apostles to decide how they were going to treat the Gentiles that were coming to the Lord. Some of the sects of the Pharisees wanted all of them to become Jews first: you should be circumcised, you should go to the yeshiva, you should learn the law and all. Peter spoke of going to Cornelius' house and how he even took some people with him as witnesses because he thought this was a set-up, and he thought he was going to be in big trouble with everyone; he was going to a Gentile's house. And yet, as the gospel went out, people were already getting saved right and left, and Peter couldn't deny that the Lord had done the work. Paul and Barnabas stood up at the meeting and they described, really, what the Lord had done in the mission field and all. Finally, the senior pastor of the area – James – stood up, and you can go read Acts 15 (I think it starts in verse 14, towards the end of the chapter), and he summarized everything that he heard, and he shared what he believed the will of God was, and the wisdom was received by everyone. It was really a word of wisdom. This was a very difficult time for the church, but he came up with the right answer. In Acts 6, when the church began to grow, the widows who were supposed to be cared for by the church (in terms of daily food) felt like they were getting the short end of the stick. But then you read that they were Jews that were Hellenists; Hellenists just meant they were Jews born somewhere other than Israel, had a different manner of life, maybe different diet, spoke a different language. And so the elders, the apostles, who saw that this was a big distraction – they needed to commit themselves to God's Word and to prayer – said, "Look, let's pick seven godly men among us that can take care of this problem." And they picked....what do you think they picked? Hellenist guys who, by their very names, would tell us that they would be the most able to understand the needs, deal with the problem. It was a true move of wisdom, and it was a wise decision.

Look, we have to learn to be able to tune God in. When I was a young man, we lived right by a railroad track and man, to live and try to sleep....but eventually you get used to it. We had a neighbor who had three children. She had twins at one time, and she lived next to the railroad track, too. And somehow she learned to sleep through the noise of the train and wake to the whispers of her children. I think that's where we need to come. We need to hear what the Lord wants to say to us. And we need this wisdom.

Now, look, if you don't stop and go, "Lord, show me what to do," you probably won't. It isn't that He doesn't want to. You're not paying attention. You're just hearing the train, and you're not listening to the Word of the Lord. I think it is vital that in your spiritual life, you get God involved in these things and allow Him, by His gifts, guide and to direct your steps. It's vital for us in our lives.

Remember when they came to Jesus and asked Him by what authority He turned over the moneychangers (Matthew 21, Mark 11). You know the Lord by example, perfect example. He showed the greatest wisdom. He just turned the tables on these guys.

We receive wisdom and knowledge as we read the Word of God. Those are absolutely true. But we're not talking about that. We're talking about a gift from God given at a particular time and a particular place so that we might serve Him better. It is a gift of the Spirit, and it can be available to you. And you may not have it the second time, and you may not get it the fourth. But God has it available, and there are times we just need His guidance in that direction.

The second thing that it says here is that there is "the word of knowledge through the same Spirit." And again I just point out each one is through the Spirit, through the same Spirit, through the same Lord. The word of knowledge, biblically defined, is the insight from the Lord about a person or a situation that you would not have otherwise known. You might remember Jesus sitting with that woman at the well in Samaria (there in John 4). And as He began to speak to her, led of the Spirit, He really began to open her up and hit the things that really mattered to her so much so that by the time she gets up to run into town, the only words out of her mouth were, "Come see a man who told me everything I've ever done!" He really hit the nail right on the head. Totally insightful. You see the gift of knowledge given by the Holy Spirit to the prophets like Elisha, who you might remember. If you read 2 Kings 6-7, the king of Assyria was plotting, and the LORD was speaking, and God showed him every time where the king was hiding so the children of Israel could defeat him, warning them at every step. Peter was shown by the Lord Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) in their deception.

I'll tell you the first time this ever happened to me, and I've shared the story before. I was at a Christian bookstore in Santa Fe Springs, and I walked in. I was a fairly young Christian, and I honestly didn't take five steps, and the Lord said, "See that woman over there? She just lost her son. Go pray for her." And I went like this, "Right." So I went way to the back of the store, and I stood there for 20 minutes watching to see. And she wasn't leaving. And she didn't look sad. She just wasn't going. And the

Lord kept saying, "Go pray for her." And it was like one of those....you know that thing?.....and finally I said, "All right." So here's a man of great faith. I came to the lady, and I said, "Look, this is gonna sound weird. Don't get mad at me. But I couldn't get away from this. The Lord told me...." And then I told her, and she started bawling. And her son had died the day before, and she was looking for a book to help her understand what the Lord might have been doing. And it was like, "Wow!!!" It was so awesome! I'm glad that doesn't happen every day, but at the same time, I suspect it would happen a whole lot more than we would like it to or want it to or wish that it would, but God would want to do that with us. That He would show us what we needed to do.

Sometimes in teaching – and you that teach regularly will relate to it – there are times when you have.....I take a lot of notes and I can read them and I can use them ten years from now (they make sense). I don't do outline notes for myself. But there are some times in speaking that something comes to mind, and it just comes out your mouth. Now usually that's not good, but sometimes that's good. And I've had that happen where I'll just use an example out of the clear blue, and someone will come up on Sunday and go, "Did my family call you?" And I'll say, "No. Why would they?" "Well, what you talked about is exactly what was going on in my life." And it was like the Lord gave you this word of knowledge; it was specific for the ministry to somebody. And so I would just go, "No, I have no idea," but the Lord knows your situation." How encouraging is it for them when they hear it. Same thing in counseling. Sometimes the Lord'll just show you something. It's good that God keeps you as you go. So, to profit with all, the gifts of the Spirit. Be open for this word of knowledge from the Lord.

Verse 9, "to another faith by the same Spirit." Now, look, you need faith to be saved, but this isn't what that's talking about. This is a faith or a trust in the Lord for a particular situation. Let me give you Bible illustrations because I think those are the best. Acts 3 – Peter and the lame man at the gate Beautiful who, we are told in the Bible, had been lame since his birth, and he was now over 40 years old, and he had been lying there for years. Acts 3. Which means Jesus walked by this guy a lot, I mean for maybe years. There he was, begging for money, and the Lord walked by him. And Peter and John and the others, going to the temple regularly, would have been walking by him as well. And then comes this day where, at least if you read the Acts account, this guy is not even looking at you. He's got his hand out over here, you know, bored. Maybe reading something on his iPhone. Just stay with me. I'm not modernizing. He just wants money, so his hand's up, his cup's out. "You know what to do. Just put it in here. Give me whatever you've got." Peter, at that moment, gets a move of the Spirit upon his heart, and he said, "I don't have any money, but I'll give you what I do have." And then those famous words, "In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk." And he takes him by the hand, pulls him up. Very odd in relation to everything that had been going on. And I would add you better be sure the Lord is speaking to you if you're yankin' a guy out of the wheelchair. (Laughing) But Peter did it. And the Lord honored it.

In praying for the sick, I think a gift of faith would be awesome. I have seen the Lord.....I've had the chance to pray....I'll tell you the story. A fellow named Gerald was a fellow that had diabetes; he had lost both of his eyes, eyesight, that we went to pray with in 1985, and the Lord restored his sight. Now, I can't begin to tell you what that did to me. I went home, and I went, "I didn't believe that." And I'd be honest with the Lord. I went to pray because I felt bad for the guy. But if you just said to me, "Do you believe it?" "No. No." I brought him to church and had him tell everybody what was going on. Twelve years later, I think, he passed away. Went to be with the Lord. But he literally was healed in eyes that had been made blind through diabetes. And I just went, "This is amazing!" And then I started asking, "Is that a gift of faith?" Nope. Not on my part. I was just there for the ride. But there are other times I think in praying with folks that just really encouraged. "I believe that the Lord's going to heal you." Again, this is not for personal use. "I have the gift of".....here's the joker on television. I'm being very nice in calling him a joker. "I have the faith to be healed. Just send me your prayer requests, tuck in your love gift – large and small - and I'll pray for you, and the Lord'll heal you." Complete baloney. Unbiblical. Gifts to serve are given by God as He sees fit for specific situations and not allowed to be carried in your backpack for whenever you want to use them.

So how do I know God can give me this gift? Well, you can start praying for folks. You can start putting yourself in a position and go, "I'll start praying for you," and maybe the Lord'll give you one of those trusted hearts where the Lord will use you. I know so often the discussions are, "Do I have faith?" Look, the faith the grain of a mustard seed moves mountains (Matthew 17:20). So we're all pretty destitute of faith. Right? None of you have moved a mountain. I don't think you have. So, at best we're hanging on to God's gifts, aren't we? But yet you can experience them if you put yourself in a position to be useful to Him.

Continuing in that same vein – and I don't want to run over here, so I've got to speed up here – "to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit." Plural. Gifts of healings. Plural for God works in many ways. He speaks by His Word. He works from near and far. A touch from the Master's hand. Clay and spit rubbed into your eyes. Shadows that pass over you. Prayer cloths. The shadow of Peter. The clothes of Paul. God heals in stages, sometimes immediately. The Lord who put that clay in the guy's eyes and dirt (Mark 8:22-26), told him to go wash. He said, "What do you see?" and he said, "I see men like trees, walking." And

you go, "Why does this take this long. Lord, are You losing it?" No. Just to encourage the man's trust and his faith. And then he washed again, and he was fine. The healings of God are given as God sees fit. You know what I hear sometimes from people? "Whose faith was it?" And was there enough of it? You go through the Bible – that woman with the issue of blood had faith that if she could just touch His garment, she just realized she could touch herself to the Master that she would be fine (Luke 8:43-48). The man with Peter expected a handout, not legs to walk on (Acts 3:1-10). And where was the faith of Lazarus who was dead? It wasn't his sisters'. In fact, one of his sisters said (John 11:38-39), "Oh, you want to roll the stone away? He's stinking by now. He's been there the better part of a week." Not exactly your monstrous understanding of faith.

God works in many different ways to heal. Sometimes He uses doctors and medicine and good counsel, better nutrition, better nutrition. Sometimes He just moves in and does the amazing stuff. Wouldn't you like to lay your hands on somebody and they get well? "God used me!" You could never take credit for it. You couldn't! But you could just stand around and go, "God used my life. This is so fun, so exciting!"

Verse 10, "to another the working of miracles." The word "miracles" is the Greek word "dunamis," and it speaks of the mighty power of the Holy Spirit as God operates by laws that are higher than our natural laws. If you read Isaiah 55:8-9, the LORD says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts nor are My ways your ways. They're beyond your finding out." That's a miracle. Right? What used to be a miracle at one time – men flying – is hardly a miracle today. It's called technology. Yet God does perform miracles in this day. But He never uses miracles to use them to create wonder. Remember when Jesus came to stand before Herod (Luke 23:6-9), who so longed to see something exciting from Him? He wanted to see a miracle. "Do a miracle!" And Jesus wouldn't even answer him because that wasn't the purpose at all. Miracles and then this work of God in the hearts of the people is something that the Lord does; the power of God is at work. I was reading, the other day, about Elijah challenging the prophets of Baal before a watching crowd (1 Kings 18:20-40). And God summoned the people to believe in Him as fire came down from heaven and not only consumed the altar but all the water that was poured out over it, and then He said, "There's no sense halting between two opinions anymore." It's a miracle! And the people ought to go, "That's a miracle!" I know we use the word carelessly, but at the same time, God does great things. His power beyond us.

When we found this property and we were getting kicked out of the school because they were going back in use (we weren't getting kicked out, we were being moved out), it was a miracle how this came together. I think we were talking to Pastor Wade this week about how God brought him here. It was a miracle. You'll have to hear the story sometime. It was weirdly a miracle. Like it was....well, you can tell it sometime, okay? Or we can tell it together. We're funnier together than just by ourselves, like Laurel and Hardy. It'll be just fine. It was a miracle! I mean, an unbelievable miracle.

I think about Paul going to Cyprus, witnessing to the governor, hindered by a sorcerer named Elymas (Acts 13:8-12). And Paul declared....he probably said, "You should be blind for a time." And it was a miracle. God struck this guy blind, so much so that the governor got saved, and the hindrance was removed. The Old Testament is filled with miraculous work of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt through the wilderness, the multiplying of the loaves, the fish, the walking on the water. Look, Christianity is more than talk. Our faith is more than talk. We expect to see God do great things: things beyond our control, things beyond our capability, things that only God can do. If you read Acts 27 sometime and Paul's miraculous journey to Rome – I just mention that because we were just there – what a miracle, how God used him and that whole trip to accomplish His will.

So, hey, be open. Maybe God will, in your life, bring miracles to bear in another's life, and people will just be blessed. Isn't it exciting to know that you could be a vessel for some of these things because God's Spirit dwells in you?

"To another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits." By definition, the word "prophecy" means to speak forth. Really. That's all it means. It is more often used in that context than in the one that we normally associate with prophecy and that is foretelling things in the future, although it is used that way frequently as well. But more often than not, the word "prophecy" – and we'll read it in 1 Corinthians 14:3 – is given to us "to edify and to exhort and to comfort all men." It is a word from the Lord that is fit, if you will. That fits. What is it? Proverbs 25:11, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver." It stands out. I think that's how it goes.

So, we need this powerful word of prophecy. You know, when Paul was heading for Jerusalem (there in Acts 21), wherever he stopped, people go, "Hey, you're gonna be in trouble when you get there." It was this prophet, Agabus, who warned Paul about the suffering that was coming. He was told, but he knew he had to go. But the Lord, through prophecy, brought him forward.



We had several prophecies through a couple of our board members when we were initially deciding to buy this building. One of our guys called me at 3:00 in the morning and goes, "Hey, the Lord showed me what building we're getting." And I went.... here's what I said, "It's 3:00 in the morning." And he described....because there used to be a little hill out here with an old cross on it that really needed to be torn down because the birds had visited it way too long. But it was....he described it "to a T." And then we came the next day and went....he goes, "See?!" How in the world? But it was so encouraging to us to just see that the Lord had gone before us. And how amazing when the Lord gives you a word of comfort to someone, you go, "That's exactly what I needed to hear." And God could use you to do just that.

The word "discernment" means to evaluate and speaks of seeing behind the scenes, as if God pulls back the blinders, if you will. When Philip was in his ministry in Samaria (going back to the book of Acts again), there was this great revival; so much so that they sent back to Jerusalem for Peter and John, who were sent to begin to come out and minister the baptism of the Holy Spirit to those who had been getting saved. And one of the persons they ran into – I mentioned him earlier – was Simon the sorcerer who, apparently, Philip baptized and welcomed into the church (Acts 8). But Peter went, "This guy's not to be trusted," and Peter saw him for what he was, and he called him out and warned him, and it was left open-ended how, maybe, that turned out.

We need to have discernment for there are lots of false prophets around. And sometimes we just need that to save ourselves from what we're about to do. "Lord, give me discernment. I need to know what Your plans are."

Lastly we read, "interpretation of tongues" and all. I'm going to leave that for chapter 14, but I will just say to you the use of this gift in public worship is not to be done without interpretation because else no one will understand what you're saying. But Paul encouraged the private use of it to benefit you. And so it's the only gift of God in the gifts of the Spirit department that is for your own benefit.

And he ends with kind of what he started with in verse 11. He says, "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills." As He wills. Like I said, there are other gifts listed in the Scriptures, but we should be open. Maybe you should say to yourself tonight when you go home, "Which of these gifts have I experienced in my life?" and, "What do you think the Lord would want to do with me?" And then put yourself in a position. Rather than run to your car before 9:00, find someone to pray for, talk to somebody for three minutes. Lord, use me before I get out of here. He will, you know. He's always willing to use those that are willing to be used by Him.

So, you need prayer tonight, we'll be happy to pray with you. But I think we need to be open to God's gifts, and it is certainly His willingness. You know, you give gifts to people you love. You can't wait for them to open them. The Lord would love to give you gifts. He can't wait to see what you're going to do as you make yourself available to Him.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson  
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