

“God So Loved The World” Bible Study

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)

Study #18: Spiritual Gifts

When you accepted Christ as your personal Saviour, God sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in you and as a result you were baptized into the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:13). Hence, God’s church on earth may be described as an extension of Christ to show forth the glory of God.

In order to function as the body of Christ, the church has been bestowed with certain gifts by the Holy Spirit. These gifts may be divided into two categories. The first category of gifts, such as apostles, prophecy, pastors, and teachers etc., are for the edification or building up of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 12:7). The second category of gifts, such as miracles, healings, tongues, are supernatural signs and wonders manifested to witness the power of the gospel (see Acts 5:12).

Every believer is endowed with one or more gifts. None are excluded. These gifts must not be equated with our natural talents or abilities but to the divine grace that the Holy Spirit bestows upon us in order that the church may grow up into Christ and witness the Saviour to the world.

In this study we will consider in general what these spiritual gifts are and zero in on the most important ones. We will concentrate on what the Bible says about the prophetic gift, since it is the gift that edifies the church.

1. When Christ ascended to heaven what did He bestow upon the church?

Ephesians 4:7, 8 _____

Note: Since the church is to represent Christ on earth, some of the first things Jesus bestowed on the believers, after He returned back to heaven, were gifts of grace known as spiritual gifts.

2. Who is the source of these spiritual gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:4 _____

Note: The mission of the Holy Spirit in the church is to reproduce the life of Christ. In order to do this, He bestows on all believers gifts or divine abilities so that each believer functions as part of the body of Christ.

3. For whose benefit are these gifts bestowed on individual believers?

1 Corinthians 12:7 _____

Note: It is important that every believer understands the purpose of spiritual gifts. They are not for personal benefit alone but primarily for the common good of the whole church.

4. Who decides what gift or gifts an individual believer is to receive?

1 Corinthians 12:11 _____

Note: It is not the believer or the church that determines which gift or gifts each person is to receive but the Holy Spirit. We must however keep in mind that these gifts are supernatural abilities and may have nothing to do with our natural talents or abilities.

5. What does Paul compare the church to in describing its mission?

1 Corinthians 12:12 _____

Note: Like the human body, the church is also made up of many parts (i.e., members), yet constitutes one body, the body of Christ (see verse 13). That is why the greatest evidence the church can give to the world of the power of the gospel is when the church acts as one body perfectly united in love (see John 13:34, 35).

6. As the body of Christ what should be the attitude of believers towards each other?

Romans 12:5 _____

Note: Only the gospel of Christ can unite believers of various cultures and backgrounds into one unified body. Such a witness is the most powerful evidence that the gospel is able to unite men and women in love, something the world desperately needs to experience.

7. In order that the church may function as the body of Christ, what must each believer do with the gifts received?

Romans 12:6-8 _____

Note: Just as the human body needs all its members to do its part, so every member of Christ's church is to use his or her gifts. Failure to do so is what paralyzes the witness of the church.

8. List the three most important gifts of the Holy Spirit as the apostle Paul enumerates them?

1 Corinthians 12:28 (i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

Note: Of the three important gifts, the gift of being an apostle is a unique one and was bestowed only on the 11 disciples of Christ plus Paul. These men were chosen by God to lay the foundation of the church by establishing the truth as it is in Christ (see Ephesians 2:19, 20).

9. Apart from the above three gifts, what other five gifts does the Holy Spirit bestow on the church?

1 Corinthians 12:28 (i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

(iv) _____

(v) _____

10. Next to the apostolic gift, the next most important gift is prophecy. Why is this so?

1 Corinthians 14:2, 3 _____

Note: Today much emphasis is given to speaking in tongues and very little is mentioned about the gift of prophecy. Yet the Bible places great importance in the gift of prophecy because it is the gift that builds up the church of Christ.

11. Who is edified by the two gifts, tongues and prophecy?

1 Corinthians 14:4 (i) _____

(ii) _____

12. To whose benefit are the two above gifts directed?

1 Corinthians 14:22 (tongues) _____

(prophecy) _____

Note: The purpose of the gift of tongues is not for the benefit of the believers themselves, as some use it today, but to give evidence to the unbelievers that the believer's tongue is controlled by a supernatural power. The prophetic gift is for the benefit of the church, to edify believers in their Christian walk.

13. What counsel does the apostle Paul give regarding the gift of prophecy?

1 Thessalonians 5:20 _____

Note: While we are not to treat the prophetic gift with contempt, the apostle Paul does warn believers to test the gift before accepting it (see verse 21). The measuring stick for all truth is the Bible. All other truths must be verified by the words of Scripture.

14. What is the purpose of the various gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 4:11, 12 _____

Note: The purpose of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are twofold. The first is to build up the church in Christ. The second is to equip the church for service and to witness the gospel to the world.

15. How long are the gifts of the Holy Spirit to continue in the church?

Ephesians 4:13 _____

Note: Apart from the apostolic gift all the other gifts of the Holy Spirit are to continue as long as time will last, until the church fully reflects Jesus Christ.

16. In prophesying about last day events, who did Christ predict would appear to deceive God's people?

Matthew 24:24 _____

Note: As we approach the end of the world, false Christ's and false prophets will appear to deceive even the most mature believer. That is why we must be grounded in the Word of God as well as to be always on our guard.

17. With what must all the messages we hear and read agree, for us to know it is from the Lord?

Isaiah 8:20 _____

Note: The words and writings of modern day prophets are not to replace or substitute the words of Scripture. That is why everything must be evaluated and judged by what the Bible teaches. The Bible alone is the only standard of truth for what we believe and practice.

18. When a prophet makes predictions, how are we to know that they are from the Lord?

Jeremiah 28:9 _____

Note: Since God only knows the future, the predictions of a true prophet will always come to pass, whether they be of peace or calamity. When some of the predictions of a prophet do not come to pass, we know he or she is not a true prophet (see also Deuteronomy 18:21, 22).

19. What is one way we can identify a true prophet?

1 John 4:1-3 _____

Note: In order for Christ to redeem fallen humanity, He had to become one of us by assuming the nature of the human race that needed redeeming (see John 1:14). Any prophet who denies this fundamental truth of the gospel is a false prophet.

20. Who controls a true prophet?

2 Peter 1:21 _____

Note: Several ways you can distinguish a true prophet from a false one is to ask the following four questions:

1. Do these teachings agree with Scripture?
2. Do all their predictions come true?
3. Do their messages point to Christ rather than themselves?
4. Does their life-style agree with their message?