



Introduction

"The presence of the Spirit in power and gifts makes it easy for God's people to consider the power and the gifts as the real evidence of the Spirit's presence. Not so for Paul. The ultimate criterion of the Spirit's activity is the exaltation of Jesus as Lord. Whatever takes away from that, even if they be legitimate expressions of the Spirit, begins to move away from Christ to a more pagan fascination with spiritual activity as an end in itself." **Gordon Fee**

I. The Excellent Way

"Paul is (not) saying the charismata are not important; it means, rather, that if too much attention is paid them, believers may overlook the absolutely crucial importance of the entire way of life that ought to characterize every believer, every person who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit...Love then is not a charisma but an entire way of life." **D.A. Carson**

"(In this text) Paul has one eye all the time on the way Christian worship affects anyone in the position of an outsider. He obviously expects, not merely that such people will normally be present on such an occasion, but that they will come under conviction by the Spirit's manifest presence in the midst. Both expectations constitute a challenge to our church life today. Are outsiders present? Do they meet the Lord?" **Mark Prior**

II. Earnest Desire

1 Cor 12:31, "...But earnestly desire the higher gifts."

1 Cor 14:1, "Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy."

1 Cor 14:12, "So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church."

1 Cor 14:39, "So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues."



"The manifestation of the Spirit is not supposed to be the exception, it is supposed to be the norm. To how many of us does God give spiritual gifts? 'To everyone.' Someone might think, 'Not to me. What Paul is talking about hasn't ever happened to me.' My answer is 'Yes it has!' You just didn't have the theology, the practice, or the encouragement to recognize it and respond." **John Wimber**

Cultivating the gifts:

1. Be convinced that the Bible teaches the gifts are for today and that they are important.
2. Use the gifts on a regular basis

"As you are learning about spiritual gifts, be patient. Don't despise the day of small beginnings. Be thankful for everything you are learning and for every answer to prayer the Lord gives youIf you will persist in your pursuit of the Lord and his gifts, more will be given to you than you ever dreamed to ask. People who want more of God and more of the gifts of the Spirit almost always feel that things are moving too slowly. They almost always fear that they are going to miss out. But if you really desire more of God and more of his gifts, it is a sign that the mercy of God is resting upon you. These desires were put into your heart by your heavenly Father, and he has not drawn you this far to abandon you or leave you unfulfilled. The holy frustration you feel right now is meant to drive you on." **Jack Deere**

3. Study the gifts

Rom. 12:3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

"The point of this analysis (of the gifts) is to caution us against making a supernatural/natural distinction in our minds whereby we think that some gifts are 'supernatural' and some gifts are simply 'natural.' The Bible makes no such distinction, and the danger of doing this is that we may tend to think of some gifts (which we think to be supernatural) are more important or more clearly from the Lord, and we may tend to devalue or deemphasize the gifts which we think to be natural. If we do this we will fail to see God's hand in the working of all the gifts and fail to thank him for all of them." **Wayne Grudem**



III. Study the gifts

"A spiritual gift is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church. This broad definition includes both gifts that are related to natural abilities (such as teaching, showing mercy, or administration) and gifts that seem to be more 'miraculous' and less related to natural abilities (such as prophecy, healing, or distinguishing between spirits)." **Wayne Grudem**

1. Personal sanctification

Galatians 5:16-18, 22-25

2. Spiritual illumination

1 Cor 2:12-16

1 John 2:27

3. Serving others and the church for mutual edification

1 Cor 12:4-7

1 Cor 14:12

Ephesians 5:18-21

4. Evangelism

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Conclusion

The work of the Spirit is dynamic. We should be able to discern the work of the Spirit.

"One of the greatest tragedies among God's people is that while they have a deep longing to experience Him, they are experiencing God day after day but do not know how to recognize Him. If this has been true of your own Christian experience, I pray that this book will help you learn the way to recognize clearly the activity of God in and around your life. I pray that God will open your spiritual eyes to see what He is doing." Henry Blackaby