

Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for her. **Ephesians 5:25**

A Covenant is a sacred commitment between God and His people. Most of the covenants have God making promises to his people, and God requiring certain conduct from His people.

Covenant 2a | I will protect the unity of Grace by following the leaders of Grace (**Hebrews 13:17**).

Hebrews 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

"**Considerable weight** is to be given to the judgment (counsel) of men and women who live near to God, and in most instances, their verdict will not be a mistaken one. Yet this appeal is neither final nor infallible, and is only to be estimated in proportion to the intelligence and piety of those consulted."
C.H. Spurgeon 1834-1892

Pastors do not and should never hold complete or final authority or allegiance over you, for that is for **Christ alone and Scripture alone!**

Christians are called, as a matter of obedience to Christ, to submit to the affirmation and oversight of local churches. People join churches by the consent of the church, and they resign by the consent of the church. For example, a person cannot walk up to a church and say, "I'm a member now." And just as a person cannot "member" himself, he cannot "un-member" himself.

Covenant 3a | I will serve the ministry of Grace by discovering my gifts and talents and using them at Grace (**1Peter 4:10**).

¹ Peter 4:10-11 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Re:

Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 14

God gave gifts of leaders to the church to equip the membership for service to edify the body towards unity and maturity. Re: **Ephesians 4:11-13**

Recognizing my inability in my own strength to keep this covenant, yet believing **that God will enable me to fulfill its terms**; I hereby attach my signature below, implying the ready assent of my heart to each of the terms of this covenant.

Spiritual Gifts:

Most Christians are quick to point out the personal benefits we receive with our salvation, but we are a little slower to focus on the responsibilities that come with it. The particular gifts of the Spirit are benefits to each believer, **but they come with great responsibility.**

There are two Greek words that are primarily used to describe the gifts of the Spirit. *Pneumatika* refers to their source, the Holy Spirit (*pneuma*) of God, and *charismata* refers to the fact that they are granted as an act of God's grace (*charis*). Since they are given by grace, we are reminded that **they are not based on our worthiness or personal abilities, but on God's sovereign choice.** Three key texts are **Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, and 1 Peter 4:10-11.**

One of the first things that becomes clear in these passages is the diversity of the gifts. When Paul listed the gifts in Romans 12, he identified different gifts than what he wrote in 1 Corinthians 12. When Peter spoke of them in 1 Peter 4:10-11, he didn't even bother specifying them. Among the things listed are prophecy, ministry, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, showing mercy, speaking in languages, and interpreting languages. **Whatever the specific use of each one was, they each fit together as the parts of the body work together to make a functional whole (Romans 12:5).**

There are varying opinions regarding the number of spiritual gifts, as well as what the gifts are. Romans 12 lists at least seven, and 1 Corinthians 12 lists nine. 1 Corinthians says God gives the word of wisdom and knowledge to some. This would seem to identify a particular ability to grasp spiritual truths in the Word of God and apply them to life. Prophecy is the ability to proclaim divine revelation to the church. As used in the New Testament, this gift seems more focused on determining God's will in particular circumstances than on foretelling future events. Discerning of spirits seem to connect with the gift of prophecy and refers to checking the authority and validity of the message to prevent false prophecy. Healing and miracles are often referred to as "sign gifts," since they were part of the validation for the ministry of Jesus and the apostles.

Re: Mark 16:17-18,

We can certainly learn of the gifts from these lists, but if we limit the gifts of the Spirit to those few that were enumerated, we miss the point. In all three passages, we are given a specific purpose of the gifts, and that is where we should direct our attention. In Romans 12:8, we are told to use the various gifts according to the character of God and His revealed will "...with simplicity...with diligence...with cheerfulness." In 1 Corinthians 12:25, we are told that these gifts were given "so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other." In 1 Peter 4:11, the purpose is "that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ." **The best way for us to understand spiritual gifts is to know how we can care for and serve one another to the glory of God.**

For further study on Spiritual Gifts visit gotquestions.org.
