

Lesson 10

Teacher's Manual

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

READ & MEDITATE ON: I Corinthians 12:1-12 MEMORIZE: I Peter 4:10-11

INTRODUCTION

The New Testament church was a church of deep faith and expectancy in Jesus Christ. Everywhere the "Acts of the Apostles Christian" went, he expected the Lord would go also, working miracles and wonders! It happened just that way! "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20). Jerusalem was where it all began. Soon after the Lord Jesus ascended, the streets and alleyways heard the reverberations of supernatural tongues coming from the upper room. Thousands came wondering, and before the day was through, three thousand had been added to the church (Acts the 2nd chapter). What a strength was in the early church! What a glory as we look back upon that beautiful era of church history! And how exciting it is to realize that the same power is in the church today!

Without proper emphasis on the Holy Spirit's place in the life of the believer and in the church proper, there will be no real spiritual life in the church. This lesson deals with highly important phases of the operation of the Holy Ghost in the individual life, in the local church, and in the whole sphere of the church body.

(Note to Teacher: It is suggested that you request the pastor to teach this lesson if possible--especially considering that a lesson has just been taught concerning him.)

I. SUPERNATURAL POWER

The Lord has organized into the spirituality of the church, a power operation. It is imperative for the church to have this miraculous presence of the moving of the Spirit of God. The reason for the

In his book, Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible, Myer Pearlman said, "The doctrine of the Holy Spirit, judged by the place it occupies in the scriptures, stands in the foremost rank of redemption truths. With the exception of II or III John, every book in the New Testament contains a reference to the Spirit's works. Yet, it is admittedly the neglected doctrine. Formalism and fear of fanaticism have produced a reaction against emphasis on the Spirit's work in personal experience. Naturally this has resulted in spiritual deadness for there can be no vital Christianity apart from the Spirit." The manifestation of the Holy Ghost must be resident in the church today if it is truly to be the church (Christ's body). For in the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, we exhibit the same power of God that worked in the fleshly body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It must be remembered there is a difference between the gifts and the gift of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are supernatural bestowments of the Holy Spirit for special visitations of the Spirit at particular times. The gift of the Spirit is the individual power given to believers for their own personal salvation and use at all times.

Paul enumerates the gifts of the Spirit in I Corinthians 12:8-10. These gifts are spiritual strengths for the purpose of building up the church of God through the instruction of believers and the winning of new converts. They can be classified as follows:

A. To Know Supernaturally

1. The word of wisdom
2. The word of knowledge
3. Discerning of spirits

B. To Act Supernaturally

1. Faith
2. Working of miracles
3. Gifts of healing

C. To Speak Supernaturally

1. Prophecy
2. Divers kinds of tongues
3. Interpretation of tongues

D. Gifts of Healing

This is God supernaturally ministering health to the sick, through prayer. All believers in general, and the ministry in particular, are empowered to pray for the sick (Mark 16:18 and James 5:14). It is not to be understood that the person manifesting this gift has the power to heal everyone. Allowance must be made for the sovereignty of God and the sick person's attitude and spiritual condition. Even Christ was limited in this miraculous ability by the unbelief of people (Matthew 13:58).

E. The Working of Miracles

There are various miracles God performs: materially, physically and spiritually. In the physical realm, there is a difference between a miracle and a healing. A miracle is instantaneous. Whereas in a healing, the natural course of restoration begins its operation. The miracle stops nature's normal course and causes the resulting healing to happen instantly. For examples of this gift in operation, see Acts 5:12-15 and Acts 19:11-12.

F. Prophecy

The exercise of the gift of prophecy is not just preaching. Preaching is generally the product of the study of existing revelation. Prophecy is the result of a spontaneous spiritual inspiration. It is not intended to supplant preaching or teaching, but to supplement it with an inspirational touch. Prophecy is a spontaneous supernatural message from God through the prophet. It is similar to interpretation of tongues, only it is without the tongues message preceding it (I Corinthians 14:5). Harold Horton says, "Prophecy in its simplest form is divinely inspired and anointed utterance. It is entirely supernatural. As speaking with tongues is supernatural utterance in an unknown tongue, so prophecy is supernatural utterance in a known tongue."

Prophecy and interpretation of tongues are to be judged. Anyone used in these gifts should be willing to let others judge whether or not it was from the Lord. The final authority in judging the spiritual happenings in the church would naturally be the pastor of the congregation. "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace" (I Corinthians 14:29-30).

In prophecy and interpretation of tongues, the Holy Spirit speaks through the individual, using the person's past knowledge and personality. There have been questions as to the incorrect use of language. Would the Lord anoint wrong grammar usage? Because God uses the individual as a human instrument, and not in a mechanical sense, he presents his message in the words and

3. Edification of the Church

(I Corinthians 14:5 and 12). This is the gift spoken of in I Corinthians 12:12. This would be a definite message to the church. There are times that God has used this type of tongues message to the church without an interpretation, but this must be used with extreme caution. (I Corinthians 14:27-28.)

I. Interpretation of Tongues

The gift of tongues is the power of speaking supernaturally in a language never learned by the speaker. The gift of interpretation of tongues makes that language intelligible to the listeners. This is also a supernatural operation, (I Corinthians 14:5, 27-28). As in speaking in tongues, the words expressed flow from the Spirit rather than through the intellect, from a divine inspiration. Also, as in other tongues, the interpretation is not conceived in the mind, but spontaneously through spiritual impression. I Corinthians 14:5 says, tongues plus interpretation is equal to prophecy (not preaching). Then why not just prophecy? Because tongues are a sign to the unbeliever (I Corinthians 14:22).

III. THE REGULATION OF VOCAL GIFTS

Lightning, which is so destructive in rending trees, burning houses, and destroying people, is of the same nature as the electricity that operates so smoothly through a power house. The difference lies in the control of the power. I Corinthians 14 gives the "controls" needed in regulating the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, in particular those which give power to speak supernaturally. The Corinthian Church was in desperate need of such teaching and the church today must not be in ignorance of such valuable knowledge.

A. Balance

This complete chapter rings over and over with this caution: Do not go to extremes on any one thing. The Corinthians were immoderately speaking in tongues. They were reminded that in a church service there should be an interpretation as well as prophecy so there would be intelligent knowledge of what was being said.

actions commonly called manifestations are actually people's "reactions" to the moving of the Spirit. We refer to actions such as shouting, weeping, raising of the hands, jumping, running and others. The practical value of this knowledge will enable us to honor and recognize the working of the Spirit without attributing to it everything that happens in a meeting. Critics, (ignoring the distinction referred to here), incorrectly conclude that because an individual's actions may not be elegant or graceful, that such a person is not under the inspiration of the Spirit. Such critics may be likened to a person seeing the antics of an electrically shocked person, exclaiming in disgust, "Electricity simply does not act that way!" The stirring of the Spirit is so moving at times that strong reactions are naturally going to take place.

The centuries have come and gone, but the gospel message is still the same. The miracle power of the early church is still in operation today. The Apostle Paul said, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). The church which Jesus Christ began on the Day of Pentecost in the First Century, has its extension into the latter half of the 20th Century. Pulsating and throbbing with the same expectancy of that earlier day, the church today is serving its generation. The gifts of the Spirit are still alive and operating with power in the church of the living God!

()

()

()

B. Edification

The purpose of the gifts is the building up of the church by encouraging believers and converting the unsaved. But, says Paul, if an outsider enters the church and hears nothing but uninterpreted speaking in tongues, he will conclude that the people are deranged (see verses 12 and 23).

C. Wisdom

"Brethren be not children in understanding..." (verse 20). In other words, use good common sense. Wisdom should always be used in the operation of spiritual gifts.

D. Self-control

Some might say they cannot be silent. They just have to speak out. But Paul said, "...the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (verse 32). That is, the one possessing supernatural utterance can control his utterance when such control is advisable. See also verse 28.

E. Orderliness

God works in a decent way. Nothing disorderly or disgraceful will happen if it is the actual moving of the Holy Spirit (verse 40). There are times it may seem to outsiders that confusion reigns. But those who know the moving of the Spirit recognize it as a "holy disorder." Everything fits in place if you realize what God is accomplishing. Modesty, self-respect and God-respect will reign supreme when things are done decently and in order.

F. Teachableness

Verses 36 and 37 imply that some Corinthians may have had a certain resentment toward the teaching of their leaders. But Paul infers throughout the chapter that there must be a pattern for all to follow and they must be willing to be taught. The reason Paul gave these guidelines for the regulation of vocal gifts is because there was power to be controlled (or there would be no need of such teaching).

One must differentiate between "manifestations" and "reactions." To illustrate: The light in an electric bulb is a "manifestation" of electricity. It is the nature of electricity to manifest itself as light. On the other hand, when a person touches a live wire and lets out a loud scream, this is a "reaction" to electricity. One was a manifestation, the other a reaction. This also can be applied to spiritual power. The gifts of the Spirit are scripturally described in I Corinthians 12:7 as a manifestation of the Spirit. But many

mentality of the prophet. Southern, Northern, Eastern, Western, city, or rural expressions and accents will commonly be heard in the operation of this gift.

I Corinthians 14:3 states, "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." These are the purposes of prophetic utterance.

G. Discerning of Spirits

God has ordained that supernatural power be in the church through the operation of the gifts. But because, (as the old saying goes), "The devil has a counterfeit to match God's reality," it was imperative for God to place in the church a means whereby it could be detected whether the particular manifestation was from God or not. This is where the discerning of spirits comes in. This gift may be checked by two other tests, the practical (Matthew 7:15-23), and the doctrinal (I John 4:1-10). The three kinds of spirits to be discerned are the divine, the satanic and the human. This gift enables one to discern a person's spiritual character. However, this gift must be distinguished from natural insight into human nature, and most certainly is not a fault-finding spirit.

H. Divers Kinds of Tongues

This gift exhibits itself in the supernatural speaking of a language never learned or understood by the speaker. Isaiah prophesied that a day would come when God's people would be used in this way. "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing..." (Isaiah 28:11-12). To understand the gift of tongues, one must recognize the three classifications of speaking in tongues:

1. The Initial Evidence

The original sign of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is other tongues (Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6).

2. Individual Edification

(I Corinthians 14:4,18; Romans 8:26-27). This manifestation of tongues is quite evident in many Holy Ghost filled saints' private devotion or personal worship in a church service (during times when the complete church is worshipping in praise or prayer). The Holy Ghost is making intercession for the child of God during these times.

A description of the purpose of the gifts is found in I Corinthians 12:7, "...The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." The gifts are given to edify the whole church, thus building up the body of Christ.

II. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

A. The Word of Wisdom

This gift, if interpreted in its New Testament use, is: skill in management (Acts 6:3), prudence in dealing with those outside the church (Colossians 4:5), discretion in imparting truth (Colossians 1:28), interpreting and applying scripture (Matthew 13:54) and knowledge of the requirements for godly and righteous living (James 1:5 and 3:13). The word of wisdom would signify supernatural ability to use wisdom in the above and related happenings.

B. The Word of Knowledge

The word of knowledge is supernatural knowledge of God as related in the Gospels and Epistles (II Corinthians 2:14, 10:5) and knowledge concerning divine and human duties (Colossians 2:3, Romans 2:20). The difference between wisdom and knowledge seems to lie in the idea that knowledge is insight into divine things, while wisdom is skill in administering this insight. Thayer's Lexicon says that where "knowledge" and "wisdom" are used together, the former seems to be knowledge regarded by itself. The latter, knowledge as exhibited in action.

C. Faith

The Amplified New Testament translates this as meaning "wonder working faith." Weymouth renders it "special faith." This is to distinguish this special supernatural faith from saving faith. Although saving faith is described as a gift in Ephesians 2:8, in this passage the word, "gift" is used as opposed to "works," while in I Corinthians 12:9 the word "faith" means a special endowment of the Spirit. In a description of the gift of faith, Donald Gee said, "It would be that it (faith) would seek to come upon certain of God's servants in times of special crises or opportunity in such mighty power that they are lifted right out of the realm of even natural and ordinary faith in God, and have a divine certainty put within their souls that triumphs over everything." See also Matthew 17:20 and Mark 11:22.

glorious happenings in the Book of Acts, is the employment of the gifts of the Spirit. Over and over one can see the early Christians yielding to the touch of God, as miraculous events thrust them on to victory. Here are a few examples:

Two of the apostles were coming to the temple at the prayer hour. A lame man was sitting by the Gate Beautiful begging, when suddenly, supernatural faith and miraculous power made the man walk and leap, praising God as he entered the temple. Wonder and amazement filled the gathering crowd (Acts 3).

The Apostles Peter and John were placed in jail overnight for preaching to the people. Standing before the chief priests and elders, supernatural wisdom came upon them in the answers they gave. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Persecution came again and all the apostles were put in prison. They were accused of filling Jerusalem with their doctrine. After a debate before the council, they were beaten and commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus further. Their faith in Jesus Christ was extremely high and their holy boldness was strong. "...They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:41-42).

A preacher prayed forgiveness for those stoning him to death (Acts 7:60). Angels stood by the people of God (Acts 5:2,20; 12:7,10; 27:23-24). A strong persecutor was stricken by the hand of God and became a great apostle (Acts 9). An angel let Peter out of prison (Acts 12:7,10). People of all religious backgrounds were baptized in Jesus Name and filled with the Holy Ghost; Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 2), Samaritans in Samaria (Acts 8), Gentiles at Cornelius' house (Acts 10), and John the Baptist's followers in Ephesus (Acts 19).

Many supernatural events attended the preaching of the First Century people of God. "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people...And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women. Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one" (Acts 5:12, 14,16). In order to be truly effective as a church, it is vital that we too, have an understanding of the gifts of the Spirit and how they are to operate among us.