



Holy Spirit – The Gifts!

Much has been said about the gifts of the Holy Spirit over recent years. Some have declared that unless you have particular gifts you may not be a proper Christian. Others have completely rejected the gifts saying that they died out in the first century church. Yet scripture and Church history point to a continuation of the Gifts of the Spirit and actively challenge us to desire the Gifts. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 v 1 says this “Pursue love and desire Spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” Greek word for desire here is zeloo which means be zealous for – to burn with desire – to pursue ardently – to desire eagerly or intensely (the Spiritual gifts!)

Discuss - (In group / or small groups)

Q1) Have you seen any of the Spiritual gifts at work – how did it make you feel?

Q2) What do you think the Gifts of the Holy Spirit might be for?

Q3) Why do you think there is so much controversy over the gifts in churches today?

Fact 1 - Gifts of the Holy Spirit are not owned by the individual and are NOT any sign of Spiritual maturity.!

Scripture makes it absolutely clear that we must not be impressed with the individual who moves in the gifts of the Spirit. We must not presume that because God uses them on that occasion that it means that they are mature in faith. Jesus Himself made it clear that the gifts are **not even** a sign of salvation let alone maturity, so we need to be careful how we discern someone’s maturity in Christ. Also it has to be said that the gifts of the Spirit are given for the moment when God wants to do something. He is the one that releases the grace, power, authority, wisdom of a gift, in the moment. So in no sense do we own a gift or use it as we want– it is to be used and manifested under the direction of God. Matthew 7 v 21 – 23 _____

Fact 2 - A gift of the Holy Spirit is a divine empowerment for a specific task or purpose in line with His Will

When we begin to look at Scripture closely we see that the gifts are given to glorify Jesus and continue His ministry here on earth today. As we encounter different situations where God wants to work, He releases divine grace into that situation by the Holy Spirit thus releasing the spiritual dimension of what is needed. The root word for gift or the spirit is “*Charisma*” this is where we get “*Charismata*” from which in English we get Charismatic... The root word “*Charisma*” actual tells us what the gifts are all about for it’s meaning is “Divine Grace.” A gift of the Spirit is an action of divine grace where God gives us something to be used in line with His will. This is all about God’s empowerment for mission. John 10 v 24 – 32 _____

Fact 3 – The gifts are given to empower our works of service. .

One of the wonderful truths of being a Christian is that God has established a plan and a calling for your life. This calling is a manifestation of God’s direct will for your life. Within the Church, God has given each person a different calling and responsibility to do for Him and others. We have had this entrusted into our hands and if we do not do it, it will not get done. To empower us for this function / this work of service, God distributes His gifts as a provision to achieve that which He has called us to. So as a summary it would be fair to say, “A spiritual gift is spiritual empowerment, by His grace, to do His will, in a particular area of work or service in His church, for His glory. 1 Corinthians 12 _____

Fact 4 – The gifts should be used in the context of love and humble service.

We see in the church in Corinth both some exciting aspects of the gifts of the Spirit and some misuses. One of the issues that Paul seems to want to deal with is a group of Christians in the church who have seemingly become proud over the gifts God has given them and begun to look down and judge those who do not have a similar experience. It is no coincidence that sandwiched between two chapters on gifts we have the filling of 1 Corinthians 13 which is all about love being at the centre of a Christian’s life and ministry. God does not just call us to powerful service in His name, but loving, humble service in His name. The gifts are there to unite and encourage us in regard to the activity and blessing of God not to be used as some measuring stick of someone's acceptance in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 13 _____

Fact 5 – Fan the gift of God in your life, into flames.

Whatever we may feel about the gifts, God is still releasing the gifts on His church today that they may share in the ministry of Jesus and truly bring glory to God. We are challenged by Scripture not only to desire Spiritual Gifts but to fan those gifts into flame that as we burn brightly not only with passion for Jesus, not only with the brightness of Holy lives, but also with power filled ministries we might bear much fruit for Jesus, showing ourselves to be HIS disciples. 2 Timothy 1 v 6 – 7 _____

