

Lesson 9

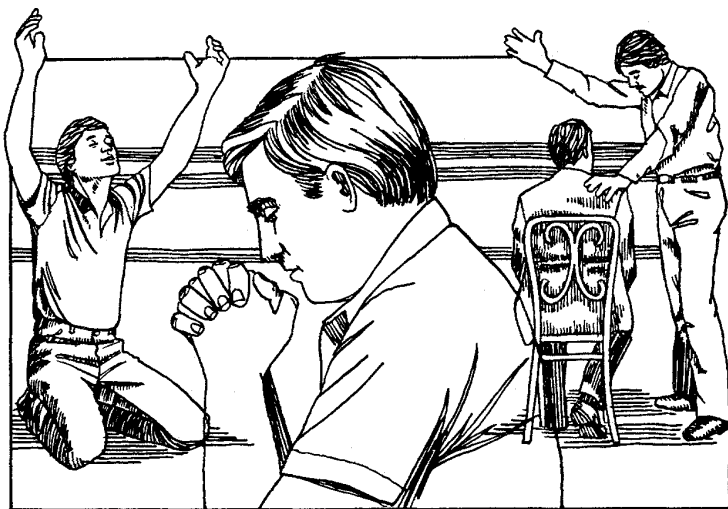
Spiritual Gifts

Do you remember that when Jesus promised His disciples He would send the Holy Spirit to abide in them, He told them, “He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you” (John 16:14)? In other words, the Holy Spirit would reveal Christ to the world.

One of the ways He does this is to show the world what God can *do*. This He does by the *gifts* of the Spirit. You remember in an earlier lesson we learned that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have the attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. All of these attributes are revealed in the manifestations of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. Supernatural manifestations of the Spirit testify that God is alive and concerned about the needs of people. The gifts of the Spirit were given to the church to *build up the body of Christ*.

You notice that we are using the terms *gifts* and *manifestations* interchangeably. They refer to the same activities of the Holy Spirit. He gives His supernatural gifts as He chooses, and they are manifested through the persons who receive them. The purpose should *always* be to build up the body of believers and to glorify Christ.

In this lesson we will briefly study the gifts of the Spirit and ways they reveal the power of Jesus to His church and, through it, to the world.



lesson outline

Biblical References

Utterance Gifts

Power Gifts

Revelation Gifts

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- List the nine gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 and write a brief definition of each.
- State the purpose for the gifts of the Spirit.
- Explain who may receive a gift of the Spirit.
- Appreciate the need for the operation of the gifts of the Spirit in the church today and have a desire to receive the gifts.

learning activities

1. Study the lesson in the same manner as you have studied previous lessons. Be sure to read all Scriptures given, and answer all study questions carefully.
2. As background for this lesson, read 1 Corinthians 12 and 14; and Romans 12.
3. Look up the meanings of any key words you do not know.
4. Take the self-test and check your answers.

key words

administrator	edification	reception
discerning	edified	spectacular
discernment	interpretation	supernatural
distinguish	prophecy	

lesson development

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Objective 1. *List and compare the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in various Scripture passages.*

A study of the book of Acts and the Epistles reveals very clearly that the early church regularly experienced supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit. These manifestations were *gifts* to the church corporately for the purpose of edifying the church and bringing glory to Jesus. However, the gifts were manifested by the Holy Spirit through individual believers who yielded themselves completely to the Spirit and allowed Him to work through them.

There are several references in Scripture to spiritual gifts. The most complete discussion is found in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. Here the apostle Paul is giving instruction to the church in Corinth concerning the proper use of the gifts. Nine gifts are mentioned in verses 4 through 11 of 1 Corinthians 12:

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.
There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

The second reference is in verse 28, where eight gifts are mentioned. Some of these have been labeled as *ministry gifts* by Bible scholars:

And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

It is worth noting that the emphasis in the first list is upon the *gifts*, and in the second list it is upon the *people* who have received the gifts.

1 Three of the gifts in the second list are not mentioned in the first list. What are they?

.....
.....

Paul continues in verses 29-30 with an explanation of verse 28:

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

Two other references to spiritual gifts should be mentioned. The first is Romans 12:6-8, which we studied briefly in Lesson 8, when we considered the aspect of Christian service as an act of worship.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

A fourth reference is given in Ephesians 4:11-13, and includes an explanation of the purpose for the gifts in the church:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Three purposes of the gifts are mentioned here:

- 1. Building up of the body of Christ
- 2. Unity in the faith and knowledge of Jesus
- 3. Christian maturity—Christlikeness

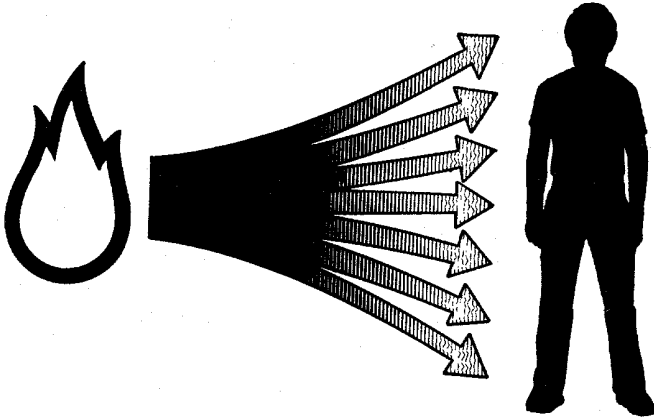
2 In your notebook, make a list of each gift mentioned in these four passages of Scripture, using a separate column for each passage. Record each gift opposite its listing in a previous passage. Add gifts as they appear in later passages. An example is given:

1 Cor. 12:7-11	1 Cor. 12:28-30	Romans 12:6-8	Eph. 4:11
gifts of healing	gifts of healing	not mentioned	not mentioned



Stanley Horton suggests that if these lists are all combined, it is possible to have a total of 18 to 20 gifts (Horton, 1976, p. 210). It is clear that some of them overlap, and some Bible scholars believe that they could be divided into ministry gifts and spiritual gifts. For the purpose of our study, we will use the list of nine spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. We have divided them into three groups, as follows:

1. Utterance gifts: Tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy
2. Power gifts: Faith, healings, miracles
3. Revelation gifts: Discerning of spirits, the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom



MANY GIFTS BUT ONE SPIRIT

It has been suggested that the utterance gifts emphasize the Holy Spirit's attribute of omnipresence; the power gifts reveal His omnipotence; and the revelation gifts manifest His omniscience. The important thing to remember is that *all* of the spiritual gifts are *manifestations* of the Spirit as He works through the Spirit-filled believer in ministry to the church.

UTTERANCE GIFTS

Objective 2. *Identify true statements concerning the utterance gifts.*

Reception Utterances

The term *utterance* refers to that which is spoken aloud, a vocal expression. In this context it describes speaking in

different kinds of tongues as the Spirit gives *utterance* or *enablement*. The first physical evidence that one has been baptized in the Holy Spirit can be called the *reception utterance*. It is considered to be the first physical sign that one has received the gift of the Holy Spirit which Jesus promised. The receiving one is conscious of the coming of the Spirit, for he experiences fullness of joy, praise, power, and holy boldness, among other things, as he worships and glorifies God. When the Spirit came at the new birth, He made us aware of our sonship (Romans 8:5-16). He also enabled us to deal with our old self (Ephesians 4:17-32). When He comes later in baptismal fullness, He gives *power to witness* in a dramatic new way. This enduement at Pentecost came to disciples who were already Christ's; this baptism was thus a subsequent experience in the Spirit (compare Acts 8:14-17; 19:1-7).

On the Day of Pentecost the multitude was amazed by the tongue-speaking phenomenon. God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven *heard the sound* and gathered. They were amazed to hear the wonderful works of God proclaimed in their own languages by Galileans. Since this phenomenon was inexplicable, the apostle Peter gave a Bible-based explanation. The result was a mighty spiritual response. Tongues, in this case, were a supernaturally given sign to unbelievers that the phenomenon they observed was divinely given (1 Corinthians 14:22).

3 Speaking in tongues is a sign to *others* that a person has received the gift of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10 the account of the apostle Peter's first ministry to Gentiles is recorded. Read verses 44-46. At what point did Peter and the other believers realize that these Gentiles had received the gift of the Holy Spirit? (Choose one answer.)

- a) When they were baptized in water
- b) When they prayed the prayer of repentance
- c) When they began to speak in tongues and praise God
- d) When they responded favorably to the ministry of the Word

In most cases, the tongue that is spoken is not understood by the hearers and is never understood by the speaker. There does not need to be an interpretation, because the purpose of the tongues in the reception utterance is to extol the Giver of the gift. While the unknown tongue is also seen as validation of the experience, the transformation of the believer's witness appears to have impressed the nonbelieving crowd more than anything else (Acts 4:13).

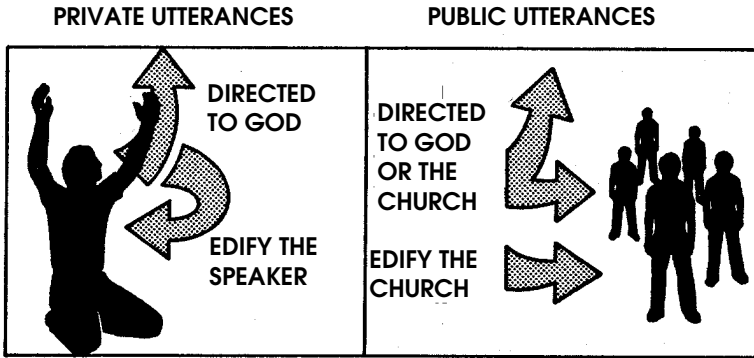
Private Utterances

What the Bible says about speaking in different kinds of tongues may be confusing unless you understand the difference between the purpose of public and private utterances of different tongues. The *tongues* manifestation of 1 Corinthians 12:10 is a *public* utterance; it is for the common good (see v. 7). Since this gift is for the edification of the church, it must always be interpreted if the hearers are to be edified.

Private utterances, on the other hand, are for the personal edification of the believer. When you pray or sing in the Spirit in private worship, there is no need for interpretation—it is the act of speaking in tongues itself that edifies the believer (1 Corinthians 14:2, 4). With the help of the Holy Spirit you are able to pray in a way that would otherwise be impossible, because you are uttering mysteries in the Spirit that are directed solely toward God.

One of the greatest blessings of private utterances is the awareness of God's presence when you are ministering to the Lord in the Spirit. You experience the fulfillment of Jesus' promise, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18).

Private utterances are for you alone, as you worship God. They are always directed to God. They may be exercised as often as you allow the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself through you. Paul was apparently speaking of tongues in private worship when he said, "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you" (1 Corinthians 14:18), for in verse 19 he contrasts his behavior in the church.



- 4 (Choose one answer.) An important difference between private utterances and public utterances in tongues is that
- public utterances edify the church, and private utterances are not intended to edify anyone.
 - public utterances must be interpreted, while private utterances need no interpretation.
 - anyone can have the gift of private utterance, while public utterances are given only to leaders in the church.

Public Utterances

There are three manifestations of the Spirit that are considered public utterances: tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy.

- Tongues* spoken in public are always unknown to the speaker, and usually unknown to the hearers. *There must always be an interpretation* (explanation of what was spoken).
- The *interpretation* is prompted by the Holy Spirit and is given by the interpreter in his own language. The interpreter does not know the language of the utterance in tongues. The interpreter may be the person who gave the utterance in tongues, or it may be someone else.
- Prophecy* is a Spirit-prompted public utterance in a language that is known by the hearers.

The purpose of tongues and interpretation is the edification of the church rather than just the personal edification of the

speaker. Prophecy, likewise, has as its goal the edification of the church and is the preferred manifestation when strangers are present or when there is no interpreter.

5 Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-5. Why is prophecy greater than tongues unless the tongues are interpreted?

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.....

The objective of prophecy and tongues with interpretation is the same. Through the exercise of these gifts the church can be encouraged, admonished, and inspired as the Holy Spirit speaks to the needs that are apparent to Him. (Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-15). Thus, the church is edified. On occasion, the church is directed specifically to implement an earlier commission to win the lost (compare Acts 1:8 with 13:1-3). At other times, He apparently communicates His purpose by forbidding or restraining His servants from certain activities (Acts 16:6-10). Another intent of prophecy is seen clearly in Acts 21:10-11, where the Holy Spirit showed Paul things “to come” (John 16:13). The evidence from other Scripture indicates that the apostle Paul received direct communication from the Lord (Acts 23:11) and indirect communication through the medium of an angel (Acts 27:23-24). All of these reveal the Lord’s concern for the spiritual life, growth, and development of His church.

There are no recorded examples of tongues and interpretation in the New Testament, but there are several prayers that could be called prophetic utterances (see Luke 1:47-55, 68-79; and 2:29-32). Nevertheless, based on the apostle’s extensive treatment of the subject in 1 Corinthians 14, we can conclude that the utterance gifts were abundantly evident in Corinth.

Thus, we can conclude that either prophecies or tongues with *interpretation* are directed by the Spirit toward the church for its edification. Perhaps you have heard a Spirit-filled preacher break forth in prophetic utterance while he was preaching, and you have experienced a special blessing as the church was edified in this way.

The operation of these gifts is to be encouraged, for they bring the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit into a gathering of believers. However, it is important that the human vessel be yielded to the Holy Spirit so that he will not attract attention to himself, but to God.

The apostle Paul wrote chapter 14 to the Corinthians because he recognized that these supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit could be abused by believers. If tongues and interpretation or prophecy detract in any way from the moving of the Spirit among believers, or if they are not in accord with Scripture, you will know that they are a work of the flesh, and not of the Spirit.

For a more complete discussion of abuses of spiritual gifts, I recommend that you read Donald Gee's book, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts*.

Paul exhorts us to desire spiritual gifts: "But eagerly desire the greater gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31). "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy" (1 Corinthians 14:1).

- 6** Place a circle around the letter preceding each TRUE statement concerning the utterance gifts.
- a** The term *reception utterance* refers to tongues with interpretation.
 - b** Tongues spoken in private are always directed to God.
 - c** The first physical sign that a person has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit is that he begins to speak in an unknown tongue.
 - d** The baptism in the Holy Spirit brings a blessed sense of the Holy Spirit's presence to the one who receives, and also great joy and holy boldness.
 - e** The most important public utterance is speaking in tongues.
 - f** Tongues with interpretation is of greater importance than prophecy.
 - g** Prophecy is considered one of the greatest gifts by the apostle Paul.
 - h** The purpose of public utterances is the edification of the church.
 - i** When a person speaks in tongues, he never understands the words he is speaking.

- j** The intent of the operation of utterance gifts is to glorify God and strengthen believers; therefore, these gifts should always agree with Scripture.
- k** A prophetic utterance may bring an up-to-date word from God that is not supported by Scripture.

POWER GIFTS

The Bible is a book of action. It records the acts of God among men and women. In previous lessons we have learned that the Holy Spirit is the agent who carries out the will of the Father. We have seen the mighty power of the Holy Spirit moving in creation. Then we saw Him moving in miracle-working power in the lives of chosen people in the Old Testament. Next, we saw Him anointing Jesus to do mighty deeds as He ministered among men.

When Jesus left the earth, He said that even greater things would be done by the disciples when the Holy Spirit came to take His place as man's helper (John 14:12). The book of Acts is a record of the Holy Spirit in action in miracle-working power, as Jesus promised.

The Holy Spirit is still moving in the earth today in miracle-working power. He works in the lives of believers who earnestly desire His gifts of power. The purpose of these gifts is to edify the church and glorify God. They are the gifts of *faith*, *healing*, and *miracles*.

Faith

Objective 3. *Distinguish between the kinds of faith a person can have.*

The gift of faith which the Holy Spirit gives is a *special* faith, and it must not be confused with ordinary human faith, which you demonstrate whenever you sit in a chair and expect it to hold you. Neither is it the saving faith which God imparts to you when you accept Jesus as your Savior, nor is it the *fruit* of faith which grows out of a living relationship with the Holy Spirit, an abiding trust that God will guide you in your daily Christian walk. (We will study the *fruit* of the Spirit in our next lesson.)

Rather, the gift of faith is a special impartation from the Holy Spirit of a faith that can move mountains—an unshakeable confidence that God will provide whatever is needed at the very moment of need!

It is the faith of the three Hebrew men when they were thrown into the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:16-18); of Daniel when he was cast into the lion's den (Daniel 6:21-22); of the apostle Peter, sleeping calmly the night before his head was to be cut off (Acts 12:6).

It is the faith that made it possible for Peter to say to the lame man, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus . . . walk" (Acts 3:6). And he walked! In a similar incident we gather additional insight into the nature of these healings. Paul, at Lystra, *perceived* (because of his sensitivity to the Holy Spirit) that the cripple had faith to be healed. Exercising the gift of faith, he called out, "Stand up on your feet!" (Acts 14:8-10). It is this same sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and faith that gave a pentecostal evangelist, Smith Wigglesworth, courage in the early days of this century to walk into a hospital room, lift a dying woman from her bed, stand her up against the wall, and pray in the name of Jesus that she be healed! And she was!

"RISE AND BE HEALED!"



Although the gift of faith is the least spectacular of the gifts of power, it is essential to the gifts of healing and miracles. This special faith is given to certain individuals chosen by the Holy Spirit as He wills, as are all the gifts of the Spirit. Perhaps you have experienced a gift of faith, or have witnessed it in another believer.

7 Give some examples from your own experience of the gift of faith in action.

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8 Match the kind of faith (right) with the description of each (left). Place the number of your choice in each blank space.

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|--------|---|-------------------|
| a | Trust that God will guide you in your daily Christian walk | 1) Saving faith |
| b | Belief that if you get on a bicycle and start pedaling, the bicycle will hold you up and get you where you want to go | 2) Gift of faith |
| c | Belief that when you confess your sins and accept Christ, He will save you from eternal judgment | 3) Fruit of faith |
| d | A special confidence from the Holy Spirit that whatever you ask in the name of Jesus, He will do | 4) Ordinary faith |

Gifts of Healing

Objective 4. *Recognize examples which give the purpose of healings in the book of Acts, based on given Scriptures.*

Did you notice in verses 9 and 30 in 1 Corinthians 12 that the plural *gifts* of healing is listed? I think the Holy Spirit wants everyone to know that there are sufficient gifts to provide healing for every kind of sickness.

In the early church, these gifts appeared to be more for the purpose of evangelism than for the body of Christ. Healings

took place so that the name of Christ might be glorified. (See Acts 3:1-13.) The provision for those in the church as given in James 5:14-15 is that a sick member

“should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.”

James exhorts Christians to confess their sins to each other and pray for each other so that they can be healed. Evidently healing for the Christian involves more than just having a gifted evangelist lay hands upon him. There are spiritual needs that should be met by interaction in the body of believers.

9 Read Acts 3:1-13. How did the people apparently react to this healing?

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10 What purpose for the healing was given by Peter?

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11 Read Acts 14:8-18. Then circle the letters preceding TRUE statements regarding the healing of the lame man.

- a** This Scripture implies that both the lame man and the apostle Paul had faith for the healing.
- b** The people immediately recognized that the healing had come from God.
- c** Paul and Barnabas refused to accept any personal credit for this healing.
- d** The purpose for the healing was obviously to give the apostles an opportunity to glorify Christ and tell the good news of the gospel.
- e** After they explained this, the people stopped worshipping them.

The Spirit-filled church can expect to see gifts of healing from the Holy Spirit, but this does not imply that anyone is given absolute power to deliver from all diseases. The Holy Spirit gives the gifts as *He* wills, and we are exhorted to desire

His gifts. The purpose will always be to glorify Christ, and not man. The important thing is to be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. If He moves you to exercise a spiritual gift, you should obey Him completely.

Working of Miracles

Objective 5. *Identify miraculous works and determine which is of greatest benefit.*

A miracle has been defined as *God interrupting the ordinary course of nature*. This definition acknowledges that nature operates by a definite set of rules, but that God controls nature and sometimes changes the rules temporarily to work His own purposes.

The working of miracles is probably the most spectacular of all the gifts of the Spirit. It was especially evident in the Old Testament when the Holy Spirit came upon God's chosen ones and they did humanly impossible things.

12 Find these Scriptures. State what miracle took place in each instance and the person God used. Write the answers in your notebook.

- a) Exodus 14:21
- b) Exodus 17:6-7
- c) Joshua 10:12
- d) Judges 15:14-15
- e) 1 Kings 18:38
- f) 2 Kings 4:35

Jesus' earthly ministry was also filled with miracles. They began when He changed water into wine at a wedding (John 2:9) and ended with His bodily ascension into heaven (Acts 1:9). During His ministry Jesus walked on water, fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish, raised the dead, healed the sick, cast out demons, and did many other miraculous works. The Gospels are filled with His miracles.

Jesus promised that when He went to the Father and sent the Holy Spirit, His disciples could expect the same and even greater miracles to accompany the preaching of the Word. Miracles are not

seen as an end in themselves; rather, they attest the validity of the gospel's claims and point to the sovereignty and power of God.

The book of Acts records many miracles of the disciples. In fact, the New Testament record indicates the truth of Jesus' words, "And these signs will accompany those who believe" (Mark 16:17). While many of these miraculous signs and wonders are lumped together in Acts (for example see 5:12-16), careful study reveals a heightened level of miraculous activity. The writer to the Hebrews indicates that the gospel, in the initial years of proclamation, was attended by signs, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 2:4). These miracles included the raising of the dead (Acts 9:40; 20:10), miraculous release from prison (5:19; 12:6-10), miraculous transport (8:30), prediction of famine (11:28-29), opposition stilled (12:23), judgment of blindness brought on opposition (13:9-12), cripples healed (3:6-10; 14:8-10), demons exorcised (16:16-18), and prison bonds broken (16:25-28). It is thrilling to know that many miracles still attend the proclamation of the gospel today, for God's miracle-working power is still available to us today.

13 Miracles, which are very much in evidence in the New Testament, are intended primarily to (according to our discussion)

- a) meet the needs of worthy individuals.
- b) demonstrate the power of evangelists, pastors, and teachers to control the lives of these people.
- c) verify the claims of the gospel as God sovereignly chooses.
- d) satisfy the curiosity of those who seek signs of the supernatural in a church or group.

REVELATION GIFTS

Objective 6. *Match each revelation gift with its definition and with an example.*

The gifts of the Spirit in this group offer special divine insight when it is needed by a Spirit-filled believer. God's knowledge is unlimited, and His understanding of every situation you face is perfect. By the revelation gifts He provides supernatural help when human understanding is inadequate.

We should emphasize that these gifts do not take the place of either natural or spiritual training. Spirit-filled believers need education, and they must faithfully study the Word of God, but there are times when a special revelation of the mind of God is needed. These bits of divine insight are provided by the spiritual gifts called *discerning of spirits*, the *word of knowledge*, and the *word of wisdom*.

Discerning of Spirits

Objective 7. *Identify true statements concerning spirit activity and discerning of spirits.*

The word *discerning* comes from a Greek word meaning “a judging through.” The Bible translation used for these lessons calls it “the ability to distinguish between spirits” (1 Corinthians 12:10).

Most of us are not aware of the great amount of spirit activity going on around us at all times. The gift of discerning or distinguishing between spirits allows a brief glimpse into this unseen realm and gives the Spirit-filled believer power to judge which spirit is being used. There are three areas of spirit activity that we need to identify:

1. *The Spirit of God.* God is Spirit, and we need to recognize when He is moving so that we can cooperate with Him. He moves through Spirit-filled believers who are yielded to Him, and sometimes He uses His angels, which are good spirits, to carry out His bidding.
2. *Demon spirits.* The book of Revelation speaks of demon spirits performing miracles in the last days (Revelation 16:14). There is much satanic activity today in the area of the occult and demon worship. The Spirit-filled Christian must be able to recognize the activities of demon spirits, or he might be deceived.
3. *The human spirit.* It is also possible that at times believers are led by their own spirit rather than the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit gives the ability to distinguish between spirits so that we can recognize whether a manifestation has come from Him, or is a demon spirit, or is of the flesh.

There are several examples of distinguishing between spirits in the New Testament. Jesus knew in advance that Judas would betray Him (John 13:21, 26). He recognized the trickery of Satan during His time of temptation (Luke 4:1-12), and He knew when Satan was the cause of sickness (Luke 4:33-35; John 5:14). Peter recognized that Simon was ruled by an evil spirit (Acts 8:18-23).

The gift of distinguishing between spirits will prevent us from being helpless victims of spiritual deception. This gift can operate only in and through a Spirit-filled believer (1 Corinthians 2:12-15). It is not to be confused with a critical spirit in the natural, which is of the flesh and not of the Spirit.

We gather very helpful insights into the intrusion of error in the early church from the First Epistle of John. Many antichrists, John says, went out from us (2:18-19). They denied both God and His Son (v. 22). Coming to the various bodies of believers these ungodly troublemakers tried to lead believers astray, undoubtedly feigning to give prophetic messages from God to the believers (v. 26, compare Revelation 2:14-16, 20-23; 3:9). John urges believers to test the spirits (4:1) to distinguish between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood (4:6). He gives certain criteria for judging: 1) Do these people live uprightly, keep the law, and consciously try to avoid sinning? (3:4-10); 2) Do they love their brethren? (3:10); 3) Do they deny Christ's incarnation? (2:22 and 4:2); 4) Do they maintain the sound doctrine proclaimed by the apostles? (2:18-19); 5) Do they share with the needs of their brethren? (3:16-20); 6) Do they listen to the apostles' message? (4:6); 7) Do they obediently follow the Lord's commands? (5:1-3). The Lord of the church has given us criteria by which we can judge spiritual utterances and teaching. It is up to us to be sensitive to the Spirit within as we seek to distinguish between what is good and profitable and what is falsehood.

14 Which of these are TRUE statements concerning spirit activity and distinguishing between spirits?

- a** Spiritual activity can come only from the Holy Spirit.
- b** Evil spirits are sometimes able to deceive people and lead them from the truth.

- c** The gift of distinguishing between spirits makes it possible for a Spirit-filled believer to distinguish between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.
- d** The fleshly human spirit can sometimes copy manifestations of the Spirit.
- e** Spirit-filled believers must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and familiar with the criteria for distinguishing between spirits in order to avoid being deceived.
- f** Anyone can discern what spirit is being manifested.

The Word of Knowledge

Objective 8. *Recognize Scripture examples of the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom.*

We have already learned that the Holy Spirit knows the mind of God. He can reveal God's knowledge to you any time it is needed. It might be a prediction of the future, it might be something that is happening right now in another place that you need to know, or it might be something from the past that you need to recall. You will not be given the gift of knowledge so you will know all things, but only a word of knowledge at the time it is needed.

Have you ever felt the need to stop what you are doing and pray for another person who may be far away from you? Have you learned later that at the moment you prayed, the person was going through a crisis of some kind and needed your prayers? That is an example of the word of knowledge which the Holy Spirit gives to the Spirit-filled believer who is open to His leading.

An example of the gift of knowledge in the Old Testament is found in 2 Kings 6:9-10. The prophet Elisha, who was often called "the man of God," warned the king of Israel not to pass by a certain place because he knew the enemy would be there. Verse 10 says, "Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places."

The Word of Wisdom

The Holy Spirit gives the word of wisdom to let you know what to do in a time of crisis. This is not merely human wisdom

based on past experience, but a special wisdom given to meet a special need. It may or may not include the word of knowledge.

Here again, the gift is only a *word* of wisdom. This means that you receive wisdom from the Holy Spirit for a given situation. The word of wisdom is often needful for those in positions of church leadership. A word from the Holy Spirit can bring unity in board meetings and church business sessions. If you are called up before the councils of the world for judgment because of your faith in Christ, it is encouraging to know that the Holy Spirit will be with you and give you the wisdom that is necessary.

Acts 15 records the account of the council at Jerusalem, where the apostles and elders met to consider the question of whether the Gentile believers must be circumcised according to Jewish law. The gift of the word of wisdom is revealed in the letter which the church leaders sent to the Gentile believers, in which they stated: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: . . ." (Acts 15:28).

15 Write a 1) in front of those that indicate a *word of knowledge* and a 2) in front of those that indicate a *word of wisdom*.

- **a** John 4:7-17—Jesus told a woman about her past life.
- **b** Acts 5:27-29—Peter gave a solution to a problem.
- **c** Acts 5:3—Peter knew that Ananias and Sapphira had lied about their possessions.
- **d** Acts 10:19—The Holy Spirit gave Peter some information that he had no other way of knowing.
- **e** Acts 28:26—The Holy Spirit gave a message to Isaiah concerning how the Jews would respond to the gospel.

16 State which revelation gift is described in each of the following exercises:

- a** A special word that lets you know what to do in a time of crisis
- b** The gift of being able to know whether a spiritual manifestation is of God, of an evil spirit, or of a human spirit.....

c A revelation from the Holy Spirit of something you need to know at a specific moment.

.....

d The gift which caused Paul to recognize that there was an evil spirit in a slave girl (Acts 16:16-18).

.....

For a more complete discussion of spiritual gifts and their proper use in the church, I encourage you to study the ICI course in this series entitled *Spiritual Gifts* by Robert L. Brandt. Remember that the purpose for all of the gifts of the Spirit is to edify, or build up, the church—the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit gives the gifts as *He* wills, so that the church will experience spiritual maturity and be strong.

self-test

1 MATCHING. Match the nine gifts from 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (right) with the definition of each (left). Place the number of your choice in each blank space.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| a Gift which reveals whether a manifestation is from the Holy Spirit or another spirit | 1) Tongues |
| b Gift of a special confidence that God will do whatever you ask | 2) Interpretation of tongues |
| c Gift that gives you specific insight into an immediate need and the ability to recall something from the past when you need to know it | 3) Prophecy |
| d Gift of unknown languages | 4) Faith |
| e Gift that interrupts the course of nature | 5) Healing |
| f Gift which provides, in the language of the hearers, an explanation of a message in tongues | 6) Miracles |
| g Gift which brings restoration from disease | 7) Discerning of spirits |
| h Gift of a message from God in the language of the hearers | 8) Word of knowledge |
| i Gift that reveals what to do in a time of crisis | 9) Word of wisdom |

SHORT ANSWER. Answer the following questions as briefly as possible.

2 Name the three classifications of gifts discussed in this lesson.

.....

3 State two important purposes of the gifts of the Spirit.

.....

4 Who may receive gifts of the Spirit?

.....

answers to study questions

9 Apparently they thought Peter and John were able to heal because of their own power or godliness.

1 Apostles, teachers, administrators. (Possibly also *those able to help others.*)

10 To glorify Jesus.

2

1 Cor. 12:7-11	1 Cor. 12:28-30	Romans 12:6-8	Eph. 4:11
wisdom			
knowledge			
faith			
gifts of healing	gifts of healing	not mentioned	not mentioned
miraculous powers	workers of miracles		
prophecy	prophets	prophesying	prophets
distinguishing spirits			
speaking in tongues	speaking in tongues		
interpretation of tongues	interpretation of tongues		
	apostles		apostles
	teachers	teaching	teachers
	helpers	encouraging serving	
	administrators	leadership	pastors
		giving	
		showing mercy	
			evangelists

11 a True.

b False.

c True.

d True.

e False.

3 c) When they began to speak in tongues and praise God.

- 12** a) The sea was divided—Moses.
 b) Water came from the rock—Moses.
 c) The sun and moon stood still—Joshua.
 d) 1000 Philistines were killed—Samson.
 e) The sacrifice was consumed by fire—Elijah.
 f) Child raised to life—Elisha.
- 4** b) public utterances must be interpreted, while private utterances need no interpretation.
- 13** c) Verify the claims of the gospel as God sovereignly chooses.
- 5** Tongues alone do not edify anyone except the speaker. Prophecy, and tongues with interpretation, edify the whole church. (Read all of chapter 14 for a fuller understanding of this truth.)
- 14** a) False.
 b) True.
 c) True.
 d) True.
 e) True.
 f) False.
- 6** a) False.
 b) True.
 c) True.
 d) True.
 e) False.
 f) False.
 g) True.
 h) True.
 i) True.
 j) True.
 k) False.
- 15** a) 1) Word of knowledge.
 b) 2) Word of wisdom.
 c) 1) Word of knowledge.
 d) 1) Word of knowledge.
 e) 2) Word of wisdom.

7 Your answer.

- 16 a** Word of wisdom.
b Distinguishing between spirits.
c Word of knowledge.
d Distinguishing between spirits.
- 8 a** 3) Fruit of faith.
b 4) Ordinary faith.
c 1) Saving faith.
d 2) Gift of faith.