



Pentecost 2020

**“GROWING
MY GIFTS OF
THE HOLY
SPIRIT”**

WEEK - 1 Answers



holy Spirit, come and shine
On our souls with beams divine
Issuing from your radiance bright.
Come, O Father of the poor,
Ever bounteous of your store,
Come, our hearts unfailing light.



1. WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL GIFT?

A spiritual gift is a significant ability given to each believer by the Holy Spirit, who thus equips and moves members of the church to serve in special ways for Christ and his kingdom.

What does this mean?

- “a significant ability”: an ability in a certain area of service which exceeds the normal ability level of others in the church.
- “to each believer”: not just some, but all members of the church have special abilities to do something well for Christ.
- “given by the Holy Spirit”: it is the promise of the Holy Spirit not only to give the believers new life and holiness but also to give them significant abilities for the sake of ministry. The Greek word for spiritual gift—charisma— suggests that this is a gift of grace.
- “who thus equips and moves members of the church to serve”: the Holy Spirit gives special abilities to us for the sake of service. The possession of such an ability is a call to commitment. The Spirit also motivates believers and gives them a desire to serve.
- “in special ways”: each gift relates to certain needs always present in the body of Christ. Through spiritual gifts, believers are able to specialize in ministries that meet these needs.
- “for Christ and his kingdom”: the gifted believer is a servant of Jesus Christ. All he does is for the up-building of Christ’s church and the advance of his kingdom. Through spiritual gifts, Christ enables his church to execute its task on earth.



2. WHO HAS SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

The Bible says that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts only to believers, for the purpose of service in and with the Christian community. Every believer has at least one spiritual gift. All need to discover their gifts and become involved in ministry.

3. CAN A PERSON HAVE MORE THAN ONE SPIRITUAL GIFT?

Yes. New Testament Christians had multiple spiritual gifts- Philip, for instance, had four gifts: wisdom, service, mercy, and evangelism. Several other apostles too, were multi-gifted (Acts 6, 8). A combination of spiritual gifts given to a Christian is called a “gift-mix.” That combination of gifts can be very helpful in giving direction to the kind of service one can render. A person with the gifts of mercy, leadership, and administration may make a good director of a convalescent home. A person whose gift-mix is hospitality, mercy, and encouragement would likely do well in assisting a displaced family in resettlement- A person who has gifts of evangelism and teaching should do a good job leading an evangelistic Bible Study Group.

4. HOW ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS GIVEN?

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:8-9 that gifts are given “through the Spirit,” “according to the same Spirit,” “by the one Spirit.” The Holy Spirit works in creation, in redemption, and in equipping Christians for service. Paul also says that the Holy Spirit always works in conjunction with the Father and the Son (read 1 Cor. 12:4-6). Usually the Spirit gives gifts that are in line with the abilities and talents he has already given a person. Using these abilities for spiritual purposes, He redirects abilities and talents into special gifts or “graces.”

5. WHY ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS GIVEN?

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts for three purposes:

a. that Christians may minister to each other in the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:7 states that gifts are given “for the common good.” 1 Peter 4:10 says we ought to “employ our gifts for one another.”

b. that the body of Christ may be built up—that is, grow in unity and maturity in Christ (Eph. 4:11-16). As believers use their gifts, the church’s witness and ministry are extended in the world.

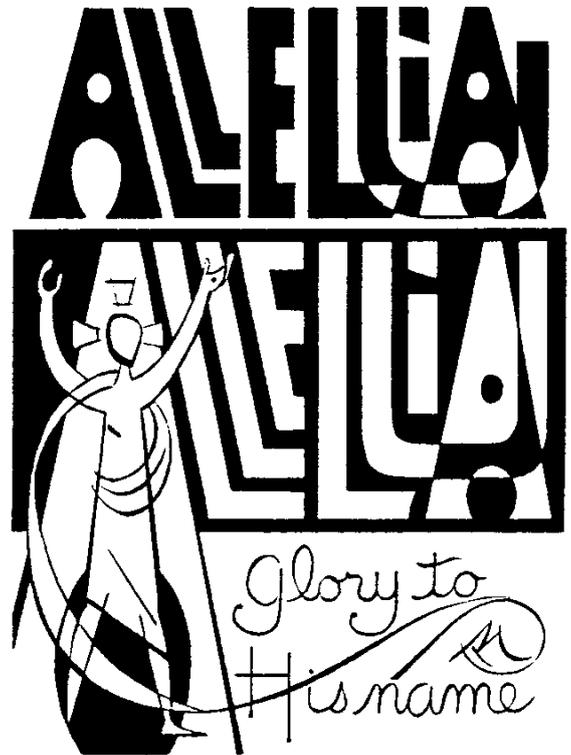
c. that God may be glorified. Peter observes that God will be glorified in everything if believers, exercising their gifts, speak the words of God and serve in the strength which God supplies (1 Pet. 4:11).

The individual believer experiences satisfaction by knowing that his or her gifts give useful service to the Master. Also, his or her sense of belonging to Christ and their church is strengthened by the use of their gift.

6. HOW MANY SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE THERE?

The Bible does not establish a definite number of spiritual gifts. In the first place, the words Paul uses to identify gifts do not present clear categories. It is difficult to know, for example, whether a gift such as “utterance of knowledge” is the same as “teaching” or signifies a different gift. “Service” and “helps” may be identical, or they may be two different but closely related gifts. We simply don’t know for sure. It is also uncertain whether the Bible names all the spiritual gifts present in the early church. Paul’s list for the Corinthians, for example, differs from his list for the Romans. What gifts would he have mentioned had he made a spiritual gift list for the Philippians or those in Thessalonica? There is nothing to suggest that his list of gifts is complete and final.

In general, it is not possible or necessary to make absolute distinctions between the gifts recorded in the Scriptures or to claim we have a final list. It is far better to regard every Spirit-given, Spirit-directed, and Spirit-empowered ability used for building up the body of Christ as a spiritual gift, regardless of how we label it.



7. ARE THERE SPIRITUAL GIFTS NOT MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Many significant abilities being used in ministries today are not specifically mentioned in the New Testament as spiritual gifts. Those who are involved in defending the faith, leading in worship, calling in the community, fundraising, Christian nursing, tutoring mentally impaired, foster parenting, playing a musical instrument, drama and interpretive dance, poetry, singing, writing, and so on today are probably exercising spiritual gifts. Some of these may just be different names for spiritual gifts that are mentioned in the Bible. Others may be ministries which are possible because of a particular gift-mix. Still others may be actual gifts which differ from anything mentioned in the Bible passages on gifts. The point is that Paul does not give an exhaustive list. He is concerned to show us the rich variety of gifts. He also wants to encourage each member in the church to use his or her gifts for the common good.



8. ARE SOME GIFTS MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT NO LONGER VALID?

According to some biblical interpreters today, certain spiritual gifts were necessary only to lay the foundations of the early church. Since this has been accomplished, Christians should no longer look for these gifts. Gifts such as apostleship, prophecy, tongues, healing, and miracles are thought to have ceased.

Other interpreters observe that the Bible nowhere says that these gifts have ceased, but that, on the contrary, the Scriptures suggest that all gifts should be recognized, developed, and used.

Paul seems to expect that the church will always be gifted, but he leaves it to Christ and his Spirit to determine which gifts should be given at any time or place. Howard A. Snyder writes, "*The question is whether the Spirit still gives gifts to men, and the answer is yes. Precisely which gifts He gives in any particular age is God's prerogative, and we should not prejudge God.*" (Community of the King, page 77)

To Snyder the question whether certain spiritual gifts are valid is less important than the awakening of various gifts within the church. He says:

"The function of the local church should be to expect, identify and awaken the varied gifts that sleep within the community of believers- We can be sure. - That God will give to each local church all the gifts really necessary for its own up-building in love." (The Problem of Wineskins, page 35)

Let the church begin by discovering, developing, and using gifts that are currently acknowledged and needed for ministries. Beyond that, let the church recognize the freedom of the Spirit to bestow his gifts according to his will. Let the church be open to the full spectrum of the gifts of the church and provide for the free exercise of all genuine gifts of the Spirit, so long as all are done "unto edifying" and in "good order".