



Session 3 | The Power of the Holy Spirit – Gifts in Operation

1. Gifts of the Spirit

The following list is by no means exhaustive or conclusive and I think there is still more to discover about all the gifts that Holy Spirit has to offer us but when we initially begin to think about these things, it's so important to firstly root our understanding in scripture and then allow our deepening relationship with Father, Son and Spirit to reveal more to us.

From the beginning of the Old Testament through to the amazing testimonies and witness of the Early Church, Holy Spirit has been revealing himself at work amongst God's people in many ways and these are some of the scriptures where we can see him at work.

Ability, intelligence and **knowledge** in **craftsmanship**, to **devise artistic designs**. [Exodus 31 v 1-5](#)

To **proclaim good news**, **bind up the brokenhearted**, **proclaim freedom** to the captives, **open prison doors** for those that are bound, to **proclaim the Lord's favour, day of vengeance of our God**, to **comfort all who mourn**. [Isaiah 61 v 1-3](#)

Sons and daughters - **prophecy**, old men - **dreams**, young men - **visions**, all inclusive (servants) and without prejudice (men & women). [Joel 2 v 28 - 29](#)

Proclaim good news, freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight, freedom for the oppressed, proclaim the year of Lord's favour. [Luke 4 v 18](#) - Jesus application of [Isaiah 61](#) - Luke's interpretation and harmonisation of texts available to the Jews at that time.

Prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation (urging, encouragement), **generosity, leadership, mercy**. [Romans 12 v 6-8](#)

Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous, prophecy, discernment of scriptures, tongues, interpretation of tongues. [1 Corinthians 12 v 7-11](#)

Healing, helping, administration. [1 Corinthians 12 v 28-29](#)

In Summary...

Wisdom
Knowledge
Faith
Healing
Miracles
Prophecy
Discernment of Spirits
Tongues
Interpretation of Tongues
Dreams
Visions
Freedom
Proclaim Good News of Christ

Emotional Healing
Serving/Helping
Administration
Teaching
Encouraging/Urging
Generosity
Leadership
Mercy
Comfort the Mourning
Declare Year of Favour (present)
Proclaim Day of Vengeance (future)
Craftmanship & Artistic Skills

N.B. Others that are not specifically named as gifts but are usually taken into consideration because of the context and scholarly interpretation of the passages of scripture where they are found...

Hospitality [Romans 12 v 13](#), [1 Peter 4 v 9-10](#) (contextually)

Celibacy (singleness) [1 Corinthians 7 v 7](#) (Paul considers this a gift)

Intercession [Eph 6 v 18](#)

I love that the ability to **‘proclaim’** and **‘declare’** things like the *Good News of Jesus*, *God’s favour over people now*, and *Christ’s 2nd coming* - are gifts! We may be very good at proclaiming and declaring all sorts of things actually, but these ones could cause a problem. The disciples needed to move supernaturally in these as they could and often did lead to imprisonment, torture and even death. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit could they move in these things.

We might not face those sorts of situations in our daily lives (although some do of course!) but we could still be fearful of someone’s reaction, repercussions in the workplace or family division etc. Isn’t it comforting to know that we can be empowered in these things and that we do not need to rely on our own strength to do this? That helps us to understand that it’s ok not to be naturally good at these things. They are actually gifts from Holy Spirit, freely given to us and we can ask for them, just at the right moment.



- Were there any surprises for you on the gift list?
- Would you consider that someone could be naturally gifted in some of these things, if so, what could it look like when Holy Spirit steps into these supernaturally - empowering someone?
- What have we experienced/seen so far in any of these gifts? Have we moved in them ourselves, seen others moving in these gifts or been at the receiving end of them? What did that look and feel like?

2. Purpose of the Gifts

A list like the one we are considering here, is so helpful to see what the purposes are behind Holy Spirit's gifts to us...

- **Public Witness/Personal Experience**

I think some things we may never see or hear about as they could happen in a personal and private space. Someone might be empowered in an unexpected way and in humility and grace be quite private about it, such as stepping out in **hospitality, generosity, mercy, discernment of spirits, words of wisdom and knowledge**. Sometimes we may not feel it's appropriate to be specific about what we have moved in or how that affected someone, **but if we can get into the habit of encouraging someone to share their story (testify)**, this can be so encouraging to others. That leaves someone free to be as personal and authentic as they like, while we can share more generally about how we have moved in the gifts ourselves. This allows us to celebrate one another, build one another up and encourage others to step out in faith.

- **Heaven on Earth**

At GodFirst, we often think about what it means to have a heavenly mindset, to be citizens of heaven (in the world but not of the world), and how we are called to be **those transformed people who transform the world around us**. Jesus modelled to us exactly what this looked like and when you look at the gifts that are offered to us through Holy Spirit, we will see many of them that Jesus moved in and there may even be some that he has left us to explore and experience for ourselves.

In Luke chapter 9, it says.... **he gave them (the disciples) power and authority to drive out all demons and to heal diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.**

The disciples had Jesus and by default, the power of Holy Spirit with them at all times but it wouldn't always be that way! They found it hard to comprehend that Jesus would leave them. We have the privilege of fully understanding what that would mean and what it could look like. Just like the disciples, we need the empowerment of Holy Spirit and to be equipped with the gifts, to bring something of heaven on earth to a desperate and broken world that so needs Jesus. The things they can experience and be exposed to through Holy Spirit are not of this world and something they will never see, hear, know or understand unless we are willing to partner with Him and bring it to them.

- **To Build Up the Church**

Jesus is passionate about his bride, The Church. The wonderful Holy Spirit has been sent to us after Jesus returned to Heaven to help with every aspect that builds his church - the individuals within it, locally and worldwide.

So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church. 1 Cor 14 v 12

There are many things we can say about gifts that build up the church. For this session, we will focus on Paul's teaching from **1 Corinthians 12, 13 & 14**.

Chapter 12

This chapter shows Paul's deep understanding of the many gifts that are needed to help a church function beautifully as the body of Christ.

His comparison between a church and an actual body is incredible and we can so understand how if one part isn't working well, needs some attention or is ignored and thought of as unnecessary, the whole of our body knows about it! Our bodies tell us this daily. Such inspirational writing and we can go very deeply into this. Just wonder for a moment, that God created us physically and all the things we know about the human body and are still discovering. Then apply that to the body of Christ - the care, the love, the detail, the intricacy, the complexity and the hurt and pain when it begins to break down and not function well. God so loves his church.... ***'God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.'*** v 18

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Eph 1 v 22-23

Some verses to help sum up this chapter...

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. v 5-6

All these (gifts) are the works of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. v 11

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured every part rejoices with it. v 26

Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different types of tongues. v 27-28

He then concludes that not everyone has the same gift, We cannot all be or have the same thing. We are gifted individually to build up the church. He urges us to eagerly desire the greater gifts (some of the above). All intended to edify His church.

Chapter 13

I like to call these 3 chapters ***'The Love Sandwich'***.

In between two very instructive chapters, lies a beautiful, compassionate and poetic chapter about love. Without placing love right at the heart of any gift we are passionate about and long to move in, everything can become dry, tasteless and unpalatable, especially to others.

In this state, we have little effect on the world around us and we are in danger of moving in our gifting in such a way that meets our own needs for acceptance, affirmation, security and significance. We can do all the stuff, but it has little impact and is ineffective in bringing about our Kingdom Culture, heaven on earth.

Paul says that we can have all the gifts, but without love right at the centre of them all - they are worthless and amount to nothing. People might not even hear us - all they may hear is Blah Blah Blah!

Resounding gongs - clanging cymbals

3 things that could help us with this...

- **Honour, Grace & Compassion.** What could this look like? Some great ideas in chapter 13!
- **No comparison, no criticism, no judgement.** It's so important to understand that we must extend these things firstly to ourselves. Without loving and honouring ourselves well, we will find it hard to love the one in front of us.
- **Loving the one in front of us.** Think about how Jesus models this to us.

Chapter 14

In this chapter, Paul focusses very much on what it can look like as we gather corporately. Not just on a Sunday of course but on any occasion where a number of us gather.

Some of what Paul describes in this chapter is of course cultural and relevant to the Corinthian church and some of the problems they had there. **Imagine what he would say if he were to write a personal letter to GodFirst?** You can see that he needed to give some very clear and firm direction to the church leaders in Corinth! However, much of what he expresses is still very relevant for us today and when we gather, many of these things are considered and put in place.

I love four verses in this chapter, and I think they sum up very well what Paul is trying to achieve with all his direction and suggestions for corporate gathering.

'Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.' v 26

'For God is not a God of disorder but of peace - as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.'
v 33

'Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.' v 40

On prophecy and conviction of sin...

....as the secrets of their heart are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming 'God is really among you!' v 25



- Have you found that other people's stories around gifts, freedom, prophetic words, words of knowledge, help, generosity etc, have helped you in your gifts? How can we encourage this more?
 - How did Jesus model loving the one in front of him? How does [1 Cor 13](#) help us with our culture of honour?
 - How can we find a balance of a 'fitting and orderly way' of gathering and God moving amongst us in power and wonder?
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3. Gifts & Fruit

So we now know of all the gifts and can discover more about them of course but how can the gifts and fruit work together?

We need to go back to [1 Corinthians 13](#) again, where Paul shows us very clearly that as we move in the gifts, the fruit of the Spirit must be evident otherwise we are just those '**resounding gongs**' and '**clanging cymbals**' that he talks about!



- Go back to the 'Gift List' and pick one of them – it might be one you would love to receive or are moving in already and becoming even more gifted with it.
- Which fruit do you need as you move in that gifting, either with an individual or corporately?

Example:

The one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.

[1 Cor v 3](#)

Moving in words of knowledge and prophecy + love, kindness, self-control, goodness = strengthening, encouraging and comfort.

Try a few more...

- Do you think this is something that happens naturally or do we need to become more aware and cultivate the fruits in our gifts? How can we do this?

4. Stewarding the Gifts

Identifying the ones you already have.

Let's go back to 'Asking Holy Spirit'. The list helps of course, as you may have been moving freely in a gift and you didn't even know it. Ask Holy Spirit to open your eyes to the things you have been moving in already and write them down.

Holy Spirit is so kind and takes us on a gentle road of discovering more about ourselves and him. God has created us beautifully and uniquely and we need to remember that not everyone will have the same gift at the same time, some may have many gifts and some just one or two, but both the person and their gifts are all equally important from one person to the next.

Paul helps us with some great principals around this.

- **Holy Spirit gives us just what we need at just the right time.** It is more about what he determines than what we ask for.
- However, Paul also urges us to '**eagerly desire**' the gifts. God loves to give good gifts to his children, so we may well find that we get just what we desire.
- **Different people have different gifts for different reasons and seasons.** And while we can of course enjoy them and take pleasure from them, we balance this with humility and a servant heart. The gifts are intended for the good of the church and to bless others as well as ourselves.
- **We can get better at a gift.** Again, Paul urges us to 'excel' at our gifts. Enjoy them, have fun and grab opportunities to have a go. Find safe places where you can try them out.
- **Be expectant that you will get just what you need - when you need it.** Holy Spirit works that way.

Spheres of influence.

In [1 Corinthians 10](#), Paul talks about understanding the sphere that God had called him to and the measure he moved within that sphere.

An example...

Within a school there are various levels of teachers. i.e. the head of the school and a TA. They both have the same sphere of influence - the school. But the measure of influence within that school is different. The Head cannot possibly sit all day with a disturbed child and give them much attention. In the same way the TA cannot decide a subject curriculum. They both need to recognise and be content with their measure of influence within their sphere.

It helps us so much to recognise our personal spheres and measures. Sometimes we want to change the world and yet God has called us to the person or situation right in front of us. **We may be asking or expectant of something that God just isn't doing right now in us and through us. This can lead to comparison with others and disappointment and discouragement with ourselves and with God.**



- What are our spheres of influence right now; home, workplace, church, relationships. Anything?
- Thinking within your 'measure in that sphere' - what gifts do you need to be Kingdom bringers in those places?
- How do you think Holy Spirit could partner with you in that place and what can you ask for, excel in, eagerly desire and enjoy?

Pray for one another to receive just what they need right now.

Transformed people, empowered to transform the world around them!