

The Promise of the Father

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The Promise of the Father

The Gift of the Giver of Gifts

Any discussion of the gifts of the Spirit must begin with the One who gives the gifts. The Spirit divides "to every man severally as He will..." (I Cor. 12:11). Without the Holy Spirit, there are no manifestations (gifts) of the Spirit. We need to remember to seek the Giver first and the gifts second.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

It is easy to give a religious answer and say that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. However, that answer leaves us without any personal application--without the experience of the Spirit. Jesus said a lot about the Holy Spirit and His purpose for the believer. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the ministry of Jesus in our lives. He is promised to us as a gift from the Father.

Luke 11:13 NASB

(13) "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

Promise of the Father

The Old Testament reveals God, the Father, His work and purposes in the earth. The transition from the Old to the New Testament reveals Jesus, manifest as God, doing the work of the Father and preparing believers to receive the Holy Spirit. After the ascension of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is revealed along with His purpose in the believers. The scriptures refer to the gift of the Holy Spirit as being "baptized with the Holy Spirit" or "receiving the Holy Spirit". The One who ministers the baptism in the Holy Spirit is Jesus Himself. This is first referred to by John the Baptist at the river Jordan when Jesus came to be baptized.

Matthew 3:11 NASB

(11) "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

John speaks of Jesus, who is the one coming after him. When Jesus came to John to be baptized, John didn't want to do it. He said that instead he needed to be baptized by Jesus (Matt. 3:14). Jesus told him to go ahead and baptize him because it was necessary to fulfill all righteousness. After coming up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove upon Him. However, Jesus later revealed that the Holy Spirit couldn't be given to all until He was glorified, i.e., until

after he ascended to the right hand of the Father.

John 7:38-39 NASB

- (38) "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"
- (39) But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The Holy Spirit is only available to those who believe on Jesus. As Jesus said, "...those who believed on him were to receive..."--it is not automatic.

Jesus, before He ascended, told His disciples to wait until they had received the promise of the Father and immediately tied the promise to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This was among the last words of Jesus to His disciples while on earth. He must have considered it very important.

Acts 1:4-5 NASB

- (4) Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," *He said*, "you heard of from Me;
- (5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Another Helper (Comforter)

Jesus told the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit because He knew that they needed Him. Jesus had been with them for about three years. They had been taught by Him, walked with Him, lived with Him, given up everything for Him. He knew that they needed comfort and assurance now and in the future.

John 14:16-17 NASB

- (16) "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;
- (17) *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

The Greek word that is translated "another" has within it the meaning of "another of the same kind". The Spirit is the same kind of comforter that Jesus is. That is why the world can't receive the Spirit--He is reserved for believers. While Jesus was with them, the Spirit dwelt with them, but there would be a future time for them when the Spirit would be inside them. That was why it was necessary for Jesus to depart.

John 16:7 NASB

- (7) "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

Purpose of the Holy Spirit

Jesus told his disciples several times that the Holy Spirit would endue them with power. This power would be necessary for them to accomplish their tasks. They were not to attempt any evangelism or other work until they received the Holy Spirit and power.

Luke 24:49 NASB

(49) "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Acts 1:8 NASB

(8) but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Peter identified the receiving of power with the Holy Spirit as the promise of the Father that Jesus spoke about. He told the crowds on the day of Pentecost that what they were seeing and hearing was the fulfillment of the promise.

Acts 2:33 NASB

(33) "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

The Work of the Spirit

There is a two-fold work of the Spirit--to the world and to the believer.

To the World

John 16:8-11 NASB

- (8) "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;
- (9) concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;
- (10) and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;
- (11) and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

The Holy Spirit convicts and reproves the world in three areas: sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Holy Spirit provides the conscience of mankind by convicting of sin. When we have not believed and, therefore, have gone our own way and acted in ways not correct before God, the Spirit is there convicting us of transgression of the Law of God. The world stands in unrighteousness because it killed the Righteous One and by that death judgment was revealed against the prince of this world.

To the Believer

The scripture reveals the value of the Holy Spirit to the believer.

John 14:26 NASB

(26) "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

John 15:26 NASB

(26) "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father*, He will testify about Me,

The Holy Spirit is to be our teacher. He testifies of Jesus by bringing to our remembrance the things that Jesus said. He is the Spirit of truth and it is truth in the form of Jesus that is revealed to us. Jesus left a lot of things unsaid to the disciples because they were unable to handle them. But, as we are able to handle them, the Holy Spirit tells us about the things of Jesus.

John 16:12-15 NASB

- (12) "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.
- (13) "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.
- (14) "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.
- (15) "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

The Holy Spirit guides us into the truth. He reveals spiritual things to us. Whatever belongs to Jesus is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit

As with most things of the Lord, we have made receiving the Holy Spirit more difficult than necessary. The basic approach is simply to ask for the Holy Spirit. If we do that the Father will give us the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11:13 NASB

(13) "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

Let us look at the examples in the scriptures of the various instances of people receiving the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost

As we saw in our earlier scriptures, the Lord told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father and that the Holy Spirit would give them the power to witness. On the day of Pentecost they were together in an upper room and the Holy Spirit came in

fulfillment of Jesus' promise. This is the first instance of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-4 NASB

- (1) When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.
- (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
- (3) And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.
- (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

As we look at these instances of receiving the Holy Spirit we need to also look at the manifestations mentioned as the Holy Spirit came.

1. Tongues of fire upon each head
2. They began to speak with other tongues

House of Cornelius

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Jews that had come to Jerusalem for the Pentecost observance. The gentiles were not included. The Lord took several steps to arrange for the gentiles to also receive the Holy Spirit. This occurred at the house of Cornelius where Peter spoke to them as directed by the Lord.

Acts 10:44-48 NASB

- (44) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.
- (45) All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.
- (46) For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,
- (47) "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?"
- (48) And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

It was an astounding thing to the Jews that gentiles could receive the Holy Spirit. It just didn't fit into their traditional theology. However, the manifestations that they saw was conclusive proof that the gentiles received the Holy Spirit just like they did. There are two manifestations listed:

1. They were speaking with tongues
2. They were exalting God.

This was conclusive enough that Peter said that they could be baptized in water as real believers in the Lord Jesus.

These two instances, Pentecost and the house of Cornelius, are instances where the Holy Spirit

came as a sovereign act of God. Both of these instances were important because they were “firsts”--Pentecost for the Jews and Cornelius's house for the gentiles.

Samaria

The clearest example of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (being filled with the Spirit) as a separate experience from salvation is the story of the people of Samaria. Philip went to Samaria to preach Christ. The people saw and heard the signs that he performed. People were delivered from demons and many lame and paralyzed were healed. As a result of all of this the Samaritans believed Philip concerning Jesus.

Acts 8:12 NASB

(12) But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

After believing Philip about Jesus and the Kingdom of God, they were baptized. In other words, they became Christians. They did exactly what people do today—they believed and were baptized. But that is not the end of the story.

Acts 8:14-18 NASB

(14) Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John,

(15) who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

(16) For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

(17) Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.

(18) Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,

When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had new believers, they sent Peter and John to minister to them. They laid hands on the believers and prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit. They had become believers and had been baptized (we would say that they had been “born again”) but they had not received the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures don't give the details about the type of manifestations that occurred but we know that something visible happened because Simon the magician saw it and wanted to buy from the apostles the power to give the Holy Spirit. This must have been something that Simon had never seen before and he had seen the miracles, healings, and deliverances performed by Philip previously.

Disciples at Ephesus

On this occasion Paul went to Ephesus and found 12 disciples. His first question reveals how important he thought receiving the Holy Spirit was if you were a believer.

Acts 19:1-6 NASB

- (1) It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples.
- (2) He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they *said* to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."
- (3) And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism."
- (4) Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus."
- (5) When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- (6) And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying.

After further questioning, Paul found out that they weren't full believers. They were disciples of John the Baptist. Paul told them of Jesus and when they believed, he baptized them in water. Once they were full-fledged believers, he laid hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Holy Spirit was accompanied by two manifestations.

1. Speaking with tongues
2. Prophesying

Apostle Paul

During Paul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, Jesus told him to go into the city and he would be told what to do. For three days Paul waited without eating or drinking. The Lord also told Ananias to go to Paul and pray for him to regain his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9:17 NASB

- (17) So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

1 Corinthians 14:18 NASB

- (18) I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all;

While no detail is given of Paul's experience of being filled with the Spirit, Paul later told the Corinthians that he spoke with tongues more than they did. Based on our previous scriptures, it is logical to assume that Paul spoke in tongues when he received the Holy Spirit.

Let's recap these five occasions in a table so that we can compare the manifestations of receiving the Holy Spirit.

<i>Occasion</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Manifestation</i>
Pentecost	Acts 2:1-4	Tongues of Fire Speaking in Tongues
House of Cornelius	Acts 10:44-48	Speaking in Tongues Exalting God
Samaria	Acts 8:12-18	Not specified but visible to others
Disciples at Ephesus	Acts 19:1-6	Speaking in Tongues Prophesying
Apostle Paul	Acts 9:17; I Cor. 14:18	Speaking in Tongues

In four of these five instances the initial manifestation or evidence of the Holy Spirit included speaking in tongues. On the fifth occasion the evidence is not specified but it was visible to others. Based on the other four occasions, it is logical to conclude that the visible evidence that enticed Simon the magician to offer money was speaking in tongues.

Tongues--Purpose and Use

Speaking in Tongues versus Gift of Tongues

As we have seen in the previous scriptures, speaking in tongues is the initial evidence or manifestation of receiving the Holy Spirit. Does this mean that if you don't speak in tongues that you haven't received the Holy Spirit? Not necessarily. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman and doesn't force anyone to do anything. We have to co-operate with Him. Some refuse to yield their mouth and tongue to the Holy Spirit either through fear or ignorance and consequently don't speak in tongues. However, because speaking in tongues is the initial evidence, the enemy can cause you to doubt the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit if you don't speak with tongues. Anyone who receives the Holy Spirit and refuses to speak in tongues is missing a blessing and a powerful prayer tool. Anyone seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit should be expecting to receive tongues also.

When looking at all of the scriptures that relate to speaking in tongues it becomes apparent that the "speaking in tongues" received at the time of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is different from the "gift of tongues" as used in the Church. To clarify our understanding many teachers have distinguished between these by labeling the tongues received with the Holy Spirit as "prayer tongues" or "a prayer language". I will use the same terminology in presenting the rest of this lesson.

To understand the difference we have to look at the way each is used. Their use reveals their function. In these next verses, Paul is contrasting "speaking in tongues" with "prophesy".

1 Corinthians 14:1-6 NASB

- (1) Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy.
- (2) For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries.
- (3) But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.
- (4) One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.
- (5) Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but *even* more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.
- (6) But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?

Lets put the verses that deal with process of speaking in tongues together so that we can easily see what is being said about it:

- (2) For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries.
- 4) One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.

These verses reveal several important facts about speaking in tongues:

1. If you speak in tongues you are speaking directly to God, because people don't understand what is being said.
2. Your spirit is speaking, not your mind or understanding.
3. Your spirit is speaking mysteries which are not known to you in the natural.
4. When speaking in tongues you are edifying (building up or charging up like a battery) yourself.

This is contrasted with prophecy which speaks to men and is understood and builds up (edifies) the Church. Paul goes on to say that if you speak in tongues in the assembly it doesn't edify the Church unless it is interpreted. Without interpretation speaking in tongues in the assembly is not profitable.

Since speaking in tongues is your spirit communicating directly with God, then it must be some form of "spiritual language". The fact that it needs to be interpreted within the assembly also reinforces the concept of a language. This is underscored by Paul when he said, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels ..." (I Cor. 13:1). When the Holy Spirit provides a language for you, He has all of the languages of men and of angels from which to choose.

We see then that in the list of the gifts of the Spirit in I Corinthians 12:6-10, the "gift of tongues" goes together with the "gift of interpretation". Therefore, when in the assembly, it is the gift of

tongues which operates because it must be followed by the gift of interpretation.

The goal is to edify the Church and not ourselves, so Paul says that if we speak in tongues we should pray to interpret. (If interpretation is required then he is speaking in Church.)

Paul again says that when you pray in tongues your spirit is praying but your mind doesn't understand what is being prayed by your spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:12-17 NASB

- (12) So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek to abound for the edification of the church.
- (13) Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.
- (14) For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.
- (15) What is *the outcome* then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.
- (16) Otherwise if you bless in the spirit *only*, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?
- (17) For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified.

Paul summarizes the results in verse 15: I will pray with the spirit (in tongues) and I will pray with my mind (understanding) also; I will sing with the spirit (in tongues) and I will sing with the mind (understanding) also. We should do both: pray or sing in our "spiritual language" and pray or sing in our natural language.

Paul goes on to say that if you say a blessing or give thanks using tongues, the one who has not received the Holy Spirit will not know when to say "amen" because he doesn't know what is being said. Therefore, even though you are giving thanks well enough in tongues, you should pray with understanding for the benefit of the ones with you.

We see then that speaking in tongues in the assembly is the operation of the gift of tongues because of the interpretation requirement; however, in the instances of receiving the Holy Spirit that we looked at previously, there appeared to be no interpretation involved which implies that the use of tongues in those instances was different from the use of tongues in the assembly.

Paul said that in the Church he desired to speak a few words with his mind (understanding) so that others might learn rather than many words in tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:18-19 NASB

- (18) I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all;
- (19) however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

However, he also said that he spoke with tongues more than all of the Corinthians. Since he was trying to correct their overuse of tongues, he must have spoken in tongues a lot. Yet, he didn't do it in Church. So, when did he do all of his speaking in tongues? It must have been when he was

alone in his prayers. This enforces the idea that the “tongues” received with the Holy Spirit is primarily for prayer and not the “gift of tongues” for use in the assembly.

Not everyone has the “gift of tongues” even though everyone baptized with the Holy Spirit should have a prayer language. The fact that not all have the “gift of tongues” is made clear in these verses.

1 Corinthians 12:28-31 NASB

- (28) And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues.
- (29) All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of* miracles, are they?
- (30) All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?
- (31) But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

It is obvious from the questions that Paul is speaking about the Church or ministry within the assembly and from that we see that not all would have the “gift of tongues” just like all do not have the “gift of interpretation” or gifts of healings. However, as we saw previously, all who received the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues, i.e., their prayer language.

The scriptures list what should be expected when the believers assemble together. There should be every member involvement and there should be a diversity of activities.

1 Corinthians 14:26-29 NASB

- (26) What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.
- (27) If anyone speaks in a tongue, *it should be* by two or at the most three, and *each* in turn, and one must interpret;
- (28) but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.

However, the use of the gift of tongues is limited to, at most, three messages and each must be done in order and interpreted. If the first is not interpreted then he should be quite as it was not the “gift of tongues” that he spoke but simply his “prayer language” for use between him and God.

Because of the possibility of abuse, many assemblies don't allow speaking in tongues; however, this is in direct contradiction to Paul's statement to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 14:39 NASB

- (39) Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues.

Introduction to the Gifts of the Spirit

This is just a quick overview of some key points dealing with the gifts of the spirit and is not intended to be an exhaustive study.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 NASB

- (4) Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.
- (5) And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.
- (6) There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*.
- (7) But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

The Holy Spirit gives His gifts to each person for the common good. That is, the gifts are not for the person who has them but are for the benefit of others.

1 Corinthians 12:11 NASB

- (11) But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

The Holy Spirit decides who receives which gift. He distributes to each person individually based on His will. Therefore, every believer should have at least one of the gifts of the Spirit active in his or her life.

Manifestations of the Spirit

The gifts, which are the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, are listed for us. There are nine listed in First Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 12:7-10 NASB

- (7) But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
- (8) For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;
- (9) to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,
- (10) and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

These nine gifts can be categorized into three groups with three gifts in each group.

1. Vocal gifts
Tongues, Interpretation, Prophecy
2. Revelation gifts
Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, Discerning of Spirits
3. Power Gifts
Faith, Gifts of healings, Working of miracles

The vocal gifts are for exhortation, edification, and consolation or comfort. They are used by the

Lord to speak to His people and encourage them.

The revelation gifts are for revealing things that are hidden that are not known by the natural mind. They are frequently used in deliverance and setting people free from bondage.

The power gifts are for signs and wonders. They are used by the Lord to show His power and His compassion and to confirm His Word.

All of the gifts are given by grace and are exercised by faith. They are not an indication of spirituality or of spiritual maturity. Neither are they an indication that God approves of your doctrine or ministry style. They are simply gifts of grace for God's people.

Romans 12:4-8 NASB

- (4) For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,
- (5) so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- (6) Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;
- (7) if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;
- (8) or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Even though we are told to desire the gifts, they, themselves, are not the goal.

1 Corinthians 14:1 NASB

- (1) Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy.

1 Corinthians 12:31 NASB

- (31) But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

The “still more excellent way” does not mean a way that is better than the gifts, but, a way of attaining gifts that is better than desiring or coveting them. The better way to function in the gifts is by love.

God desires that we grow up into love, His kind of love. When we love as He loved the gifts will naturally flow forth to set the captives free, heal the broken hearted, and encourage the weak.

Even though a person could exercise all of the gifts it would not profit him any since they are given for others. The only way a person who operates in the gifts can profit is if his motivation is one of love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 NASB

- (1) If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
- (2) If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I

- have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
- (3) And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

Questions and Answers

I was taught that when I was saved I received the Holy Spirit. Is this not true?

There is certainly a work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation experience; but Jesus said that: . . . *the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. (John 14:17 NASB)*

The Holy Spirit is for those who know Him. He abides with us in salvation but He will be in us. He also said: *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" (John 7:38 NASB)* *But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:39 NASB)*

Jesus said that those who believe were to receive the Spirit and He would cause living water to flow from our innermost being.

Go back and read the section of this lesson that deals with Samaria and Philip's ministry. The people received salvation under Philip's ministry and the baptism in the Holy Spirit later under the ministry of Peter and John.

When were the Apostles saved or born again the way we mean it today if it wasn't at Pentecost?

The Apostles were in the transition between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Since the New Covenant is in the blood of Jesus, they could not be "born again" until after Jesus became the sacrifice and shed His blood for sin.

There is an incident in the scriptures between Jesus' death and resurrection and the day of Pentecost which, I believe, would correspond to what we would call being born again, that is, receiving a new spirit. After His resurrection He was with the disciples in a room. *And when He had said this, He breathed on them and *said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. (John 20:22 NASB)*

Jesus breathing on them was not an accident. This is a parallel to God breathing the "breath of lives" into the form of clay that became Adam and he became a son of God. This is where the Apostles were born again and became sons of God. But, Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father which is the Holy Spirit. This they did and were baptized with the Holy Spirit on

the day of Pentecost.

Is every Christian meant to have the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

On the day of Pentecost after Peter preached, he was asked what they should do and this is his answer: *Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38 NASB)*

"For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." (Acts 2:39 NASB)

He said that the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit was to them, their children, all who were far off, and to as many as the Lord called. To me that sounds like every believer should receive the Holy Spirit.

When Paul found disciples at Ephesus, his first question was “have you received the Holy Spirit since you believe?” It seems that he thought the baptism with the Holy Spirit was for everyone.

I was taught that the time of miracles is past and that the gifts of the Spirit were only for the early believers. Is that true or not?

There is no indication in the scriptures that miracles or the gifts of the Spirit were to cease. In fact, the opposite is true—Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He is alive and does the same work today that He did when He walked the earth as a man.

The source for most of the ideas concerning miracles ceasing is a faulty teaching called “dispensationalism”, which divides God's work into various dispensations where God tried different things and nothing was carried forward to the next dispensation. Miracles are then relegated to a previous dispensation. This came about in an attempt to reconcile the anemic nature of the modern church with the scriptural presentation of a miracle working God.

If the gifts are for today, why can't we empty the hospitals and the sick beds?

This question usually comes from those who want to believe that miracles are past. However, they are forgetting that the promises of God are conditional. Look at this from the viewpoint of salvation. If Jesus died for all, why are not all Christians? The answer is that you can't separate salvation from the Gospel message. There is a response required from us. The same is true of healing or other miracles. You can't divorce the actions from the message of the Word.

Jesus, Himself, did not empty the sick beds. We have an account of this when He went to the pool of Bethesda: *Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool,*

*which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. (John 5:2 NASB)
In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered,
[waiting for the moving of the waters; (John 5:3 NASB)*

The pool is similar to our modern hospitals. It was a place where the sick came in hopes of being healed. There was a multitude of sick at the pool, yet, Jesus only healed one man. Why would it be any different with us? Healing only occurs when faith is stirred by an encounter with the Lord or with His Word.

Can you receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit and not know that you have received it?

The basic answer to this question is “no”. However, there are some who have had the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit but had never heard of it or been taught about it. They knew that they had received something; they just didn't know what to call it.

Then there are others who have been seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit and have been prayed for and may even have spoken a word or two in a strange language, but their tongues are not as fluent as their friend's or the experience itself didn't meet their expectations. These have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, but the devil is seeking to cause them to doubt and rob them of the experience.

Can you control the desire to speak in tongues?

Yes. The Holy Spirit doesn't force anyone to do anything. We must cooperate with Him. Once you have received the Holy Spirit, you can speak in tongues and stop speaking in tongues whenever you desire.

Do you have to be worthy to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

There is no way for us to become worthy of anything from the Lord. The gift of the Holy Spirit is a just that: a gift. Like the gift of salvation it cannot be earned; it can only be received by faith. The Holy Spirit is not bestowed as a prize for spiritual achievement, nor a reward for good behavior, nor handed out as wages earned. If you could become worthy of the Holy Spirit you wouldn't need Him! The only righteousness that we have is the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us by faith in Him.

What are the hindrances to receiving the Holy Spirit?

There are three primary hindrances to receiving the Holy Spirit:

1. Broken fellowship or wrong relationship with Jesus such as unconfessed sin.
2. Scriptural ignorance. Years of erroneous teaching can create a psychological barrier even though we have become intellectually persuaded.

3. Fear of others' opinions. The approval of God must be more important to us than the approval of men. Public opinion is not important to receiving from God.

Do you have to receive the laying on of hands to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

The laying on of hands is scriptural and may be helpful but it doesn't appear to be absolutely necessary. In the five examples given previously in this study, three were with the laying on of hands and two were by the sovereign act of God. In meetings today, I have seen people receive the Holy Spirit directly while hands were being laid on others to receive. Our God is sovereign and does what He pleases anyway that He pleases.