

Powerful Christian Living

Chapter Thirteen

The Holy Spirit

There are a few things in life as bad as seeing a job that needs to be done and knowing that you don't have what it takes to get the job done. For example when God called Moses to lead Israel to the Promised Land Moses hesitated to take the job.¹ Moses knew that unless God went with him he couldn't do the task to which he was called. The same is true for us. But God has graciously provided His Spirit to us enabling us to obey His Word.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;
and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and
Samaria, and to the end of the earth.
(Acts 1:8)

The Lord Jesus Christ has called his disciples to be witnesses of him. And the power to witness for Christ comes in the gift of the holy Spirit. The word translated "receive" in the verse above, is from the Greek word *lambano*. This word means to receive into evidence or manifestation. In other words the power of the holy Spirit will be seen in operation in our lives. Sadly, too many Christians are ignorant of this gift of the holy Spirit or how it should work in their lives. But we are going to examine three chapters in 1 Corinthians that explains in detail how the holy Spirit can work in a person's life.

Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be
ignorant:
(1 Corinthians 12:1)

Right at the start I need to give you a more accurate translation of this verse. The way this verse is translated is one of the main reasons for so much confusion and wrong teaching on the subject of the holy Spirit. The word "*gifts*" in verse 1 is in italics in several translations of the Bible.² Bible translators have italicized many words that they have put into the Bible to help the flow of thought when translating from the Greek or Hebrew. The italicized words indicate that there is no corresponding word in the Greek or Hebrew manuscripts. In some cases the italicized words actually help the English translation to read more smoothly and to be better understood. But at other times, like here in 1 Corinthians 12:1 it has introduced doctrinal error.

¹ Exodus 3:11-13

² The King James Version, The New King James Version and The New American Standard version

The Greek word translated “spiritual” is *pneumatikos*. This word would be better translated as “spiritual matters” or “spiritual things.” Translated this way there would be no need for the italicized word “*gifts*.” In fact, “The New Testament in Modern English”³ translates verse 1 as follows,

Now, my brothers, I want to give you some further information
in spiritual matters.

This is a very good translation because the rest of 1 Corinthians 12 deals with gifts, ministries, ways of serving in the church and the manifestation of the Spirit. Let’s go on.

Now concerning spiritual [matters], brethren, I do not want you to
be ignorant: 2 You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to
these dumb idols, however you were led. 3 Therefore I make known
to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed,
and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.
(1 Corinthians 12:1-3)

In verse 3, “speaking by the Spirit of God” would be speaking under the influence of God’s Spirit. This would be inspired speech, particularly prophecy and speaking in tongues and speaking in tongues with interpretation.⁴ Anyone can simply say, “Jesus is Lord, but to really mean it in the sense of being truly saved takes the influence of the Spirit of God.

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
(1 Corinthians 12:4)

The word “gifts” in this verse is translated correctly. Each and every believer has been gifted by God to serve in some capacity within the church.⁵ We all have the same gift of the holy Spirit. But we are each individually graciously endowed with some specific ability by which we can bless others in the body of Christ⁶.

There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.
(v. 5)

The word “ministries” signifies the different areas in which we may serve. For example I may have the gift of teaching and you also may have the gift of teaching. But my area of ministry is serving as a pastor and your area of ministry may be with children or teen agers or in

³ The New Testament in Modern English, Revised Edition, J.B. Phillips, (Collier Books, New York, 1972)

⁴ These are three worship manifestations of the Spirit and these will be dealt with later in this book. These manifestations are also dealt with exhaustively in this author’s book, “The Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

⁵ Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, 1 Peter 4:10, 11

⁶ See chapter six in the E-Book “The Gift of the Holy Spirit” which can be accessed at the E-Book section of www.graceministryinternational.org

an adult Bible study. And it is the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church, who decides where we serve.

And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.
(v. 6)

The word “activities” refers to the different effects produced as we minister and serve. For example, electricity can have an effect upon a radio and produce sound, or it may have an effect on a television and produce a video image, or it can produce heat. In the same way the Spirit can help us to love, to serve, to be faithful, to be encouraged, to give, to prophecy, to lead. And it is the one true God who works in each and every one of us through the gift of the holy Spirit.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:
(v. 7)

Now, the word “But” in the verse 7 is a very strong transitional word in the Greek text. It indicates that a new thought, a new point is being introduced. And the point is this: although we may serve the church in various capacities, **all of us, every believer**, can manifest the Spirit in nine specific ways for the profit of all. The nine ways in which we can all manifest the Spirit are listed in verses 8-10.

The word “manifestation” is translated from the Greek word *phanerosis*, which basically means a shining forth, to make something visible or evident. Just as electric energy in a light bulb is manifested or shines forth in light, the gift of the Spirit is manifested and shines forth in nine specific ways in every believer.

Each and every Christian has the gift of the holy Spirit. There is one gift—the Spirit, but that gift has many uses. The Swiss Army knife is a good example of the difference between a gift and a manifestation. If I gave you a Swiss Army knife, that would be my gift to you. But now you can manifest that gift in several ways. You can use the knife blade or the scissors or the screw driver or even the can opener in the knife. You don’t have to wait for the gift of a can opener or the gift of scissors; you have the gift of the Swiss Army knife and the can opener and scissors are already in that gift. It is the same with the gift of the holy Spirit. There is one gift—the Spirit, that can be manifested in nine ways.

This is crucial to understand, because there are Christians waiting to receive the gift of the word of wisdom or the gifts of healings, or the gift of speaking in tongues. But these are not gifts per se, they are the manifestation or evidence or the shining forth of the one gift of the holy Spirit. Every Christian has the gift of the holy Spirit, now we need to know what the manifestations are and how they work and operate in our lives. We will examine these manifestations individually and in detail in the coming chapters. But let us first read what they are and then there is an important point that I need to make.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.
(1 Corinthians 12: 7-10)

Verses 8 through 10 lists the nine ways the Spirit can be manifested.⁷ Now at first glance it may seem that a person can only manifest the Spirit in one of the nine ways mentioned. This is because of the phrases “For to one” and “to another.” But further study reveals that this cannot be what the Bible is teaching. Some Christians teach that not every believer can speak in tongues. But 1 Corinthians 14:5, states, “I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied.” The Greek word translated “wish” is *thelo* which means a very strong determined desire. It is often translated as “to will.” In fact, the English Standard Version of the Bible translates 1 Corinthians 14:5, in this manner, “Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy.”⁸

Every believer can and should speak in tongues and prophecy. And every believer can and should manifest the Spirit in the other 6 ways mentioned in verses 8-10. In John 14:12, Jesus Christ said,

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

Jesus Christ heard from God by means of word of knowledge and word of wisdom. He manifested gifts of healings and workings of miracles. He had the ability to discern spirits. And our Lord Jesus Christ said that when we believe in Him we can do the very same things! So then, why doesn't every Christian manifest the Spirit?

First, many Christians simply do not know about spiritual matters. They are ignorant, because they have never been taught or this subject has been taught incorrectly. Secondly, there have been so many non-biblical and extremely bizarre activities attributed to the holy Spirit. People fall over and roll around on the floor, they bark like dogs or roar like lions; some even cluck like chickens, but none of this is biblical. Therefore people are afraid of this subject

⁷ See appendix A in the book “The Gift of the Holy Spirit” for the list of terms and their definitions

⁸ The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV) is adapted from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. All rights reserved.

of the holy Spirit. But every believer can manifest the Spirit in the godly, orderly and powerful ways mentioned in verses 8 through 10 and they should strongly desire to do so.

So how should we understand the phrases “For to one” and “to another”? We can get a better understanding of what the apostle Paul was saying by reading a translation from the Aramaic text.

7 Now the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one as it is profitable to him. 8 There is a word of wisdom that is given to him by the Spirit, now for another [profit]⁹, a word of knowledge by the same Spirit, 9 for another [profit], faith by the same Spirit, for another [profit], gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 now for another [profit], miracles, now for another [profit], prophecy, now for another [profit], discerning of spirits, now for another [profit], kinds of tongues, now for another [profit], the interpretation of tongues.¹⁰

The manifestation of speaking in tongues is profitable to you. 1 Corinthians 14:4, says that when you speak in tongues in your private prayer life, it edifies you, it builds you up spiritually, strengthening you. Speaking in tongues is profitable to you and you can speak in tongues anytime you have time for prayer. The manifestations of interpretation of tongues or prophecy are reserved for profit in a worship service and not everyone will interpret or prophesy in that service. There won't always be gifts of healings or miracles. But this does not mean that every believer couldn't potentially speak in tongues, interpret, prophesy or receive word of wisdom and word of knowledge, or manifest faith to bring about gifts of healings.¹¹

Verse 7 says that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for profit. God wants the gift of His Spirit to shine forth in all of His people. All of us are called to be a witness for Christ to the world, all of us are called to contribute to and benefit the church. And therefore God will energize His gift in us, His Spirit, so we can serve and do the work He has called us to do. Now, finally, we come to verse 11.

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

God wills for us to speak in tongues anytime we can so that we are edified spiritually. Therefore he will work in us to speak in tongues. When prophecy is needed and you desire to

⁹ This is a figure of speech called an “ellipsis” where a word or words are omitted; words which are necessary for grammar, but not necessary for the sense. In other words it was logically assumed by the Aramaic reader that he was reading about another type of profit coming from the gift of the Spirit, not that one person manifested the Spirit in one way and another person manifested the Spirit in a different manner.

¹⁰ Aramaic Peshitta New Testament Translation, by Janet M. Magiera (Light of the Word Ministry Publications, 813 Pershing St. Truth or Consequences, NM 87901; www.lightofword.org; www.aramaicresearch.org), Copyright 2005

¹¹ See Mark 16:17, 18, James 5:13-15

serve, God will work in you and you will manifest the Spirit by prophesying. When gifts of healings are needed and you desire to serve, God will work in you and you will manifest gifts of healings. God's empowering presence is in all of us as Christians in the gift of the Spirit. Now it is up to us to decide to shine forth, to manifest the Spirit, to do the work God has called us to do.