



November 22, 2009

1 Corinthians 13 – 14

“Guidelines for Spiritual Gifts”

Pastor Gary Hamrick

At the conclusion of the Sunday, November 15th message on the Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Spirit, Pastor Gary posed four questions that would be the foundation for this teaching: 1. Are all the gifts of the Spirit still available today? 2. If so, what are the purposes of spiritual gifts? 3. Why so much emphasis on “Tongues”? 4. What is the evidence in a person’s life for the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit”? Since this study is essentially a continuation of that message, there isn’t much of an introduction to this study guide.

Are All The Gifts Of The Spirit Still Available Today?

1. The simple answer is “Yes,” *all* of the gifts are available today.
2. Yes has always been the universal, historical position of the church for the first 19 centuries; and there was never a debate until after the turn of the 20th century.
3. In Los Angeles, California in 1906 a revival¹ broke out at 312 Asuza Street under the ministry of William J. Seymour,² an African-American minister, who was the son of freed slaves.
4. This revival essentially gave birth to the modern Pentecostal movement.
5. In response, some fundamentalists who wanted to dismiss the gifts and miracles of this revival started to interpret **1 Corinthians 13:10** to mean that now that the Church had the Bible, the gifts have ceased.
 - a. “[W]hen perfection comes” was interpreted to mean the completed canon of Scripture.
 - b. Their thinking was that since the apostles died and the Bible was completed, the gifts of the Spirit ceased.

¹ Also known as the Asuza Street Revival. <http://www.azusastreet.org/revivalbegins.htm>

² <http://www.azusastreet.org/WilliamJSeymour.htm>

- c. This passage, in context, is really about being face to face in the presence of the Lord; it's the perfection of the saints, not the completion of the Scriptures.
- d. In **1 Corinthians 13:12** the contrast between “now” and “then” is about the imperfect state that we are in now, versus the perfected state of the Christian when they die and go into the presence of the Lord or when the Lord returns.
- e. When the Lord returns there won't be a need for prophecy or tongues, or healing, because the Lord will be there!
- f. Almost every theologian and writer of Bible commentaries explains this verse to mean the perfected state of the Believer, including: Adam Clarke, A.T. Robertson, Albert Barnes, John Wesley, William Burkitt, and Matthew Henry, to name a few.
- g. The early Church fathers were of the same opinion concerning the gifts of the Spirit, including: Ignatius (35-100AD), Justin Martyr (100-165AD), Irenaeus (130-200AD), Tertullian³ (160-215AD), Cyril of Jerusalem (300s AD) and Augustine (354-430AD).

What Are The Purposes Of Spiritual Gifts?

- 6. The purposes of the gifts are twofold: the edification of the Church and the glorification of God.
- 7. When God's people use the gifts he has given them, it builds up the body of Christ.
 - a. **1 Corinthians 12:7** – “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”
 - b. **1 Corinthians 14:26** – “What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.”
 - c. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift⁴ and the Spirit gives to each person “as he determines.” (**1 Corinthians 12:11**)
 - i. If you're not sure what your spiritual gift(s) are, in time you will discover it/them when you follow your spiritual passion and leading of the Holy Spirit.
- 8. Concerning the glorification of God, **1 Peter 4:10–11** says: “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.” (Emphasis added)

Why So Much Emphasis On “Tongues”?

- 9. There's a lot of emphasis on speaking in tongues in some circles of Christianity because this gift has been touted as *the* gift!

³ Tertullian wrote a seven-volume commentary on *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*.

⁴ There are at least 20 mentioned in the New Testament, 13 of which are mentioned in **1 Corinthians 12**.

10. The simple definition of speaking in tongues is that it is an inspired language, unknown to the person speaking, for prayer and praise to God.
 - a. It is a known language somewhere, but just not to the person speaking it.
11. Why would God give a gift like this? Because language is a bridge and a barrier to communication.
12. You can only connect with someone to the degree that you speak the same language and have an agreed, identical understanding of what a certain word or tone means.
13. Speaking in unknown languages is a gift that allows Christians to bypass communication limitation and connect with God in prayer and praise.
 - a. **Acts 2:11** – *“We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”*
 - b. We read in **Acts 10:46** that Cornelius and his family were filled with the Spirit and were overheard *“...speaking in tongues and praising God.”*
14. It is a gift of prayer and praise to God, not to people!
15. It is not a gift for evangelism in a foreign country.
16. It is not to be interpreted as a prophetic word to people.
17. The Bible discourages the exercise of tongues in public worship services.
 - a. **1 Corinthians 14:18–19** – *“I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.”*
 - b. **1 Corinthians 14:23** – *“So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?”*
18. At Cornerstone Chapel, the best place for the use of this gift is in a small group setting where everyone is a believer and everyone understands, however, there are still a few rules of practice:
 - a. **1 Corinthians 14:27–28** – *“If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.”*
19. Not everyone has the gift of tongues.
 - a. **1 Corinthians 12:29–30** – *“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?”*
20. It is not the definitive gift and, in fact, there is no one particular gift that defines whether or not a person is Spirit-filled.

What Is The Evidence In A Person’s Life For The “Baptism Of The Holy Spirit”?

21. Love is the evidence of the Spirit in a person’s life.

22. There is a reason Paul sandwiches chapter 13 between the list of the gifts in chapter 12 and their proper function in chapter 14; it's because love (Greek – *agape*) is the evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and love is to be central in the exercise of all gifts.
- The real characteristic of a Spirit-filled believer is the love of the Lord Jesus Christ that is demonstrated in their lives.
 - Love should be central to the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit and it is *the* evidence of the baptism of the Spirit.
 - 1 Corinthians 13:1–7** – *“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not **love**, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not **love**, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not **love**, I gain nothing. **Love** is patient, **love** is kind. [**Love**] does not envy, [**love**] does not boast, [**love**] is not proud. [**Love**] is not rude, [**love**] is not self-seeking, [**love**] is not easily angered, [**love**] keeps no record of wrongs. [**Love**] does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. [**Love**] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”* (Emphasis added)

Discussion Questions

- Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
- Read **1 Corinthians 12:29–13:1** and **13:8–14:5** to provide an overview for this study.
- Read and discuss **1 Corinthians 13:10**, focusing on the interpretation based on the context.
 - Give a brief overview of the Asuza Street Revival of 1906.
 - Review the list of early church fathers and well-known theologians who agree that this Scripture verse is not referring to the completion of the Bible.
- Read and discuss the purposes of spiritual gifts found in **1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:26**.
- Allow the people in your group to discuss their experiences concerning speaking in tongues.
 - Why do people feel it's appropriate to exercise the gift of tongues in a way that would contradict the Scripture guidelines?
 - Read and discuss **1 Corinthians 14:18–19, 23**, emphasizing the Scriptural guidelines which indicate the Bible discourages exercising tongues in public worship services.
 - Allow the people in your group to share experiences when speaking in tongues was improperly exercised in a public worship service.
 - What was the reaction in the congregation?
 - Do you think everyone was comfortable with it?
- Read and discuss **1 Corinthians 13:1–7**.
 - What does the life of a Christian look like when they demonstrate the fact that love is the evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

7. Close your time by allowing everyone in your group to: personally ask the Holy Spirit to fill them to overflowing, that the Lord would be glorified in their life; to follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, that they would be used by the Lord to build up the church and bring glory, honor and praise to the Lord; and ask the Holy Spirit to shine through their lives so that Jesus would be seen in them and through them.