

The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts Pt. II

Desire Them

By Lonny R. Bower, 30 September, 2009

Luke 11:9-13

Introduction:

There is a school of thought that claims that the Lord took the manifestation (power) gifts from us at the end of the “Apostolic” age, when the last Apostle died, which would have been John the beloved. They simply ignore (are ignorant to) all the evidence that points to the validity and presence of the gifts through the church age. Furthermore, they ignore (are ignorant to) the fact that the word of God commands us to desire the gifts (**1 Corinthians 12:31a; 14:1**). I for one am glad that we serve a God that does not change His mind (**Numbers 23:19; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8**). Consider for a moment the ramifications if God indeed took back the gifts of the Spirit. Would this not mean that He has changed His mind? **Romans 11:29** says that the calling and gifts of God are irrevocable. So then if indeed He revoked the gifts of the Spirit this would show that His word cannot be true and we would be a hopeless people! The fact remains however, that God has not changed, He is still the same and He still desires for all members of the Church of the first born to desire and walk in the gifts of the Spirit. Imagine for a moment that you are in church and during the worship service the Spirit of God moves upon you, stepping out of your pew you follow the Spirit’s leading to a brother or sister whereupon you lay your hands on them and instantly the power of God falls upon them and they are healed. You have just been used in the gifts of healings. Stay with me now, as I know that this is ethereal to most. Right after that, the power of God moves through another and they begin to speak a prophetic word, (not a word of foretelling the future, but a spontaneous unrehearsed word of encouragement, revelation, wisdom, rebuke or instruction). Where do we go from here, what do we do now? Unfortunately, we all too often are guilty of hurrying the program along, so we quench the Spirit before He can move a second time let alone a third or even forth time. We have become satisfied with the manna and are unwilling to cross the river into the Promised Land! Immature and ignorant, unwilling to let the Spirit lead us where He wants us to go. Without the manifestation of the power gifts working in our midst we are relegated to a form of godliness with no power! We need to walk in and experience these gifts, especially during our worship services, because they are for the profit of all. Only when we are obedient to do so will we see an irreversible impact on the church and the lost – it is the power of God manifest in our lives that will bring revival to God’s people and an awakening to the lost.

I. Handicapped – 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Paul uses the illustration of our body to show how the body of Christ (church) works in relation to the gifts of the Spirit. If you were missing any part of your body you would be considered handicapped. This is not at all meant in a derogatory way, but in a way that would reveal ones inability to live in their full

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potential. Imagine, if you were missing more than one part, how much more potential would you be missing out on. From a physical standpoint none would ever choose to be handicapped, but from a spiritual perspective it seems to be the norm. Let's bring it all into perspective. What the Lord is saying through Paul is profound. Without the gifts of the Spirit we are simply handicapped. The Lord has made provision for each of us to not only reach, but live in our full potential, however, we cannot do it on our own – we need the help of the Holy Spirit. He will give to each one as He wills; this does not mean that He will only give me the gift of prophecy, or the gifts of healings, but not miracles or faith. The church has had the mind set for too long that if God wants them to have any of these gifts that He would provide them. If you remember from last week's lesson – God does not work this way otherwise all would be saved (that's His will 2 Peter 3:9). So then, we have a responsibility. If you were missing a leg and you knew that all you had to do was ask for one and it would be provided, would you not ask? This is exactly what Jesus was telling us in our opening verse (Luke 11:9-13). The church has been fooled by the devil for far too long and as a result she is handicapped! We need to not only ask for the Holy Spirit – we need to then earnestly desire the best gifts. I don't want to over theologize this, the best gifts are simply what is needed during the time of need. Consider Paul from Acts 20:9-12, if he would have run down to the front yard where Eutychus had just fallen to his death and began to speak a word of knowledge – what good would that have done? Instead he used the best gift – miracles and raised Eutychus to life!

Think About it:

How would you describe yourself as relating to the use of Spiritual gifts – mature or immature?

How many times in the last year have you personally witnessed the use of the gifts?

II. The Expectation and Necessity of Love – 1 Corinthians 13

Love should compel us to use the gifts, and if by chance we have the gifts but not love then we are a useless people. Love is the defining element of Christianity, it is how the world will know that we are Disciples of Christ – by our love for one another (John 13:35). Love will carry on throughout eternity; it is not a gift, but an expectation of all followers of Christ. Without love we are not Christ like, if we are not Christ like then how can we call ourselves Christian? It is a simple matter of choice – we choose to

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love and the closer we are to God the easier it is to love. Love is the heart of the pastor, it's the strength of the evangelist, it's the Apostle's motivation, the prophet's story and the teacher's classroom. The body of Christ needs love and if it is true that we are handicapped without the gifts, then it is equally true that we are dead and most ineffective without love. Paul makes the point that we will always have love, even after there is no longer a need for the gifts, we will still need love – for God is love. At no time since the Holy Spirit was poured out have any of these gifts ceased – people may have refused to seek them, refuse to ask for the Spirit, but they have never ceased by God revoking them. As long as we live in the mortal flesh and make up the body of Christ on earth there will be a need for all the gifts for the profit of all. The perfect has not come yet, right now we all still peer through a dark glass, but soon, we will see face to face our Lord and maker – Jesus Christ. Once we are in His presence Love will be all that remains as faith and hope too will be swallowed up by the reality of being as He is.

Think about it:

Are you motivated by love, does it drive you to minister to others?

Have you ever heard someone say that the gifts have ceased – how did you answer?

III. Desire the Gifts – 1 Corinthians 14

Paul never rebukes them for using the gifts too much, but for using them out of order. In fact he tells them that he desired that they all spoke in tongues and that he spoke in tongues more then they did (vv 5, 18). He provides guidance for them in the use of the gifts and encourages them to continue in them. This is the opposite of what many churches today are doing. Many are discouraging the use of gifts and forbidding the speaking of tongues. One must understand that our Father is good (Luke 11:9-13) and He would never give us something that would harm us. I asked for the Holy Spirit and He gave Him to me, I know this because I began to speak in tongues – tongues I never learned. Some have further claimed that tongues are of the devil, well duh...they can be, (he can duplicate (counterfeit) all of God's gifts and can even appear as an angel of light) but not when I asked God to baptize me in the Holy Ghost and He did and provided the evidence of speaking in tongues. Jesus said that tongues would be one of the signs that would follow believers (Mark 16:17) and as such they become a sign to the unbeliever. Paul emphasizes the importance

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of the gift of interpretation (specifically for the gift of tongues) and gives clear instruction for those used in the gift of tongues to pray that he may interpret (v 13). He then transitions to the prayer language of tongues (received at the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and must be distinguished from the gift of tongues), and how that praying in tongues (in the Spirit) is necessary, as he stated in verse 4 it edifies the one doing the praying. We all need edified, so let us not neglect to pray in the Spirit (Further study Romans 8:26-27). One will not receive the gifts unless one desires them. If they are not prevalent among us then how would any ever desire them? We must get back to what God intended for us – the use of Spiritual gifts for the profit of all.

Think about it:

What is it you desire most? Would you like to be used in the Spiritual gifts?

Conclusion:

I have found that people get what they desire; this is especially true when it comes to spiritual things. If you have a desire to meet with God and feel His mighty presence then you will. Jeremiah 29:13 says and you shall seek me and find me when you search for me with all of your heart. This is God's way, we have to seek His gift of salvation, we have to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we have to seek His Spiritual gifts and when we do so with all of our heart, we get what we seek. Look around you, with very few exceptions everything you have you have because you desired it. I want to leave you with this thought and question. First, be encouraged, you serve a God that desires to give you His very best, no strings attached. But what is it that you really want from Him, do you want everything He has for you, or are you satisfied with just the manna on the East side of the river, a form of godliness? He has asked each of us to exercise our faith and cross over the river and see what potential lies on the other side. I'm telling you there is no limit to what God can and will do through you if you'll just seek Him, with all of your heart. When you do this you'll want more and when you want more you'll get more. The conundrum of many within the church is this – they really don't want all of what God has to offer – otherwise they would have it.
