

GOD JUST TOUCHED ME - WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT

Chapter 10 - THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT TO PEOPLE

About Gifts to People

No person deserves gifts or can earn gifts. If something has been earned it is a payment, not a gift. An individual's worth or character is never defined by the gifts they receive. The worth or character of the gift giver is revealed by the quality of the gifts given. What the gift says about the gift receiver is that the gift giver cares. Our God is a gift giver who gives only good gifts. The existence of God's gifts was prophesied long ago (Joel 2:28-31). They were not given for our amusement or entertainment, but to show forth the glory of Jesus through His body, the Church. The Gifts of the Spirit are construction tools from our Father's toolbox, given for one purpose, to build. They are not just for the one who receives them, but should benefit all members of the body (1 Corinthians 12:7). The list of the Gifts of the Spirit is not a menu from which we get to pick and choose. Since God is the gift giver, God decides who will receive what gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11). Some of the gifts have more value than others. The Lord does not give everyone all the gifts (1 Corinthians 12:30&31). We should not desire the spectacular gifts, but the more helpful gifts that enrich our corporate life and witness (1 Corinthians 14:1). God's intent is that the gifts uplift individuals and enlighten the church (1 Corinthians 14:12). Although some gifts are more highly valued, all the gifts are from God and all the gifts are needed (James 1:17). The gifts are intended to be used within the body (1 Peter 4:10). Nine Gifts of the Spirit given to individual people are listed in scripture (1 Corinthians 12:8-11). Any person can be given different gifts at different times as the requirement arises.

We need to be aware that the enemy can counterfeit gifts to steal us away from God. Even those who claim to come in the Lord's name can be enemies (Matthew 7:21-23). Jesus warned us of those who would come to lead us astray (Matthew 24:24). They come doing Satan's work (2 Thessalonians 2:9). The forces of hell are active in our world trying to destroy the church (Revelation 16:14). God has given us a way to know if those who claim to come in the name of the Lord are real or not (Deuteronomy 13:1-3). If a gift is from God it will build up and strengthen the church and glorify God. If it is not of God it will cause dissension and strife.

Wisdom

Wisdom is a Gift of the Spirit. Wisdom is making Godly choices. It is the quality of being wise, the power of judging rightly and following the soundest course of action based on knowledge, experience, and understanding. Wisdom is revealed in a devout and proper care in interaction with others and an ability to communicate effectively. Information is useless if you do not know how to use it or what to do with it. Wisdom knows how to rightly use knowledge. Wisdom is the supreme intelligence that belongs to God. Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord (Job 28:28, Psalm 111:10). Fear of the Lord is not terror or dread, but is respectful awe for the character and being of our Creator and Redeemer. Without God there is no wisdom (Daniel 2:20&21). Everything God does is done in wisdom (Psalm 104:24, Psalm 136:5). We can only Accept God's wisdom because our human intellect cannot comprehend that wisdom (Isaiah 55:8&9, 1 Corinthians 1:25). A prime example of one who requested and received God's wisdom is King Solomon (1 Kings 3:16-28). People were in awe of Solomon because they recognized the Wisdom of God. For the church, Christ is God's wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:24) and brings us only good (James 3:17). The Spirit bestows this gift when and where it is needed.

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Knowledge

Knowledge is a Gift of the Spirit. Knowledge is knowing information or facts, and is normally received through the five senses. In our worldly lives it is possible for people to believe a lie, mistaking it for real knowledge. The gift of knowledge refers to knowledge received directly from God, not through the five senses. The gift of knowledge is information given by God for specific instances of ministry. Like wisdom, knowledge begins with the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1:7). The enemy is the father of lies, but our God is the source of all truth, and without truth there can be no knowledge or wisdom. Real knowledge is more valuable than wealth (Proverbs 8:10). The very Word of God is the supreme knowledge given for our good (Romans 15:14). Knowing God is the greatest knowledge we could have (2 Corinthians 2:14), and that starts with scripture reading but continues through a personal relationship with Him. The Lord's expectation for us is that we abound in knowledge (2 Corinthians 8:7). God's intent is not that we be "know-it-alls", but that His knowledge should be used to glorify Christ and build up the church (Acts 5:1-4). The church could not stand and grow with dishonesty in its midst. The spirit bestows this gift when it is needed.

Faith

Faith is a Gift of the Spirit. In common usage the word faith has a variety of meanings: a) A set of beliefs, such as Christian faith, Muslim faith, etc. b) A saving belief, trust, and confidence in Jesus. c) An astonishing assurance of well-being in times of unusual stress such as faced by the martyrs, or the ability to expect God to do the humanly impossible. The kind of faith being addressed here is the third one, and that kind of faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8). It is a wonder working faith characterized by an utter confidence in the faithfulness of God and a loving obedience to His will. It is the kind of faith that does not waver even when everything around us indicates that there will be complete failure and destruction (Hebrews 11:1). Our trust needs to be in the Lord, not in men, or in governments, or even in our five senses (Psalm 118:8&9). No matter what the conditions, with faith there is yet hope because what is impossible for man is possible for God (Mark 9:23). The gift of faith is the kind of faith that can move mountains (Matthew 21:21&22). That is the kind of faith that allowed Peter and Paul to command the dead to rise (Acts 9:40, Acts 20:9-12). That is the kind of faith that resulted in a lame man being healed (Acts 3:2-6) and caused an opponent to be struck blind (Acts 13:8-11). That is the kind of faith that allowed Stephen to pray for those killing him (Acts 7:54-60). That is the faith that the Holy Spirit gifts us with in times of special need.

Healing

Healing is a Gift of the Spirit. To heal is to cure, to make whole, to make well. Doctors heal with medicines and physical treatments and with God's help. The gift of healing, however, is the ability to bring God's miraculous healing to others, and it does not involve medicines or physical treatments. The gift of healing was prophesied long ago (Isaiah 35:4-6). That kind of healing is not something a human does, it is something a human proclaims and God does. When God the Son laid aside His divine attributes and lived on earth as a Spirit filled human, He did what He expects us to continue doing; He proclaimed God's love and healing to hurting humanity. His glory was revealed in the multitude of healings He commanded. Just a few includes the noble's son (John 4:46-54), the demoniac (Mark 1:23-26), Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-17), the leper (Matthew 8:1-5), the paralytic (Matthew 9:1-8), the woman with an issue (Matthew 9:20-22), and a blind man (Matthew 9:27-31). The results were that many people followed Him, and some remained His disciples. They recognized the power of God at work in the healing. After Jesus returned to His Father, the Spirit's gift

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of healing continued to operate through His disciples. People flocked to Peter (Acts 5:14-16), and people were amazed by Peter and John (Acts 3:2-11). Healing was a sign that followed the apostles. The early Christians were directed to look to the church for healing (James 5:14&15) with the result that there was no sickness among the believers. However, healing is not restricted to the elders in the church, because the Spirit gives the gift as He wills. It could be anyone. It could be you. The spirit bestows this gift when it is needed.

Miracles

The working of miracles is a Gift of the Spirit. Miracles are not magic tricks; they are works of God's power. Miracles are due to supernatural causes, acts of God. A miracle requires the power of God to accomplish something that is beyond any and all human power. Miracles reveal the glory of the Lord until He returns. Working of miracles attracted people to Jesus and later to the church (John 2:11&23). Stephen accomplished great works of power (Acts 6:8), and Phillip attracted many people (Acts 8:6). People were in awe of the power that accompanied Barnabas and Paul (Acts 15:12). The result was that the church grew and spread to the entire known world. The work Jesus did was not accomplished as God the Son, but as Jesus, the Spirit filled human. The works were things that no human could accomplish without the power of God. Jesus took a small amount of food and fed five thousand people, and there was food left over (Luke 9:12-17); ordered a raging storm at sea to cease, and it did (Matthew 8:23-27); ordered a dead girl to rise, and she did (Matthew 9:18-26); walked across the surface of a large body of water (Mark 6:45-52); turned water into wine (John 2:1-11); and commanded a man four days in the grave to come out, and he did (John 11:43-45). No wonder people followed Him and recognized that He was from God. After His ascension the disciples carried on His work, and His glory continued to be displayed. Peter and Paul also commanded the dead to rise (Acts 9:40, Acts 20:9-12) and the dead did. Signs and wonders accompanied the church everywhere. God's power was literally enough to move mountains (Matthew 17:20). If He is able to create the entire universe, surely He can move a small pile of dirt. The spirit bestows this gift when it is needed.

Prophecy

Prophecy is a Gift of the Spirit. Predicting something is not necessarily prophecy. Fortunetellers and people just guessing also make predictions. Prophecy is the act of speaking forth God's word, saying things emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purpose of God. Prophecy includes reproofing, admonishing, comforting, and revealing, all under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Prophecy is not just for yesterday but is also for now (1 Thessalonians 5:20). Since prophecy is spoken in a language that is understandable it is of more value than tongues (1 Corinthians 14:3-5). Prophecy is also one of the signs of the end times (Acts 2:17&18), not the end of the world, but the end of Satan's rule. God spoke through His prophets throughout the Old Testament (Hebrews 1:1). Moses and Aaron are examples of prophets (Exodus 4:12&15). Throughout the New Testament God speaks through His Son, Jesus (Hebrews 1:1&2). The word of God speaks to us still, and God speaks directly to us through the gift of prophecy (2 Peter 1:21). The gifts of the Spirit are given to us to be used; they are tools to build with, and they need to be used (1 Timothy 4:14). In spite of the desperate need in today's world, God does not force us to do things (1 Corinthians 14:32). Our free will remains intact. The spirit bestows this gift when it is needed.

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Discernment

Discerning of spirits is a Gift of the Spirit. To discern is to judge, make a judicial estimation, make a distinction, to determine. Discerning the spirits is a requirement (1 John 4:1). Discerning of spirits does not mean seeing devils everywhere; it means knowing if something is of the Holy Spirit or an evil spirit; if someone is speaking by the Spirit of God or by a false evil spirit. We are told how to recognize a spirit (1 John 4:6). We have been warned that there will be false prophets (Matthew 7:15) and that their purpose is to deceive God's people (Matthew 24:11). The end times are not unique in having imposters trying to mislead us (Matthew 24:24, 2 Peter 2:1-3). There will be false prophets and miracle workers with the lone goal of deceiving the body of Christ (Revelation 16:13&14). Not only are we to try the spirits, but also to judge those who claim to be prophets (1 Corinthians 14:29). We have been warned, and we have the tool that can identify the enemy. The spirit bestows this gift when it is needed.

Tongues

Diverse tongues are a Gift of the Spirit. Tongues are languages, and languages have structure and carry intelligence for someone, either for men or for angels. Tongues are languages that are not acquired naturally, but are put into motion by the Holy Spirit. Tongues give us the ability to communicate with God without using words our intellect understands. Jesus predicted tongues (Mark 16:17). Tongues accompanied Pentecost (Acts 2:4). Because of tongues many stayed to listen and became disciples. As the church grew tongues were often passed on through the laying on of hands (Acts 19:6&7). In this modern world the gift of tongues is often scorned or even forbidden. God, however, expects us to use tongues (1 Corinthians 14:39). Paul would that every member of the body could speak in tongues, yet cautions that there must be order in speaking in tongues in public worship (1 Corinthians 14:5&6). If the body is to be edified, the hearers must be able to understand (1 Corinthians 14:18&19). While some of the more spectacular gifts enlighten unbelievers, tongues are for the body (1 Corinthians 14:23&24). Usually tongues are used to talk to God (1 Corinthians 14:2) either through prayer or song (1 Corinthians 14:14&15). Tongues are also used to prophesy. As with any of the gifts, tongues are given as the Spirit decides (1 Corinthians 12:27-31). Not everyone has them. The spirit bestows this gift when it is needed.

Interpretation

Interpretation of tongues is a Gift of the Spirit. Interpretation means to give intelligible meaning to something spoken by another person. There are two uses of tongues mentioned in scripture, a private prayer tongue and a tongue spoken publicly in worship. Interpretation is required for tongues used in public worship (1 Corinthians 14:27&28). When we speak in tongues only God understands (1 Corinthians 14:2). Without understanding the body cannot be edified (1 Corinthians 14:14). Even a little understanding is more beneficial than none (1 Corinthians 14:19). God's solution is to have interpreters (1 Corinthians 14:5). If you are going to publicly speak in tongues you should first pray that the Spirit provide an interpreter (1 Corinthians 14:13). God desires that someone speak up (1 Corinthians 14:27). The God of order will not command tongues without providing an interpreter. The spirit bestows this gift when it is needed.

All are given for the building up of the church.