

# OpenTheo

## Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Part 3)



### Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg discussed the various gifts of the Holy Spirit as listed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12. He emphasized the importance of using spiritual gifts to serve the body of Christ and cautioned that miracles and prophecies must be tested to ensure they are from God. Gregg also explained the gift of speaking in tongues and its three different uses. Ultimately, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit allows for the manifestation of spiritual gifts in one's life.

### Transcript

Okay, we only have a little bit of time left to finish up what we need to do here. I wanted to talk about each of the 15 gifts that Paul lists, but obviously we only have about 45 minutes. That means I have less than three minutes each to speak about them.

So don't be too disappointed if I race through them rather quickly. But since you will have the notes, there's the complete information there in the notes that Nate can give you. Okay, the first gift, I'm just going to take them in order.

We'll take the gifts Paul lists in 1 Corinthians 12 verse 8. The first gift he mentions is called the Word of Wisdom. Now, the expression Word of Wisdom is not found anywhere else in Scripture, which makes it somewhat difficult to know exactly how Paul would expect his audience to understand that. It's not self-explanatory, although it may be, but it's not clear if he means something more than is obvious.

A Word of Wisdom is when you speak a word that's conveying wisdom, obviously. Now, every Christian is supposed to be wise. We're told, you know, be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

And the Bible says in James chapter 1 that, you know, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God and he'll give it to you. So wisdom is, you know, general. We're supposed to be wise people.

But a Word of Wisdom is a special gift that Paul says God gives one, a Word of Wisdom, as opposed to another one getting a Word of Knowledge or Faith or one of these other

gifts. So we have to assume that the Word of Wisdom is something special, that it's something different than merely, you know, speaking out of your wisdom. In every conversation with any other person there should be wisdom being communicated, but that can't be what Paul's referring to here.

Wisdom, of course, is the ability to know the right path to take to reach a desired goal. It's different than knowledge. Knowledge is informational only, but wisdom is the application of knowledge to reach desired ends.

So that if I desire to get out of poverty, it would be wise for me to get a job. It's not wise for me to sleep in late every day and watch television all day if I need to get out of poverty. Wisdom would tell me to get a job.

So books of wisdom like Proverbs would say that kind of thing. Wisdom is simply recognizing what the most proper and, you know, most effective course of action is to reach something that's a desired goal. That's what wisdom refers to.

And therefore it must apply to times when the church is puzzled over some problem requiring solution. We see in the Old Testament, Solomon had a gift of wisdom and two prostitutes who were fighting over the same baby, both claiming it was theirs, came to Solomon and both of them wanting him to give them custody of the baby. And Solomon, who was noted for his wisdom, which God gave him, said, well, I'll tell you what we'll do.

We'll cut the baby in two and give you each half. Now, this was brilliant, actually, because he knew that the real mother would never allow her baby to be cut in half. So then the other mother was just, you know, jealous of the other one and didn't care much about the baby.

And of course, the woman who didn't really deserve the baby wasn't hers. She said, go ahead. Let's do it that way.

Cut it in two. We'll neither have the baby. But the woman who's who was the mother said, no, let her have the baby.

Don't kill it. I mean, it became obvious. These both women were claiming the same thing, that they were the mother of the child.

Well, how do you get the truth to come out? Neither of them's going to deny that they're the mother. Well, you can reveal the heart of a mother. Let's just threaten the baby's life and see which one is willing to sacrifice to keep the baby well and good.

That's a brilliant solution. The Bible says that after he gave that ruling, that's in 1 Kings 3, verses 23 through 28, it says that the wisdom of Solomon became well known throughout the world. Now, that's because this is a difficult problem.

How can you tell who's telling the truth? How can you tell who's lying? Well, God gave him wisdom to know what to do. And I believe that I've been in situations where in an eldership, people were discussing the problem in the church, and it was really a prickly problem, really difficult to know what the solution would be. And then one person just out of the blue would give an answer to which everyone realized, yeah, I mean, I remember hearing, I've experienced this before, not me giving the word of wisdom, but hearing it done, I thought, wow, that's God's wisdom coming out there.

You know, it's just someone spoke a word that is the divine wisdom solving a difficult problem. In the book of Acts in chapter 15, the church met to try to decide whether Gentile Christians had to be circumcised or not. And it wasn't obvious what the solution would be.

And there were arguments about it. And Paul and Barnabas and Peter were on one side, some other people on another side. And finally, James came up and says, I've got a solution.

And he gave the solution. And when they wrote a letter to the Gentiles to explain the solution, they said, it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us that this is the way it should be. They recognized that what James said was from the Holy Spirit.

It was like a word of wisdom for the church. And I think that's what Paul is referring to as a word of wisdom. And then the second gift is similar to it, in sound anyway, the word of knowledge.

Once again, word of knowledge is not a term used elsewhere in scripture, although words of knowledge are mentioned a couple of times in Proverbs. But in Proverbs where it talks about, listen to the words of knowledge or don't depart from the words of knowledge. It's not really talking about a gift of the Holy Spirit.

It's more or less, don't separate yourself from counselors who are well informed, really, whose words contain good information, good knowledge. A word of knowledge as a gift of the Spirit is again, never defined for us in scripture. And the way usually it is understood by people who believe in the gifts of the Spirit, they usually think of the word of knowledge as a revealed factoid, a revealed bit of information that is given to somebody which they could not naturally know.

It's almost the spiritual counterpart of the occult phenomenon of clairvoyance or someone being able to know something supernaturally that they wouldn't know otherwise. But this time it's not demonic. This is from the Holy Spirit that he reveals something.

Elisha, the prophet, knew that his servant Gehazi had compromised and he confronted him about it, though he had no natural way of knowing it. Jesus knew that the woman at

the well had had five husbands and was living with a man who was not her husband in John chapter four, and he confronted her with it. He had no natural way of knowing that.

That was a word of knowledge, according to the way people usually understand this term. Peter knew that Ananias and Sapphira were lying about how much they sold their property for. He didn't have a natural way of knowing this.

When someone has this information about somebody else and it's revealed to them, it's knowledge of facts, but it's facts that they wouldn't have otherwise access to. This is what generally is understood to be a word of knowledge. And I think although we don't have the Bible defining it as such, we do see the phenomenon in Scripture, and I think that's probably what Paul is referring to as a word of knowledge.

It can be used, of course, to really comfort somebody in a way in that it reveals to them that God is revealing something about them to you when you give a word of knowledge. Now, I've never had a word of knowledge like this, and when it is given, it is usually associated with prophets like Elisha. When Jesus told the woman at the well, you've had five husbands, she said, oh, I see you're a prophet, because this was a sort of a function of prophecy.

Although Paul distinguishes a word of knowledge from prophecy as separate gifts, yet it's probable that this is the phenomenon that Paul has in mind when he uses the term word of knowledge. And then Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 9 speaks of faith as a gift. Now, faith simply means believing God, and every Christian has faith.

Obviously, we're saved by faith. In fact, many things depend on our faith. Jesus said the disciples failed to cast a demon out because of their lack of faith.

Paul said that the Holy Spirit is given to us by faith. We're certainly justified by faith. Faith is something that has many uses in the Christian life, but the special gift of faith, which apparently is not given to everybody, or at least not all the time, has got to be something different than that.

And as I pointed out in 1 Corinthians 13, Paul says, if I have all faith, this is 1 Corinthians 13 2, if I have all faith even to remove mountains and have not love, I'm nothing. And he says that in the context of discussing gifts of the Spirit. So he must be thinking of faith as a special endowment of faith, perhaps at a moment, maybe not something that people have all the time, but in a crisis or in a need that someone has the special faith given to them for some kind of great exploit to be accomplished.

Now, there are people who definitely seem to have more faith in general than others, although it seems to be our fault if we have little faith. Jesus kind of blames the disciples for having little faith. We should have more faith and we can have more faith simply by believing God more consistently.

Yet there are people whose faith is just amazingly prominent, and we might argue that they have the gift of faith as a resident gift. I think of George Mueller or Hudson Taylor, who were men in the 19th century who lived entirely by faith. And George Mueller ran an orphanage for over 70 years, never asking for money, never letting anyone know their needs, just trusting God to provide.

And the money always came in. Hudson Taylor lived his life as the first missionary to inland China the same way, just depending on God and not letting anyone else know his needs. And all his needs, which were numerous, were provided because he just trusted God.

Now, not everyone lives by faith in that way. Not everyone is required to, but people like that might be said to have the gift of faith. They certainly have something exceptional in that area that most people don't have.

Whether everyone should have that kind of faith or not, I don't know. But it's possible that Paul is thinking of exceptional faith like this also, when he talks about to another is given faith. Now, in verse 9 of 1 Corinthians 12, we have also this expression, gifts of healings.

Now, this is the only one of them that's given in the plural, in the Greek. Now, some of the translations just say gift of healings, but in the Greek, it's gifts, plural, of healings, plural. Now, healings are a noun, not a verb.

Healing can be a noun, a verb. It's something you do. You heal.

You heal somebody. You are healing somebody. But a healing is a noun, a thing.

And a healing is something that's received by a sick person. And therefore, gifts of healings apparently does not refer to the ability that some people have to heal other people, but rather the individual cases of healings given to certain sick people, which are not given to everybody, by the way. The Bible does not guarantee that everyone will receive healing of their sicknesses, but there are healings that God gives to some people.

It's often not obvious why he gives to some and not to others. I know people who are healed miraculously of cancer. Other people died of cancer while they were confessing themselves to be healed by faith.

God didn't give them the healing. He gives it to some and not to others. Paul himself was used by God in administering healings to many people, but he himself had an infirmity that he called a thorn in the flesh, and he prayed that it'd be taken away.

And Jesus said, no, I'm going to give you grace instead of healing in this case. Paul had a friend named Trophimus, whom he left sick in Miletus, according to 2 Timothy chapter 4.

His friend Timothy, according to 1 Timothy chapter 5, had stomach problems frequently. Instead of being healed, Paul told him, take some wine for that.

That's a medicinal approach. I'm sure these men would have loved to be healed, but they didn't receive healing. But some people did.

Some people are given the gift of a healing when they're sick. Other people are not given that gift. And so, when somebody is supernaturally healed, that's actually a gift given to them by the Spirit.

And since this happens to various people at different times, there are gifts of healings. That is, each healing is itself a gift. And to think of a healing as a gift is not really that strange, because Paul speaks, for example, in 2 Corinthians 1, 11, of how God had delivered him from death, from life-threatening circumstances, and he referred to that as a charisma, the gift given through the prayers of many.

His deliverance from death was a charisma God gave to him. So an individual deliverance or healing is a gift from God. And I think we have to see the gifts of healings this way, because the next gift Paul mentions is the gift of working miracles.

And if the gift of healing is the gift of being able to heal people, how is that different than the gift of miracles? Most of the miracles in the Bible are healings. Most of the miracles Jesus did were healing people's sickness. There was also casting out demons.

And by the way, the exorcism of demons is also viewed as healing. In Matthew chapter 12, the Bible talks about a demon-possessed man who is mute and dumb, and Jesus healed him, casting the demon out of him. Peter, in Acts 10, 38, is preaching in the household of Cornelius, and he says, Jesus was a man anointed by God who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.

So even exorcisms are a type of healing in that category. But receiving a healing is different than working a healing or administering a healing to someone else. God can heal people just unilaterally by them praying to be healed.

If he wants to heal them, he can heal them. But many times he heals through the administration of somebody who has a gift of working miracles. Those miracles include healing.

Jesus' miracles included healing, and so did the apostles' miracles include healing. But there are other kinds of miracles too, raising the dead, being among them. In Jesus' case, he walked on water, turned water into wine.

He could still a storm with his words. There are other kinds of miracles that the apostles wrought also that were besides healing. For example, Paul struck a man blind in Acts 9, briefly.

Peter seemingly, although it doesn't say he did this personally, but he seemingly struck Ananias and Sapphira dead. He just pronounced that they would die, and they died. There are miracles besides healing in the early church, but they're mostly healings, and therefore the working of miracles would include the working of miraculous healings.

But like a healing, miracles don't come all the times that you want them. I'm sure when Paul was in the storm at sea, he would have loved to be able to stand up like Jesus did and say, peace, be still, and have the storm stopped. I'm sure when they threw the food overboard from the ship, he would have liked to be able to multiply what little food was left to feed everyone and fill their stomachs.

Paul never did those kinds of miracles that we know of. It does say in Acts 19, verse 11, that special miracles were done by the hands of Paul. That is special in the sense that they didn't usually happen.

Not everyone did them, and he didn't do them all the time. But in Ephesus, Acts 19, 11 says special miracles were done by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs and aprons were taken from him and given to sick people and demon-obsessed people, and they were healed and delivered of demons. What made these miracles special is they were done in Paul's absence.

Just like Jesus could heal the nobleman's son without seeing him, Paul was able to heal people without seeing them on some occasions, not all occasions. But those were special cases. You see, a miracle, when it does occur, is a special thing, so is a healing.

But they do happen, and God does do them, and God has vouchsafed the power to do them when he wants them done to certain people. Usually in the book of Acts, these miracles are done by people who are apostles or evangelists. It says, for example, in Acts chapter 2, that mighty miracles were done by the hands of the apostles in verse 43, Acts 2, 43.

Now, this is right after it tells us that the 3,000 Christians were continuing daily under the apostles' teaching and breaking bread and fellowship and prayers. That's what most Christians were doing. But then it says, but great signs and wonders were being worked by the hands of the apostles.

Sometimes we read the book of Acts and get the impression the early Christians were just running around doing miracles, healing everybody. The Bible doesn't say that. There were some who worked miracles.

Usually it was the apostles. There's a few others, evangelistic men like Stephen and Philip. Philip is referred to as an evangelist in the book of Acts, and he worked miracles in Acts chapter 8. Stephen was, we might call him an apologist or an evangelist, and he worked miracles also in Acts chapter 6. So besides the apostles, there's a couple of other

people in the book of Acts that are known to work miracles, but generally speaking, it was the special ministry of preachers, either apostles, evangelists, or whatever, to actually be given miracles.

And the reason is because miracles are wrought by Christ to confirm the Word. They're not wrought by Christ just because it's convenient for us to have one. It's not.

I mean, anyone who's sick would find it convenient to be miraculously healed. Anyone who's got too little food would find it very convenient to be able to multiply their food. Anyone who's in a storm would find it convenient to stop the storm if they could.

But that's just not the way God does things. God doesn't do miracles to get us out of hard situations, because hard situations are situations that God often puts us into for our own learning, for our own growth. And if we could just call miracles down every time to relieve ourselves, we'd never grow.

I mean, we wouldn't live in a real world at all with natural laws. We'd just be, you know, countervailing the natural laws every time it was inconvenient to submit to them. God's miracles are given as a sign to verify the message of his messengers.

In Mark chapter 16 and verse 20, we are told that the apostles, whenever we're preaching the Word, the Lord working with them, confirming the Word with signs following. That's Mark 16 20. The apostles preached the Word, and the Lord worked with them, confirming their words with signs following.

In Hebrews chapter 2, beginning at verse 2, it said, For if the word spoken through the angels in the Old Testament proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation which was first spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard him, God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will? He says we heard the Word from Jesus' own followers who preached it to us, and it was confirmed by signs and wonders and miracles. And so that's what miracles are primarily for. Now, when Paul's apostleship was questioned and challenged, he defended the authenticity of his apostleship by claiming his miracles as evidence.

In 2 Corinthians 12 12, Paul's defending his apostleship, and he says, Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. Now, he's talking about himself. He's saying when I was with you, the fact that I'm genuinely an apostle was certainly demonstrated by the signs and wonders and mighty deeds I did.

Obviously, he's saying that signs and wonders and mighty deeds, these miracles, are essentially proofs that confirm that God's messengers are genuine, and that the gospel



they're preaching is truly a supernatural message. And maybe one of the reasons we see more of these kind of miracles in the primitive world, when the gospel goes out to tribal people and places like that, is because these people already know supernatural realities. They've got witch doctors.

They've got the occult. And in order for them to realize that this message that's coming by these strangers to them is a divine message, it needs to be confirmed by supernatural means, because these people already know there's supernatural power in the demonic religions they find. And many times in the book of Acts, miracles were performed in the context of confrontation with occultists, magicians or whatever.

And it was just like Moses' miracles were challenged by the magicians of Egypt, but Moses' miracles were superior to theirs. They could all turn their rods into snakes, but Moses' snake ate their snakes, you know. There came a time when the magicians of Pharaoh couldn't continue to duplicate the plagues that Moses brought down.

That the supernatural signs and wonders often are there as part of the spiritual warfare to demonstrate the superior power of God over the demonic powers that are already known and active in the regions where they're done. Anyway, that working in miracles, I don't know of anyone today who works miracles on a regular basis. There are people on TV who have a reputation for doing so, but if you look into the miracles they allegedly do, a lot of times they're kind of faked.

I do believe the gift is genuine even today, but I think we hear most of the credible stories of miracles taking place on the cutting edge of missionary activity in the third world. I'm not saying no miracles are done anywhere else. There was a time when it was very important that the rain stopped.

It had been raining for two weeks where I was living, and we had to minister in a prison. Our band had to. It was an evangelistic band.

And the rain was so bad, there was no covered area to carry our electrical equipment, our amplifiers and so forth into the prison. We had to cross an open area that was pouring down rain, and the rain had not stopped for two weeks in Santa Cruz at that time. And there was a guard there kind of smirking at us saying, how are you going to work this out? And I said, well, I guess we'll just have to pray for the rain to stop.

So I went out to the truck with the other band members and said, we've got to pray for the rain to stop. So we prayed the rain would stop. And as soon as we said amen, the rain had stopped for the first time in two weeks.

We carried the equipment in, played the set, left, packed the equipment, put the tarps over the truck and drove home. The rain started up as soon as we got back in the truck and didn't stop again for weeks. It was an incredible thing.

I don't know if that's working in miracles or just saying a prayer and God answering the prayer. I'm not a miracle worker, that's for sure. But God can still work miracles in answer to prayers of anybody He wants to.

But to have miracles associated with the ministry of any particular person as they were with the apostles and so forth is specifically something that God does to credential His ministers, I believe. Now the gift of prophecy, I won't go into this in detail only because we don't have the time. The gift of prophecy is when you receive a word, an oracle from God, it's God's actual word which then is spoken out by the person who prophesies.

And it's generally in the Bible, generally comes out in the first person. God is speaking in the first person. I, thus says God, I have this opinion.

I have this attitude toward you. I have this reaction to you. I am making this promise to you.

I'm making this threat to you or whatever. It's I, God speaking. This is different than, say, a preacher or a teacher who speaks about God in the third person does not claim to have this quite the same kind of inspiration that a prophet claims to have.

A prophet has thus says God. And that's basically saying what I'm about to say is God speaking directly. This is His actual word to you.

And it's quite a proof claim. And because it is such a profound truth claim, it's necessary to be tested. Because if God is really speaking, it's very important that we know it's Him.

If someone's faking and claiming it's God, it's very important for us to recognize the fake. Now, prophecy in the church was conducted by people who were called prophets. But Paul made it very clear in 1 Corinthians 14 that anyone might prophesy.

In fact, he said, covet to prophesy. He said to the church, desire the best gifts, especially prophecy. So every Christian might prophesy on an occasion or two or three or 10.

God can speak through anyone prophetically if he wants to. But there were certain people who were called prophets. And not all the Christians were prophets.

Paul says at the end of 1 Corinthians 12, are all apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers, do all have the gifts of miracles? The answer is no. Not all the Christians are evangelists, not all are apostles, not all of them are prophets, not all are teachers, not all work miracles, but some do. And some do it regularly, apparently, and they are the prophets, the ones who prophesy all the time.

So I don't know anyone today who's a prophet, but I've heard genuine prophecy. The person who prophesies might be a prophet or might not be. A person who is a prophet can be counted on to be a reliable prophet and prophesy, no doubt, regularly.

And I have known some people that might qualify for that. I've heard some people who prophesy fairly regularly, and they seem like they could be the real deal. But you have to test prophecy because it says in 1 John chapter 4, verse 1, beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world, he said.

Now, test the spirits means that the spirits refers to the spiritual utterances of the prophets. And the gift that is mentioned after the gift of prophecy is called the discerning of spirits. Now, spirits in this case, I believe, refers to spiritual utterances.

Discerning, some people think discerning of spirits is like knowing when there's demons present or knowing when there's angels present, being able to sense the presence of spirits and so forth. Now, I believe that sense may exist in a believer, but I believe that the expression discerning of spirits is not referring to that. I believe that as he mentions prophecy followed by discerning of spirits, and then he's also going to mention tongues followed by interpretation of tongues, that these are companion gifts.

One might even say that the receiving of healings is a companion to working miracles. One person works the healing, one person receives the healing. So also, one person prophesies, another tests the prophecy.

Discerning of spirits, I believe, is the testing of prophecy. Why do I say that? Well, this word discerning in the Greek is the same word that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 14, 29, when he says, let the prophets speak two or three and let the others judge. The word judge is the same Greek word as the word discern that's in this.

So the translation differs, but it's the same word. Paul says, let the prophets speak and let others discern. And then with reference to those who are discerning, he says, and if something is revealed to one of them, then let the prophet stop speaking for a moment and hear what is being discerned.

So discerning of spirits is also a gift of revelation, just like the prophet. The prophet claims to be receiving a genuine revelation from God. If he is, it's all good.

If he's not, then somebody else has another gift like it that discerns. That's not really from God. It keeps the prophets accountable, keeps them in check.

Now, discerning of spirits, therefore, is the testing of prophecy, just like Peter said, don't believe, or 1 John says, don't believe every spirit that tests them because many false prophets are going out in the world. The spirits you're testing are the spiritual utterances of prophets to see if they're false prophets or not. So also the spirits that are being judged here are the spiritual utterances of prophets are being judged or discerned.

And the discerning of it, as I said, according to 1 Corinthians 14, 29 is a revelation in itself given to somebody who has that gift. Now you can also discern a prophet to be

false other ways besides by revelation. For example, if it's contrary to prior revelation, like the Bible, if a prophecy is given and it's contrary to the Bible, well, then it's not genuine because the Bible is a prior revelation from God.

In 1 Kings 13, there's a prophet from Judah who goes up to Israel and he prophesies against a pagan altar up there set up by Jeroboam. And God has revealed to this prophet that he should not eat or drink anything until he gets back home to Judah. But he is tested in his loyalty to God's another prophet who comes to him and says, an angel came to me and told me that I should tell you to come and eat and drink with me.

Even though you think you shouldn't eat or drink until you get home, an angel told me that you should. And this original prophet, he succumbed to the temptation and he ate and then he was judged for it because he should have known this second prophecy was false because it was not in agreement with the earlier prophecy. It was not in agreement with the earlier revelation.

So prophecies can be tested by whether they agree with what God has already said before. And also, of course, Paul said, no one speaking by the Spirit would say Jesus is accursed. We saw that earlier in 1 Corinthians 12 at the beginning.

So clearly, any prophecy that doesn't exalt Christ is not real. Now, next, Paul talks about tongues and interpretation of tongues. Speaking in tongues is something that means speaking supernaturally in a language that you don't know.

And apparently you don't even know what it is you're saying when you're doing it. The reason I say that is because Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14, 13, if someone speaks in tongues in the church, let them pray that they may be able to interpret it. Now, obviously, if they understood what they're saying, they don't have to pray that they can interpret it.

They know. They can translate themselves. Nathan is fluent in Spanish and English.

He could speak to you in English and he could translate it in Spanish easily. He doesn't have to pray that he can interpret what he said because he knows what he said. But speaking in tongues is when you're speaking something in a language you don't know what the language is, what it means, but the Holy Spirit is giving you the utterance.

And no one understands it, apparently, in most cases, so you need a translator or an interpreter. And that, too, is a special gift. It's a revelation from God of what the tongue meant.

Now, there are tongues in the Bible that are speaking languages that people do know. And, of course, we have that example in the book of Acts in chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost. But this was not the same use of tongues Paul's talking about in 1 Corinthians 14.

How do I know that? Because on the day of Pentecost, tongues was a sign to unbelievers. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul speaks of tongues as a gift that edifies the church, meaning the Christians. In the book of Acts chapter 2, tongues was a public thing, speaking actual languages of unbelievers who recognized the languages.

That was a sign. And Paul does say in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 that it is, in fact, a sign to the unbelievers, 1 Corinthians 14, 21, that tongues is a sign to the unbelievers. But more than a sign to the unbelievers, it's also a gift that can minister to the believers, to the church.

And when Paul's talking to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 14, he's talking about the use of tongues in the church. And there he says, no one understands the tongue. You're not speaking in a language anyone understands.

He says that in 1 Corinthians 14, too. He says, he that speaks in an unknown tongue does not speak to men, but to God, because no one understands him. But in the spirit, he speaks mysteries.

So this is different. This is not like the day of Pentecost, where speaking to unbelievers in their own languages that were understood. In the church, you're speaking in tongues.

You don't know what you're saying. No one knows what you're saying. You're not speaking to men at all.

You're speaking to God. It's a prayer. Paul talks about praying in tongues.

He talks about blessing God in the spirit or in tongues. The utterance in tongues, unlike prophecy, is uttered toward God. Prophecy is God speaking to the church.

Speaking in tongues is a member of the church speaking to God. And apparently it's prayer and such things as that. If you read 1 Corinthians 14, it's clear.

Paul makes that clear. Now, Paul said that should never happen in the church unless there's an interpretation, and it shouldn't be everyone at once. Two or three total, one at a time, and only if there's an interpreter.

Now, Paul says, if there's no interpreter present, he says this in 1 Corinthians 14, 28, if there's no interpreter present and you want to speak in tongues, just speak to yourself and to God. In other words, you can just pray personally without it being made known to the church. If there's no interpreter, the church doesn't need to be bothered with it because they can't understand it.

You can't either, but God does. And if you're just going to pray privately to God, you can do it that way. So there's like three uses of tongues in the Bible.

One is assigned to the unbelievers, as in Acts 2. One is as a ministry to edify the church,

which requires an interpretation to be given. That's like, we could say, the ministry of tongues to the church. Then there's what we could call devotional tongues, which is where you're just speaking to yourself and to God, and you don't have an interpretation, but you don't need it because you're not talking to you.

You're talking to God, and he understands it. And Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14, 4, that he that speaks in an unknown tongue edifies himself. That's not bad.

It's good. In fact, edify means to build up, to spiritually build up. If you pray in tongues, you're spiritually building yourself up.

There's actually a command to that effect in Jude in verse 20. Jude verse 20 says, build yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. So to build yourself up or edify yourself by praying in the Spirit is good.

But Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14, it's good, but it's better not to do it in the church unless there's an interpretation because your activity in the church is not to build you up, but to build the church up. In your private devotional life, pray all you want to and edify yourself all you want to. It's good for you.

But in the church, let's just do those things that'll edify everybody, not just you. And that means in the church, you don't speak out in tongues unless there's an interpreter. Okay, now, you know, those gifts that are mentioned by Paul in Romans 12, we just have to briefly say something about them.

They include the gift of service, the gift of teaching, the gift of exhorting, which means to entreat or to encourage. There's the gift of giving and the gift of leading and the gift of showing mercy. Those are the gifts that Paul lists in Romans 12.

Now, most of those gifts are things that have sort of uninspired counterparts. There are people who aren't even Christians, don't have the Holy Spirit, don't have any gifts of the Spirit, and yet they serve. There are servants, there are teachers, there are people who encourage, there are people who give to charities, there are people who lead, and there's people who show mercy.

There are non-Christians who do these things. So how are these gifts of the Spirit? Well, these are all situations, I believe, where when you're serving, when you're teaching, when you're giving, when you're comforting people, when you're leading, basically what you're doing is trusting that God is using this to meet real needs that will edify the church. For example, people who have money can give anywhere they want to, but there's places you probably shouldn't give, or there's places you should give on some occasion, but you should give somewhere else on another occasion.

How do you know? How do you know where the real needs are? How do you know how to distribute your hours available for service? What tasks should you do? There's so many

things that could be done. There's so many people in need. That's where, if you've got the gift of it, you need to be led by the Spirit.

And this is true in all these activities. I would go into them in more detail, and I do in the notes, so if you look at the notes, it'll go into all these things considerably more, and if you look up the scriptures in the notes, you'll get a pretty full teaching on these things. But I just want to raise the question at the end, how do you know what your gift is? Because people ask this all the time, how do I know what my gift is? Well, first of all, I want to say knowing what your gift is is not the most important thing, because you probably operate in your gift whether you know what it's called or not.

If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, and this is in the New Testament assumed to be the case, Christians are all supposed to be filled with the Spirit, and walking in the power and the leading of the Spirit, if that is so, then as you walk in the Spirit, He will manifest Himself through you in various ways. You may end up, for example, I teach, obviously, I'm a teacher, so I didn't endeavor to be a teacher. I had people when I was 16 ask me if I'd teach them a Bible study.

I didn't know if I could do it. I never tried. I wasn't volunteering.

But I was an older Christian than some others I was with, and they said, would you teach us the Bible? And this is a high school lunchtime Bible study. So I said, okay. I didn't know if it'd work out, but it worked out well.

Actually, it turned out that God blessed it. And other people told me, oh, you're definitely a teacher. So that's how I knew.

I think a lot of times the gift that you have, other people will know it before you know it. That is, they'll know what your gift is before you're even aware of it, because they will know in what way the Holy Spirit is ministering to them through you. I mean, people may eventually come to you and say, man, you're really an encourager, or you really show, you know, a lot of mercy, or you really do clarify things.

Well, I think you're a teacher, you know, or whatever. Or you just got such a servant's heart. It's just amazing.

It's such a blessing how you serve. I mean, when people come to you and say, this is what I see God doing through you, then you'll get a clue. Oh, this must be the gift that I have.

But it's not even important for you to know what gift it is necessarily. Although it may be helpful because then you know what to concentrate on. But the most important thing is that you walk in the Spirit, you walk in love, and let the Holy Spirit do whatever He's going to do through you.

Eventually, there'll be a pattern. Eventually, there'll be something that He regularly does through you. You might notice it, but others certainly will.

And you may not know whether you have the gift until people begin to tell you, or you might begin to recognize it yourself. But the point is, there are no doubt people who think they have a certain gift, and other people don't think so. There's some people who think they're great evangelists, but, you know, other people are unimpressed, and no one's getting saved.

There's people who think they're leaders, but they're really dictators. They don't have a spiritual gift of servant leadership. So these gifts, as I said, are things that will manifest.

They are manifestations of the Spirit, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12, 7. So in order for the Spirit to manifest, He has to be present. You have to be filled with the Spirit. You need to be yielding to the Spirit.

You need to be leading, led by the Spirit. You need to be trusting the power of the Holy Spirit. And as that's the way you live your life, and that's the way every Christian is supposed to live their life.

We don't just get spiritual when we go to meetings. We're supposed to be 24-7, walking in the Spirit. Paul said, walk in the Spirit, and you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Well, that's your full-time assignment. And as you walk in the Spirit, then the gifts of the Spirit will manifest. If you read what Paul says about them, it may be that you'll identify them.

But that doesn't mean you wear a badge and say, well, now I'm a teacher, or I'm an exhorter, or I'm a prophet. Maybe you are. But it's not a badge to be worn.

It's a service to be rendered to the body of Christ. And Christ, through His Spirit, will equip you and use you in it. And the body of Christ will be edified through it.

All right, well, we've run about five minutes over time. I'm going to have to quit here, just because I actually have several other things I have to teach today for other audiences. So it's been a pleasure, although it's been a rush.

I'm sorry we haven't had time for questions and answers. I usually want to have questions and answers. This is such a cram course that we weren't able to really take that time.

But feel free to email me with questions. Steve at [thenarrowpath.com](http://thenarrowpath.com) will get to me, and I'll do my best to answer them. All right? So much.

All right. Thank you very much. God bless you guys.