

LifeSavers Bible Studies

#12: Gifts of the Spirit

As Jesus ended His ministry on earth, He knew more help was needed to prepare those who wanted to live in a perfect world. So, He gave humanity a number of special gifts!

Check one answer for each question:

I. The Helper

1. When Jesus ascended to heaven after His resurrection, He abandoned the church in its infancy.

Matthew 28:18-20: TRUE FALSE

Jesus knew that His disciples might feel abandoned and alone, so He said, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18). He made a way for them to receive "another Helper, to be with them forever" (verse 16).

2. This Helper is called the *Spirit of Truth* and is given to all who choose to love and obey God.

John 14:16-17: TRUE FALSE

This *Helper* is better known as the Holy Spirit (verse 26). The designation that is given to the Holy Spirit in this passage is the Greek word *paracletos*, which is descriptive of someone who comes up beside you to help, such as a counsellor or comforter.

It was important that Christ's disciples learn to rely upon God through faith, just as Jesus had exercised His faith and dependence in the Father (verse 10). If Jesus had stayed with them, they would have continued to rely upon His human presence and may never have learned how to trust in Him by faith. Therefore, Jesus knew it was necessary for Him to leave, so they might learn to trust Him through the person of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised to send in His place. It is by the Holy Spirit that we are enabled to increase our faith, and Who is the key to righteousness which comes by faith in Jesus. "The fruit of the Spirit is...faith..." Galatians 5:22-23

3. Jesus said His follower's works would be even greater than His, and that His Spirit would teach them all things.

John 14:12-14; 26-29: TRUE FALSE

II. Gifts of the Spirit

4. When Jesus said, "Not as the world gives, give I to you," He meant it! The fruit that Jesus gives us through His Spirit includes: *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

Galatians 5:22-23: TRUE FALSE

5. When God's people partake of these fruits, it creates humility and unity of spirit.

Ephesians 4:1-6: TRUE FALSE

The unity of Christian believers is very important because it demonstrates to the world that the subjects of God's kingdom are grounded in unselfish love.

6. When Christ ascended on high, He gave gifts to His people.

Ephesians 4:8: TRUE FALSE

7. The gifts were merely given for personal enjoyment.

Ephesians 4:12: TRUE FALSE

8. Those who receive the gifts are to use them for building up the body of believers (equipping for service, edification, unifying encouragement and truth-telling).

Ephesians 4:12-15: TRUE FALSE

There are so many spiritual gifts, no single Scripture passage contains all of them. Christ gives these gifts in various clusters and arrangements to everyone who is connected to Him. They include *wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, and the ability to speak in various tongues or languages.* (1 Corinthians 12:7-10).

The key to understanding spiritual gifts is to realize that "there are varieties of gifts, ministries and effects, "but they are all given by the "same Spirit...the same Lord...[and] the same God...for the common good" of building up the body of Christ, which is the church (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

Much like a coach utilizes the diversity of his players, God coordinates the spiritual gifts within the church. Every player is important, but each has a specific function to perform that will help the team accomplish its goal. So, the members should praise God for their gifts and not be envious of one another, wishing they were like someone else (1 Corinthians 12:14-19).

9. Paul identifies the gift of tongues as the greatest of all gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11: TRUE FALSE

Some believe having the gift of tongues proves we are Spirit led. But God doesn't elevate any one of the gifts above the others. In fact, 1 Corinthians 13 (the famous love chapter), shows that possessing any or all of the spiritual gifts is meaningless without charity, or love.

10. Without love, our religious fervour is worthless.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13: TRUE FALSE

11. Love is more important than all of the other spiritual gifts?

1 Corinthians 13:4-8: TRUE FALSE

Whatever our gifts may be, they're not as important as the attitude that motivates their use. Spiritual gifts are bestowed in various ways. Sometimes God instantaneously gives an ability, such as at Pentecost in Acts, chapter 2, when the disciples were suddenly able to speak with their audiences in languages they had never known (Acts 2:1-11). At other times, such as when Jesus sent the seventy out to preach and perform miracles, He took time to teach them the skills they would need (Luke 10). Yet the Holy Spirit was no less involved in this latter work.

Our spiritual gifts may be the "natural talents" we have cultivated over the years. These are no less miraculous than those that God may choose to give on special occasions, for He is the source of all of the gifts that we possess. Presently, when the Holy Spirit impresses us to use our talents to edify the church, and we put them to use, they become "spiritual gifts."

III. Special Revelation

12. Sometimes God uses specific people to communicate special instructions to His people.

Amos 3:7; Numbers 12:6: TRUE FALSE

Prophets were called by God at various times in history to convey a particular message that God wanted to deliver. Prophets, both men and women, are special emissaries with great responsibilities for God. A prophet is required to speak what God has told him/her to say, or suffer the consequences (Ezekiel 3:17-19).

13. When Isaiah received his call from God he was tempted to shrink from his assignment. But then an angel gave him courage by touching his mouth.

Isaiah 6:1-8: TRUE FALSE

14. Daniel's visions were accompanied by physical and psychological side effects (sleep, fainting, and fear).

Daniel 8:18, 26-27; 10:7-9, 16-19: TRUE FALSE

15. If someone claims to be a prophet we should quickly dismiss them as being deluded and fanatical.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21: TRUE FALSE

"Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20). Be careful! Do not believe without first testing the prophet and his/her message. "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (Matthew 24:24).

16. Scripture requires that prophets pass these tests: TRUE FALSE

a. 1 John 4:1-3. They must confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, and is of God.

b. Isaiah 8:20. Their message must be tested against the rest of Scripture.

c. Jeremiah 28:9. Their predictions must come to pass.

d. Deuteronomy 13:1-4. Even if their predictions come true, don't listen to them if they point you away from God and other Scripture truths.

e. Matthew 7:15-20. Their life must bear good fruit.

IV. A Prophet in the End Time

17. According to Paul, spiritual gifts are needed until "we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man." In other words, they are needed until Jesus comes.

Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10: TRUE FALSE

It appears there is still a need for the gifts of the Spirit. When the Perfect One comes we will all be united in perfect love, but until then, the Holy Spirit is the only One who holds this world together.

Prophets were not as prevalent in Biblical times as many might think. There were periods of time when there were no prophets at all, and other times when a number of the prophets were contemporaries. Not all of the prophets made contributions to Scripture. We know of prophets, such as Nathan (2 Samuel 7:1-17), Anna (Luke 2:36-38), Ahijah and Iddo (2 Chronicles 9:29), to name a few, who left no writings. The Bible mentions other prophets who came on the scene of action, but not even their names were recorded. Yet, each one was called by God and had a particular work to do. Any generation that was privileged to have a prophet among them was truly blessed.

18. According to Scripture, God's church in the last days will keep His Commandments and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 12:17: TRUE FALSE

When we understand Revelation's symbolism, we know that the dragon is Satan, and the woman is the church. A remnant is the last part of something, which in this case is the church.

19. John says the "testimony of Jesus" is the "spirit of prophecy."

Revelation 19:10: TRUE FALSE

John, the author of Revelation, was imprisoned on Patmos because he had the spirit of prophecy—"the testimony of Jesus"). (See Revelation 1:9.)

Seventh-day Adventists believe that a fulfilment of the gift of prophecy in the last-day church is evidenced in the ministry and writing of a woman named Ellen G. White. The visions and dreams she received and recorded from 1844 until she died in 1915 pass all the Biblical tests: a Christ-centred message, accuracy in their predictions, and her life and teachings harmonize with the character and doctrine of Jesus.

Although she had the equivalent of only three years of formal education, God strengthened her to overcome a tragic accident in her youth and enabled her to write some 100,000 pages of manuscript on a wide variety of subjects. These include, but are not limited to, history, medicine, health, education, finance, family relationships, counselling, church organization, and the work of ministers.

As a result of her counsel, hospitals, publishing houses, universities and industries have been successfully established all over the world for the purpose of advancing the gospel of Jesus. Specialists in their fields have examined her writing and testify of her expertise. They acknowledge that, not only did she give counsel which was far advanced for her day, but the test of time has proven that she was always accurate in sifting through the maze of misguided thinking prevalent throughout her generation.

V. A Lesser Light

Many encouraged her to proclaim herself a prophet, yet she never made this claim for herself. By much prayer she remained humble and wrote, "I cannot call myself other than a messenger, sent to bear a message from the Lord to His people" (1SM 34). "Little heed is given to the Bible and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light" (CM 125).

The confidence that Seventh-day Adventists place in the Bible is evidence that her writings have been instrumental in guiding people back to the Bible. No Adventist Christian questions Bible inspiration, nor do they place the writing of Mrs. White equal or superior to it. Although much testimony can be given regarding her life, ministry and teachings, the best way to be convinced of her prophetic gift is to read the writings of Ellen White along with your Bible. This method of study can only strengthen your ties with the Saviour and will be a great benefit to your daily walk with Jesus.

20. Would you like to learn more about Ellen White?

YES NO

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