

Christians Gone Wild!
1st Corinthians, week 27
Spiritual Gifts I: Wisdom, Knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:1–8, 11)
 August 6, 2006
 Pastor Mark Driscoll

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.
 1 Corinthians 12:7

During his life on earth, Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit to do ministry. Jesus said that one day Christians would do even greater ministry than He did (John 14:12). While this does not mean that Christians are greater than Jesus, it does mean that Christians who are also gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit can minister to more people than Jesus because there are billions of Christians today spread across the earth. Therefore, as we begin our study of spiritual gifts it is paramount that we first see that our personal ministry is the continuation of Jesus' ministry. Or, to summarize, the gifts of God are dispensed through the Spirit of God so that the church of God, can minister like the Son of God.

It is also important to note the position of Mars Hill in comparison to other churches and theologies. Considering the size of our church, we likely have members of each group, but the official position of the elders is a charismatic view.

Cessationist	Charismatic	Charismaniac	Pentecostal
Supernatural gifts (e.g., tongues and prophecy) functioned only in the early church and are not to be practiced today.	Supernatural gifts are given to every generation and should be practiced today according to the limits of Scripture.	Supernatural gifts are given to every generation. Contemporary revelations are, in effect, equal to Scripture.	Essentially the same as the charismatic position, but only Christians who speak in tongues have the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual gifts are often misunderstood

¹Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.

Sadly, it seems ignorance about spiritual gifts persists in our day. It is important to clarify some of the most debatable aspects of the spiritual gifts.

- The spiritual gifts differ from natural talents (e.g., musical ability, creativity, athletic prowess, computer skills) in that one is given at new birth and the other is given at birth.
- Since no list of spiritual gifts in the New Testament seems altogether complete, compiling all of the lists together still may not result in a complete list (1 Corinthians 12:8–10; 12:28; Romans 12:6–8; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:11).
- We are each given different portions of a gift.

- We must be open to serving outside our area of gifting.
- God will also give us passions and opportunities in addition to natural talents and spiritual gifts.
- Discovering our gift(s) is a combination of desire, joy, and effectiveness.
- Every gift must be cultivated so that we are most effective in our ministry service.

Spiritual gifts serve the lordship of Jesus

²*You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.*

The entire point of ministry and spiritual gifts is to reveal the lordship of Jesus Christ as God over all people and things. Therefore, if someone says they are a Christian or want to do ministry but they do not affirm the lordship of Jesus Christ, they do not have the Holy Spirit. The primary evidence of a person having the Holy Spirit is their love and submission to Jesus.

Spiritual gifts are given by the Trinity

⁴*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.*

Here we see that the entire Trinity is involved in gifting the church for ministry.

Spiritual gifts each exist to benefit the whole church

⁷*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

Whatever someone's gift, the purpose of the gift is to build up and benefit the entire church, not just edify the individual using the gift.

Spiritual gifts are appointed by God

¹¹*All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

Spiritual gifts are given by God's choice; we cannot choose our gift. So, anyone who is unhappy about how God has designed them is, in effect, complaining about God not giving them the gift they wanted. This is like a spoiled kid unwrapping a present only to complain about it.

Having laid some foundational principles regarding spiritual gifts, Paul then begins to list some of the spiritual gifts: "*To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit*" (v. 8). In the following weeks we will examine all of the spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament. We will begin this week with the gifts of knowledge and wisdom listed in verse eight.

Wisdom

Place in Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:8

Defined: The gift of wisdom is the ability to have insight into people and situations that is not obvious to the average person, combined with an understanding of

what to do and how to do it. It is the ability to not only see, but also apply the principles of God's Word to the practical matters of life by the "Spirit of wisdom" (Ephesians 1:17).

General makeup: These people often have an ability to synthesize biblical truth and apply it to people's lives so that they make good choices and avoid foolish mistakes. These people today function well as coaches, counselors, and consultants.

Seen in Jesus' ministry: Luke 2:40–52 says that Jesus was "filled with wisdom" as a boy and "grew in wisdom" as a young man so that the scholars of His day were "amazed at his understanding." Crowds who heard Jesus teach said, "What's this wisdom that has been given him" (Mark 6:2). In Matthew 12:42, Jesus said that He was wiser than Solomon. And in Luke 21:15, Jesus said, "I will give you words and wisdom." We are also told that Jesus is the "wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30).

Illustrated biblically: Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9), Solomon (1 Kings 3:5–28), Daniel (Daniel 1:17–20; 2:19–23).

Do you have this gift? (1) When studying God's Word, do you find that you discover the meaning and its implications before others do? (2) Do you seem to understand things about God's Word that other believers with the same background and experience don't seem to know? (3) Are you able to apply biblical truth in a practical way to help counsel others to make good life choices? (4) Do you get frustrated when people make foolish decisions that damage their quality of life because you know what they should have done instead? (5) Do you find that when people have important decisions to make they come to you for prayer and biblical counsel? (6) Do you find that when you counsel people God the Spirit gives you wisdom to share with them from Scripture, which they accept as God's truth to them through you?

Knowledge

Place in Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:8

Defined: The word of knowledge is the ability to research, remember, and make effective use of a variety of information on a number of diverse subjects.

General makeup: These people love to study, love to learn, and are not content with a surface-level knowledge of topics. They are compelled to conduct thorough research and compile their findings so that others can benefit from their long hours of focused study. People with this spiritual gift love God with "all [their] mind" (Mark 12:29–30). And these people tend to like footnotes.

Seen in Jesus' ministry: Throughout His ministry, Jesus frequently quoted the Old Testament Scriptures from memory because He had committed Himself to studying Scripture so faithfully. Jesus also rebuked the scholars of His day because they studied the Bible but failed to love Him, which is the purpose of all study (John 5:39).

Illustrated biblically: Ezra (Ezra 7:10), Solomon (Ecclesiastes 1:13; 7:25; 8:9), Timothy (2 Timothy 2:15)

Do you have this gift? (1) Do you love to study? (2) Do you have a good memory that retains and compiles lots of information? (3) Have others frequently pointed out your ability to know and understand God's Word? (4) Do people often come to you with difficult problems and questions from the Bible, seeking your insight because they know you will have the answer or find it? (5) In studying God's

Word, have you found that new insights and understanding of difficult subjects come easy to you? (6) Are you frustrated when you hear bad teaching from someone who has not done their homework?

Verses for next week: 1 Corinthians 12:9–11