

## Understanding Our Spiritual Gifts

### by Dr. Harley Ihm

God gives us specific gifts for the building up of the church. As part of the Body of Christ, we should all discover our gifts and develop them as part of our faith life. However, God does not send us an invitation with our assigned roles. It is our responsibility to seek out God's gift/gifts to us and apply them. Too often, churches use a canned program that is of little or no help in grasping the actual gifts and how to use them. Sometimes this leads to a misunderstanding of various Spiritual Gifts, their importance, and their specific purpose.

#### ***Read Romans 12:3-8***

1. What instructions does Paul give us concerning our gifts? (*Do not think more highly of yourself than you should. God provides our Spiritual Gifts. We can't think what we have been given is any better or more important than what others have been given. God knows the level of our faith and has given us what we need to be an effective part of the body.*)
2. How do some people become prideful with their Spiritual Gift? Why?
3. Notice how it takes all the functions (Spiritual Gifts) to build up the body of Christ, which is the Church. How important does that truth make it for each of us to discover and use our Spiritual Gifts for the church?
4. God calls on us to use those gifts for the church body's health. What happens to the health of the church if some people don't care to discover or use their gifts? (*There are no unimportant parts in the health of the church body!*)
5. Paul names some of the gifts that were in place in the first-century church.
  - a. prophecy – 4394 - *προπητεία* – prophētia – God used prophets to tell about future events, exhortations, and warnings. It does not mean visions are given to individuals today. It was given by the laying on of the Apostles' hands when churches were being started. (See Acts 8:9-25 – Philip had miraculous gifts and yet could not impart them to others.) There were no NT Scriptures at this time, and therefore, prophecy was needed to help the church grow much faster. These were not new prophetic words and visions, but rather, they were the miraculous ability to teach what had not yet been written. It was greatly needed until the canon of Scripture was complete.
    - i. How is the prophetic word of God best spread today now that we have the complete Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, to thoroughly equip everyone for service and salvation? (*Teaching the Bible accurately. That means being a serious student who spends time digging deep to hear the voice of God from the Scriptures and teach others to do so.*)
  - b. service – 1248 - *διακονία* - diakonia – to serve others or to serve in a ministry. The best example of these godly servants is found in Acts 6. It is assumed that this was probably the choosing of the first deacons that are later mentioned in 1 Timothy and Titus. They were to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom to be able to solve a major problem with food distribution to the widows. It was keeping the Apostles from focusing on preaching, teaching, and planting churches. They were the servants who oversaw the ministry of servants.

- i. What are some of the areas of service that you have a passion for?
- ii. Are there areas of need that you see neglected? Wouldn't that call for us to take that to the Servant Leadership of the church?
- c. teaching – 1321 - *διδασκω* - didaskō – to know, to teach, someone skilled in teaching, knows solid doctrine, can instruct on content and context.
  - i. According to Paul, what is required of someone who believes they have the gift of teaching? It implies that they are very serious. They will dig into the Word. It is not someone who buys a lesson and simply hands it out to fill in the blanks.
- d. exhortation – 3870 - *παρακαλεω* – parakaleō – to call, to invite, appeal, ask, beg, encourage, implore – This is the heart of someone who wants no one to be left behind and does something about it. They can't be quiet.
  - i. How critical is the gift of exhortation? It will obviously be someone that God wired as more of an extrovert. They are not afraid of rejection or ridicule. The lost person or the Christian living in sin who needs someone to help them see needs that gift to be used by someone who deeply cares.
- e. generosity – 572 - *'απλοτησ* - haplotēs – sincerely, not self-seeking, generous giving.
- f. Where would you see this Spiritual Gift of generosity being used? This is a person who would never seek to get his name on the greatest donor list!
- g. leadership. (*Leading well takes time, energy, commitment, and an understanding of the role of God's church and equipping people to make it healthy.*)
- h. mercy – (*If you have the gift of mercy, it is not something that wears you out. It actually gives you joy to give mercy.*)
  - i. What types of ministry should be embraced by people with the gift of mercy?

### **Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-9**

1. According to Paul, how important is knowing our Spiritual Gifts? (*Paul tells us that He does not want us to be uninformed. However, that is the Holy Spirit giving those words to Paul to write to us. It is the fabric that makes up the church.*)
2. Notice that Paul mentions there are a variety of gifts and a variety of services that the Holy Spirit has given to us. Varieties was the Greek word for divisions or classes. Some were for specific periods of time and purposes, while others were for much longer periods of time and purposes.
  - a. gifts – 5486 - *χηρισμα* – charisma – endowments given to us by God. They are not anything we have created. They are abilities that God provides as He chooses.
  - b. service – 1248 - *διακονια* - diakonia – (already explained in Romans 12)
  - c. activities – 1755 - *ενεργημα* – energēma – energy that is created only by God's grace. God alone empowers the gifts and service to the Kingdom through our Spiritual Gifts.
3. Who receives these various Spiritual Gifts? (*Each of us who accept Jesus as Lord and receive His Holy Spirit to live in as His temple or dwelling place.*)

4. For what purpose is each manifestation (gift) of the Holy Spirit? (*The common good, meaning the health and power of the church, the Body of Christ. Now Paul breaks them down for the Corinthian Christians as he did for the Christians in Rome.*)

- a. Spirit of utterance – 3056 – *λογοσ* – logos – to speak intelligently, declare the word, preach, declare doctrine (*This was a gift the Apostles had. It was the ability of Paul, Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, James, Peter, and Jude were given. There were uttering the word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit and spoke it before it was written. The other Apostles had this gift when they declared the wonders of God on the day of Pentecost. All the Old Testament prophets had the Spirit of utterance. They all delivered the Word of God before it came to be in the book that we have today.*)

  - i. Could this be claimed and used improperly today to deceive people? (*David Koresh; Jim Jones; Joseph Smith, Mohammad*)

- b. Spirit of wisdom – 4678 – *σοφια* – sophia – deep knowledge, moral insight, learned research, knowledge of hidden things, deep understanding, and yet the ability to practically apply the knowledge.
- c. Utterance of knowledge – 1108 – *γνωστισ* – gnōsis – knowledge, understanding, comprehension – the ability to understand deep ideas and teachings. This would be like the deeper, scholar's level of understanding truth.
  - i. Where is the best source of learning from those with the gift of knowledge and wisdom?
  - ii. How are you seeking knowledge and wisdom from those with those gifts?
- d. Faith – 4102 – *πιστισ* – pistis – moral convictions, trusting all God says, trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior, confidence in truth.
  - i. How are faith and deep moral conviction shaping your life choices and plans?
- e. Healing – 2386 – *ιαμα* – iama – a cure, healing
  - i. Was this a temporary gift when the church was being built?
  - ii. Do you think God might work healings on the mission field where there are no churches or Bibles prevalent?
  - iii. Could evangelism be the greatest healing gift of all?
- f. Working of miracles – 1411- *δυναμισ* - dunamis – power, strength, mighty works, miracle, abilities – Can be both physical and moral – can also mean manly vigor in opposition to a spirit of cowardice – warlike power
- g. Prophecy - previously addressed.
- h. Ability to distinguish between spirits – 1253 *διακρισισ* – diakrisis – judicial estimation, to determine clearly, to see truth and righteousness, scruples
  - i. How is this an important gift when you are confused about a true teaching from Scripture?
- i. Various kinds of tongues – 1100 – *γλωσσα* – glōssa – a language that is not known to the speaker, unnaturally acquired.
  - i. See Acts 2:1-13
  - ii. How many tongues did the people hear?
  - iii. In the description, the people did not claim to hear some angelic language. They heard them declare the wonders of God clearly in their own native tongue.

However, they used the word *διαλεκτος*, dialektos – a dialect. What dialects can you name? (National dialects or languages, but even more so with northern dialect, southern dialects, the English is different in Scotland, England, Ireland and America.)

- j. Interpretation of tongues – 2058 - *ἐρμηνεία* – hermēneia – translation
  - i. Who was interpreting on the Day of Pentecost?
  - ii. If the people all heard in their native dialects, was the miraculous interpretation coming from God coherent?
  - iii. Yes, but not to everyone. All 15 dialects were divinely addressed. God was the interpreter at that time. Later, people would need that gift. For example, let's say I am on a mission trip in Germany. There are people from Iran, Russia, Japan, China, and Spain in the meeting. I am preaching the Gospel to them. If each of them clearly understood my preaching in their native dialect, that would be like it was on the day of Pentecost. However, this gift of interpretation could be fulfilled by people with a gift for learning and understanding languages who can interpret in the dialects of the people gathered there today.
- 5. Who decides what gifts go to whom? (*The Holy Spirit sends them out in the amount He decides and to whom He decides. His plan is God's perfect plan. Man has no right to take or not to take what the Holy Spirit determines will build the church.*)

### **Read 1 Corinthians 12:28-31**

(It specifically states that it is God who makes all decisions for gifting. He does this through the work of the Holy Spirit.)

- a. First, setting apart – first - 4412 – *πρωτον* – prōton – First in order of importance, to begin with (*How were the 12 apostles and later Paul the beginning work of God through Jesus' leading?*)
  - i. apostles – 652 - *ἀπωστολος* – apostolos – a special ambassador of the gospel commissioned directly by Jesus. (*The Holy Spirit had Paul write, "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord" Ephesians 2:19-21 NIV. Upon whom is the church, the household of God, raised? The prophets pointed to Christ. Christ taught and discipline the Apostles. The Holy Spirit led them to teach and write the NT and connect all the dots God had laid out before creation.*)
- b. Second, prophets – (already addressed)
- c. Third, teachers – (already addressed) – However, it is important to note that it would be at least 20 years after the crucifixion before we have the first written gospel by Mark. That would have required a miraculous gift from God to have that knowledge

and be 100% correct. There could be no mistakes in the oral teaching until the written Word began to happen.)

- d. Miracles – God had given some people the ability to work miracles to show that power of God so people would believe the message. We see that Philip, who was a deacon (Acts 6), went to preach in Samaria during the severe persecution and performed miracles that began an evangelistic outreach in Samaria. Note in Acts 8 two apostles were sent down to Samaria to give others miraculous gifts. It is noted (8:17-18) that the miraculous gift was passed on by the Apostles, but not by Philip.
- e. Healing - (already addressed)
- f. Helping – 484 - *ἀντιληψίσ* – antilepsis – to provide relief. Used of those appointed to take care of the poor and the sick. Those who have a passion for helping those in need. (*What are some ways this gift is seen in the church today? If we have it, we are called to use it. Not everyone has this gift.*)
- g. Administrating – 2941 - *κυβερνησίσ* – kubernēsis – to steer, to administrate, to direct, used of a ships pilot or captain. (*Why would this be a critical gift for Elders, Deacons, and Pastors? They have to be wise in using God's charts to get us safely to where we are going. Do you think this is why some churches die or never grow?*)
- h. Various tongues – 1100 – *γλωσσα* – glōssa – generic word that includes all languages but not specific to dialects. Like saying English, but the dialect can be northern, southern, Irish, Scottish, English, etc.
- i. Interpret – 1329 – *διερμηνεύω* – diermēneuō – to translate a language. Some were given the miraculous gift of being able to interpret a foreign language so others who did not know that language would not be confused.)
- j. After all of this teaching on the Spiritual Gifts God provides in various forms, what does Paul go on to say as a summary in verse 31? (*Earnestly desire the higher gifts. Wait a minute! You mean there are higher gifts that all these miraculous ones mentioned? Higher – 3173 – μεγασ – megas – high, profound, great, enlarge, strong, severe, used of a mighty gale! – Wow! You mean there are gifts more powerful than all of those we have just studied? There is something greater than being empowered as an apostle or prophet or healer or teacher? How can that be? The Holy Spirit is about to have Paul tell us the path to greatness in ministry in the eyes of God. Paul says that he will show us a still more excellent way to serve God and man. It is the path to fulfilling the greatest commandment to love the Lord with all my heart, all my soul, all my mind, and all my strength AND loving my neighbor as myself. There is no great way to serve God and His kingdom on earth!*)

### **Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3**

1. First, he addresses tongues and lets them know that it does not make them anything unless it is born out of love. If I could learn all the languages in the world and preach to anyone I come across, if it was not driven by agape, unselfish love, the love Jesus had when He left heaven, then my teaching would not come from God, no matter how wise it seems.

- a. *(What happens in the eyes and ears of God if His Spirit is not driving our teaching and preaching? Imagine standing in the presence of God and taking a mallet and a cymbal and crashing it with all our might! Do you think that is not annoying? God says it is. Love for others has to be the fire within me moving me to teach others. It is not about numbers so I look great on paper when someone is reading about the church.)*
- 2. Paul goes on to say that even if I had powers that could predict the future and have a complete understanding of all of life and how it all works, and if my faith was so great I could tell a mountain to slide off into the ocean, even if I could be that great and powerful if I do not have the sacrificial love of God then it is all meaningless! I am nothing before my Creator! *(This reminds me of David Koresh and Jim Jones, who were brilliant users of Scripture. Most people who start cults have photographic minds that overwhelm people to the point they trust everything they say. This simple test from Paul would silence those people. They would have no followers.)*
- 3. If I take a vow of poverty and give up everything I own, God is not impressed. Even if I were willing to be a martyr and die in the flames but am not giving the love of Christ to others from my heart, I gained nothing.

### ***Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7***

- 1. Love is the power that drives true ministry for everyone. There are no exceptions. If that makes us a small person, then don't you wish there were more small people? This list of qualities that define true agape love is a great personal growth tool, church development tool, and marriage enrichment tool. I use it in premarital counseling. It is the only way two people can become one flesh as God created us to be in a marriage relationship.
- 2. True love's check list:
  - a. Patient - 3114 - *μακροάθυμια* – makrothumia – to be long minded, slow to react, patient, forbearing, willing to wait. Instead of giving a definition of true love, Paul gives us a rich description. All of these attributes point out what love does and does not do.
    - i. *Why is patience critical to truly giving agape love?*
  - b. Kind – 5541 - *χρητευεται* – chrēsteuetai – to be useful, kind, benevolent. Obviously, this requires compassion that calls us to show love.
    - i. *How do we pursue kindness toward others?*
  - c. Does not envy – 2206 - *ζηλω* – zēloō – to have a warmth of feeling for or against, to covet, earnest desire, envy, jealous
    - i. *How can we best avoid envy and jealousy? If we recognize it, how do we conquer it?*
  - d. Does not boast – 4068 – *περπερευομαι* – perpereuomai – to boast, to brag, for pride to cause you to think too highly of yourself, to strut like a peacock and expect others to look up to you. It reminds me of the
    - i. *How does that happen in a Christian's life?*

- e. Not arrogant – 5448 – *φυσιοῦ* – phusioō – to blow, to inflate, make proud, vain, arrogant, puffed up – It is the personality that embraces boasting and elevating oneself. The word is used to describe how a frog puffs up just before it lets out a croak.
  - i. *If you are arrogant and boastful, how will that destroy and marriage?*
  - ii. *How can you be salt and light for Jesus if you are arrogant?*
- f. Not rude – *ασχημονεῖ* – aschēmonei – to not behave properly, to be rude, not caring what anyone thinks – ill-mannered – repulsive – an in-your-face type person.
  - i. *What does this do to the “I am the way I am, get over it” attitude for a Christian?*
- g. Does not insist on its own way – the person who loved never puts their own pleasure, advantage or honor above others.
  - i. *How do we see this playing out in Matthew 20:20-26?*
  - ii. *Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-31 and 1 Corinthians 3.*
  - iii. *How would you describe the level of love at Corinth?*
- h. Not irritable – does not fly off in a rage. The word is related to sharpening a knife or sword. We are called to sharpen the control of our temper and feelings. Love does not allow us to fly into a rage and react without thinking of the consequences.
  - i. *What are some things that cause people to fly off the handle in the church?*
  - ii. *What are some ways husbands and wife prevent this emotion?*
- i. Not resentful - *λογισζέται* – logiszetai – is an accountant’s word used for entering an item onto the page of a ledger so it will not be forgotten. True love does not keep a ledger of diary of mistakes.
  - i. *How does this trait cause division in churches?*
  - ii. *How does this trait cause division in marriages? (In premarital counseling, I use a session called ‘throwing out your baggage’ for those who have been divorced. People often carry past hurts into the marriage and react from past hurts that they have journaled.)*
- j. Does not rejoice at wrongdoing – Love never rejoices when people fall into sin. We hurt for them, pray for them, and hope for their change. That also means that love causes us to help the fallen and not to embrace their sin.
  - i. *Read 1 Corinthians 5.*
  - ii. *What were the Corinthian Christians doing wrong that had to be addressed? (True love does not embrace sin within the church. True love walks beside the fallen person to help them change. It does not look the other way and pretend they are holy by not judging a fellow believer.)*
  - iii. *What are some ways the church can be guilty of rejoicing with wrongdoing?*
- k. Rejoices with the truth – Truth is most likely the Gospel message. We rejoice that God wants no one to perish but for everyone to come to repentance and faith through Jesus. We are excited as the family of God grows. Love lives with our eyes wide open for spiritual transformation around us.
  - i. *How could we promote this aspect of love through our family?*
  - ii. *How could we grow it in our small groups and church?*

- iii. *Why do you think God added this to the qualities listed for the do's and don'ts in His list on the attributes of agape love?*
- 1. Bears all things - *στεγεῖ* – stegei – means to cover, a roof or covering, hide, conceal, to not make known – Love does not share the dirty laundry of others and feel like we are helping and caring.
  - i. *How does this fail on social media?*
  - ii. *Why do you think we feel so good about sharing the latest dirt we heard about someone?*
  - iii. *What can we do spiritually when someone begins to share the dirty laundry of others with us?*
- m. Believes all things – This simply means that love is never in a hurry to rush to judgment. Love withholds judgment until all the facts are in. It is always eager to believe the best about others.
- n. Hopes all things – believes, hopes, and endures seem to form a climax. It is as if to say that when love has no evidence, it believes what is best until otherwise enlightened. When someone fails many times, it always hopes that this will be the time everything changes.
- o. Endures all things - *ὑπομενεῖ* – hupomenei – Love is long-suffering. It deals with trials and suffering and bears them with noble courage. It makes a choice to use them wisely for spiritual growth.
  - i. *How is this neglected in the church when conflicts happen?*
  - ii. *What does James 1 teach us about this attribute of agape love?*
  - iii. *If it is difficult for us to love like this, what does James tell us to do to make it possible?*
- p. Never ends – Paul is showing us that there is something that is more permanent, more powerful than any Spiritual gift. It is without end. It transcends this world and is embedded in eternity.
  - i. *Why do we focus less on love than on various gifts is this is an eternal gift from God?*
  - ii. *When you are hurting and need to feel true love, which of the Spiritual gifts would minister to you more than the person who is there and walks with you through the fire? That is true love from God.*

### **Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-12**

1. Prophecies will pass away, tongues will cease, and knowledge will pass away.
  - a. Prophecies - Done away is a passive form of the verb, meaning it is not the man who causes them to pass away. It is God who causes prophecies to pass away.
  - b. The cessation of tongues, the ability to speak a foreign language that the speaker does not know, is in the middle voice. That means that at some point, the speaker pauses and speaks no more. Paul is saying that, at some point, they will lapse into silence. It is not actively the speaker who makes that decision. God will cause the cessation.

- c. Knowledge was the NT Scriptures being preached and taught before they were in writing. The Apostles could not be everywhere. God needed to empower people to preach and teach with 100% accuracy the Word of God before it was compiled in the writings we have today in the 27 New Testament letters.
  - i. *Why would we need this gift today?*
  - ii. *How has this gift been misused by people after the writing of the NT?*
- 2. All this was temporary.
  - a. We know – at the time of the writing of Corinthians, the NT was not complete. It would not be complete until John finished his writing in AD 95. The miraculous gift of God of Spiritual Knowledge was needed. The church was growing and expanding and the Word had to be kept pure. The first complete copies of single New Testament books appear around 200 AD, and the earliest complete copy of the New Testament, the Codex Sinaiticus, dates to the 4th century. Could this be the prophetic time frame that God was placing in Paul's mind? Or, maybe Paul only knew the day was coming but would have no idea of when that would happen in the future.
    - i. *What is the danger in people coming today with a new word straight from God?*
    - ii. *This was the Mohammad story that began Islam around 610 AD*
    - iii. *This was the Joseph Smith story that began the Mormon religion in the early 1800's.*
  - b. We prophecy in part – This has the imagery of several people at work assembling a puzzle. Each did their part until the work was complete. In the NT today, we have the completed work of all the prophets bringing us the Word of God with the Old and New Covenants and Testaments in place to give us the finished work of God.
    - i. *Some people today still claim to be prophets. What would they prophesy that would not add to the Word of God?*
    - ii. *Some people today believe they are apostles and prophets. Catholicism developed the teaching that each pope is Peter's chosen replacement. If the pope makes a pronouncement as speaking ex-cathedra, then it is saying this is directly from God to the current Apostle and is God's absolute truth. That means it must be taken as the infallible word of God through His apostle.*
  - c. But when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
    - i. perfect - 5046 – *τελειον* – teleion - something that is fully developed, complete, mature. In the context of the more excellent way, this would seem to indicate Paul is pointing to the day when the New Testament is complete that the Tongues, Prophecy, and Knowledge of God was compiling. Those writings together show us and teach us how to love like Jesus loved. The New Testament joins the Old Testament to show us what agape love looks like, from the creation of the world to the new creation. It seems that Paul's prophecy is best explained by the compiling of the entire Bible for all to have to read God's words straight from His book.
      - 1. *Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. What does Paul tell us that we are still lacking in God's Word?*

- ii. comes – to arrive, the grammar tells us that it is something that will certainly happen but has not happened at this time.
- iii. The partial will be done away – partial refers to verse 9, where we are told that at this time of writing, we know in part and prophesy in part. They were useful lights in the darkness, but when the light is fully turned on, they were irrelevant and ceased to exist. We have the entire Word of God to lead us to salvation. There is no ‘rest of the story.’ The great news is we do not have to determine if someone claiming to speak a new word from God should be heard.
- d. Paul’s analogy – at this time, there was only a partial understanding of God’s plan. It was still in the building stage.
- e. Paul summarizes his teaching. There are three remaining Spiritual Gifts that will drive our faith and the church once the perfect comes. It will be a time when we can clearly see all we need to know from God about salvation and His plan through Jesus. It had not arrived at the time of the writing of Corinthians in AD 51-52. It will be a time when we have grown up in faith and understanding. We will then be able to clearly see all God wants us to know to be complete as the body of Christ.
  - i. *Paul says it is a time when we will see face to face. Can we fully see Jesus through the Scriptures that we now have?*
  - ii. *Are the parts that were missing completely at this time?*

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:13 – “But now...”**

1. abides – 3306 - *μενει* – menei – present tense, meaning it is continually with us to remain. But now, possibly meaning at the present time and continuing, This seems to be arriving at the meat of the teaching. Something will be permanently with us.
2. Faith remains – the relationship with Jesus remains after the miraculous Spiritual gifts have ceased.
3. Hope remains – hope is a certain we have that will be realized. Our hope in Christ will never go away in this life or the next.
4. Love remains – the agape unconditional love that Jesus brought to us and taught us how to live out will be moving people forever. Love driven by our faith and hope will accomplish ministry and relationships that nothing in this life can touch.
5. What is the greatest gift of all that should drive us? Love – There is nothing greater in this world than the love of Christ living in us and guiding all we do, think, believe or say.
  - a. *How can the church better live out the agape love of God?*
  - b. *How can you daily increase your love for others?*

**Read 1 Corinthians 14:1**

1. Pursue love – *διωκω* - diōkō – is the word used of a hunter chasing his game. or a runner pushing with all they have toward the finish line. It is a pursuit with passion and persistence.

- a. *How can we pursue love with that deep intensity?*
- b. *What prevents us from loving with such passion and conviction?*

2. Earnestly desire spiritual gifts – They are still what the Holy Spirit uses to build the church. In AD 51-52, the miraculous gifts were still greatly needed to spread the Gospel and build the church, Jesus' body. The foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus as the chief cornerstone was still being laid for the building of Jesus' body on earth. He is wrapping up the teaching and calling on people to passionately get out there and use whatever God has provided to build the church with urgency.

- a. prophesy – it was still greatly needed at this time to teach the Word of God. It was far greater than speaking in tongues. It was proclaiming the Word of God.

***Read 1 Corinthians 14:12***

1. What passion should drive our faith? (*Building up the church with whatever that takes to be successful.*)

***Read 2 Corinthians 8:7***

1. Some people have the gift of generous giving no matter what life is handing them. Notice that Paul mentions graces that they are called to excel in. Faith, speech, knowledge, earnestness, love and giving.

- a. How do you excel in faith?
- b. How do you excel in speech?
- c. How do you excel in knowledge?
- d. How do you excel in your earnestness in your faith?
- e. How do you excel in love?
- f. How do you excel in giving?

2. Some people have a gift of generous giving. We are told that to whom more is given, more is expected. How does that apply?

***Hebrews 2:1-4***

1. What does the writer of Hebrews tell us about the miraculous gifts?

2. How do our Spiritual Gifts also attest to the salvation available in Jesus?

***1 Peter 4:10-11***

1. Who has received a spiritual gift?

2. What are we called to do with it?

3. How important is it that we discover how we can best lift up Jesus according to our gift?

4. We should speak Scripture as the very words of God, not the words of man from a book.

5. We should excel in our serving that lifts up Jesus.

6. Our goal for life is to glorify God through our faith in Jesus Christ. That means we have to be able to help others see Jesus and understand our Creator and His love for us.

## Plan for Developing and Using Your Spiritual Gifts

1. What will I do to increase my knowledge of Scripture to help various people I encounter who I can relate to with my life experiences? (*Our past and God's hand in our deliverance and change is a powerful tool for connecting, teaching and helping those people who have similar situations they are facing. What Scriptures did God use to help you through these trials? What new Scriptures can you find that address those life issues?*)
2. What trials in life cause me to be deeply compassionate? (*Identify past hurts you have overcome and pray for God to show you people who are hurting from similar trials and give you a deep sensitivity and compassion. Pray you do not walk by like the priest and the Levite in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. BE a neighbor with God's help. Compassion is an incredible Spiritual Gift.*)
3. What talents has God given me that can be used in the church setting? (*Make a list of all the ministries in the church and identify the Spiritual Gifts that help make them effective. Talent is in various areas, from communication, music, graphics, art, organization, leadership, cooking, teaching, nursery service, etc., needs people passionate to serve and build up the effectiveness of the church.*)
4. What talents has God given me that can be used in the community? (*The community needs to see the heart of Jesus. It is love that is the most powerful witness. Make a list of needs within the community. Do you have any talents or gifts that can meet those needs? Do you know people who do whom you can encourage? Remember, the Great Commission said, "...as you are going, make disciples..." This means that everyday life is the mission field. It isn't at church every Sunday. We need that, but it does not transform those lost and without hope.*)
5. What talents has God given me that can be used in social media for lifting up Jesus? (*Social media dominates every moment of our culture today. We can seize that reality and use it for the glory of God. Be the one online who is always showing love, encouraging, helping, providing positive truth, comfort, and joy.*)
6. Do I have something I've learned that I could help others within a blog or podcast? (*If you have writing or speaking abilities, create a blog or a podcast that gives hope, teaching, powerful ideas for dealing with life, etc. Some people have collected thousands or even millions of followers. This means you will have to devote yourself to serious study for the topics you address and be ready with clear, powerful and Biblical answers. This could be a new avenue of outreach for the church.*)
7. Do I have leadership qualities that cause people to want to listen to me or seek my advice? (*Jesus said that the sheep know the shepherd and the shepherd knows the sheep. The sheep follow the shepherd's voice. No one can lead unless they know the needs of the people they are leading, the needs of the people they are leading, and the purpose of their leading. Great leaders must love people and care deeply for them. Leaders should have the gift of hospitality, which means, "to love strangers." That means you cannot wait to get to know someone who you do not know. Without a passion for close relationships, leadership often fails.*)

8. Are there help ministries that lift Jesus up that need servants to help them financially or physically? (*Some people have been blessed with the ability to be successful. If God has blessed you financially, you have a great responsibility to help others in His name. It is a Spiritual Gift to be able to give generously. However, that also means giving wisely. Just giving large amounts of money means nothing. Rate various mission or outreach opportunities. How deeply are they actually needed? Prioritize them according to the greatness of the need and if the outreach is truly seen as Jesus reaching out to them. Only the greatest needs should be addressed. Evaluate how this will show them Jesus if you support it. That means getting involved in knowing the workings of every outreach and its effectiveness. Invest wisely! Maybe there is a great need that is not being addressed, and you need to organize and build the ministry.*)
9. Faith, hope, and love remain. The greatest power for building the church, as Jesus called us to do, is through serious agape love. We need the eyes of Jesus to see the world, especially the lost as Jesus saw them. Our purpose as Christians is to increase the body of Christ. To do that, we have to be His ambassador, doing His work, until He returns. Why did Jesus say He came?
  - a. *Harassed and helpless*
  - b. *Sick who need a doctor*
  - c. *Sheep without a shepherd*
  - d. *Dying in their sins*
  - e. *Poor who need good news*
  - f. *Imprisoned who need set free*
  - g. *Blind who need to see*
  - h. *Make God visible to people*
  - i. *Seek and save the lost*
  - j. *To offer life*
  - k. *To offer peace*
  - l. *To bring the lost sheep home*
  - m. *To serve*
  - n. *To suffer for us and take our punishment*