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SERMON TITLE The Power of the Holy Spirit

SERIES We Need the Holy Spirit

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KEY SCRIPTURE 1 Corinthians 12

SYNOPSIS The Holy Spirit distributes supernatural gifts to believers who are willing and ready for him to work through them.

HIGHLIGHTS Closing Song: The Power of Your Presence



We Need the Holy Spirit

☞ The Power of the Holy Spirit

We've been talking about the Holy Spirit recently – we need the Holy Spirit. Jesus said it was for our good that he was going away because it meant that we would receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a gift from God who is always good. To fulfill God's calling on your life; to rebuild after a major setback; to reach out to a lost and dying world, we need the power of the Holy Spirit. It's the Spirit of God working in the people of God that will build the Kingdom of God.

It's the Holy Spirit who will stir us to minister effectively. He will shift us and steer us in his way. As we step out and begin to minister to others, the Holy Spirit will support us, speak to us and speak through us. We need the Holy Spirit, and we need to pay attention to his leading, becoming sharper and more fine-tuned over time.

Power is always associated with the Holy Spirit:

Judges 14 Samson killed a lion bare-handed
1 Kings 18 Elijah outran a chariot for about 16 miles
Acts 6 Stephen performed signs and wonders
Acts 14 God confirmed Paul & Barnabas with signs

When we think of the power of the Holy Spirit, we typically think of the gifts of the Spirit.

Lists of gifts are found in...

Romans 12:6-8 1 Corinthians 12 Ephesians 4:11

Today's key text:

☞ 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. 7 **Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.** 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 **All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.**

In verse 1 it says, "I don't want you to be ignorant about spiritual gifts." Sadly, many Christians are ignorant exactly here. God wants us to know about these things. Later, in verse 31 and again in 14:1, it says we should eagerly desire the gifts.

We know about the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are evidence of growth as the Holy



Spirit works in us, and we almost universally enjoy talking about those things. But when it comes to the gifts of the Spirit there are a few people that get nervous. I think that may be why the Apostle Paul here continually makes the emphasis about the same Spirit. v. 4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. v.5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. v.6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God. Then in verse 11... all these are the work of one and the same Spirit...

It's the Holy Spirit who lives within the believer's heart. It's the Holy Spirit that works in us to become more and more Christlike. It's the Holy Spirit who develops godly fruit in our character. And, it's the same Holy Spirit who distributes powerful gifts to us. God's character is generous and giving. God gives us the Holy Spirit, and he, in turn, gives us these spiritual gifts.

So, if God and the Holy Spirit are handing out gifts, I want to receive what he has for me. How about you? We need to know more about these gifts so that we are not ignorant or uninformed. So, let's talk about the power of the Holy Spirit as evidenced in his gifts.

v. 4 "Different kinds of gifts" - That means there is a diversity, a variety of gifts; they are not all the same, yet there is only one Giver, the Holy Spirit, who works through the gifts. This is fitting for the body of Christ, which is made up of many and various parts; not all the same, so that it is a complete, healthy body. And so, there are various gifts so that the body of Christ may be built up in every way necessary.

☞ **Gift = charisma; a gift of grace which is not earned.** Here's an important point to remember: if someone has the ability to operate in one or more of these gifts, it does not mean they are some special person or some kind of Super Christian. These are gifts which are given simply by the Holy Spirit's determination. So, this should do away with any kind of egotism with the gifted person as well as any kind of inferiority complex on others. These are purely unearned gifts.

Verses 7 and 11 tell us that the gifts are given to each or every one as the Spirit determines. This means that these gifts are for all believers. They are not restricted to pastors and evangelists, nor to a few ultra-Christians. They are for everyone.

Verse 7 also reminds us that the gift is not for the receiver only, but for the common good. The gifts are not intended to make you look cool or feel all tingly. These gifts are distributed in order to help and benefit others. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is not to promote any man, not even to lift himself up, but to glorify and represent Jesus.

In context here, it is referring to extraordinary abilities or powers given to individuals in order to serve the church and to confirm God's word. Paul also calls these "manifestations" of the Spirit. ☞ **Manifestation = exhibition; expression;** from a root meaning to make actual and visible.

The Holy Spirit is always present in and among Christians. However, at some times the Spirit's presence is more *apparent* than at other times. There are times when He may choose



to *manifest* Himself with a display of power which then makes Him more apparent, more visible.

Purpose of the Gifts:

☞ **To benefit others and build up the church** (cf. 1 Peter 4:10; Romans 12)

☞ **Confirm God's message**

In John 10:37-38 Jesus told people to believe his miracles so they would know God. Then, in Acts 14:1 Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.

☞ **Win the lost**

In John 6:2 and 14 a great crowd followed Jesus and acknowledged his authority because of the miracles he was performing.

Sometimes people get sidetracked when the Spirit of God is at work, thinking it's all about feeling something special or showing off and getting attention. *It reminds me of Glen Berteau's testimony. When he was a very new believer, he was invited to go along and play guitar with a friend who was preaching at a meeting. In short, there was a powerful move of God in the place and people were reacting to God's presence. Some were being stirred by God in such a way that they were shouting and others were dancing. Being a naïve, new believer, he didn't know what to make of it, but assumed it was "showoff" time, so he began to play some fancy guitar solo, until his friend waved him off. It's hilarious to hear him tell it.*

The gifts of the Spirit are not about showing off; they are for helping others, confirming God's word and winning the lost.

Three main categories: Gifts of Comprehension; Capability; Communication

☞ **Gifts of Comprehension** are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and the discerning of spirits. These gifts are all about insight which the Holy Spirit gives. This is not about some special perception, or reading body language, or being extra suspicious of people. It's about the Holy Spirit giving understanding in a specific situation.

☞ **The Word of Wisdom** is the ability from the Spirit to **give guidance** in a confusing situation that can help people move forward. Have you ever been in a situation where you really didn't know what to do? It seemed like every option was a bad option and people would get hurt or angry? But you prayed about it and all of a sudden there's a fresh idea for dealing with the situation that actually works? That's probably the word of wisdom.

☞ **The Word of Knowledge** is a supernatural **revelation** or ability to know **something otherwise unknowable**. Some of you have actually seen this gift in operation when a person praying with somebody brings something up that was only known to that person. Then the person being prayed for may be astonished, wondering, "How did you know about that?" It's a demonstration or a proof of God's power!



☞ **Discerning of Spirits** is the ability to tell the **difference between true and false** doctrine, and between what is of the Holy Spirit and what isn't. One might call it the supernatural ability to avoid being deceived. Discerning of spirits is not the gift of discerning the faults in other people. This gift discerns spirits, not people. This is not natural ability to discriminate, size up, or psycho-analyze. It is not a critical spirit, which is actually a hindrance to natural discernment.

☞ Then, there are **Gifts of Capability** which include faith, healing, and miraculous powers. These are about accomplishing something that would otherwise be impossible.

☞ **Faith** is divine certainty that triumphs over everything. It is God's reserve of faith when basic faith would fail, and is generally given in times of danger, distress, or dire need. The gift of faith is faith that **commands with confidence**. It is faith that **sees with certainty** and can **wait without wavering**.

☞ **Gifts of Healing** are the supernatural abilities imparted by the Spirit **to cure and restore** the human body from sickness, disability, or evil spirits. This isn't your everyday healing. The human body is designed to heal itself over time, but this gift provides a supernatural cure that cannot be reproduced by doctors.

☞ **Miraculous Powers** are a supernatural demonstration of God's power by which **the laws of nature are temporarily altered** for a specific purpose. This gift is also at times called **signs and wonders**. Sign is proof of the genuine. Wonder is something extraordinary, out of the course of nature – a wonderful thing.

☞ Finally, there are **Gifts of Communication**, which include prophecy, tongues and the interpretation of tongues. These are all about speaking something from the Holy Spirit in order to build up others.

☞ **Prophecy speaks to strengthen, encourage, or comfort**. It is a divinely inspired message delivered to others. Prophecy sometimes involves predicting the future, but not always. Though inspired, this gift is not on the level of the Word of God (Bible). In fact, Paul tells us to test prophecy against God's Word.

☞ **Tongues** is the supernatural power to **speak in a language not known by the speaker** for a specific purpose of God. In the next chapter Paul reveals that this language can be human or angelic. This subject is one that some people are unsure about, thinking it's strange. But remember, it is a gift from God just as much as wisdom or healing. Very often tongues is spiritual prayer and I like to call it "**Prayer language**."

Nightline Online did a report on this phenomenon of speaking in tongues. The report actually studied brain scans of people praying in tongues and compared those to people simply praying in English. The results strongly suggest that something extraordinary is happening and clearly indicate that praying in tongues is not just some hyped-up gibberish that people are



manufacturing. They couldn't explain exactly what was happening, but concluded that it was genuine.

☞ **Interpretation of Tongues** is the supernatural ability through the Holy Spirit **to give the meaning of tongues in a known language**, for the edification of the church. This gift is **not a translation**. To interpret means to give the meaning of a message, whereas a translation is word for word. According to 1 Corinthians 14:6, when the gift of tongues is interpreted it can be a revelation from God or a word of knowledge. It can also be a prophecy or simply a word of instruction.

Summary: All the gifts are from the Spirit and are meant to build others up, glorifying God, and these are desirable and encouraged in the Bible. We need the Holy Spirit and we want the gifts he distributes.

Table Talk: Which of the gifts are you most interested in? Why?

☞ **Start timer**

☞ The gifts are manifested by the Spirit in believers who are **willing and ready** to let the Holy Spirit work through them. While these nine are the primary gifts of the Spirit, there are other gifts listed in the Scripture: Serving; Encouraging; Giving; Leadership; Administration; and more.

Here is the fundamental attitude we are to have regarding this subject:

☞ **1 Corinthians 14:1...eagerly desire spiritual gifts...**

The Power of Your Presence