

OUTREACH GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES FOR JUNE 2, 1996

"Pentecost Sunday" by Jeff Wright (from May 26, 1996)

Pentecost Sunday each year is a good reminder to review the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit, as described in 1st Cor. 12:8-10. The nine Gifts of the Spirit are often grouped into three groups of three each:

Three of the Gifts are called the "Revelation" Gifts--they reveal something. These Gifts are the Gift of the Word of Wisdom, the Gift of the Word of Knowledge and the Gift of Discerning of Spirits.

Three of the Gifts are called the "Power" Gifts--they do something. These Gifts are the Gift of Special Faith, the Gifts of Healing, and Gift of the Working of Miracles.

Three of the Gifts are called the "Vocal" Gifts--they say something. These Gifts are the Gift of Prophecy, the Gift of Divers Kinds of Tongues and the Gift of the Interpretation of Tongues.

Excellent paperback reference books along these lines: Questions and Answers on Spiritual Gifts by Howard Carter; and The Holy Spirit And His Gifts by Kenneth E. Hagin (both available from Harrison House publishers; both can be special ordered through the VWOC book table or at area Christian book stores).

The Gift of the Word of Wisdom can be defined as a supernatural revelation of a part of the mind and purpose of God for the future. Old Testament example: Dan. 9:21-27; New Testament examples: Mt. 12:39-40, Mt. 17:22-23, Mt. 20:28 and Ac. 10:9-16.

The Gift of the Word of Knowledge can be defined as a supernatural revelation of something in the present that can be used to glorify God through helping people now. Old Testament example: 2nd Ki. 6:8-12; New Testament examples: Jo. 4:16-19 and Ac. 9:10-12.

The Gift of Faith can be defined as special, supernatural, unwavering trust in God for an extraordinary miracle. Old Testament example: 1st Ki. 18:30-39; New Testament examples: Mt. 8:5-13 and Ac. 3:1-16.

The Gift of the Working of Miracles can be defined as a supernatural demonstration of the power of God by which the laws of nature are altered, suspended or controlled (except regarding disease, which is covered by the Gifts of Healings). Old Testament example: 2nd Ki. 4:1-7; New Testament examples: Jn. 6:5-13 and Ac. 8:39-40.

The Gifts of Healings can be seen as a special subset of the Gift of the Working of Miracles. Regarding the Gifts of Healings see Is. 38:1-9 and 21; Mt. 8:14-16 and Ac. 5:12-16.

The Gift of Divers Tongues and the Gift of the Interpretation of Tongues are together equivalent to the Gift of Prophecy, which is used to edify, exhort and comfort (1st Cor. 14:3 and 13). These Gifts are often used by God to deliver some of the other Gifts described above.

A recent example of the Gift of Prophecy occurred in our church on April 28th when Cindy and Mike Jacobs shared several prophecies for our church and members of the congregation. The audiotape or transcript of these can be ordered at the book table.

necessary of spirits coming to the fruit of the Holy Spirit

4:3  
re 12:7-10

Old Test ex: Is 6:1  
New Test. ex: Mt 4:13-17  
Mt. 4:1-3

Just as the Gift of Faith above is a much bolder, divinely-initiated version of ordinary faith which is a fruit of the Spirit listed in Gal. 5:22, so also the Gift of Divers Tongues is a much stronger, divinely-initiated version of the ordinary manifestation of speaking in tongues, which can be initiated by our will (1st Cor. 14:15,32).

OUTREACH GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES FOR OCT. 1, 1989--LANHAM

"GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT--PART 1" BY PASTOR JEFF

1st Cor. 12:1-2 say "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. You know that you were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as you were led."

The word "dumb" does not refer to low intelligence, but rather to a lack of speech. The apostle Paul here is making a contrast between worshiping silent idols made of wood or stone, as compared to worshiping a living God who created us to walk and talk with Him in the cool of the day, as Adam did. (Gen.3:8) We should expect God to speak to us--God created us to fellowship with Him. Prayer for us is supposed to be a two-way conversation, not just God listening to us all the time.

The gifts of the Spirit are some of the ways God talks to us, both individually and in groups, and for that reason God does not want us to be ignorant of these gifts. The more we know about these gifts, the more God can use them to speak to us. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Ro.10:17), so the more we hear God's Word about the gifts of the Spirit, the more faith we'll have for them to operate through us, and the more God will be able to bring forth these gifts through us, because according to our faith it will always be done unto us. (Mt.9:29)

1st Cor.12:31 tells us to covet earnestly the best gifts; 1st Cor. 14:1 tells us to desire spiritual gifts. 1st Cor.12:7 says that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 1st Cor.12:11 shows us that God divides or distributes these gifts to every person as He wills. 1st Cor.14:26 shows us that when the Corinthians came together for meetings, every one of them came ready to bring forth the gifts of the Spirit--every one of them had a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation and an interpretation. In fact, Paul had to give them special instructions to keep them from interrupting one another, so that all things could be done decently and in order, without confusion. (1st Cor.14:27-40)

So, we don't want the gifts abused from over-use or neglected from under-use in our services--there is a wholesome, middle-of-the-road balance that will be a blessing to all. In teaching on the gifts of the Spirit some have said that it will be necessary to tolerate nine "lead balloons" in order to get that one true manifestation of the gifts that lifts the entire service to a higher plane of joy and spiritual excitement. In other words, we don't want to quench the spirit by despising inappropriate prophesying. (1st Thess.5:19-20) A "lead balloon" is an attempt by someone to operate in the gifts of the spirit in a public meeting, but what they speak out does not fit in with, or add to, the flow of the Spirit for that meeting. What they had may have been just God talking to them, and was not meant for the entire group. Or it may be that they are being motivated by a desire to be noticed by people, rather than purely obeying the Lord and wishing He would use anyone else but them. P We do not operate in the gifts to be noticed by people, but at the same time we do not shun the gifts for fear of being noticed--to do either would make people's opinions more important to us than obeying God. Obviously, appropriate ministry in the gifts of the spirit requires a great deal of spiritual maturity, including much knowledge of the Word and much knowledge of the love of God--that's why 1st Cor.13 (the love chapter) was placed to tie together 1st Cor. 12 and 14, the two chapters that teach on the gifts. 1st Cor.14:3 shows us that God's purposes in the gifts are edification, exhortation and comfort. In other words, speaking the truth in love, and growing up into Him! (Ep.4:15)

OUTREACH GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES FOR OCT. 29--LANHAM

"GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT--PART 2" BY PASTOR JEFF

The nine Gifts of the Spirit, listed in 1Co.12:8-10, are often grouped into three groups of three each for study purposes. Three of the gifts are called the "revelation" gifts--they reveal something. These gifts are the Gift of the Word of Wisdom, the Gift of the Word of Knowledge and the Gift of Discerning of Spirits. Three of the gifts are called the "power" gifts--they do something. These gifts are the Gift of Special Faith, the Gifts of Healings, and the Gift of the Working of Miracles. Three of the gifts are called the vocal gifts--they say something. These gifts are the Gift of Prophecy, the Gift of Divers Kinds of Tongues and the Gift of the Interpretation of Tongues.

Starting with the revelation gifts: the Gift of the Word of Wisdom can be defined as a supernatural revelation of a part of the mind and purpose of God communicated by the Holy Spirit. (from Howard Carter's book entitled, Question and Answers on Spiritual Gifts.) More simply, the Word of Wisdom reveals God's plans for the future. An Old Testament example is in Dan.9:21-27, in which the angel Gabriel told Daniel about God's timetable between the rebuilding of the temple and the appearance of Jesus. In the gospels we see a Word of Wisdom being expressed by Jesus in Mt.12:39-40, Mt.17:22-23 and Mt.20:28. In all of these scriptures Jesus referred to his future crucifixion and resurrection. In the book of Acts we see a Word of Wisdom coming to Peter in the form of a vision in Acts 10:9-16, in which God made it clear to Peter that the Gentiles were to be welcomed into the church of Jesus Christ. What the occult or the world refer to as "prophecy" or predicting the future is for us actually the Word of Wisdom.

The Gift of the Word of Knowledge can be defined as a supernatural revelation of the existence, or nature, of a person or a thing, or the knowledge of some event, given to us by the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose (from Howard Carter's book mentioned above). More simply, the Word of Knowledge reveals the present. An Old Testament example is in 2Ki.6:8-12, in which the prophet Elisha had supernatural knowledge of military attacks being planned by the king of Syria. In the gospels we see a Word of Knowledge in Jo.4:16-19, in which Jesus told the woman at the well about her five husbands. In the book of Acts we see the Word of Knowledge in Ac.9:10-12, in which Ananias was instructed to go minister healing to Saul.

The Gift of Discerning of Spirits can be defined as a supernatural vision into the realm of spirits, either good or evil or both. (from Howard Carter's book mentioned above.) This gift is more than just an inner witness and it is different from a Word of Knowledge, either of which could let us know of the presence of an evil spirit (a demon) or a good spirit (an angel). In the Gift of Discerning of Spirits, one actually seems to be physically seeing these creatures from the spirit world. Others around may not be able to see them, but to the person involved it seems as if they are seeing them with their physical eye, just as if they were seeing them in the natural world. An Old Testament example of this gift has already been cited above under the Word of Wisdom--in Dan.9:21-27 the angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel to deliver the Word of Wisdom about God's plans for the future. From this example we see how the gifts may be manifested together, to work together. In the gospels we see the Gift of Discerning of Spirits in Lk.22:43, in which an angel from heaven appeared to Jesus to strengthen him in the garden of Gethsemane. Ac.12:5-10 shows this same gift, when Peter was released from prison through the appearance of an angel.

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OUTREACH GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES FOR NOV. 5, 1989--LANHAM

"Gifts of the Spirit--part 3" by Pastor Jeff

We have previously covered the three revelation gifts.

Continuing with the next general grouping of the gifts listed in 1st Cor.12:8-10, we come to the three gifts of power, the gifts that do something. These are the gift of faith, the gift of the working of miracles and the gifts of healings.

Starting with the gift of faith: this gift can be defined as a supernatural unwavering trust in God for an extraordinary miracle. This is not ordinary, or normal faith, which every believer has as a fruit of the spirit (Gal.5:22). This gift involves special faith, or a manifestation of God's own faith. With this gift the possibility of failure never even occurs to one's mind, even as it would never occur to God. This gift keeps one calm in the time of danger, such as with Daniel in the lion's den or Jonah in the whale's belly. The gift of special faith receives an extraordinary miracle; the gift of the working of miracles then performs that extraordinary miracle--these two gifts work together. The gift of special faith allows the gift of the working of miracles to take place. Whenever we see the gift of the working of miracles, we can know that the gift of special faith was also involved. Another Old Testament example of the gift of faith can be found in 1st Ki.18:30-39, where Elijah drenched his sacrifice with 12 barrels of water before praying for fire to fall from heaven. In the gospels the gift of faith can be seen in Mt.8:5-13, where the centurion told Jesus to speak the Word only and his servant would be healed. In the book of Acts, the gift of faith can be seen in Ac. 3:1-16, where Peter healed the lame man in the name of Jesus. In verse 16 Peter explained that Jesus' name, through faith in His name, made the man strong.

The gift of the working of miracles can be defined as a supernatural demonstration of the power of God by which the laws of nature are altered, suspended or controlled (except regarding disease, which is covered by the gifts of healings). The gift of the working of miracles can be seen in the Old Testament in 2nd Ki.4:1-7, where Elisha instructed the prophet's widow in how to multiply her oil supply to pay off all her debts. An example from the gospels can be found in Jn.6:5-13, where Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes of one boy's lunch to feed 5000. An example from the book of Acts is found in Ac.8:39-40, where the Spirit of the Lord supernaturally transported Philip after he baptized the Ethiopian in the desert.

The gifts of healings are actually the working of miracles specifically in regard to disease. Notice in 1st Cor.12:28 that both "gifts" and "healings" are plural, and that they are listed just after the working of miracles. The gift of the working of miracles was more in evidence in the Old Testament than in the New; whereas the gifts of healings are more in evidence in the New Testament than in the Old. In the Old Testament the working of miracles was used to establish the divine authority of a prophet before the people, as with Moses. However, in the New Testament, God chose to emphasize the healing of the human body over any other miraculous sign, perhaps because now we are the temples of the Holy Spirit, with God living inside us. Gifts of healings were emphasized so much in the gospels and in the book of Acts, that they could be listed as a separate category of the gifts in 1st Cor. 12:8-10. In other words, now the Holy Spirit is doing as many healing miracles as all the rest of the miracles put together. For example, laying hands on the sick to see them recover is now one of the primary signs that is to follow a believer (Mk.16:18). See Is.38:1-9 & 21; Mt.8:14-16 and Ac.5:12-16.

OUTREACH GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES FOR OCT. 29--LANHAM  
(continued from other side)

While we are to covet earnestly and fervently desire (1Co.12:31; 1Co.14:1) the manifestation of the spiritual gifts, we have to remember that they are manifested as God wills, not as we will. (1Co.12:11) Some in the past have shipwrecked spiritually because they got pre-occupied with angelic visitations, and began seeking appearances of angels (or demons). In studying God's supernatural, we need to remember that there is an evil supernatural as well. 2nd Co.11:14 tells us that Satan himself can appear to us as an angel of light, trying to deceive us. So we need to be forewarned, and yet not paranoid.

One Bible teacher has said that in the beginning of his ministry he decided to believe God for an appearance of Jesus to him, since he had heard so many noted Bible teachers at that time share about how Jesus had appeared to them. However, the Lord spoke to his heart finally, and said in effect, "If you keep pushing for a supernatural appearance, Satan will accommodate you, in an attempt to deceive you. And even if I myself appeared to you, it wouldn't be my best for your ministry, because I want my people to walk by faith and not by sight, (2Co.5:7) and the greatest faith you can have is that based on the Word alone without any other supporting evidence in the natural. (Mt.8:5-13)" Jesus has appeared to key leaders or sent angels to appear when God was starting a new emphasis in the earth, such as at the time of Jesus' birth, or right after World War Two when the divine healing revival started in America. But when and where Jesus appears or sends his angels to appear is up to Jesus, not to us.

One problem with supernatural visitations is that they are so exciting to the natural man, that they become addictive, and a person can start desiring them more and more, until it gets to the point where they need an angelic visitation every morning to tell them what to wear. Thus, people can start to base their faith on angels appearing to them rather than on the Word. At that point a person is ripe for spiritual shipwreck. This occurs when Satan appears to you as an angel of light and gives you a message contrary to the Word, but yet you refuse to let go of what the "angel" told you, and end up hurting yourself and others. Several cult groups have started just this way.

One noted Bible teacher said concerning his experience of having Jesus appear to him, "I wasn't seeking for Jesus to appear to me--I wish he had appeared to you. But now I have to obey the Lord and tell you what he told me to tell you." Our attitude needs to be that if Jesus or an angel appears to us, that's great, but if not, that's just as great, because we still have God's Word and His Holy Spirit all the time, to teach us all things and cause us to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. (Jo.14:26; Col.1:9)

It should also be noted that in several places the Bible shows us that when angels appeared, they looked like men (Dan.9:21; Dan.10:1-19; Lk.24:4; Ac.1:10; Rev.22:8-9) So, today when we have a legitimate manifestation of the discerning of spirits, we should expect the angels we see to look like men. In contrast, some in recent days have reported seeing white dots and/or black dots when they pray and they have started depending on these appearances for guidance. This is real shaky ground, because in the Bible we don't see Jesus or the early church or the Apostle Paul depending on black or white dots for guidance in prayer. If it's not clearly in the Word, then we have to reject it, or else we'll get burned by it later.

OUTREACH GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER 17, 1995

"Gifts of the Spirit" by Jeff Wright

In our Sunday morning service on September 10th, we saw many of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in manifestation, including an altar call with a prayer line for those wanting special prayer for miracles in their lives. From 1st Cor. 12:8-10, the nine Gifts of the Spirit are often grouped into three groups of three each:

Three of the Gifts are called the "Revelation" Gifts--they reveal something. These Gifts are the Gift of the Word of Wisdom, the Gift of the Word of Knowledge and the Gift of Discerning of Spirits.

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The Gift of the Word of Knowledge can be defined as a supernatural revelation of something in the present that can be used to glorify God through helping people now. Old Testament example: 2nd Ki. 6:8-12; New Testament examples: Jo. 4:16-19 and Ac. 9:10-12.

In the altar call and prayer line we saw in our service on Sept. 10th, the two Gifts described above were in manifestation, as well as the Gift of Faith, the Gift of the Working of Miracles, the Gifts of Healings, the Gift of Divers Tongues and the Gift of the Interpretation of Tongues.

The Gift of Faith can be defined as special, supernatural, unwavering trust in God for an extraordinary miracle. Old Testament example: 1st Ki. 18:30-39; New Testament examples: Mt. 8:5-13 and Ac. 3:1-16.

The Gift of the Working of Miracles can be defined as a supernatural demonstration of the power of God by which the laws of nature are altered, suspended or controlled (except regarding disease, which is covered by the Gifts of Healings). Old Testament example: 2nd Ki. 4:1-7; New Testament examples: Jn. 6:5-13 and Ac. 8:39-40.

For the Gifts of Healings see Is. 38:1-9 and 21; Mt. 8:14-16 and Ac. 5:12-16.

The Gifts of Divers Tongues and Interpretation are together equivalent to Prophecy, which is used to edify, exhort and comfort (1st Cor. 14:3 and 13). These Gifts are often used by God to deliver some of the other Gifts described above.

OUTREACH GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES FOR JUNE 11, 1995

"Pentecost Sunday" by Jeff Wright (from June 4, 1995)

Pentecost Sunday each year commemorates the arrival of the Holy Spirit in His present day ministry on the Jewish feast day of Pentecost, which occurred about seven weeks after Jesus' crucifixion at Passover in the year A.D. 30. Pentecost means "fifty" and refers to the fifty day period following Passover. The Jewish feast of Pentecost was traditionally seen as a time to thank God for the Spring harvest (Lev.23:15-22), which symbolizes for us the early harvest of souls in the early church.

Jesus promised and described the Holy Spirit in John 14:16-17, 26; John 16:13-14 and Ac.1:8. Pentecost Sunday generally receives very little attention as a church holiday, but if it wasn't for the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't know anything about Christmas or Easter or any of the rest of the Bible. However, it can be seen as scriptural that the Holy Spirit receives such little attention, because His ministry as described in Jo.16:13-14 is to glorify Jesus and not to speak of Himself.

Another word used to describe the Holy Spirit's present day ministry is "anointing" as in 1st Jo.2:27: "But the anointing which you have received abides in you. . . ." This is better understood in the light of Ac.10:38: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. . . ." And Ac.1:8: "But you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. . . ."

In Jo.14:12 Jesus said the works that He had done, we as His body would do also. In Mk. 16:18 Jesus listed laying hands on the sick for their healing as a sign that would follow believers. Thus, Holy Ghost power to heal the devil's oppression of sickness is another name for "anointing."

This fits in with Ps.23:5 which includes the phrase, "thou anointest my head with oil." God's Israelite people were traditionally known as shepherds (see Gn.46:31-34 and Ps.100:3). Shepherds understand that sheep need anointing from outside themselves, with a special healing oil, to give them power to overcome afflictions in their lives.

This is especially true regarding nose worms associated with summer flies, and regarding a skin disease, mostly on the head, known as "scab," which is caused by microscopic parasites. We can compare all of this to ourselves in the wintertime with chapped lips--we need anointing with lip balm to overcome that affliction. We need something from outside ourselves, something with healing power in it. So it is with the anointing of God's Holy Spirit--we need, and thank God as believers we have, God's power to do God's work and bring healing into our lives and into the lives of others.

The Old Testament prophet, priest and king were anointed with oil to symbolize that God would protect them as they encountered the devil and his works, in their special missions to protect God's people and advance God's kingdom. The same is true for us today as we go into all the earth to spread the gospel to all people groups! Jesus has made us kings and priests unto our God (Rev.1:6), and prophets to the nations, to preach the gospel (Mk.16:15-20) with signs following, and in total protection for ourselves (Lk.10:19).



OUTREACH GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES FOR JULY 28, 1996  
*Prophecy-Waged Warfare* By Pastor Jeff Wright (from 7/21/96)

1Tim.1:18 says in effect remember what was spoken to you by the Spirit through established ministers of God because by those prophecies you can wage a good warfare.

Two other New Testament scriptures that talks about warfare and fighting are 2Cor. 10:3-5 and 1Tim. 6:12.

We're not fighting the devil (he's already beaten) or people; we are fighting doubt, fear, unbelief, confusion and mental turmoil. That's our fight. And one powerful weapon in our fight is the gift of prophecy (1Cor.12:10 & 14:3).

A lot of times God gives personal prophecies to people just before they are about to go through hard times. He gives them a personal word before they need it, so they'll have it when they need it. Of course, every personal prophecy should confirm what God has already put in our heart; it must line up with the Word, and it will bring forth good fruit of strength and peace when tested over time.

Prophecy is given to edify us--meaning, to build and charge us up, like a battery. Also, it exhorts us, meaning, it encourages us to keep on keeping on doing the will of God, not getting double minded, not becoming weak and confused in any way; but continuing to have our face set like a flint like Jesus when He went to the cross.

A prophecy also comforts us, which literally means "with strength or protection." It imparts the knowledge that God is here, God is with us, His strength is here, His love is here, His blessing is here. A genuine prophecy from heaven is like a beautiful jewel from heaven, a spiritual deposit of strength and peace like a rock that drops into our heart. We can't let go of it and it won't let go of us. It's a living thing, like an angel from heaven. What does the word angel mean? Literally, messenger, one who brings a message from heaven.

The Bible says His word, it was like fire shut up in our bones. The Bible tells us that God appears as a fire from the loins up and from the loins down, and in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was and is God. So when that Word comes, that Living Word, it's quick and powerful and able to split our heart right open to show us where we're really at and what's going to happen in the future and where we need to be.

When that Word, that fire comes, it's like fire shut up in our bones. It's a living thing on the inside of us. It's Jesus. It's His glory, it's His wind, fire and Spirit on the inside of us and it turns to ashes all of the wood, hay and the stubble of this world--all of the turmoil, all of the doubt, confusion, double-mindedness, all of the wondering, all of the complaining and murmuring. It just burns them up and makes them become like ashes at the foot of the cross--fertilizer for God's next miracle as He takes what the devil meant for evil and turns it for good!

A recent example of the Gift of Prophecy occurred in our church on April 28th when Cindy and Mike Jacobs shared several prophecies for our church and for members of the congregation. The tape or transcript can be ordered at our book table.