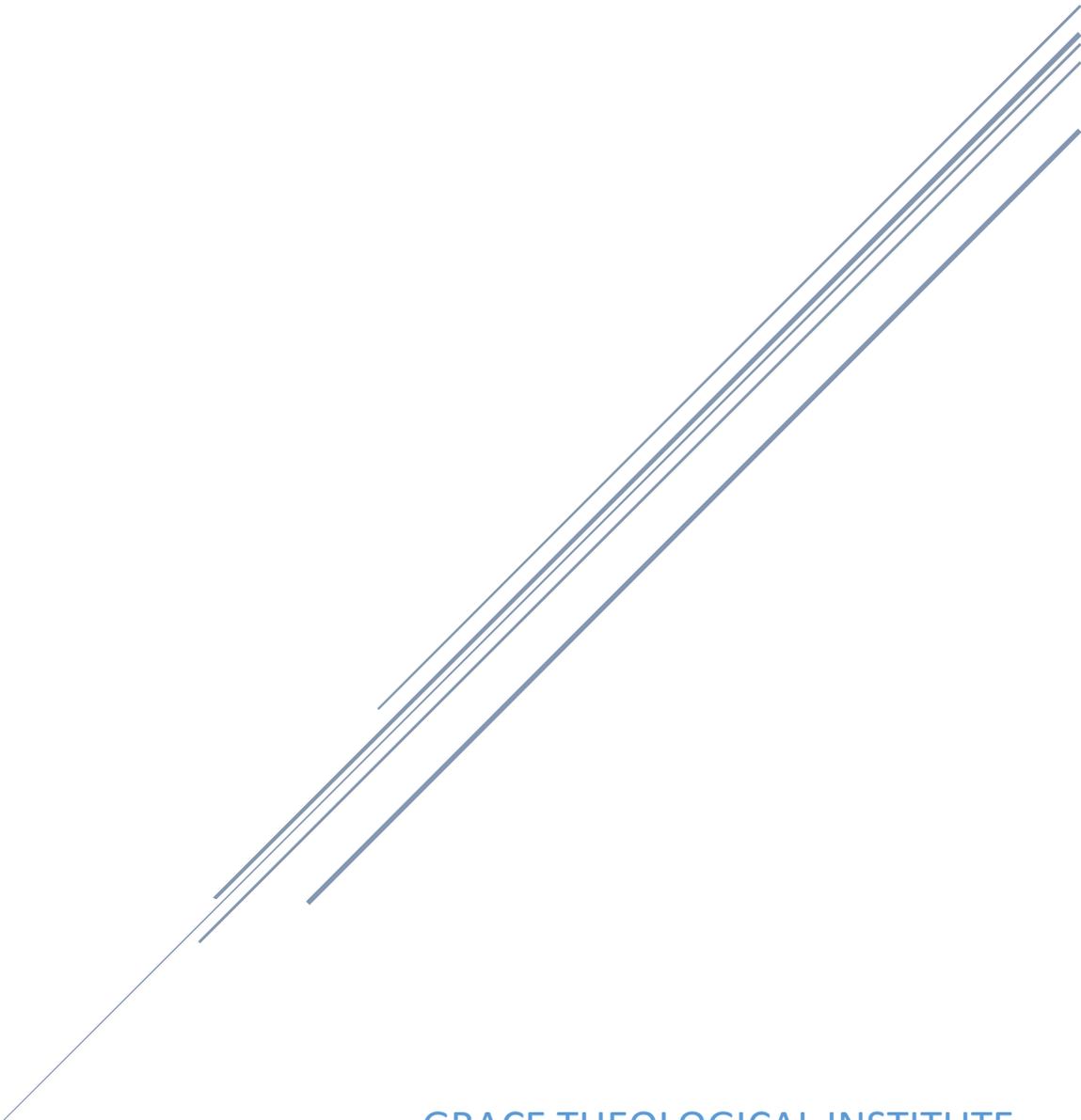


# SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A Study of God's Gifts to the Church



GRACE THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE  
Spiritual Gifts



# Spiritual Gifts

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## Introduction

“Spiritual Gifts” is a topic of concern in most churches and for most Christians at some point in their life. To begin our study of the Spiritual Gifts we must first define what we mean by “Spiritual Gifts”.

## Definition

Spiritual Gifts are God given abilities to be used for the service of God and the church. Ray C. Stedman of the Peninsula Bible Church of Palo Alto, California, defines a spiritual gift as “*a capacity for service which is given to every true Christian without exception and which was something each did not possess before he became a Christian.*”<sup>1</sup>

We should remember that these Spiritual Gifts are different than talents a person may already possess. While both Spiritual Gifts and talents are given by God talents may or may not be used to serve the church and God. We should also remember that Spiritual Gifts are not locations or places of service, not an office or position in the church. Spiritual Gifts are also not ministries to specific groups within the church, or a special technique of ministry. Spiritual gifts are people and special spiritual abilities given by God to build up the church.

## Difference from Talents

### Natural Talents

Given by God through our parents  
Given at birth  
To benefit mankind generally

### Spiritual Gifts

Given by God independent of parents  
Evidently given at conversion  
To benefit the body particularly<sup>2</sup>

In this short chart, Dr. Charles Ryrie outlines the difference between the talents we naturally have in our life and Spiritual Gifts. These talents may include musical ability, athletic ability, intellectual abilities or many other things that make up the range of talents individuals can have and those Special Gifts given to us by God to be used to build the church. We will see in our study what these gifts are and how they contribute to the building of the church by Jesus.

## Biblical Basis for Spiritual Gifts

The doctrine of “Spiritual Gifts” stems from several passages and a translation of four(4) specific words in the Greek New Testament. These four (4) words are:

δῶματα (domata) Gifts in Ephesians 4:8

πνευματικῶν (pneumatikōn) Spiritual Things in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:1

χαρισμάτων (charismatōn) Graces in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:4

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<sup>1</sup> Ray C. Stedman, *Body Life* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal Books, G/L Publications, 1972), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 424.

ἐνεργημάτων (energēmatōn) Workings in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:6

Of these four words, πνευματικῶν (pneumatikōn) and χαρισμάτων (charismatōn) are the primary words used in reference to Spiritual Gifts and appearing in the primary passages dealing with Spiritual Gifts

The primary passages in the New Testament that provide the Bible Student with instruction on Spiritual Gifts are *1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:1-31*, *Romans 12:3-8*, *Ephesians 4:11-13*, and *1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:10-11*. We will spend some time during our study going through these passages. From our study we will then compile a list of the Spiritual Gifts given in scripture based upon all the passages. We will then deal with some theological issues dealing with Spiritual Gifts. So let's work our way through the primary passages dealing with Spiritual Gifts.

Romans 12:1-8

### **Romans 12:1-8 (ESV)**

**1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

**2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**3** For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

**4** For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function,

**5** so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

**6** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;

**7** if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching;

**8** the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

### **Romains 12 Nouvelle Edition de Genève – (NEG1979)**

Consécration au service de Dieu

**12** Je vous exhorte donc, frères, par les compassions de Dieu, à offrir vos corps comme un sacrifice vivant, saint, agréable à Dieu, ce qui sera de votre part un culte raisonnable. <sup>2</sup> Ne vous conformez pas au siècle présent, mais soyez transformés par le renouvellement de l'intelligence, afin que vous discerniez quelle est la volonté de Dieu, ce qui est bon, agréable et parfait.

<sup>3</sup> Par la grâce qui m'a été donnée, je dis à chacun de vous de n'avoir pas de lui-même une trop haute opinion, mais de revêtir des sentiments modestes, selon la mesure de foi que Dieu a

départie à chacun. <sup>4</sup> Car, comme nous avons plusieurs membres dans un seul corps, et que tous les membres n'ont pas la même fonction, <sup>5</sup> ainsi, nous qui sommes plusieurs, nous formons un seul corps en Christ, et nous sommes tous membres les uns des autres. <sup>6</sup> Puisque nous avons des dons différents, selon la grâce qui nous a été accordée, que celui qui a le don de prophétie l'exerce en proportion de la foi; <sup>7</sup> que celui qui est appelé au ministère s'attache à son ministère; que celui qui enseigne s'attache à son enseignement, <sup>8</sup> et celui qui exhorte à l'exhortation; que celui qui donne le fasse avec libéralité; que celui qui préside le fasse avec zèle; que celui qui pratique la miséricorde le fasse avec joie.

When I study or teach on the Spiritual Gifts I love to start here. In this passage written by the Apostle Paul to the church in Rome, a church he did not start and had not been to, he describes for them and for us the purpose of the gifts and some of the gifts themselves. It is extremely important that we understand the purpose of the Spiritual Gifts. Failure to properly understand the purpose often results in a misunderstanding and misuse of the Spiritual Gifts.

Paul begins by appealing to the Romans to offer a sacrifice to God, a living sacrifice of themselves. To be used by God to accomplish the mission given to them by God. This sacrifice involves being different from the world, having our minds renewed by the power God gives. By serving God we comply with His will for our lives and accomplish the things He wants us to accomplish.

In verse 3 we see that Paul reinforces that the following comments come from God and not just his own mind. He was led by God through the gifts or grace given to him to remind the Romans that the Spiritual Gifts they have received are not to build themselves up but to build up the church. He challenges the people to not think of themselves as bigger or better than they should. He also reminds them that each in the church received Spiritual Gifts according to the "measure of faith" God gives to each of us. Among Bible scholars there is a great deal of debate concerning the phrase "measure of faith". Some teach that this phrase indicates that God gives each person a different amount of faith. Others teach that the phrase teaches that God gives each different gifts. I believe that the second understanding is in keeping with the context of the passage. The word "faith" here is the Greek word πίστις (pístis) and is sometimes used by the Apostle Paul in a more technical sense to speak of appropriating what God through Christ has for each man. The gifts given by God to each as a result of salvation provided by Jesus Christ on the cross. In other words, because of God saving each of us, each of us also receives other gifts, which I believe are the Spiritual Gifts.

In verses 4-5 Paul teaches that the gifts, alluded to in verse 3, are different because we all have different functions. He does this through the analogy of a human body. A body made up of different parts. One head, two hands, two feet, two arms, two legs, two eyes, two ears, one nose, one mouth, etc. these different parts have different functions, they do different things. I cannot pick up things with my ears but I can with my hands. I can't breathe through my feet but I can walk with them. Different parts different jobs. The same is true in the church. God has given and gifted each of us with different abilities in order to perform different functions in the church.

In verse 6 Paul reiterates different gifts according to the grace or gift of God. Both the word gift and the word grace in this verse come from the same Greek root word χάρις (charis). He then speaks of some of the Spiritual Gifts and the reality that since we have been given these gifts we should use them to the best of our abilities. The gifts that Paul lists here in this passage are:

Prophecy, Service, Teaching, Exhortation, Giving, Leadership, Acts of Mercy

We will define these gifts later in our study when we have gone through the primary passages that provide for us the Spiritual Gifts. The seven (7) gifts mentioned above will be merged with the other gifts to form a more complete picture of Spiritual Gifts.

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:1-11

### **1 Corinthians 12:1–11 (ESV)**

**1** Now concerning Spiritual Gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

**2** You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.

**3** Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

**4** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;

**5** and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;

**6** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

**7** To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

**8** For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

**9** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

**10** to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

**11** All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

### **1 Corinthetaiens 12:1-11 Nouvelle Edition de Genève – (NEG1979)**

Les dons spirituels

**12** Pour ce qui concerne les dons spirituels, je ne veux pas, frères, que vous soyez dans l'ignorance. <sup>2</sup> Vous savez que, lorsque vous étiez païens, vous vous laissiez entraîner vers les idoles muettes, selon que vous étiez conduits. <sup>3</sup> C'est pourquoi je vous déclare que personne, s'il parle par l'Esprit de Dieu, ne dit: Jésus est anathème! et que personne ne peut dire: Jésus est le Seigneur! si ce n'est par le Saint-Esprit.

<sup>4</sup> Il y a diversité de dons, mais le même Esprit; <sup>5</sup> diversité de ministères, mais le même Seigneur; <sup>6</sup> diversité d'opérations, mais le même Dieu qui opère tout en tous.

<sup>7</sup> Or, à chacun la manifestation de l'Esprit est donnée pour l'utilité commune.<sup>8</sup> En effet, à l'un est donnée par l'Esprit une parole de sagesse; à un autre, une parole de connaissance, selon le même Esprit; <sup>9</sup> à un autre, la foi, par le même Esprit; à un autre, le don des guérisons, par le même Esprit; <sup>10</sup> à un autre, le don d'opérer des miracles; à un autre, la prophétie; à un autre, le discernement des esprits; à un autre, la diversité des langues; à un autre, l'interprétation des langues. <sup>11</sup> Un seul et même Esprit opère toutes ces choses, les distribuant à chacun en particulier comme il veut.

I love how Paul in writing to the church in Corinth begins his discussion of Spiritual Gifts. He says *"I do not want you to be uninformed"*. Some of the Corinthians did not know the truth, some were taught by false teachers and others chose to simply do the wrong thing. So Paul begins the discussion by making sure they all have the same information and understand the same thing. This was a very important topic to bring up to the church in Corinth.

Corinth was a city in Ancient Greece that was located on the isthmus between the Greek mainland and the Peloponnesus of southern Greece. It was a city of great wealth and a city of great religious practice. Paul founded the church in Corinth on his second missionary journey. However, many of the people of the church struggled to separate themselves from their culture and their previous religious practices. This resulted in the Apostle Paul having to correct many practical problems and many problems in their theology despite having been with the church for more than a year teaching them.



One of the greatest issues facing the church in Corinth was their use or misuse of Spiritual Gifts. Many in the church of Corinth came out of the pagan religious practices common in the Greco-Roman world of the day. Corinth had temples to many Greco-Roman gods including Apollo and Aphrodite. The temple to Aphrodite was the primary temple to worship the goddess of sensuality.

The worship practice of Aphrodite included temple prostitutes and the consumption of large amounts of alcohol and drugs to induce euphoric states. While in the euphoric states sexual orgies would occur which was seen as part of the worship of Aphrodite. Also occurring during these drug and alcohol induced stupors were ecstatic utterances and loud verbal noises. The claim that these utterances were messages from the gods was followed up by preaching and teaching from temple priests on the meaning of the utterances. It was from that framework that many people in the Corinthian church came. Many not giving up that practice after their conversion. In our modern western world this would compare to many in the church still reading their horoscope every day or the many superstitious practices of many people. This led to these practices infiltrating the practice in the church. Paul's teaching to the Corinthians concerning Spiritual Gifts is based upon this background. It is also why Paul begins by reminding the Corinthians in this passage that they were led astray by the worship of idols as pagans.

Paul then reminds them that there are many Spiritual Gifts but the same gift giver, the Holy Spirit. There are many different types of service but they all serve the same Lord. It is God who empowers everyone with Spiritual Gifts. The Bible student needs to recognize that every follower of Jesus is given Spiritual Gifts but they may not all look the same as others with the same gift. The gifts given and utilized are very unique and individual.

The issue in Corinth that Paul is dealing with here is that many Corinthians were jealous of gifts that others had. They wanted gifts that had been given to others, particularly the flashy gifts that everyone could see. Some in the church had elevated the importance of some gifts over that of other gifts. So Paul in this passage is setting the record straight on the gifts.

Notice in verse 7 that the Apostle Paul says *“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good”*. The purpose of the Spiritual Gifts is not for the benefit of the individual but for the common good of the church. To build up the church not the individual. In the following verse Paul lists the Spiritual Gifts as they related to the situation in Corinth. Paul does not intend this list to be a complete or total list of Spiritual Gifts. Simply a list of gifts as they relate to the situation in Corinth.

In verse 8 Paul talks about the gifts of the “utterance of Wisdom”. Wisdom here is the idea understanding doctrinal truth, God’s Word and the direction God gives to His people, through His Word and other methods. Paul also refers to the “utterance of knowledge” or Speaking doctrinal truth. Closely related to the “utterance of wisdom”. This gift may have included revealing truth that which was previously unknown much like the gift of prophecy but it also includes the idea of the ability to bring that doctrine or revealed truth to others in way that they can comprehend it. This is a gift that is manifested in good preachers and teachers today. The gifts of “utterance of wisdom” and “utterance of knowledge” are different gifts but may be given to the same person. A preacher who can understand what God has said, how we need to respond to what God has said and then convey that truth is truly a gift to the church as will be demonstrated in our study of Ephesians 4. It should be understood that this gift as it is seen today does not include any revelatory aspect and has not since the New Testament was complete.

In verse 9 Paul talks about the gifts of “faith” and “healing”. The gift of faith should be differentiated from the faith that all believers are given by God. Based upon the context Paul is speaking of a special faith in which the recipient exercises a greater faith and trust or confidence in God during difficult or dangerous situations. Those with this gift often also are persistent in their prayer life.

Healing is a gift that is often referred to as a “sign gift”. We will deal with that term and doctrine in a little bit. Healing is a gift that was visible in the Apostles (Matt 10:1) and the Seventy Disciples sent out by Jesus (Luke 10:1). We also see in the book of Acts some others who were closely associated with the Apostles, such as Philip (Acts 8:5-7). The gift of healing is a miraculous gift which gives the special ability to heal from physical illness or injury and even prevent immediate death.

In verse 10 Paul speaks of the gift of miracles, prophecy, discernment or the ability to distinguish between spirits, tongues and the interpretation of tongues. All of the gifts in this verse with the exception of discernment are sign gifts which will be explained later.

Miracles is actually the Greek word δυνάμεων (dynamēōn) from where the English word dynamite comes from. It is the expression of great power by God through those given the gift of miracles. God demonstrating His power through the person with the gift. The purpose of the sign gifts will be explained later in the study.

Prophecy is another gift given as a sign and as a method of distributing to man a specific revelation. Most think of foretelling the future when they hear or read the word “prophecy”, but that is only part of the word. The word actually means the giving of information that is divinely inspired, information the person had no way to know except it came from God. This of course includes predicting the future. A prophet is a messenger of God who conveys from God specific previously unknown information.

Decernment or as the ESV translates it as “distinguish between spirits” is the only gift in this verse that is not a sign gift. This the gift in which the person has the ability to distinguish between God and His Word and Satan or his minions and their lying word. A person with this gift has been given the ability to recognize false teaching and false doctrine that is most often given as a counterfeit to proper Biblical Doctrine. This was an extremely important gift in the early church, particularly prior to the New Testament was completed and distributed. A person with this gift may have been the only thing between a church following false doctrine or following God.

The next gift in verse 10 is the gift of tongues and then associated with that gift is the gift of interpretation of tongues. Both these gifts are sign gifts. There is considerable debate among scholars concerning tongues and the interpretation of tongues. Some scholars argue that tongues is a reference to the ability to speak a language not previously known by the person. For example, if I, the teacher of this class, suddenly started speaking in perfect Creole. I know a couple words of Creole but cannot speak it. If I started to speak it clearly and fluently it would be a miracle. Other scholars argue that real known languages are not in view here but some unknown “spiritual” language. Some even argue that this “spiritual” language is the language of God as utilized by Adam and Eve in their communication with God. The grammar of the text in the original Greek does not solve this question allowing for all interpretations to be made. So we have to utilize one of the other principles of Biblical Hermeneutics, allowing the Bible to interpret the Bible, to get a sense of the gift of tongues. This means we have to look at other passages to get a frame of reference to tongues.

The word “tongues” in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:10 is γλωσσῶν (glōssōn). It is defined by BAGD as an organ of speech, and a distinctive feature of nations.<sup>3</sup> It is a form of the same word as used in Acts 2 to describe the physical appearance of the Holy Spirit as “tongues of fire” and to describe the miracle of the Disciples being heard speaking a language they did not previously know. The

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<sup>3</sup> Arndt, William; Gingrich, F. Wilbur; Danker, Frederick W.; Bauer, A *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature : A Translation and Adaption of the Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch Zu Den Schrift En Des Neuen Testaments Und Der Ubrigen Urchristlichen Literatur.*

scene in Acts 2 is the disciples are being obedient to the command of the Lord to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Comforter as promised by Jesus. When He comes He would indwell and empower them. Dr. Luke records that when they received the Holy Spirit they began to speak in “other tongues” as the Spirit gave them utterance. People from all over the Roman Empire were in Jerusalem for the feasts, heard the disciples speaking in languages they did not previously know but was known to the hearers. This event sets the stage for the rest for the New Testament concerning tongues. Speaking of tongues is referenced in several locations in the book of Acts. Each time they serve to authenticate the speaker as being a legitimate messenger from God.

We next see the speaking of tongues is in the book of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. First in the passage we are currently studying where the Apostle Paul lists tongues and in the interpretation of tongues among the Spiritual Gifts. Then again in chapter 14 Paul deals with the abuse of tongues in the Corinthian Church. It appears that some of the people in Corinth had adopted the pagan practice of ecstatic utterance which was often drug and alcohol induced.

Corinth had a long history of pagan worship which involved drunken orgies and ecstatic utterances in worship of several pagan gods including worship in temples to Aphrodite, Apollo, and Poseidon. Also close to Corinth was the Shrine at Delphi. Paul dealt with a girl in Philippi who had a “spirit of divination” in Acts 16:16-18. Many scholars believe, due to the close proximity to the Temple at Delphi this girl was one of the oracle of Delphi. This is well documented as being fortune telling while in trances. The trances were induced by drugs, alcohol, and possible a natural occurrence of the release of gas in the temple. The girls, often prostitutes would get in these drunken states and would make unintelligible vocal sounds. Priests from the temple would then “interpret” the vocal sounds and provide the people with a telling of their fortune. This was a very common practice in and around Corinth by the time of Paul. This practice became something that infiltrated the church with church members being drunk, high and making unintelligible vocal sounds that would then be interpreted by others in the church. Paul rebukes this practice in the Corinthian church as not building up the church but building up the individual. It provided them no knowledge just commotion.

It is clear that what was going on in Corinth was different than what occurred on Pentecost in Acts 2 and the other occurrences in the book of Acts. If the introduction of tongues in Acts 2 sets the standard for our understanding of tongues the tongues in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14 are not the gift of tongues talked about by Paul in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12 and other places. We know in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians that Paul was not using “tongues” to speak of known real languages since he says in verse 2 “no one understands him” as opposed to many understanding in Acts 2. As a result of the abuse in Corinth Paul gave some specific instructions on how tongues were to be exercised in the church worship service.

Paul closes his comments in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12 concerning the “Spiritual Gifts” by reminding his readers that the Holy Spirit gives the gifts to empower the people as the Holy Spirit wills. The Holy Spirit gives gifts so that the church is built up as we will see in other locations.

**Romans 12:3–7 (ESV)**

**3** For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

**4** For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function,

**5** so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

**6** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;

**7** if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching;

**Romains 12:3-7 Nouvelle Edition de Genève – (NEG1979)**

3 Par la grâce qui m’a été donnée, je dis à chacun de vous de n’avoir pas de lui-même une trop haute opinion, mais de revêtir des sentiments modestes, selon la mesure de foi que Dieu a départie à chacun. 4 Car, comme nous avons plusieurs membres dans un seul corps, et que tous les membres n’ont pas la même fonction, 5 ainsi, nous qui sommes plusieurs, nous formons un seul corps en Christ, et nous sommes tous membres les uns des autres. 6 Puisque nous avons des dons différents, selon la grâce qui nous a été accordée, que celui qui a le don de prophétie l’exerce en proportion de la foi; 7 que celui qui est appelé au ministère s’attache à son ministère; que celui qui enseigne s’attache à son enseignement,

Paul was commissioned by God as a divine representative, an apostle. By the “Grace given to Me” is a reference to the commissioning of Paul by God, He was assigned to ministry as an apostle. As an apostle he had the authority and right to speak to all in the church. His instruction to the church is that each person in the church should not think of himself more highly than he ought to think. But to utilize sober judgement. He also states we are to think according to the measure of faith God has given to them. “Faith” here is the Greek word πίστεως (pisteōs) which BDAG gives a range of meaning including “faithfulness, reliability, fidelity, commitment, assurance, oath, troth, proof, pledge, trust, confidence, faith, body of faith/belief/teaching”. The use of the word here in Romans 12:3 is the sense that God has given to each believer a measure of ability and understanding in order for the believer to serve God. Paul was addressing the idea that some people in the church are more valuable than others because they have different gifts. But in reality it is God that gives the gifts according to His plan and desire and it is not based upon the value or worth of the individual.

In verse 4 Paul utilizes the analogy of the human body, made up of different body parts that have different functions, but all one body. The parts of the body enable the body to do many things. Often this includes things that could not be done without specific body parts. The individual body parts make up one body.

The same is true for the gifts given to the church and the members of the church. Different gifts so that the entire body can function collectively. In speaking of these gifts Paul mentions Prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, and acts of mercy. Different gifts than the list presented in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12. The fact that the list contains other gifts than the list in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians does not invalidate this list or the list in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. It simply reflects that the lists of “Spiritual Gifts” in the New Testament are not complete or intended to be complete. We will go over a complete list compiled from the various passages later in our study.

The only sign gift in this list is prophecy. We will cover sign gifts as a unit later in our study. Our English translations of Romans 12:6 has been simplified to make reading a little easier. The original Greek text would be better translated more abruptly “One’s prophecy is to be done in proportion to the faith”. Note not “his faith” or “our faith” as the ESV translates it. The faith is clearly a reference to the body of belief, or Christian doctrine. This leads the reader to understand that prophecy is the dissemination of a message from God. During the apostolic age this included what would become recognized as the Word of God. After the apostolic age prophecy does not include any new revelation from God so prophecy would only include the dissemination of the Word of God, and its teaching. Many scholars utilize “**P**”rophecy to refer to the revelation of new truth from God and “**p**”rophecy to refer to preaching or teaching the Word of God already revealed.

Service is the Greek word *διακονίαν* (diakonian) from where the English word deacon comes. In Acts 6 the Apostles appoint Deacons to serve the rapidly growing church. The apostles needed assistance to meet the physical needs of the new members of the church. This gives us some insight into the use of the word. We understand Paul to be speaking of those who care for others needs within the church. In many churches we call them Deacons.

Teaching as used by Paul here is the idea of imparting theoretical and practical knowledge with the highest possible development of the pupil as the goal.<sup>4</sup> Teachers and teaching are a gift to the church to enable the church to grow in the understanding of the Word of God and what God wants the church to do. We also need to understand the original readers would have also had in mind the concept of moral instructions.

Exhortation is the gift of consolation and encouragement. This can be through speaking with people or through non-verbal means. We have all needed encouragement from time to time and God has provided to us a person who encouraged us by putting their arm around us or spoke the right words to us at the right time.

Giving is a gift in which one shares what he has with others. Sometimes this even includes sacrificial giving. Giving is sharing with others without the thought of repayment or getting anything in return. Not commanded to give but giving with cheerfulness and joy not seeking a return of the gift.

Leadership is another gift given to people and the church. The gift of leadership must be understood in light of the New Testament world and not the secular world. The description of the

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<sup>4</sup> Kittel, Gerhard; Bromiley, Geoffrey W.; Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.

secular leader is somewhat different than the Biblical leader. In our secular leaders are often seen as forceful, powerful men who command fear and respect from the people around them. They are often seen as ambitious and seeking to get the most they can get. However, the Biblical concept of leader and leadership is that of a servant to the people of the church. Church leaders are servants of the people who provide direction and care for the people, much as a shepherd does for sheep. A church leader needs to be prepared to lead in theological discussion right after cleaning the toilets.

The final gift in this passage is the gift of mercy. This is the idea of caring for the sick, feeding the hungry and essentially caring for others around you. Paul says that it is in cheerfulness that mercy is to be given.

[Ephesians 4:11-14](#)

### **Ephesians 4:11–15 (ESV)**

**11** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

**12** to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

**13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

**14** so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

**15** Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

### **Éphésiens 4:11-15 Nouvelle Edition de Genève – (NEG1979)**

<sup>11</sup> Et il a donné les uns comme apôtres, les autres comme prophètes, les autres comme évangélistes, les autres comme pasteurs et docteurs, <sup>12</sup> pour le perfectionnement des saints en vue de l'œuvre du ministère et de l'édification du corps de Christ, <sup>13</sup> jusqu'à ce que nous soyons tous parvenus à l'unité de la foi et de la connaissance du Fils de Dieu, à l'état d'homme fait, à la mesure de la stature parfaite de Christ; <sup>14</sup> ainsi, nous ne serons plus des enfants, flottants et emportés à tout vent de doctrine, par la tromperie des hommes, par leur ruse dans les moyens de séduction, <sup>15</sup> mais en professant la vérité dans l'amour, nous croîtrons à tous égards en celui qui est le chef, Christ.

In this passage the Apostle Paul gives specific teaching concerning the purpose of Spiritual Gifts as well as providing some of the gifts given to the local church. It should be noted that in this passage Paul does not address individual gifts but gifts given to the church for the building up of the church. It should also be seen that the people which are given to the church to build it up themselves possess gifts given to them by God.

Apostles were a specific group of men chosen by God to be part of the foundation of the church. The word Apostle essentially means ambassador or emissary. One who is sent by another to carry a message and the authority of the sender. Jesus Himself chose 12 disciples and called

them apostles. These 12 with the exception of Judas who betrayed Jesus and was replaced by Mathias were the highest authority in the early church after the risen and ascended Jesus. Added to this number was the Apostle Paul, called to be an apostle by the risen Jesus as Paul was on his way to Damascus. We also need to recognize that the word “Apostle” is used more than 70 times in the New Testament. It comes from the Greek word ἀπόστολος, (apostolos) which means sent one, messenger or emissary. The use of the word in the New Testament includes those specifically commissioned by Jesus and then others who were more generic messengers.

There were specific criteria given in Acts 1 for the replacement of Judas. This included being part of the disciples that followed Jesus around during His ministry. Two were nominated and then one was chosen through the use of lots. Later use of the word apostle included as a reference to others such as Barnabas Acts 13:2, and James, Jesus half-brother Galatians 1:19.

While no one today qualifies to be an Apostle the word is still used to refer to some who are engaged in ministry such as a missionary or church planter leader for a group of church plants. It is common to differentiate between Apostolic Age Apostles by capitalizing Apostle and to reflect modern missionaries with a lower case “a” in apostle. We should not confuse modern apostles with apostolic age Apostles.

“Prophets” is a reference those who spoke for God and who communicated God’s Message<sup>5</sup>. We should understand that the Prophet, whether an Old Testament Prophet or a New Testament Prophet, communicated information directly from God. These prophets were communicating information they only could have received from God and from no other source. In modern use of the word prophet a reference is being made to those who proclaim the word of God such as a preacher. As with Apostle, the use of prophet in reference to people today, is denoted with a lower case “p”. We should understand that “p”rophets are not delivering new revelation from God but are delivering what has already been revealed by God.

Evangelists is another word which has dual use or meaning. One of the meaning is a reference to the writers of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is also a reference to the one who proclaims the good news of the gospel. We should not confuse this with a gift of evangelism which is not listed in Scripture as a spiritual gift. Evangelists were specific people who proclaimed the good news of the gospel message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. All Christians are to be involved in evangelism, even while not being an evangelist.

Shepherd is a reference to one who cares for those in the flock. It is most common to see “shepherd” as a reference to the pastor of a local church. It is the responsibility and mission of the pastor of a local church to care for the needs of the members of the church. This care is not limited to spiritual care, although that is primary, it does also include social and physical care at times.

Teachers is a reference to those in the church who serve in the capacity of imparting knowledge and information to others. In many churches this is the pastor or shepherd. But it should be

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<sup>5</sup> Youngblood, Ronald F.; Bruce, F. F.; Harrison, *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

understood that pastor is one function which is different from the other function of teaching. Often both functions are performed by the same person but it does not have to be so.

Before we leave this passage we need to go through the purpose of these gifts. From Apostles through the entire list here in Ephesians to teachers the purpose of these gifts is to “to equip the saints for the work of the ministry for the building up of the body of Christ”. These gifts were given to the church to build up the church. This is a truth that is often missed. In our modern western culture ministry is often left to the pastor or others who are placed in ministry positions such as missionaries. But the Apostle Paul here makes clear that it is not the job of the pastor to do all the ministry. The job of the pastor, teacher, prophet, evangelist, or apostle is to prepare the church, the rank and file, the members of the church to accomplish the ministry of the church. These gifts are given to teach and to lead the people in doing the ministry God has prepared for the church to accomplish. The Apostle Paul told the Ephesians a little earlier in Ephesians:

### **Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)**

**10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Éphésiens 2:10 Nouvelle Edition de Genève – (NEG1979)

<sup>10</sup> Car nous sommes son ouvrage, ayant été créés en Jésus-Christ pour de bonnes œuvres, que Dieu a préparées d’avance, afin que nous les pratiquions.

The gifts are given to the church to prepare the members of the church to accomplish the good works that God has already prepared for them to accomplish. Of course it should be noted that in order to lead the pastor also needs to be involved in ministry so that the people of the church can follow his example in ministry.

<sup>1st</sup> Peter 4:10-11

### **1 Peter 4:10–11 (ESV)**

**10** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace:

**11** whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Pierre 4:10-11 Nouvelle Edition de Genève – (NEG1979)

<sup>10</sup> Comme de bons dispensateurs des diverses grâces de Dieu, que chacun de vous mette au service des autres le don qu’il a reçu. <sup>11</sup> Si quelqu’un parle, que ce soit comme annonçant les oracles de Dieu; si quelqu’un remplit un ministère, qu’il le remplisse selon la force que Dieu communique, afin qu’en toutes choses Dieu soit glorifié par Jésus-Christ, à qui appartiennent la gloire et la puissance, aux siècles des siècles. Amen!

This verse is often left out of a study of Spiritual Gifts but it does provide us with a little insight into a couple Spiritual Gifts. While the passage does not present any gifts not presented elsewhere in the New Testament it does reflect a very important truth that applies to all the gifts: *“in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ”*. The gifts are given to the church as people and as abilities in order for God to be glorified in the church, the body of Christ. Gifts are not given to the Pastor, the teacher, the Apostle or the Prophet to be lifted up, but that God is glorified. The focus of the church is always to glorify God and the Spiritual Gifts are part of the process given to glorify God.

Notice that Peter reiterates what Paul stated, we all have received Spiritual Gifts and they are to be used to serve one another in the Church. In serving others the body of Christ is built up and ultimately God is glorified. In much of the modern world the concept of serving others is not the primary purpose of the Christian. Like the pagan world many Christians look to use their gifts to make themselves look better, to make money or to enhance their own position. But Peter makes it clear, the purpose of the gifts is to serve one another. Peter also says that as the recipient of Spiritual Gifts we are to be *“good stewards of God’s varied grace”*. God has entrusted to us gifts which are given to us through His grace. These gifts are not your possession for use to serve yourself but are given by God to serve others, to glorify God.

## Complete List of Spiritual Gifts

Rom 12:6–8	1 Cor 12:8–10	1 Cor 12:28	1 Cor 12:29–30	Eph 4:11	1 Pet 4:11
prophecy	prophecy	prophets	prophets	prophets	
ministry					ministry
teaching		teachers	teachers	pastor-teachers	
exhortation					
giving					
ruling		governments			
showing mercy					
	word of wisdom				
	word of knowledge				
	faith				
	healing	gifts of healing	healing		
	miracles	miracles	miracles		
	discerning of spirits				
	tongues	tongues	tongues		
	interpretation		interpretation		
		apostles	apostles	apostles	
		helps			
				evangelists	
					speaking

## Theological Discussions

### Distribution of Gifts

Any discussion of Spiritual Gifts ultimately will include comments by people who claim they do not have the gift of evangelism so they are not required to evangelize, or they do not have the gift of teaching so they do not have to teach etc. First of all, remember there is no gift of evangelism, only the gift of the evangelist, a person specifically gifted in spreading the gospel. Many of the specific Spiritual Gifts given to the church are also general commands given to the entire church.

## GIFTS GIVEN TO SOME

1. Ministering
2. Exhortation
3. Giving
4. Teaching
5. Showing mercy
6. Faith
7. Evangelism

## COMMANDS GIVEN TO ALL

1. Serve one another (Gal. 5:13)
2. Exhort one another (Heb. 10:25)
3. All give (2 Cor. 9:7)
4. Great Commission (Matt. 28:19)
5. Be kind (Eph. 4:32)
6. Walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7)
7. All witness (Acts 1:8)<sup>6</sup>

Despite specific gifting by God being given to some, we are all commanded to serve, exhort, give, make disciples, teach, have faith and to witness.

## Sign Gifts

It has already been stated in our study that some of the Spiritual Gifts were temporary gifts, only given during the apostolic age for the purpose of authenticating the message being delivered. This is a topic that has resulted in much controversy but needs to be understood in proper Biblical perspective.

We must begin by defining what the apostolic age is. The apostolic age, simply put, is the period of time in which the Apostles of Jesus Christ were active. This is the foundational period of time of the church. From the time of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 until the last of the Apostles died which we believe to be the Apostle John. Possibly as late as 100AD. From this we can conclude that the Apostolic age was from the early 30'sAD to about 100AD. It was during this period of time that the church began and a complete transition from the dispensation of law to the dispensation of grace or the church age occurred.

The Apostolic age should be seen as having some different characteristics than the present church age. One of these differences is the completion of the writing of the New Testament, not the canonization of the New Testament but its writing. The gathering of the writings of the New Testament into a collection did not make them the Word of God. Every letter and book was the Word of God as it was being written, sent and read. Prior to the writing of the text, God provided, through principally the Apostles, a means to validate as authoritative their teaching. We call those means the "Sign Gifts". Those gifts are identified as Prophecy, Miracles, Tongues and the Interpretation of Tongues. The use of Prophecy in relation to sign gifts is the Captial "P"

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 428.

prophecy which is the receipt and dissemination of information direct from God, information which the person had no way to know, except it comes from God.

The most common teaching concerning sign gifts is that they were in effect until the revelation of scripture by God was complete. This was so the Apostolic era speakers, teachers and leaders could authenticate their message as being from God. Once complete the sign gifts were no longer necessary. Validation of the message was made in comparison to the revealed Word of God. The name for this doctrine is Cessationism. The modern charismatic movement does not hold to or teach Cessationism, believing that the sign gifts continue on today. However, a proper hermeneutic of relative passages reveals that Scripture itself reveals these gifts will be only temporary in the church age.

The first element that must be substantiated is that with the conclusion of the writing of the book of Revelation the giving of new revelation from God concluded for the church age.

### Jude 3 (ESV)

**3** Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

### Jude 3 Nouvelle Edition de Genève – (NEG1979)

<sup>3</sup> Bien-aimés, alors que je désirais vivement vous écrire au sujet de notre salut commun, je me suis senti obligé de vous envoyer cette lettre pour vous exhorter<sup>[a]</sup> à combattre pour la foi qui a été transmise aux saints une fois pour toutes.

There are several things we need to see in this verse. It was common in the first century church to utilize the phrase “the faith” which is the Greek word πίστει (pistei) as a reference to the entire revealed body of truth as revealed in scripture. The faith here refers to the entire revealed word of God, the Bible. Jude says that it was “once for all delivered”. The positioning of the word in the Greek text place the emphasis on the Greek Word ἅπαξ (hapax) translated as “once”. The word means once for all meaning a completed action. It is the same word that speaks of Jesus crucifixion, once not repeatedly. No further revelation will be given during this age.

### Hebrews 2:1-4

#### Hebrews 2:1–4 (ESV)

**1** Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

**2** For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution,

**3** how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard,

**4** while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

## Hébreux 2:1-4 Nouvelle Edition de Genève – (NEG1979)

**2** C'est pourquoi nous devons d'autant plus nous attacher aux choses que nous avons entendues, de peur que nous ne soyons emportés loin d'elles. <sup>2</sup> Car, si la parole annoncée par des anges a eu son effet, et si toute transgression et toute désobéissance ont reçu une juste rétribution, <sup>3</sup> comment échapperons-nous en négligeant un si grand salut? Le salut annoncé d'abord par le Seigneur, nous a été confirmé par ceux qui l'ont entendu, <sup>4</sup> Dieu appuyant leur témoignage par des signes, des prodiges, et divers miracles, et par les dons du Saint-Esprit distribués selon sa volonté.

This passage offers us a couple of important points. First, the author of the book of Hebrews equates the giving of the Old Testament through the angels and messengers or prophets of the Old Testament with the receipt of the New Testament through the words of Jesus and those who followed Him. Second the author states that the revelation given by those who followed Jesus was accompanied by sign gifts. This is clearly the purpose of the sign gifts, to authenticate the speaker being from God. The third point is made by the author in his choice of words in verse 4. The English word "Witness" in verse 4 is the Greek word *συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος* (*syne-pimar-tyroun-tos*) which comes from the root word *συνεπιμαρτυρέω* which BDAG defines as *testify at the same time*<sup>7</sup>. At the same time the revelation was being made by the followers of Jesus it was attested to by sign gifts. The logical understanding of this then is when the revelation was complete the sign gifts were no longer necessary. Another way to view this is when the followers of Jesus passed away so did the sign gifts. Of course it should be understood that the followers of Jesus in this passage is reference to the Apostles in the first century.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:8-12

Perhaps the most important passage dealing with Cessationism is 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:8-12. Right in the middle of a three-chapter discussion of Spiritual Gifts and their abuse in the Corinthian church Paul gives the following:

#### 1 Corinthians 13:8–12 (ESV)

**8** Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

**9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

**10** but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

**11** When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

**12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

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<sup>7</sup> Arndt, William, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature : A Translation and Adaption of the Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Worterbuch Zu Den Schrift En Des Neuen Testaments Und Der Ubrigen Urchristlichen Literatur*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

## 1 Corinthiens 13:8-12 Nouvelle Edition de Genève –(NEG1979)

<sup>8</sup> L'amour ne périt jamais. Les prophéties seront abolies<sup>[a]</sup>, les langues cesseront, la connaissance sera abolie<sup>[b]</sup>. <sup>9</sup> Car nous connaissons en partie, et nous prophétisons en partie<sup>[c]</sup>, <sup>10</sup> mais quand ce qui est parfait sera venu, ce qui est partiel sera aboli. <sup>11</sup> Lorsque j'étais enfant, je parlais comme un enfant, je pensais comme un enfant, je raisonnais comme un enfant; lorsque je suis devenu homme, j'ai fait disparaître ce qui était de l'enfant. <sup>12</sup> Aujourd'hui nous voyons au moyen d'un miroir<sup>[d]</sup>, d'une manière obscure, mais alors nous verrons face à face; aujourd'hui je connais en partie, mais alors je connaîtrai comme j'ai été connu.

In this passage Paul compares some of the Spiritual Gifts with Love. He says “Love never ends, but prophecies they will pass”; “Tongues will cease”, “knowledge will pass away”. The critical words in this passage that must be understood from the original are “cease” and “pass away”. Cease is the Greek word παύσονται (pauantai). Archibald Robertson in his *Word Pictures of the New Testament* defines this word as “Future middle indicative of παύω [pauō], to make cease. They shall make themselves cease or automatically cease of themselves.”<sup>8</sup> The Apostle Paul is saying that Love endures but tongues will of their own accord cease or no longer operate. “Pass away” is the Greek word καταργηθήσονται (katar-gēthē-sontai) which Robertson defines as “First future passive of καταργεω [katargeō]. Rare in old Greek, to make idle (ἀργος [argos]), inoperative.”<sup>9</sup> Prophecies and knowledge will become idle or inoperative.

Paul goes on in verse 10 to say “when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away”. Properly interpreting what this means is critical to our understanding of the sign gifts. Perfect is the Greek word τέλειον (teleion) which BDAG defines as *having attained the end or purpose, complete, perfect*.<sup>10</sup> It is also defined as mature. Every use of this word in the New Testament refers to completed, perfect or mature. The challenge is to determine what Paul is referring to that has become completed, mature or perfect.

There are many scholars who interpret this to be a reference to the return of Jesus, the Perfect, either at the rapture or at the end of the tribulation and the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. There are many credible arguments to support this interpretation of the text. However, this interpretation does have some difficulties. This interpretation utilizes contrasts that Paul references as analogies of the perfect coming in verses 9 through 12. One particular contrast is in verse 12. Paul says that we will be known as we are known when the perfect comes. This is interpreted to mean that when Jesus returns and we have face to face contact with Jesus we will know Him as well as He knows us. To equate our knowledge of God with His knowledge of us is not supported by the rest of scripture. An omniscient, omnipotent, infinite God is not completely knowable to us, finite human beings.

In viewing τὸ τέλειον (to teleion) as a reference to maturing of the church, the end of the apostolic age, the completion of the written revelation of God in this age the contrasts of verse 9-

<sup>8</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), 1 Co 13:8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature : A Translation and Adaption of the Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch Zu Den Schrift En Des Neuen Testaments Und Der Ubrigen Urchristlichen Literatur* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 809.

12 work well to prove his point. The sign gifts should be seen as all dealing with revelation from God, either directly or indirectly. When the apostolic age closed at the death of John, the New Testament revelation was complete and the church passed from the transitional beginning phase to a more mature phase. This more mature phase will last until the conclusion of the dispensation, which will occur at the rapture of the church. This author believes it is best to view Paul's use of τὸ τέλειον (to teleion) as a reference to the end of the beginning of the church age. God has revealed through His prophets, both in the Old and New Testaments, all that He wanted recorded by written word. The conclusion of this recording coincides with the end of the apostolic age which ushers in the rest of the church age.

## Restrictions of Sign Gifts

A discussion on Spiritual Gifts in general and sign gifts specifically must include the restrictions the Apostle Paul placed on these gifts in the only place they are discussed theologically rather than historically in the New Testament. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12-14 is the only place that the sign gifts are spoken of in a theological manner. Other locations they are referred to is in an historical context. As we have already stated that Paul is addressing issues and abuses of sign gifts and tongues specifically here in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12-14. In chapter 14 the Apostle Paul lays down some restrictions on the use of these gifts within the church.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:26-33

#### **1 Corinthians 14:26–33 (ESV)**

**26** What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

**27** If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret.

**28** But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.

**29** Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.

**30** If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent.

**31** For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged,

**32** and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.

**33** For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints,

#### **1 Corinthetaiens 14:26-33 Nouvelle Edition de Genève – (NEG1979)**

**26** Que faire donc, frères? Lorsque vous vous assemblez, les uns ou les autres parmi vous ont-ils un cantique, une instruction, une révélation, une langue, une interprétation, que tout se fasse pour l'édification. **27** En est-il qui parlent en langue, que deux ou trois au plus parlent, chacun à son tour, et que quelqu'un interprète; **28** s'il n'y a point d'interprète, qu'on se taise dans l'Eglise, et

qu'on parle à soi-même et à Dieu. 29 Pour ce qui est des prophètes, que deux ou trois parlent, et que les autres jugent; 30 et si un autre qui est assis a une révélation, que le premier se taise. 31 Car vous pouvez tous prophétiser successivement, afin que tous soient instruits et que tous soient exhortés.

32 Les esprits des prophètes sont soumis aux prophètes; 33 car Dieu n'est pas un Dieu de désordre, mais de paix. Comme dans toutes les Eglises des saints,

Paul begins this section by mandating that everything done in the church be done for the building up, edification, of the church. It is not for the person possessing the gifts to receive credit or acclaim, it is to build up the church that God gave these gifts.

He goes on to restrict the number of tongues speakers to two or three. He also restricts these speakers to one at a time. He also mandates that there be an interpreter to interpret for the rest of the church so they can also obtain a benefit from what is being said. No interpreter, no speaking in tongues.

Next he restricts how many prophets can speak and requires that they submit to the scrutiny of others. This point is critically important to understand. A true prophet from God, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament was required to be accurate 100% of the time. So Paul was requiring that a prophet submit to the others to determine if what has been said comports with what God has already revealed in Scripture or at that time revealed by the other prophets. If there is a conflict one or both are wrong. Paul adds that God is not a god of confusion meaning that God will not say one thing one time and another thing another time. The message revealed in the Word of God is consistent from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21.

The issue with the modern charismatic and Pentecostal movements is they do not abide by these restrictions. It is common for many people, even hundreds in large gatherings, to be making vocal noises at the same time. To the observer it appears to be complete chaos, something Paul says God is not the God of. There also seems to be a lack of consistency in the interpretation of what has been said, if there even is a translator. Many attempts have been made over the years to put tongues and the interpretation of tongues to the test. To have different interpreters, independent of each other to see if they have the same interpretation. This has been resisted by the charismatic and Pentecostal groups. When it has been performed it has failed with different interpretations.

The Bible student should also recognize that what is being spoken by the modern movements is not a language known to someone but unknown to the speaker. It is most often gibberish that through the use of modern computerized tools fails to display any normal verbal patterns. In other words, the tongues spoken by the modern movements is not language at all, simply vocal noises. That seems to be inconsistent with the description of the Spiritual Gifts of tongues in the New Testament.

## Conclusion

The Spiritual Gifts, given by God to the church, includes both abilities and people. These gifts were given to build up the church and to enable the church to complete the mission given the church by God. Some of the gifts are gifts that are permeant to the church for the church age. Other gifts were given to the church to enable the church to mature to the point that they had obtained the complete revelation from God for this age. Once that revelation was complete, the foundation of the church, the Apostles and Jesus Himself were physically gone from the scene the transition was complete, the church mature, those sign gifts, which dealt with the revelation itself, were no longer necessary. A person hearing a speaker during this early stage of the church could not simply turn to the Bible to determine if what they were being told was accurate and correct. God utilized these sign gifts to authenticate that what the person was hearing was true and from Him. When the revelation was complete, the apostles were gone, the church was now in a state of having to determine the veracity of the spoken word by comparing it to what God had revealed. Maturity here refers to the state of no longer being led by the hand but having to figure it out for themselves.

Of course, with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the remaining Spiritual Gifts, the church is not left completely by ourselves. We have the comforter, the councilor and our guide to illuminate the pages of Scripture for us. We have pastors and teachers to teach us what God has recorded. The Spiritual Gifts are all about God providing the right tools at the right time for the church to develop and accomplish the mission God has assigned to her. Every Spiritual Gift aids in that effort just as every member of the church is supposed to be involved in that by discovering and utilizing the gifts given by God.