

UNWRAPPING YOUR PRESENTS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

Part Four

I. REFRESHER ON THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

A. The initial and continual filling of the Holy Spirit:

1. What a Holy Spirit filled individual is: "A Holy Spirit filled person is a born-again believer who is hungry and disciplined to study, understand and wisely implement what he is being taught from God's Word. This in turn, triggers rapid spiritual growth. (See *1 Pet. 2:2*) With a sense of urgency, he eagerly addresses anything that would hinder the Spirit from daily producing Christ's character in his life or Christ's ministry through his life. By faith, he places every area of his life under Christ's complete Lordship, so that ministry occurs through him, beyond what is humanly possible. (See *Rom. 6:16* *1 Cor. 6:19*; *Mt. 10:36-38*; *17:20-21*; *Jn. 14:12*)
2. Characteristics of a Holy Spirit filled believer:
 - a. Christ-like character: (See *Gal. 5:22-23*)
 - b. Boldly sharing the Gospel and reaping: (See *Acts 2:4,41*; *4:31*; *5:14*; *6:3*, *7*; *11:24*)
 - c. Constantly singing vibrantly to the Lord: (See *Eph. 5:18-19*)
 - d. Continually (always) being thankful for everything (absence of worry, disappointment, guilt, doubt, irritability, resentment, inferiority, jealousy, fears, etc.) (See *Eph. 5:18*, *20*)
 - e. Being submissive to the authority figures in your life: (See *Eph. 5:18-6:9*)
3. Continual fillings due to the quenching of the Holy Spirit:

Quenching the Holy Spirit - the word used for quenching means to smother or extinguish the flame. Don't extinguish the influence of the Holy Spirit in your heart by willfully disobeying any absolute of Scripture. Although the Holy Spirit still indwells the believer, disobedience brings His "filling" work of assuring, understanding and applying Scripture, conviction, bold witness, eternal focus, power to break habits, resisting temptation, controlling the tongue, implementing marital, parental, occupational roles, the delivery of prayers, spiritual growth, and divine guidance to a complete standstill. Disobedience empties your life of the Spirit's influence while prompt confession begins the filling process all over again - therefore the need for numerous fillings. Prompt confession that re-ignites the flame triggering the Spirit's refilling, include acknowledging the sin (going my own way) has no justifiable cause, seeing it for how it has hurt God, asking for God's help to hate the sin the way He does, begging for his forgiveness with no thought of deserving it, and promptly establishing new patterns so it won't happen again. Quenching the Holy Spirit with unconfessed sin cripples the intended powerful testimony of the individual believer as well as the local church he attends. The powerless individual and his powerless local church must now resort to a carnal (fleshly) emphasis using entertainment to excite feelings and self-serving church growth strategies that can be accomplished in the flesh. Quenched lives being empowered by the flesh, have replaced the vibrant supernatural work of the Holy Spirit which so graphically empowered the handicapped lives and churches (they were without the completed Word of God) throughout the book of Acts. (See *1 Thes. 5:19*; *1 Cor. 3:1-3*; *1 Pet. 3:7*; *Ps. 66:18*; *1 Jn. 1:9*; etc.)

II. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT INTRODUCED: (See *1 Cor. 12*)

- A. Defining spiritual gifts: "Spiritual gifts are special abilities that allow me to function in the local church with ease and success. The Holy Spirit gives these gifts at the moment of salvation, with each born again believer having at least one.

Since they are unconditional gifts, they cannot be lost but they can be ignored or misused by operating in the flesh.”
Dr. Charles Swindoll

B. There are five reasons for the Holy Spirit giving believers spiritual gifts:

1. To exalt exclusively the person and work of Jesus Christ at the expense of self: (See *I Cor. 12:3; Eph. 4:13-15; Jn. 15:26; 16:14*)
2. For the local church to have all the necessary parts to function as an autonomous entity in any culture throughout the world: (See *I Cor. 12:14-20*)
3. To humble every member to take the initiative and be a participant rather than a spectator in serving each other in a local church, the way a physical body functions: (See *I Cor. 12:20-24*)
4. To force each member to sincerely need others and join with others in ministry embracing the fact that more can be done together in the local church than can be done individually: (See *I Cor. 12:19-24*)
5. To unify the local church for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel in the community and throughout the world: (See *I Cor. 12:25; Jn. 17:11b, 21-22*)

C. Three different groups of spiritual gifts:

1. Service gifts: “Service gifts are the maintenance gifts that minister to others behind the scenes and are rarely publicly acknowledged. They repair what is broken and lubricate the moving parts of a local church so everything functions harmoniously. The majority of believers have at least one of these gifts, yet they are rarely discovered because they are not as glamorous as the support or sign gifts, and therefore carnally overlooked. Only someone who is filled with the Holy Spirit will value them in others and in themselves.”
2. Support gifts: “Support gifts involve the ministry of the Scriptures. These gifts are given more authority and honor than most of the other gifts, so they have greater appeal to those carnally minded. They are public scriptural gifts that do the shaping and building of the local church. Once again, the balance of Scripture is on display. The Holy Spirit knew that for a local church to reach any level of maturity in drawing others to Christ, it would need a maintenance ministry done to existing parts (service gifts), while conducting an aggressive building ministry (support gifts), to expand and further equip the local church in effectively “reaching their world for Christ”. Every local church must have both a maintenance ministry and a building ministry going on, or it will soon become a lifeless church of spectators.”
3. Sign gifts: “Sign gifts were super-human abilities that altered the laws of nature. They were the most sought after gifts by those living in carnality, because of how it placed them in the spotlight with both believers and unbelievers. These gifts were given by the Holy Spirit so local church leaders could authenticate God's spokesman with the absence of the completed Word of God. Local church leaders could check out both the teacher and his message with these gifts being exercised. They, for the most part, were no longer needed after healthy local churches were multiplying, and God's Word complete in written form.”

D. Admonishments regarding spiritual gifts:

1. Don't be “ignorant” concerning spiritual gifts. (See *I Cor. 12:1*)
2. “Stir up” (keep on stirring) your spiritual gifts as bellows do a fire. (See *I Tim. 1:6*) The idea is to follow through on your commitments so that your gifts will be practiced regularly, successfully, and joyfully. God will then be using you to glue this local church together, rather than fragmenting it. The key word here is “faithfulness”. (See *Ps. 101:6; Mt. 25:21, 23; I Cor. 4:2*)
3. “Don't neglect” your spiritual gift. (See *I Tim. 4:14*) When you find out what your gifts are, be diligent to faithfully practice them week in and week out, so you will be the unifying enabler of your local church's ministry. You can't lose, outgrow or retire from implementing them, since they are purposely given by the Holy Spirit to equip you for a lifetime of service in a local body of believers.

III. FOUR SIGN GIFTS THAT AUTHENTICATED GOD'S SPOKESMAN:

A. The spiritual gift of miracles: (See I Cor. 12:10)

1. The gift explained: "This gift allowed an individual to display super-human ability to alter the laws of nature by super-human power. Most of God's dispensations began with a display of miracles and after the dispensation was under way, they subsided. To say the gift of miracles has ceased does not mean that miracles have ceased. (See Heb. 2:3-4)
2. Examining the dispensations for practical examples: (*Dispensations are periods of time where God added additional responsibility on mankind when additional revelation was given by God.*)
 - a. Innocence – creation of the universe, world, Adam and Eve: (Gen. 1:28)
 - b. Conscience or moral responsibility – the fall of mankind and the absence of Divine companionship: (Gen. 3:7)
 - c. Human government – the flood and the revamping of the surface of the earth as well as the environment: (Gen. 8:15)
 - d. Promise – the birth of Isaac at Abraham and Sarah's age: (Gen. 12:1)
 - e. Law – burning bush, plagues, Red Sea, manna, fire and a cloud for guidance: (Ex. 19:1)
 - f. Church – gift of miracles and other miraculous signs: (Acts 2:1)
 - g. Kingdom – great tribulation, Satan bound, 1,000-year reign with Christ: (Rev. 20:4)

B. The spiritual gift of healing:

1. The gift explained: The gift gave the individual the super-human ability to restore health immediately and at will.
2. Examples – Peter and Paul: (See Acts 3:1-7; 14:6-11; 19:10-12)
3. Practicing the gift today – the gift ceased with the founding of the church and the completion of the Word of God:
4. Three misconceptions concerning healing:
 - a. Physical healing is guaranteed in the atonement:
 - b. It is God's will for everyone to be physically healed: (Why did Jesus heal only one rather than everyone at the pool of Bethesda in Jn. 5:1-9?)
 - c. Infirmities are always due to sin/demonic activity (Jn. 9:1-3; II Cor. 12:7-10)
5. God's method for healing today: (See Ja. 5:13-16)
 - a. Self-examination: vv. 13, 16
 - b. Consult a doctor: v. 14
 - c. If both steps fail, call the elders: vv. 15-16
6. Insights for lingering illnesses:
 - a. It may be allowed by God due to the unwillingness of a believer to address known sin: (Ps. 32; 51; I Cor. 11:31-32; I Jn. 5:16-18)
 - b. It may be allowed by God to teach a believer about himself and about the nature of God like Job experienced in the O.T. (Rom. 5:3-5)
 - c. It may be allowed by God to prevent a believer from sinning: (II Cor. 12:7-10)
 - d. It may be allowed by God to enhance the effectiveness of a believer's testimony: (Phil. 1:12-18)
 - e. It may be allowed by God to help comfort someone else: (II Cor. 1:4-7)

C. The spiritual gift of knowledge: (I Cor. 12:8)

1. The gift explained: This gift allowed an individual to super-naturally possess facts and understanding to make right decisions without previously being taught those facts.

2. Practicing this gift today – the gift concluded as well, with the founding of the churches and the completion of Scripture. (*I Cor. 13:8*)

D. The spiritual gift of **interpretation of tongues**: (*I Cor. 12:30*)

1. The gift explained: The individual with this gift was to be male in gender and was to be recognized by a local church to have the ability to interpret any tongue spoken at any time. (*See I Cor. 14:26-34*)
2. Practicing this gift today - This gift obviously ceased when the gift of tongues ceased. (*I Cor. 13:8*)

IV. **PRINCIPLES TO PERSONALLY APPLY:**

(Together becoming “people of the Word” in principle AND in practice)

- A. All sign gifts must be scrutinized in light of the Scriptures and their motives, since the Holy Spirit will never initiate an experience contrary to the written Word of God. (*See I Jn. 4:1; Jn. 16:13; Note Moses – Num. 12:3*)
- B. There is a prophetic justification for studying the sign gifts since they will occur once again when the Holy Spirit is removed during the great tribulation. (*See I Cor. 13:8; II Thes. 2:5-8; Rev. 11:3-6 7 numerous O.T. passages*)