

- The subject of spiritual gifts can be a topic of controversy among Christians ... Are their Christians and churches who wrongly teach about and practice the gifts of the Spirit – yes ... However, the solution to misuse is not disuse; instead, the solution is to correctly teach, understand, and develop the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given to each believer ... We need not look any further than the Corinthian church to see this
- The underlining issue with the Corinthian church was one of immaturity – 3:1-3 ... This immaturity influenced what they believed, how they lived, how they treated one another, how they operated as a church, how they viewed and practiced spiritual gifts ... Interestingly, Paul says that this church does “not lack any spiritual gift” (1:7) ... The Spirit was clearly evident among them ... And yet, church members allowed their immature understanding of giftedness to create divisions among them ... They claimed certain gifts were of greater importance than others ... In worship gatherings, the Corinthians allowed chaos rather than order, especially in regard to prophecy and tongues ... What is Paul’s solution – for them to discontinue using spiritual gifts – no ... Paul’s solution – to correctly teach about the spiritual gifts, so the church is able to rightly understand and develop the gifts among them (12-14)

### What are Spiritual Gifts?

- In 1 Corinthians, we are actually dropping in on a conversation that has been occurring for a while ... Paul actually wrote 4 letters to this church, and we only have 2 of them – letter 2 and letter 4 ... Paul wrote a letter concerning some issues he had heard about ... Then, the church sent a letter asking a number of questions; Paul responds
- Since the majority of those in the Corinthian church probably came from a God-less background, they were used to seeing people acting crazy and speaking gibberish when worshipping false idols ... So, when people in the church openly practiced speaking in tongues and acting disorderly, they probably assumed something strange and wrong was occurring, hence Paul’s words in 12:2-3 ... “I don’t want you to mistake the work of the Holy Spirit for the work of pagan practice” ... Paul then lays out what spiritual gifts are: they are a gift – **charisma, gift of grace**; they are a ministry or service to others; they are a working of God’s power ... A spiritual gift is a gift of grace, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to build up and grow the church ... **Tozer**, “The work of the church is to be done by the Holy Spirit through gifted members”
  - According to 12:7 – it is the Holy Spirit Himself working supernaturally in you and through you ... Every Christian has been given at least one spiritual gift ... This occurs when the Spirit enters you at salvation ... You do not earn the gift; it is bestowed upon you as the Spirit wills (12:11) ... Gifts are not a sign of spiritual maturity (as the Corinthians exemplify) ... However, the fruit of the Spirit greatly influences and enables the way one uses their gift ... Remember this equation = Filling ➤ Fruit ➤ Gifts



### Are Spiritual Gifts Necessary?

- Yes ... The purpose of a spiritual gift is two-fold: benefit others and glorify God ... 12:7; 14:3, 12, 26 ... Eph4:12-16 ... “by the proper working of each individual part” – every person and every gift is needed for the building up of the church, as well as for the effectiveness of the church ... Paul commands you and I to “desire gifts” (12:31); “desire ... prophecy” (14:1); “be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues” (14:39) ... Peter says, “Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God ... so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (1Pet4:10-11) ...
- We should never look down upon our gifting, as if our gifting doesn’t really matter (12:12-27) ... None of God’s gifts are left-overs, nor are any of them meant to sit on a shelf in a closet ... Each one has been given for a purpose, and is therefore needed in the church in which God has placed you ... 12:18 – He has assigned you a gift, and He has assigned you a place in which to use the gifts He has given you ... Essentially, you were wired for the very gift that you have received – even if you don’t feel that you are ... We can come up with all of the excuses as to why we are not capable of doing what God has gifted us to do, and for each excuse God will remind you of His ability to enable you, teach you, prepare you, lead you every step of the way

## How many gifts can a person have?

- As said, every Christian has at least one gift ... But also, as we read, Paul instructs you and I to pray for and desire gifts that we do not have ... So, the Spirit will give you as many gifts as He has determined ... There is no conflict in saying the Spirit **distributes gifts to each person as He wills**, and also saying **desire** (seek after, pray for) **spiritual gifts** ... It is the Spirit's will that you desire and seek after additional gifts that He wants to bestow upon you ... Maybe you have a strong desire for a particular gift, could it be that the Spirit has put this strong desire in you, so that you would pursue Him for that gift – YES!
- No Christian will ever possess every gift ... Gifts should cause us to depend on one another ... I don't need every gift; I need to depend on others for what I need, as they depend on me for what they need

## Can a person lose their gift?

- In a letter to Timothy, Paul calls him not to neglect the gift that is in him (1Tim4:14) ... In another letter, he calls him to rekindle the gift of God (2Tim1:6) ... So, it is possible that if one chooses to ignore and not use their gift, that the gift could become inoperative ... I don't think that God will give up on us, or that the Spirit will stop working in us, but I do think that we can cause ourselves to be limited in what we can do and how effective we can be in certain areas ... Don't put a limit on what the Holy Spirit can do and wants to do in your life ... The Christian life is so much more than what we sometimes allow it to be ... How does one rekindle a spiritual gift – 1) call out in repentance and faith, asking the Spirit to renew His gift in you; 2) ask Him to provide opportunities for you to practice the gift; 3) ask Him to connect you with another person who may have the same gift as you, and then together seek out opportunities

## How do I discover my gift?

- Taking a "Spiritual Gifts Test" can help reveal areas where God is working through you ... However, your gifting may change based on the questions being asked, so don't base your gifting solely on this one test
- **Sam Storms**, "Instead of first asking, 'What is my gift?', ask the question, 'Who is in need?' If God's people would look outward before they look inward, they will encounter the charismatic and empowering presence of the Spirit to equip them for every good deed. If you're still bewildered by what may or may not be your spiritual gift, act first and ask later. If we would devote ourselves to praying, giving, helping, teaching, serving, and exhorting those around us, the likelihood greatly increases that we will walk headlong into our gifting without ever knowing what happened."
- I would love to continue this conversation on discovering your gift with anyone who wants to