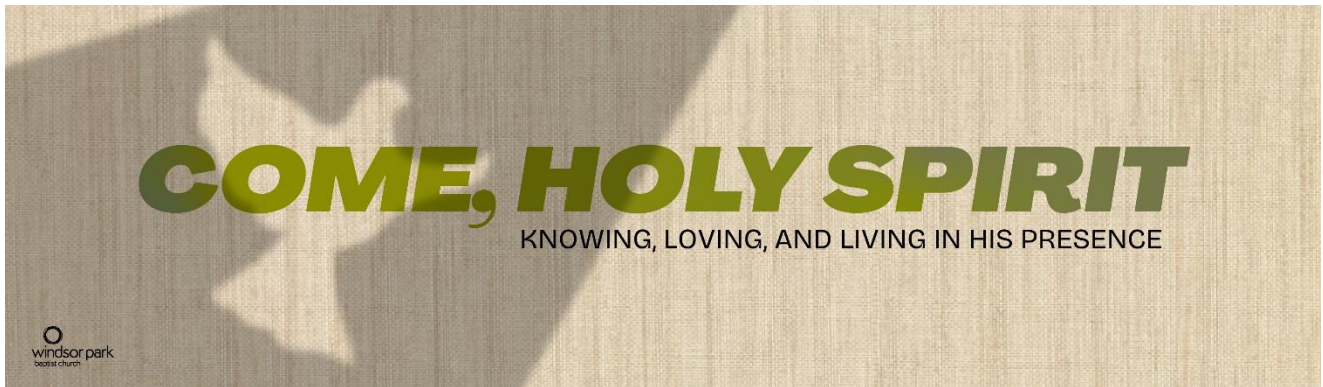


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Week 5: The Grace Gifts Given to You

Introduction:

We are into the fifth week of our series “***Come, Holy Spirit***” one of the most ancient prayers of the church and I am so privileged to be looking at the gifts of the Holy Spirit with you this week. I want to use one of my spiritual gifts, exhortation or encouragement today because the gifts of the Spirit are good news. In 2025 we did Life Group Health survey and one of the surprises was that many people didn’t know their spiritual gifts. They were keen, they just didn’t know. So with that level of need and interest let’s look at it together.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in tongues, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

A week ago, I was on the phone to my brother in-law, Peter and he asked what I was up to. I said I’m doing my research for a sermon on the gifts of the Spirit. He asked me, “*Heathie, where do you stand on the gifts?*” I said, “*Well Peter, I stand very firmly on all of them. I’m for*

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the lot!" It was a bit of a weird question, but I know what he means. You don't know where people stand because it's not something we talk about very much. There's a bit of controversy around some of the more supernatural gifts of the Spirit and we don't see much of them so obviously in church or in our everyday lives and I often wonder why that is, but in this scripture, they are very much a feature of the church in Corinthians. So, to unpack this scripture and what it means for us we're going to look at three things:

1. **What are the gifts of the Spirit and their implications?**
2. **Why is it so important that has God given us these gifts?**
3. **How can we rightly use these gifts to grow the church and our own faith?**

1. What are the gifts of the Spirit and their implications?

There are two important words here in 1 Corinthians 12:7: ***A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.***

The word for **spiritual** here in Greek is ***pneumatika***. It highlights the spiritual source of the gifts as something given to us to use by the Spirit of God. I do want to labour the point. Almighty God, the creator God who ordered the universe, has given you a gift! He knows you intimately, He created you, He is constantly with you, and He said this is for you. You've got a gift of grace that I don't have. Do you know what yours is? Are you curious? Nobody leaves a gift unopened right? Why has He given you this gift? What does He want you to do with it? Understanding this is a core part of living out our faith.

The second word **gift**, is ***charismata***. It means "**gifts of grace**" or "**grace-gifts**" These are gifts are freely given by God's grace, not earned, not based on human merit but distributed by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the believers, the church first, your family, your community and workplace. I love that. These gifts of grace are something we don't earn through good behaviour or superstar faith, but something God has chosen for us because He knows who we are. Meaning, you don't have to wait until you have a huge sense of calling or are mature in your faith.

I was talking to Mike Little about this. He and Jo became Christians at Alpha. The very next Alpha, a couple of months later, he was asked to lead a small group. He said I didn't know much but in Alpha that's great so you listen to people rather than tell. He began to use his

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spiritual gifts and discovered that they were leadership and teaching. He's been faithfully using them ever since. At 26 years, Jo and Mike's life group is our longest running group at Windsor. When Mike and Jo became Christians, they didn't wait until they were experts, they just knew Jesus had changed everything so they got on with living out their faith that others might know more of Jesus too.

Here's some listed gifts in the New Testament the Holy Spirit has given to the church.

Romans 12:6–8	1 Corinthians 12: 8–10	1 Corinthians 12:28	Ephesians 4:11	1 Peter 4:11	Others
Prophecy	Word of wisdom	Apostle	Apostle	Teaching	Exodus:31:15 Craftsmanship
Serving	Word of knowledge	Prophet	Prophet	Service	Interpreter of dreams
Teaching	Faith	Teacher	Evangelist		Composer of music
Exhortation	Gifts of healings	Miracles	Pastor		Poetry
Giving	Miracles	Kinds of healings	Teacher		1 Cor: 7: 7 Gift of celibacy
Leadership	Prophecy	Helps			
Mercy	Distinguishing between Spirits	Administration			
	Tongues	Tongues			
	Interpretation of tongues				

They are amazing, challenging gifts that God has given each one of us. Look at what they do. They reach out, they love, they give. In an individualistic society that is primarily, me looking after me and mine, they cause us to look outwardly to care for others.

This list is not exhaustive Paul and Peter were not saying, that's all folks. Some gifts are not listed like the gift of intercession. There are others like hospitality, worship, wisdom, and the less popular martyrdom and celibacy. We need to consider spiritual gifts as many kinds of abilities dedicated to the Lord's work. The carpenter, the teacher, the engineer, the nurse, all can use their gifts for God. In an age where we can prefer to leave things to the paid specialists, we miss out on growing our faith if we don't use our gifts. We need to remember that every gift of grace used in love for others will build up the body. If you're at Windsor, if we are your church home, you have a gift for all of us to benefit from when you use it.

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A helpful way of seeing the gifts of grace that we each have could be:

1. **Acts of service**
2. **Specific ministries**
3. **Spirit manifestations**

There are grace gifts seen as **Acts of Service** such as exhortation or encouragement, giving, leadership, mercy, serving, helps and more. I see these gifts so evident in the life of many at Windsor Park. Here in the church and everyday life.

Then there are **Specific Ministries** for the leadership of the church which include apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher along with administration and leadership.

Spiritual manifestations listed in the New Testament are miracles, healing, wisdom, words of knowledge, prophecy, the discernment of spirits, tongues and the interpretation of tongues. The fact that Paul can list all these gifts shows the worship of the early church used these gifts as a core part of church life.

I was recently at a Life Group, and we discussed why there is hesitation around some of the more supernatural gifts. Some of us are wary because we've heard prophecies that haven't happened or words of knowledge that felt manipulative, people we love who've not been healed. We're scared of stepping into a gift and getting it wrong or disappointing people, maybe we don't feel good enough or we're lacking in faith, so we don't even go there.

Yet I know from my own experience how powerful those gifts are. Growing up my family had a lot of tension and conflict. When my parents were prayed for to receive the Holy Spirit their lives were completely changed. My mum was physically healed from arthritis and a severe back injury. My dad had always felt abandoned and unloved. He was deeply healed by a loving God who saw him. We went from being a family who were constantly tense to one of connection and joy. I am so grateful to God for the way our family was healed. I am so grateful to those people that used their gifts to pray for my parents and for me. My question is what are we losing in not using these gifts?

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The prophet Joel says in Joel 2:28–29:

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your old men will dream dreams,

your young men will see visions.

Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”

Joel’s words free me. The Spirit comes into my life to empower me to do what I could not do myself – to utter prophecies, see visions, dream dreams, perform wonders. Joel stresses that it will be normal for every believer to experience this. **The gap between my all-too-human fear and God’s power is not a reason to count myself out.** It is the reason to joyfully count myself in because when I step into those moments my faith in God must rise. Here’s a scary prayer we could pray, *“Holy Spirit, come and fill my ordinary, flawed, soul with your extraordinary power. Let me speak prophecy, see visions, dream dreams and perform wonders with you.”* Can you pray that prayer and what does it mean to live it out?

“*The Familiar Stranger*”, is one of the source books for this series, and in it, Tyler Staton, emphasizes that people need **safe, supportive environments—like close-knit communities or churches—where they can explore and practice their spiritual gifts without fear of judgment or failure.** These spaces allow growth through encouragement, feedback, and grace, rather than pressure or performance. We are wanting to do this as a church through the video course, **Naturally Supernatural**. Aidan and I are going to facilitate it over six Monday nights starting on July 6th. I do want to encourage you, if you want grow in your gifts and understanding of how to hear from the Holy Spirit please sign up and be a part of that.

2. Why has the Spirit given us these gifts of grace?

God has given us these gifts of grace because we’re created for a purpose. It says in Ephesians 4:11-13:

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Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Tim Keller, a theologian and author writes:

The purpose of spiritual gifts are differing abilities given by the Holy Spirit to each believer to meet needs in such a way that it creates a community of people who are growing into the fullness of the character of Jesus Christ.

What is the goal of our God given grace gifts? To equip us for works of service. What is the whole point? To build up the body until we reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

The gifts make us a body because I don't have all the gifts. Everyone gets a portion, no one has all of them, but everyone gets at least one. So, you get one and you get one, and you get one too. I need you and must lean into and honour your gifts that make us a complete body. We are all intimately reliant on each other. That's why you can't be experiencing the full reality of Christ if you live out your faith on your own. The whole purpose of all this ministry is to create Christ likeness in one another. Are you getting a picture? Like this jigsaw made up of many pieces you get a complete picture. Each of us has part of the picture, each of us has a role to build up the church. I need you; I need your gifts, Windsor needs you, as a church, as the body of Christ we need you to help grow us with your gifts.

3. How can we rightly use these gifts to grow the church and our faith?

We see in Galatians 5:22 says: ***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*** It's pretty clear we need **both the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit** working together. Paul names gifts like serving, giving, showing mercy, helping, and guiding—practical expressions that make the Spirit's fruit visible. **The fruit of the Spirit shapes who we are; the gifts shape**

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what we do. The fruit reflects our inner transformation our changing character as we walk with Jesus, while the gifts are how we actively serve God—in our families, communities, workplaces, and the church. As the fruit grows in us, our use of the gifts should be marked by love, otherwise, our service risks becoming prideful or self-serving rather than Christlike. We have seen ministries like this. People who are extremely gifted and so their platform grows but something happens and they stop serving out of the fruit of the Spirit and they fall. Again, that's why the whole body is important, realising no gift is more important than another, and remaining open to loving correction.

The good news is God uses all of who you are—your gifts, your story, your passions, your pain, and your skills, to do His good work and grow His kingdom. Nothing in your life is wasted. It all matters to Him.

Take Jo and David Peterson. You can often see them as part of the Connect team on the door with a foster baby in their arms. One of Jo's spiritual gifts is mercy. She feels deeply for young babies who have had a tragic start to life. Alongside that, she brings her experience and skills as a nurse, a mother, and a grandmother. God weaves all of it together—her compassion, her life experience, her profession, into a powerful calling to foster and care for the most vulnerable. Through her, Christ's love becomes visible to me. Jo is an example to me as she meaningfully lives out her faith and helps build wholeness in the next generation. Be encouraged: the pain you've been through, every passion you carry, every skill you've developed, God wants to use it. Nothing is lost in the Kingdom of God.

So, what will a church that is active in the theology of the gifts of the Spirit look like?

First there won't be any passive unemployed people in the church. We all have a role. You know if you see something that needs to be done in the church, you may very well be the one to do something about it. For ages I kept saying we need Alpha. How can people come to know Jesus? Now I get to organize and oversee something I love. Evangelism is one of my gifts so there's real joy in being part of the Alpha team. The body of Christ leaning into each other's gifts is so much more effective when we use our gifts together. So good!

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So, if you know the gifts of grace that God has given you that's fantastic! How are you going at using them, growing them? If you don't know your gifting, I think it's vital because God gave it to you, and not me, for a reason. We all wish God would send us an email so it's in writing but God doesn't work like that. He is all about relationship and wants us to journey with Him to discover them and to grow them.

There are lots of ways to discover them.

1.  Pray and ask God to show you.
2.  Ask others you trust. What gifts do you see that I may have?
3.  Encourage others by calling out the gifts you see in them.
4.  Do **Discover Your Design** and take a short questionnaire.
5.  Understand what your gift is. Read up about it. Talk to others who have it.
6.  Try it out. Volunteer somewhere, focus on it where you can and see if it is a gift.
7.  Grow it. 2 Tim 1:6 ***“Fan into flames the spiritual gift God has given you.”***

To sum up in Romans 12:6-8:

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

God has sent Holy Spirit to generously give each one of us a gift of grace that we have not earned so that we can pour out His love on the earth. He wants to use us to build up His church, change lives, heal families and grow the kingdom of God but how can we do that if we don't use our gifts.

The team are now going to sing to us a song I have loved for ages. The Upper Room. It's about the Upper room that was made available for Jesus for the last supper. The owner opened it up and gave it to Jesus to use and the song is inviting us to do the same with our

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lives. It would be great to take some time now as the worship song plays to ask God to grow the gifts of His Spirit in you to surrender to what He wants to show you.



Reflecting on Sunday 14th June Last Sunday Grant Harris took us through the “wedding passage” 1 Corinthians 13. After reflecting on that message, that our primary calling is to love God and love others, what were the moments when you sensed a call to love rather than react?

The following questions help you think more about this message.

- What stood out to you about the idea that **spiritual gifts are “grace-gifts”** (charismata) given freely by God, and how does that shape the way you view your own abilities?
- According to **1 Corinthians 12** and **Ephesians 4**, why does God give spiritual gifts, and what might it look like for our group/church to truly function as one body?
- What **hesitations or fears** do people have (including you) about using spiritual gifts—especially the more supernatural ones—and how can we create a safe space to grow in them?

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- **Putting it into practice:** What is one practical step you can take this week to discover, use, or grow a spiritual gift, and how can the group support you?

If you'd like to chat with someone about your spiritual journey or anything else going on in your life, please contact us at care@windsorpark.org.nz; **we're better together** and **no perfect people are allowed**.

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Below are some further resources that may take the message further and deeper and enable you to explore other viewpoints on the same theme. We also encourage you to engage with the preacher if there are further questions you have or if you'd like clarification on anything. Email info@windsorpark.org.nz and we'll direct your query to the appropriate person.

1. Spotify, **Tim Keller Sermons** "*The Gifts of the Spirit*"
2. Bible Project Classroom, **Tim Mackie** "*Unity not Uniformity*"
<https://bibleproject.com/classroom/ephesians/sessions/25>
3. **Naturally Supernatural Course.** "Are you worn out trying to serve Jesus and live on mission out of your own strength and strategies?" **Beginning July 6th** Heather and Aidan will be hosting a course designed to equip you to pursue a Spirit empowered lifestyle. Find out more info here to see this might be a great space for you and your Life Group. <https://www.naturallysupernaturalcourse.com/>
4. **Discover Your Design Course** An hour long course helping to give you understanding of how God has wired you and where your gifts may lie. **28th June 10:45 in the Kowhai Room** <https://www.windsorpark.org.nz/event/discover-your-design>