

Discovering Supernatural Resources

Paul Teaches on Spiritual Gifts

Discovering the Supernatural Series - 1st Corinthians B Series – Part 1

1st Corinthians 12:1-11

Oct 22-23, 2022

“Paul’s point seems clear: Diversity, not uniformity, is essential for a healthy church.” Gordon Fee

Introduction

- **Returning to 1st Corinthians – A New Series** on the last 5 chapters as Paul shifts into some discussions about supernatural matters. We’ve called this new series, ***“Discovering the Supernatural.”***
- **Stories of Spiritual Gifting**
- **The Point = Equipped for Collective Victory**

The Holy SPIRIT Gives GIFTS to His Kids

- **Continuationist or Cessationist?** – Are miracles, supernatural ministry and all spiritual gifting for the Church today? - **Absolutely!**
 - **What the Cessationist View is and why Bridgeway doesn’t subscribe to it**
 - **The Cessationist View** = that the supernatural gifts of miracles, signs and wonders stopped after the Apostolic Age. Why would someone believe that? Does it say that in the Bible?
 - **No Biblical Support** – there is absolutely NO Biblical support for this position.
 - *“If you were to lock a brand-new Christian in a room with a Bible and tell him to study what Scripture has to say about healing and miracles, he would never come out of the room a cessationist.”* [Jack Deere, Surprised by the Power of the Spirit]
 - **It’s taught, but not by the Bible.** It’s taught to us by others who have this view.
 - **Reasoning Argument** – Many conservative denominations believe this view and the main reason is that it seems right to them. It makes sense of their world and their views of their theological perspective. Don’t get me wrong, I understand how people can get there. I understand the temptation to believe it.
 - **2 Primary Reasons/Arguments:**
 1. **The Purpose of the Spiritual Gifts is no longer necessary (Signs Only)** – The argument is based on the assumption that spiritual gifts, miracles, and supernatural ministry are primarily SIGNS. They were signs given through the Old Testament prophets to validate their ministries. It was given to Jesus to validate that He was the Messiah. It was given to the Apostles because there was the launch of the brand new Christian Church and they needed validation in the eyes of both the Jewish community and the world around them that they were legit.
 - **Secondary Reason = Revelation & the Bible** – a second major reason they think that supernatural gifting was used, especially gifts like

prophecy is that God had a lot to re-rack in theology and to usher in the New Covenant, God was bringing direct revelation to His people. But once the Bible books were collected and canonized (made formal and closed), God no longer speaks directly, and we now look only to the Bible for anything we need God to say.

2. **It validates their current reality** – they don't see miracles around them, so they must not be important. If God wanted them to continue, then He would do more of them in our lifetime. There's no point in pursuing the Spiritual Gifts since we have done a good job without them. It's not worth the mess that comes along with it.
 - **The Danger of Reverse Engineering our Theology** – the irony of many Cessationists is that they fancy themselves as having a high view of Scripture. But again, it's not Biblically supported. It's actually a reverse engineering of eisegesis (importing views & bias into the Bible), not the proper exegesis (taking out of the Bible). When we allow our theology to be dictated ONLY by our experience (no miracles), it's going to shrink our worldview into a very small lens, to the lowest common denominator.
- **What the Continuation View is and why Bridgeway wholly embraces it.**
 - **The Continuation View** = that God is by nature supernatural and we are supernatural, therefore supernatural ministry is part of who we are and what we do. There is no difference between the Church of the first century to the church of the 21st century. We still need to be with God and have Him move in our lives powerfully. The world still needs God to move. The world doesn't care that the Messiah has been proven in the past. They need a fresh move of God in their lifetime too.
 - **It's Most Biblical** - The Bible gave instructions on pursuing the gifts, and a mandate to understand the gifts and Paul took a lot of time to help the Church understand how to use the gifts. The Bible is full of supernatural ministry and we were told to follow their example. To live like Jesus lived, to live like the Apostles and Church of Acts lived, without the supernatural doesn't make sense. There is no indicator that gifts would stop or the Holy Spirit would stop moving in those ways.
 - **The Purpose of Supernatural Ministry & Gifts still stands** – Although many of the supernatural elements of the early church helped in validation and as proof of the Messiah and Church legitimacy, that is not the only reason, nor the prime reason, God moves in supernatural ways and gives spiritual gifts to His kids. In my opinion the 4 primary reasons are:
 1. **Relational Connection** – I believe that one of the two most important aspects and purposes of our existence are relationship with God and glorifying His name. This makes it obvious which ones head this list. Spiritual gifts are God's partnership with His people, doing stuff together, relationally bonding through activity. God has never NEEDED people to get things done, He has always WANTED to partner with His people for relational reasons.

2. **Glory to God**¹ - This is the second of the two primary reasons for our existence so it shows up on this list at the top. God sought glory in the past and seeks it now. It's why we are here. When God does supernatural things it makes people recognize His presence and power and it instills an awe.
3. **Building Up the Body of Christ**² – Over and over Paul explains to the early church that the point is building up the Church around you. It's not a selfish endeavor, it's not a means for pride, it's not a game, it's purposeful. It's the way that the Church remains strong and united. Which brings up the point of unity. Unity was on the lips of Jesus in His last recorded long prayer.³ When we need each other (need is a bonding agent), it draws us together. God split up the gifts so that no one had them all. They would need to rely on each other to get the full support of Heaven for victory.
4. **Provides Evangelistic Support**⁴ - The term POWER EVANGELISM is a shortened way of saying that God used something supernatural to get people's attention so that He can provide them the message of the Gospel and begin a relationship with them. A perfect example is Pentecost. Weird supernatural stuff brought a crowd and people preached the gospel and God won. That was necessary in the early church and necessary now.
 - **Practical Reality** – I find the spiritual gifts the practical reality of being supernatural beings and children of God. It's not about being fancy or dramatic, it's about getting stuff done. We have things to accomplish as the Body of Christ and this is how we do it.
 - **Bridgeway is a Word & Spirit Church - Scripture-Soaked & Spirit-Led**
 - **Anchored in the Word** – Although the Bible is not exhaustive, saying everything that God wants to say about every subject, it is our surest anchor of God's will. This means that everything we do at Bridgeway needs to have a Biblical support or align with the Nature of God as revealed in Scripture. We are not interested in making things up, but living out what the Bible tells us is true. This sets up parameters and guidelines to protect us from mere human nature.
 - **Keeping in Step with the Holy Spirit** – The Holy Spirit has a lot to say and a lot to do. Jesus described Him like the wind, you can't see Him but you know where He's been and can get a guess on where He's going. Paul says to keep in step with the Holy Spirit and since He's on the move a lot, our Christianity is very active and pursuing. For us 'Spirit-led' includes supernatural ministry and the use of our spiritual gifts on a daily basis.
 - **Bottom Line** - Spiritual gifts are real and we need to know what ours are⁵ - If any of us fail to discover or develop our spiritual gifts the Body as a whole suffers.

Lesson

¹ 1 Peter 4:11; Jn 2:11

² This means that your gift is for my help and advancement while mine is for your benefit [1 Pet 4:10-11]. It's an interdependency of the Body and mutual building up of one another [1 Cor 14:3-5, 12].

³ "high priestly prayer"

⁴ Heb 2:3-4; Mk 16:17; Jn 2:11; 6:2, 14; 12:18, 37

⁵ This is one of the beautiful results of having *schools* of supernatural ministry as odd as that seems.

- **Sheep and Goats**
 - **Separating the Good Guys from the Bad Guys**
 - **1st Corinthians 12:1-3** – *“Now concerning spiritual⁶ gifts, brothers [and sisters], I do not want you to be uninformed⁷. 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 God⁸ ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord⁹” except in the Holy Spirit.¹⁰”*
 - **What’s a Spiritual Gift?** – literally it reads better as, *“Now concerning the things of the Holy Spirit”*. It doesn’t have the word ‘gifts’ here but the focus is on the

⁶ 4152. πνευματικός *pneumatikós*; fem. *pneumatikḗ*, neut. *pneumatikón*, adj. from *pneúma* (4151), spirit. Spiritual.

“When the emphasis is on the manifestation, the “gift” as such, Paul speaks of charismata; when the emphasis is on the Spirit, he speaks of pneumatika. If so, then both here and in 14:1 the better translation might be “the things of the Spirit,” which would refer primarily to spiritual manifestations, from the perspective of the Spirit’s endowment; at the same time it would point toward those who are so endowed.” Gordon Fee, NICNT Commentary

⁷ *“Paul begins his correction of their “ignorance” by reminding them of something from their pagan past of which they were well aware. The sentence itself is an anacolouthon (it doesn’t follow grammatically) since the “when” clause has no main verb. Either something dropped out in the transmission of the text, or else Paul himself intended his readers to supply a second “you were” at some point in the sentence. Literally it reads, “You know that when you were pagans, to mute idols whenever (or however) you would be led, being carried away.” The best solution is to repeat the verb “you were” with the final participle “carried away,” so that the sentence reads, “When you were pagans, you were carried away, as you were continually being led about to mute idols.” The greater difficulty is to determine the reason for this sentence in the argument. There are basically two options: (1) Some have argued for a minimal view, that Paul intends only to contrast their former life as idolaters with their new life as Christians (i.e., pagans are led to idols; Christians are led by the Spirit). A modification of this position sees Paul as contrasting their former experience with idols either (a) as a way to remind them of their “sheer lack of experience with true ‘inspired’ speech” (thus implying that they have no basis from which to make judgments about speech inspired of the Spirit),³⁶ or (b) to contrast Christian prophets and their Spirit-inspired utterances with their former experience with totally mute idols. While this view in one of its several forms is certainly possible,³⁸ the difficulty of finding an adequate reason for making this point in this introductory paragraph has caused most scholars to look elsewhere for an answer. (2) Others see Paul’s larger concern to be setting forth a pagan example against which they are to understand both “inspired utterances” and the significance of “tongues.” If so, then it seems probable that what is in view is their former experience of “ecstasy” or “inspired utterances” as pagans. Although neither verb on its own necessarily implies this, the unusual compounding of the verbs, with emphasis on the Corinthians’ being acted upon by others (implied in the two passive verbs), seems to lead in this direction. In keeping with his Jewish heritage, Paul scorns the idols as mute because they cannot hear and answer prayer; nor can they speak—in contrast to the Spirit of God who can. But he has also argued earlier that the mute idols represent demons (10:20–21)—who can and do speak through their devotees. Most likely, therefore, he is reminding them of what they well know, that in some of the cults “inspired utterances” were part of the worship, despite the “mute idols.” If so, then his concern is to establish early on, as v. 3 seems to corroborate, that it is not “inspired speech” as such that is evidence of the Spirit. They had already known that phenomenon as pagans. Rather, what counts is the intelligible and Christian content of such utterances.”* Gordon Fee, NICNT

⁸ *“it continues to stand as a particularly important word for the church, in which many of these spiritual phenomena are recurring. The presence of the Spirit in power and gifts makes it easy for God’s people to think of the power and gifts as the real evidence of the Spirit’s presence. Not so for Paul. The ultimate criterion of the Spirit’s activity is the exaltation of Jesus as Lord. Whatever takes away from that, even if they be legitimate expressions of the Spirit, begins to move away from Christ to a more pagan fascination with spiritual activity as an end in itself.”* Gordon Fee, NICNT

⁹ *“...only one who has the Spirit can truly make such a confession because only the Spirit can reveal its reality.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee

¹⁰ *But what follows turns out to be one of the more difficult passages in the letter. In two nearly balanced clauses Paul indicates what one who is speaking by the Spirit cannot say, and contrariwise that only by the Spirit can one utter the primary Christian confession. The difficulty lies primarily with the first clause, “No one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus is cursed.’” But it also has to do with the point of all this for the argument that follows. However one finally responds to the first matter, which is probably “past finding out,” that answer must make sense of two things: (a) how it functions in relationship to v. 2, and (b) how it relates to the larger issue of their apparently inordinate enthusiasm for the gift of tongues. The problem itself is especially perplexing—in two ways: First, it is difficult for us to imagine either that anyone actually cursed Jesus in the gathered Christian assembly, or that, if he/she did, Paul would take it so casually as to speak to it only here and in this totally noncombative way. Second, how is it possible that Paul would have to “make known to them” that no one speaking in the Spirit would say such a thing as “Jesus is/be cursed”? The solutions are many and varied; none is without difficulties... A second alternative is that this is exactly the kind of thing that those who are “inspired” by demonic spirits may have said in the pagan settings that Paul is alluding to in v. 2. This is an attractive option since it would help us better to understand the reason for v. 2. Furthermore, it would be precisely the kind of contrast between their pagan past and Christian present that would help them to see the difference between “spirits” and the Spirit, between “inspired utterance” as such and that which is truly of the Spirit of God. Hence it is not tongues per se that is evidence of the Spirit’s activity, but the intelligible, Jesus-exalting content of such activity. The difficulty with this option lies in the language anathema, which seems to reflect a Jewish usage not frequently found among Greeks... In the final analysis, therefore, it seems more likely that it is either hypothetical, perhaps serving as an analogy to their pagan past, whose point is its shock value, or else it is something that some of them had actually experienced in their pagan past. In either case, Paul’s point in context is not to establish a means of “testing the spirits,” but to remind them that “inspired utterance” as such is not evidence of being “led of the Spirit.””* Gordon Fee, NICNT Commentary

Holy Spirit providing something to His people, so it's assumed that anything He gives is a gift. The gifts are talked about later for context.

- **Spiritual in Nature** – The point of calling them SPIRITUAL gifts is due to their source. They are supernatural empowerments from God.
- **Gift not Earned** – The point of calling them spiritual GIFTS is to point out that you didn't earn it and it's not here to create an elitism of who's better than who. It's grace from God, period.
- **Definition - Spiritual gifts are extra empowerment**¹¹. In other words, they are extra juice for what the rest of us Christians must mature into and work for. It's like **cutting in line**. While the rest of us must develop the ability to discern God's voice, a gifted person just does. While we all struggle to grow in prayer and healing, a person with the gift of healing sees breakthrough at a shocking rate. While everyone is called to share the gospel with others [2 Tim 4:5], those with the gifts of preaching, teaching and evangelism seem to have the right words to say and the results are off the charts. The reason why they are so difficult to initially spot is that they are **not primarily a different quality of empowerment, but a different quantity**. Everyone connected to the Holy Spirit can operate in the prophetic, but a prophetically gifted person does it more. Spiritual gifts change a person's ABILITY.
 - **A Helpful Test** - You know that you have a spiritual gift when two things occur: 1.) others struggle to do the very same ministry effort you do more easily; 2.) There is spiritual impact through your efforts. Usually, **people who are highly gifted don't recognize it as a gift because it's so natural to them**.
- **Uninformed about Paganism** – Scholars struggle with how Paul launches into this subject on the Holy Spirit's supernatural ministry. He seems to be talking in a way that the church knew and had already written him about, so it made sense to them. But to us it seems disjointed how this passage is written. What it seems to be saying is, *"in the past many of you were pagans and engaged with demons without knowing it. You had experiences and manifestations and it's tempting to assume the Holy Spirit is doing things the same way. In fact, it's tempting to think they are the same manifestations, but they are not. There is Godly supernatural ministry and ungodly supernatural manifestations."*
- **Corinthians were already using them** – it's important to note that the Corinthian church was already up to their eyeballs in supernatural ministry and manifestations. Paul was not trying to teach them to look into the gifts and pursue supernatural stuff as much as trying to educate them to learn how to use what they already experienced. That's an important difference when you come into the Bible with little to know experience with these things and are looking for Paul to start at square one and convince you. He's not going to. He's turning an already existing river at full flow.

¹¹ of a normal supernatural element.

- **Assessing Legitimacy** - Then Paul explains that two things really matter when assessing whether something is from the Lord or not: **1.) the agent** – the one speaking or utilizing the supernatural element; **2.) The content of the ministry** – literally, what they are talking about or doing. Those things are supposed to be examined and we know that all Christian tests tend to fall into the ‘examine the fruit’ category.
- **Unity in Diversity**
 - **God’s Infinite Creativity and Diversity**
 - **1st Corinthians 12:4-6** – *“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 activities¹², but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.”*
 - **Varieties = Diversities in Unity** - There are lots of gifts, but they all come from the same source: The Holy Spirit. There’s lots of ways to minister but they all serve the same Lord. There are lots of good Christian things to do but God’s the one behind them all, every time in everyone.
 - **Unity is critical** and we cannot allow our differences to divide us. We cannot fall into comparison. Since everything comes from the Lord, and there is only ONE BODY of CHRIST, unity is paramount. Jesus’ last longest prayer was about unity (High Priestly Prayer). It matters and it seems that God spread out His gifting so that we would be connected, interdependent and relying on one another.
 - **Vital Source** - Their power source is always God.¹³ We must never divorce the gift from the Giver [cite Acts 2:38-39]. The point is not to become more independent in ministry but less.
 - **Holy Spirit is a Person** - The minute we start trying to think about or use Holy Spirit as a force, we are way out of line. He is a Person and not a force. In our prayers you’ll hear, ‘Father send us power of the Holy Spirit’ as if God has to go over to Holy Spirit and get a box and then hand it to the kids without the Holy Spirit being involved. The whole reason that spiritual gifts are activated and able to be used is Holy Spirit’s PRESENCE. He’s there. He’s doing stuff through us. We don’t get stuff from Him and walk away to do it ourselves.
- **Christmas Day**
 - **How God Splits Up the Different Gifts**

¹² “Given the flexibility of language noted above (see n. 12), one should probably not make too much of the different words used to describe the individual activities of the divine Persons: “gifts,”¹⁶ “ministries” or “services,” “workings.”¹⁸ Most likely they are simply three different ways of looking at what in v. 7 Paul calls “manifestations” of the Spirit. This is supported by the fact that (1) both “gifts” and “workings” occur again in the list itself (associated with “healings” and “miracles” respectively) and that (2) both “God” and “the one and the same Spirit” are respectively the subjects of the same verb (“works”) in vv. 6 and 11... In passing one must note the clear Trinitarian implications in this set of sentences, the earliest of such texts in the NT. As Barrett notes, “The Trinitarian formula is the more impressive because it seems to be artless and unconscious” (p. 284). It is not in fact a Trinitarian construct as such; that is, Paul’s interest is not in the unity of the Persons of the Godhead: the relationships are not spoken to at all, nor does he say that the Father, Son, and Spirit are one. Nonetheless, such passages as this are the “stuff” from which the later theological constructs are correctly derived.” Gordon Fee, NICNT Commentary

¹³ God’s the one behind them all, every time in everyone - 1 Cor 12:4-11

- **1st Corinthians 12:7-11** – *“To each is given the manifestation¹⁴ of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom¹⁵, and to another the utterance of knowledge¹⁶ according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith¹⁷ by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing¹⁸ by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles¹⁹, to another prophecy²⁰, to another the ability to distinguish*

¹⁴ “Second, what “each one” is given in this case is not a “gift,” but a “manifestation of the Spirit.” One should not make too much of this change of words, as if the following items would be wrongly called “gifts” because they are now called “manifestations.” Most likely the change reflects Paul’s own emphasis throughout these chapters, which is on the Spirit himself, not on the “gifts” as such. Thus each “gift” is a “manifestation,” a disclosure of the Spirit’s activity in their midst.” NICNT

¹⁵ “The message (logos) of wisdom (sophia). This language clearly harks back to the problem addressed in 1:17–2:16, where in the name of wisdom the Corinthians were rejecting both Paul and his gospel. Indeed, in contrast to their own criterion for “spiritual” excellence, Paul says he deliberately rejected coming to them either in “wisdom characterized by word (rhetoric)” (1:17 or “with excellence of word or wisdom” (2:1, 5). With a considerable stroke of inspiration Paul now does two things: (a) He uses one of their own terms to begin his list of “manifestations” in the assembly that demonstrate the great diversity inherent in the one Spirit’s activities; and (b) he reshapes that term in light of the work of the Spirit so as to give it a significantly different content from their own. The phrase means either “a message/utterance full of wisdom” or “an utterance characterized by wisdom.” In either case its content is probably to be understood in light of Paul’s own argument in 2:6–16. There the “message of wisdom,” revealed by the Spirit, is not some special understanding of the “deeper things” or “mysteries” of God. Rather, it is the recognition that the message of Christ crucified is God’s true wisdom,⁴⁹ a recognition that comes only to those who have received the Spirit. For only the Spirit, Paul says, whom we have received, understands the mind of God and reveals what he accomplished in Christ (2:10–13). Thus in the present case the “utterance of wisdom” comes “through the Spirit,” and in Corinth it is almost certainly to be found among those who give spiritual utterances that proclaim Christ crucified in this highly “wisdom”-conscious community. It is of some interest, therefore, that this particular “gift” does not appear again in any further list or discussion.” NICNT

¹⁶ “The message (logos) of knowledge (gnōsis). As with the first item, this is first of all Paul’s way of rescuing this gift of the Spirit⁵¹ from their own fascination with “knowledge” and its concomitant pride (see on 8:1–3, 8:7). In this case, however, Paul’s own understanding of the gift as a “manifestation” of the Spirit is more difficult to determine, since “knowledge” as gift recurs in the ensuing discussion in three significant texts (13:2, 8–12 and 14:6), which also display some ambiguities. Some have suggested that Paul here has in mind a supernatural endowment of knowledge, factual information that could not otherwise have been known without the Spirit’s aid, such as frequently occurs in the prophetic tradition and is assumed to be true in the pagan prophetic oracles. But since here it is a descriptive genitive with the word logos, others see it as referring to something more akin to inspired teaching,⁵³ perhaps related to receiving Christian insight into the meaning of Scripture. Since this word has also been taken over from the Corinthians and is so closely tied to the preceding “utterance of wisdom,” the two should probably be understood as parallel in some way. Most likely, therefore, it is a “spiritual utterance” of some revelatory kind. This is suggested by its place between “revelation” and “prophecy” in 14:6 and by the fact that, along with prophecy and tongues, it will cease at the Eschaton (13:8). How the content of such an utterance makes it gnōsis as distinguished from “wisdom” or “revelation” is perhaps forever lost to us.” NICNT

¹⁷ “Faith. With this word Paul moves on to include several more clearly supernatural manifestations of the Spirit.⁵⁸ While it is true that Paul considers the “faith” that leads to salvation to be the work of the Spirit in the believer’s life, what he has in mind here is the special gift of supernatural faith that can “move mountains,” mentioned again in 13:2. It probably refers to a supernatural conviction that God will reveal his power or mercy in a special way in a specific instance. Although it is listed separately, as given “to another,” there is a sense in which this and the following two items belong together—and indeed would at times seem not quite possible to differentiate. Faith that “moved a mountain” could also rightly be called the working of a miracle.” NICNT

¹⁸ “Gifts of healings. What this refers to needs little comment. Jesus, Paul, and the rest of the early church lived in regular expectation that God would heal people’s physical bodies. This expectation was based in part on the OT promises that in the messianic age God would “heal” his people.⁶² According to Acts, such healings accompanied Paul’s own ministry; and Paul himself probably referred to them in “the signs of an apostle” in 2 Cor. 12:12. Only among the intellectuals and in a “scientific age” is it thought to be too hard for God to heal the sick. What is of interest here is the language “gifts of healings,” which recurs in the two lists in vv. 28 and 30. Probably this language reflects two things: (a) The use of charisma itself suggests that the “manifestation” is given not to the person who is healed, but to the person God uses for the healing of another; (b) the plural charismata probably suggests not a permanent “gift,” as it were, but that each occurrence is a “gift” in its own right. So also with the plurals in the next item.” NICNT

¹⁹ “Miraculous powers (lit. “workings⁶⁷ of miracles”). Although Paul would probably include gifts of healings under “workings of miracles,” this manifestation most likely covers all other kinds of supernatural activities beyond the healing of the sick. The word translated “miracles” is the ordinary one for “power,” and as was pointed out in 2:4–5 it is especially associated in Jewish antiquity with the Spirit of God. The present context suggests that it covers a broad range of supernatural events that ordinary parlance would call miraculous. In the duplicated list of vv. 28–30, the word appears by itself in the plural.” NICNT

²⁰ “Prophecy. With this word Paul returns to verbal manifestations. In light of the running contrast in chap. 14 between this gift and tongues, he is probably also consciously moving toward the conclusion of this list with its mention of tongues. Also because of that running contrast, we have a fairly good idea as to how Paul himself understood this phenomenon. Several things need to be noted: First, although prophecy was an especially widespread phenomenon in the religions of antiquity, Paul’s understanding—as well as that of the other NT writers—was thoroughly conditioned by his own history in Judaism. The prophet was a person who spoke to God’s people under the inspiration of the Spirit. The “inspired utterance” came by revelation and announced judgment (usually) or salvation. Although the prophets often performed symbolic acts, which they then interpreted, the mainstream of prophetic activity, at least as it came to canonized, had very little to do with “ecstasy,” especially “frenzy” or “mania.” For the most part the prophets were understood only too well! Often the word spoken had a futuristic element, so in that sense they also came to be seen as “predicters”; but that was only one element, and not necessarily the crucial one. Second, with the outpouring of the Spirit at the end of the age, the early Christians understood the prophecy of Joel 2:28–30 to have been fulfilled, so that “prophecy” not only became a

between spirits²¹, to another various kinds of tongues²², to another the interpretation of tongues²³.¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.”

- The whole point of spiritual design, gifts, abilities and talents is to build other people up. None of it is just for show.
- **What Everyone Gets – a manifestation of the Holy Spirit**, it may or may not be a specific spiritual gift in the way that we think about gift lists. But we are getting some gift from the Holy Spirit, some impartation, some manifestation.
- **What Everyone Doesn't Get = the exact same thing.** Comparison can kill us. We have to stay in our own lane. We cannot get distracted by what God is doing with others. Their example can be inspirational or educational, but if we aren't careful it can be discouraging.
- **God Doesn't Need a Lot of Duplication** – especially in each grouping of believers. The point is to spread out the responsibility and jobs to get the whole done. The point is interdependence. The point is reliance. The point is

renewed phenomenon but was also potentially available to all, since all now possessed the Spirit in fullness (cf. Acts 2:17–18). This seems especially to fit what we learn in the Pauline letters. It seems to have been a widespread phenomenon (cf. 1 Thess. 5:19–22; Rom. 12:6); the evidence in chap. 14 indicates that it consisted of spontaneous, Spirit-inspired, intelligible messages, orally delivered in the gathered assembly, intended for the edification or encouragement of the people. And those who prophesied were clearly understood to be “in control” (see 14:29–33). Although some people are called “prophets,” probably because they were frequent speakers of “prophecies,” the implication of chap. 14 is that it is a gift available—at least potentially—to all.” NICNT

²¹ “Distinguishing between spirits (lit. “discernments of spirits”). This is language over which scholars have engaged in considerable debate, but with little agreement. The question is, To what does it refer? To the phenomenon associated with “testing the spirits, to see whether they be of God” (1 John 4:1), meaning the ability to discern what is truly of the Spirit of God and what comes from other spirits? Or to the phenomenon noted in 14:29, “and let the others weigh carefully (i.e., discern or judge rightly) what is said,” in which the cognate verb of this noun appears? Most likely, given Paul’s own use of language in chap. 14, it refers to both, but particularly to the phenomenon of “discerning, differentiating, or properly judging” prophecies in 14:29. There are several reasons for taking this position: (a) Both 1 Thess. 5:20–21 and 1 Cor 14:29, the two places where Paul mentions the functioning of prophecy in the church, call for a “testing” or “discerning” of prophetic utterances; it therefore seems likely, given that the noun used in this passage is the cognate of the verb in 14:29, that the same is true here, since it immediately follows “prophecy.” (b) That seems all the more likely in this case since these two are followed immediately by “tongues” and “interpretation.” This same pattern of tongues plus interpretation and prophecy plus discernment is found again in the instructions on order in 14:26–29. (c) The real difficulty lies with the word “spirits.” The probable key to understanding lies not in 1 John 4:1, but with Paul’s own usage in 14:12, 14, and especially 32, where he tends to use the term in a much more flexible way than most of us are comfortable with. The Spirit who speaks through the prophets is understood to be speaking through “the spirit” of the prophet; when Paul is praying in the Spirit, he speaks of “my spirit” praying (cf. on 5:3–4). The Corinthian zeal for “spirits” in 14:12, therefore, is zeal for manifestations of the Spirit (especially tongues) as he quickens their spirits to pray. Thus in this present listing, it seems most likely that Paul is referring to the same phenomenon as in 14:29, but is using the language of “spirits” to refer to the prophetic utterances that need to be “differentiated” by the others in the community who also have the Spirit and can so discern what is truly of the Spirit.” NICNT

²² “Different kinds of tongues. This is obviously the “controversial gift,” both then and now. If our interpretation of chap. 14 is correct, then the Corinthians’ singular preference for this manifestation is what lies behind this entire argument. Thus, after listing several equally visible and extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit, Paul includes their favorite as well,⁸² along with its companion, “interpretation.” As with prophecy, enough is said in chaps. 13–14 to give us a fairly good idea as to how Paul understood it. The following seem certain: (a) It is Spirit-inspired utterance; that is made explicit both in vv. 7 and 11 and in 14:2. (b) The regulations for its use in 14:27–28 make it clear that the speaker is not in “ecstasy” or “out of control.” Quite the opposite; the speakers must speak in turn, and they must remain silent if there is no one to interpret. (c) It is speech essentially unintelligible both to the speaker (14:14) and to other hearers (14:16). (d) It is speech directed basically toward God (14:2, 14–15, 28); one may assume, therefore, that what is “interpreted” is not speech directed toward others, but the “mysteries” spoken to God. What is less certain is whether Paul also understood the phenomenon to be an actual language. In favor of such a view are (a) the term itself, (b) the need for “interpretation,” and (c) the evidence from Acts 2:5–11. In the final analysis, however, this question seems irrelevant. Paul’s whole argument is predicated on its unintelligibility to both speaker and hearer; he certainly does not envisage someone’s being present who would be able to understand it because it was also an earthly language. Moreover, his use of earthly languages as an analogy in 14:10–12 implies that it is not a known earthly language, since a thing is not usually identical with that to which it is analogous. Most likely, therefore, the key to Paul’s—and their—understanding lies in the term “the language of angels” in 13:1 (q.v.).⁸⁷ On its usefulness or lack thereof to the community and the individual, see on 14:1–5 and 13–19.” NICNT

²³ “The interpretation of tongues. This is the obvious companion to “tongues,” precisely because of the unintelligibility of the latter. Although this term could mean something close to “translation,” it can also mean “to put into words”; in this context it probably means to articulate for the benefit of the community what the tongues-speaker has said. The evidence from 14:5, 13, and 27–28 indicates (a) that this, too, is a “Spirit-inspired” gift of utterance, and (b) that it may be given either to the tongues-speaker or to another.” NICNT

- **What Everyone Gets – a manifestation of the Holy Spirit**, it may or may not be a specific spiritual gift in the way that we think about gift lists. Something from His presence.
- **What Everyone Doesn't Get = the exact same thing.** Comparison can kill us. Their example can be inspirational or educational, but if we aren't careful it can be discouraging.
 - **God Doesn't Need a Lot of Duplication** – The point is to **spread out the responsibility and jobs** to get the whole done.
- **Examples Not Exhaustive**²⁴ - A sample list of gifts are²⁵: Words of Wisdom; words of knowledge; faith; healing; miracles; prophecy; discernment of spirits; tongues and interpretation of tongues. ALL of them are from the Holy Spirit. He gives them out as He deems best. This is one of 5 spiritual gift lists, that collectively name 19 different types. No two lists are the same. That means that it's an example list.

Conclusion

- **How would we know what ours are?** – Either get guidance (Discover Class November 5th) or usage.
- **Let's Pray that the Holy Spirit reveals ours**
- **Online** has something special with Pastor Judah
- **Lobby** - Some of us know our gifts and our passions, let's go get plugged in, in the lobby.

²⁴ "First, Paul's argument is entirely *ad hoc*, reflecting the Corinthian situation itself; therefore his own concern is not with instruction about "spiritual gifts" as such, their number and kinds. Indeed, the list of nine items in vv. 8–10 is neither carefully worked out nor exhaustive; it is merely *representative* of the diversity of the Spirit's manifestations. Paul's concern here is to offer a *considerable* list so that they will stop being singular in their own emphasis. All of this suggests not only that we do not have here a systematic discussion of "spiritual gifts," but also that there is some doubt as to whether the apostle himself had precise and identifiably different "gifts" in mind when he wrote these words. In any case, he would almost certainly not recognize some of the schematizing that later interpreters have brought to these texts." Gordon Fee, NICNT

²⁵ "Attempts to classify the several items are numerous and varied. Some have suggested that they reflect a descending order of value,³⁹ while others have rearranged the items conceptually. A popular grouping is (1) gifts of instruction (wisdom and knowledge); (2) gifts of supernatural power (faith, healings, miracles); and (3) gifts of inspired utterance (prophecy, discerning prophecies, tongues, interpretation of tongues). The seventh item (discernment of spirits) is the one that tends to give trouble to most of these arrangements. If grouping is legitimate at all, it is most likely to be found in some clues Paul himself has given, by starting the third and eighth items (faith and tongues) with a different word for "another."⁴² If so, then the first two are chosen for very specific *ad hoc* purposes; "wisdom" and "knowledge" held high court in Corinth. He then adds a random list of five items that have as their common denominator a supernatural endowment of some kind, and concludes with the "problem child" and its companion, tongues and interpretation." NICNT