

Chapters 52 - Gifts of the Holy Spirit (General Questions)

1. Introduction.
 - A. Study today – Chapters 52 of Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology – Gifts of the Holy Spirit 1.
 - (1). Context: The Doctrine of the Church.
 - (2). This is split up into two sections: General Questions about spiritual gifts and will be followed up next month about Specific Gifts.
 - (3). Introduction stated that in previous generations there were few questions regarding the nature and use of spiritual gifts. **Why? Were they not being used?**
 - (4). **Was the reason for an increase in interest because of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements or is the Holy Spirit stirring things up?**
2. Definition.
 - A. From Grudem - A spiritual gift is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church (page 1016).
 - (1). **Is a doctor at a hospital using the spiritual gift of healing to do surgery? If so, do all doctors in hospitals have the gift of healing?**
 - (2). **Mark 4:25-26** has a woman with an issue of blood who had been at the hands of physicians for twelve years and spent all that she had and got worse. We have doctors and we have Jesus.
 - (3). **Can all teachers teach Scriptural truth? Why not? When does it become a spiritual gift?**
 - (4). Purpose of spiritual gifts: **1 Cor. 12:7 Now to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. Verse 18 God has placed these parts in the body. Verse 25 says it is done so each part has equal concern for one another.**
 - (5). **1 Cor. 14:26** includes some of the gifts with the instruction that all should be done to build up the church.
3. The Questions.
 - A. **Can we discuss the gifts of the Spirit separate from the person of the Spirit?** Once we answer this question, we can answer the other questions that Wayne Grudem poses.
 - (1). The implication of the giving and using of the gifts was part of the new covenant for those in Christ and was revealed on the day of Pentecost.
 - a. **Acts 2:33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he (Jesus) has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.**
 - b. The Holy Spirit was understood to be the paraclete, helper, advocate, comforter to the disciples in **John 14:16, 26**. So

as Jesus gave them authority and empowered them while on earth; the Holy Spirit continued to do the same in them when Jesus rose from the dead.

- c. If gifts reflect the person of the Holy Spirit, then it is easy to resolve questions of whether gifts have ceased, are all gifts to be used today, and do all Christians have spiritual gifts.
- (2). Every believer receives the Holy Spirit. **So does every believer have a spiritual gift or gifts?**
- B. **What is the purpose of spiritual gifts [page 1019]?** So that God might have an active relationship with us as he does his work through us.
 - (1). **Why might we need the Holy Spirit in tongues, prophecies and words of knowledge?** God desires to speak to his church today as part of his relationship with his church.
 - (2). **Why might we need the Holy Spirit in helps, miracles, healing and giving?** God desires to move actively in his church today as part of his relationship with his church.
 - (3). **1 Peter 4:10-11 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.**
 - (4). There is also an element of evangelism, God showing his glory to people who are not believers.
 - a. **Matt. 11:20-23** - Jesus denounces cities where he performed most of his miracles and where they would not repent.
- C. **How many gifts are there [page 1019]?**
 - (1). We have multiple lists from **1 Corinthians 12:28, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Ephesians 4:11, Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 7:7, and 1 Peter 4:11. What are some of the gifts?**
 - a. We see that there is overlap.
 - b. The lists are probably not conclusive.
 - c. It doesn't mean we get wishy-washy and try to assign everyone to the gifts of help and service because we don't see miracles and healing. Are there still apostles and prophets in the church? When we speak of apostles, we will say that they are different than those initially appointed by Jesus, and those were gifted to write Scripture.
 - d. We should be accepting of how the Holy Spirit uses others in the various gifts.
 - (2). **How do spiritual gifts vary in strength?**
 - a. They reflect our walk in the Holy Spirit. We are not given the gifts based on maturity, but we may fail to walk in them because of the lack of maturity or faith in Christ.

- [1]. **Matthew 17:14-20** - disciples cannot cast a demon out of a boy. Jesus called them an unbelieving and perverse generation. When they come to him to ask why they can't cast the demon out; he says that it is because they had so little faith.
- b. At the same time, the use of the spiritual gifts may also be hindered by the lack of faith of those around us.
- [1]. **Mark 6:1, 5 Jesus goes to Nazareth with his disciples. ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them.** They were so familiar with him and his family that they couldn't believe in what God would do through him.
- c. Grudem asks a question: **how strong does one have to have an ability before it is considered a spiritual gift?**
- [1]. Our goal is not to manufacture a gift. We follow God in our relationship through Christ and he makes those gifts known.
- d. A discussion is made about evangelism vs. sharing Christ with neighbors, teaching vs. reading Scripture in our family, prophecy and speaking in tongues vs. praying for a friend or send a letter of encouragement. He states that spiritual gifts are only intensifications or highly developed instances of phenomena that most Christians experience in their lives (p 1024).
- e. I think a better question is whether a brother or sister has a specific gift or not. We should encourage the use, but also be straightforward to say if a person is trying to walk in something but it is not there.
- (3). **Are these spiritual gifts permanent or temporary?**
 - a. If the gift is from the Holy Spirit, it really doesn't matter. What matters is that we are available to be used by the Holy Spirit as the need arises. It appears that some gifts/functions are more permanent.
 - b. **1 Corinthians 12:11** The Holy Spirit distributes as he determines.
- (4). **Are gifts miraculous or non-miraculous?**
 - a. It depends on our perspective. The disciples saw Jesus walk in these gifts and they were encouraged to do so at his direction. When Jesus rose from the dead, they walked in the Spirit as they walked in Christ. They were less likely to be surprised by what God would do.
 - b. There is very much a spiritual realm that we walk in daily. But because we don't see it doesn't mean that God is not working. Matthew 6 tells us to give in secret, pray in secret, and fast in secret and God will reward openly.

- c. **Hebrews 2:3-4 ... This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.**
- D. **Should we know what spiritual gifts we have?**
 - (1). We have problems where churches don't believe that a number of gifts are still operating.
 - (2). We have a fan congregational culture where the pastor is supposed to do everything.
 - (3). **How can we help in encouraging people to find out their gifts? Do we encourage young people in the church to walk in spiritual gifts?**
- E. **Have some gifts ceased (p. 1031)? Which ones are they?**
 - (1). Goes back to our original thought of the gifts are tied to the Holy Spirit as a person, not something you pick up at the grocery store.
 - (2). **Do we still need to cast out demons today and where?**
 - (3). Discussion of **1 Corinthians 13:8-13** speaks of when the perfect comes; the imperfect will pass away.
 - a. **What is the perfect?**
 - (4). **Can God speaking to us today be equivalent to the authority of Scripture? Is there a concern about prophecy having the same authority as Scripture? Or must prophecy be equivalent in authority but only consistent with Scripture without overriding Scripture?**
 - a. **Were the words of Scripture the words of God or words of man?**
 - b. **Do they reflect the personality of the men that spoke them?**
 - c. **If Paul used an amanuensis to write for him, to take his dictation, is it the same as writing oneself? Romans 16:22 I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.**
 - d. **John 7:32 The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.** You pray this morning and God speaks to you and says that he loves you. Which is more authoritative? We can say that he loves us is consistent with Scripture so it is as authoritative.
 - e. **Acts 8:29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."** The Ethiopian eunuch is in the chariot and Philip will share Christ with him. Now later today, God will direct you to go to a specific person and you will share Christ. Are both of these consistent in God's authority?
 - f. Prophecy and God's word to us cannot replace Scripture and the authority given to it. But we also cannot play games

about God's authority. The disciples received the Holy Spirit who was the equivalent of Christ. The Holy Spirit has the same authority. **2 Peter 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

- g. The Holy Spirit spoke through men.
- h. **John 21:25 Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. Did Jesus' other words have less authority than those that were recorded?** No!
- i. Was reading Oswald Chambers, My Utmost For His Highest, and he speaks on February 13 about the devotion of hearing and that when we are more focused on doing other things and not hearing, God may say what he likes but I do not hear him. Do we train people to hear God?

F. **Are the gifts today the same as the ones in Scripture or are the ones today weaker (p. 1045)?**

- (1). We might ask where the gifts are being used. **Do we see more being shown in 3rd world countries? Why?** I think it is unbelief again.

G. **Can cessationists and charismatics get along?**

- (1). Some do well in Bible teaching; others do well in worship and practical use of spiritual gifts.
- (2). Cessationists were around in the 1700's; I was reading some of John Wesley's writings.