

# CHURCH. SUPPLEMENT 12

## [CHURCH BUILDING MINISTRY] MORE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

See the first 5 gifts of the Holy Spirit explained in manual 7, lesson 35.

### **6. Leaders and administrators.**

#### **(1) A leader (Romans 12:8)**

“A leader” is an extraordinary competence (ability) or an ordinary licence (function, office, appointed service) in the Church. The leaders lead *by walking in the front, by giving direction and by setting a good example*. This is especially the task of the elders of the church (or the leaders of a Christian organisation)

#### **(2) An administrator (1 Corinthians 12:28)**

“An administrator” is an extraordinary competence (ability) or an ordinary licence (function, office, appointed service) in the Church. The administrators lead the Church *by steering the congregation with wisdom through difficulties*. There were elders in the congregation that directed the affairs of the congregation without the burden of preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17). While the helpers in different ways took the external administration of the congregation upon themselves, the administrators gave themselves to a certain amount of spiritual leadership of the congregation.

### **7. Serving and helping.**

#### **(1) Serving (Romans 12:7)**

“Serving” is an extraordinary desire and competence (ability) or an ordinary licence (function, office, appointed service) as for example the deacons. The servants *see and alleviate different kinds of needs*.

#### **(2) Helps (1 Corinthians 12:28)**

“Helping” is an extraordinary desire and competence (ability). The helpers *give assistance* in a great variety of tasks.

### **8. Speaking a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, a psalm or a word of encouragement.**

#### **(1) Speaking a word of wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8)**

“Speaking a word of wisdom” has wisdom as its contents. It is an extraordinary desire and competence (ability) to show people *the best means to attain the highest goals*. Christians with this spiritual gift *advise other people how they could best live to please God*.

#### **(2) Speaking a word of knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8)**

“Speaking a word of knowledge” has knowledge as its contents. It is an extraordinary desire and competence (ability) to explain clearly to people *the meaning of things that were previously hidden*. Christians with this spiritual gift *discern whether particular knowledge is good and valid, that is, whether it is in agreement with God’s revelation in the Bible or not*.

#### **(3) Speaking a Psalm (1 Corinthians 14:26)**

“Speaking a Psalm” is an extraordinary desire and competence (ability) to speak to other people by means of the existing *Psalms, new hymns and spiritual songs* (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Christians with this spiritual gift *convey God’s message by means of poems, songs and music*.

#### **(4) Speaking an exhortation or encouragement (Romans 12:8)**

“Speaking an exhortation or encouragement” is an extraordinary desire and competence (ability) to stimulate Christians to *do what the Bible says*, whether by means of a public speech or by means of a personal talk. Christians with this spiritual gift advise and counsel other Christians in the area of personal growth and service. They exhort Christians to apply the lessons of the Bible to daily life and to the development of their character. They urge Christians to behave as Christians and encourage them to take steps in faith.

### **9. Giving or contributing.**

“Giving” (Romans 12:8) is an extraordinary desire and competence (ability) to *use earthly possessions for the highest well-being of people and for the greater glory of God*. Christians with this spiritual gift direct their attention to the acquisition of money or possessions in order to further the kingdom of God. They entrust their money or possessions to other Christians in the Church (own, other, or foreign congregations) and in Christian organisations in order to extend the kingdom of God.

## **10. Showing mercy.**

“Showing mercy” (Romans 12:8) is an extraordinary desire and competence (ability) *to empathise with the needs of others and consequently comfort and help them*. Christians with this spiritual gift are generally good observers and good listeners. They quickly assess the situation of need and the thoughts and feelings of people that are discouraged and hurt, abused or oppressed, sick or handicapped, old and dying, and of people that fear or mourn. They have the ability to empathise and sympathise with their misery.

## **11. Faith.**

“Faith” (1 Corinthians 12:9) is an extraordinary desire and competence (ability) *to accomplish a special task for God*. Christians with this spiritual gift trust in God when he calls them to accomplish a particular difficult assignment. For example, God may ask them to live and work in a foreign country (Hebrews 11:8-10), to persevere under oppression and persecution (Hebrews 11:25-27), to bring justice to an unjust world (Hebrews 11:33). Christians with this spiritual gift trust God to do particular miracles and to accomplish great things through them. They trust that God can remove obstacles as great as mountains (Mark 11:22-23) and to bring about things that are impossible for man (Romans 4:19-21) and cause enemies to make peace with you (Proverbs 16:7). They trust God to bring into existence things that, humanly speaking, seem impossible. As Noah, Abraham and Moses, they through faith make God’s purposes a reality.

## **12. Gifts of healing.**

“Gifts of healing” (1 Corinthians 12:9,30) are a variety of extraordinary desires and competences (abilities) *to heal the diseases of the body and the spirit (or soul) of other people*. God uses people that possess one of these gifts as human instruments of healing people. All true healing is divine healing and therefore supernatural!

## **13. Workings of powers or miracles.**

“Workings of powers or workings of miracles” (1 Corinthians 12:10,28-29) are a variety of extraordinary desires and competences (abilities) *to perform supernatural deeds* (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:23-28) *or unusual signs or miracles*. The purpose of miracles is to point to the reality of the God of the Bible and his revelation and especially to strengthen a continuing faith in Jesus Christ that ensures eternal life (John 20:30-31), but also to awaken faith in the existence of the Living God and his revelation in the Bible.

In the Bible miracles occurred especially when God revealed himself and his truth by means of:

- Moses (e.g. the Ten Commandments, crossing the Red Sea, water from a rock, etc).
- the Old Testament prophets (especially Elijah and Elisha)
- Jesus Christ
- the New Testament apostles. (Matthew 10:1,8; Luke 10:18-20; Acts 2:43; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4).

## **14. The distinction between spirits.**

“The distinction between spirits” (1 Corinthians 12:10) is an extraordinary desire and competence (ability) or calling to *distinguish between different spirits*. As long as there was not yet a written New Testament, the Christians made use of this spiritual gift *to distinguish whether something is:*

- *divine or demonic* (1 John 4:1-6; Acts 13:6-12)
- *spiritual or psychological*
- *edifying or destructive*
- *true or false*.

These Christians can discern whether what a New Testament prophet says is true or false and whether the church ought to listen to it or not (1 Corinthians 14:29). They can distinguish whether a particular spiritual gift in the church is genuine or strange, insincere, fake and demonic.

Evil spirits operate in demon-possessed people and in people that occupy themselves with occult practices. Evil spirits even operate within churches that mainly consist of converts from the Gentiles (1 John 4:1). Such evil spirits can manifest themselves in uttering false prophecies and in the performance of particular miracles (Acts 19:13-16). Devilish imitations of the spiritual gifts and the work of Christ do exist (Matthew 24:23-24; Acts 20:29-31; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

## **15. Different kinds of tongues.**

### **(1) Languages (tongues) in the book of Acts.**

In the book of Acts the speaking in languages or tongues was the extraordinary ability *to speak in other existing, known and understandable languages of the nations in the world about God and his wonders* (Acts 2:7-11).

The purpose of this spiritual gift was that it was historical fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy in Joel 2:28-29 and in order to prove the genuine outpouring and presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:16). It was the visible and audible sign of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in human history, first to all Jews who believed in Jesus Christ (Acts 2), then to all Samaritans (half-Jews) who believed in Jesus Christ (Acts 8) and finally to all the Gentiles (non-Jews) that believed in

Jesus Christ (Acts 10-11,15) (cf. Acts 1:8). In Acts chapter 2 this sign was visible (tongues of fire) and audible (the sound like the blowing of a violent wind and the speaking of foreign languages).

The book of Acts describes or relates what God did in his history of salvation. These events were unique and were not repeated! The book of Acts does not teach that these events should happen in Christian churches in the world today!

The Bible teaches that the normal visible signs of having received the Holy Spirit are the coming into existence of a functioning congregation (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; cf. Acts 2:42) and the visible presence of the fruit of the Spirit, especially love, in the lives of the individual believers (Galatians 5:22)! Even if certain spiritual gifts are lacking in the church, love may never be lacking (1 Corinthians 13:1-8)! The Bible does not teach that prophesying in other known and understandable languages of people should be the accompanying sign of the reception of the Holy Spirit (or the baptism of the Holy Spirit)! (And the Bible teaches nowhere that speaking in unintelligible tongues of angels is or should be the sign of baptism with the Spirit!)

## **(2) Tongues (languages) in the first letter to the Corinthians.**

In the letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12:10,28-30; 13:1,8-11; 14:1-33) the speaking in tongues was *an unusual ability or phenomenon to say things in strange, unknown and unintelligible sounds* (the tongues of angels). This phenomenon was not accompanied by the visible tongues of fire or the audible blowing of a violent wind. Because speaking in tongues was audible, but completely unintelligible, it created confusion in the church.

The apostle Paul does not speak about a sudden outburst in tongues, but about the permanent ability to speak in tongues and the ability to control this phenomenon. The words “anyone who speaks in a tongue” (1 Corinthians 14:13) does not refer to a person that is suddenly overcome by the Holy Spirit during a service and bursts out in speaking in strange and unintelligible sounds. It does refer to a person that possesses the permanent ability to speak in tongues or is used to speak in tongues (Greek: present continuous tense)! This is also true for 1 Corinthians 14 verses 26,27 and 28. That is why the apostle Paul is also able to prescribe certain limitations to the use of speaking in unintelligible tongues during the meetings - something that would not have been possible if these people were suddenly overpowered by the Holy Spirit and burst out in unintelligible tongues!

The manifestation of the spiritual gifts in the church at Corinth took place in the period of the early New Testament Church, when the New Testament revelation had not yet been completely recorded. There was much room for error and false teaching. The congregation at Corinth consisted mainly of new believers from a complete pagan background that had to struggle against problems and phenomena that also occurred in their non-Christian environment. The Christians in the church of Corinth were not “eager to have spiritual gifts” (NIV translation), that is, “zealots with regard to spiritual gifts”, but literally “zealots with regard to (non-Christian) spirits” (Greek: zelótai este pneumatón) (1 Corinthians 14:12)! They probably believed that the different spiritual gifts were caused by different (non-Christian) spirits. But the apostle Paul taught that all the different spiritual gifts originated with the (one) Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4,11). He teaches the Christians at Corinth to occupy themselves with things that edify others instead of creating confusion and disorder (1 Corinthians 14:33,40). That is why there was in this situation of error and sin at Corinth a great need for the functioning of the gift of prophecy and its supplement, the discernment of spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10).

The letter to the Corinthians suggests that the speaking in unintelligible tongues was only one of the many problems within the congregation. There was a strong influence from the Jewish religion and Greek philosophy (1 Corinthians 1 and 2), factions and schisms, quarrelling and spiritual immaturity (1 Corinthians 3), grave sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 5), court cases before worldly and ungodly judges and misuse of freedom (1 Corinthians 6), divorces (1 Corinthians 7), participation in heathen festivals accompanied with eating meat that was sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 8), abuses with regard to the rights of an apostle (1 Corinthians 9), women abusing their position (1 Corinthians 11), harmful Christian meetings and abuse of the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11), the striving after spirits with phenomena as speaking in unintelligible tongues (1 Corinthians 12-14) and the denial of the resurrection of the body (1 Corinthians 15)!

The problem in the church of Corinth was that the Christians *overrated* the spiritual gift of speaking in unintelligible tongues (1 Corinthians 12:30) and that the speaking in unintelligible tongues in the meetings of the church caused confusion, disorder and disunity (1 Corinthians chapter 14). That is why the apostle Paul tackled the matter of the spiritual gifts (Greek: charismata). First he teaches that there is a great diversity of manifestations of the Spirit (spiritual gifts, ministries and workings) (1 Corinthians 12). Then he teaches that love is the most excellent way, above the exercise of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 13). Finally, he teaches the difference between speaking in unintelligible tongues and intelligible prophecy (1 Corinthians 14).

Apparently the members of the congregation of Corinth who permanently possessed special spiritual gifts, misused the meetings of the congregation to make themselves heard! While God demanded that all things in the meetings of the church should be conducted in an orderly manner, these members behaved themselves in an undignified and indecent manner. They turned the regular meetings of the congregation into disorderly meetings. Instead of peace, irritation,

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<sup>1</sup> Translation. “So it is with you, since (because) (Greek: epei, causal) you are zealots of spirits, strife towards (whatever spiritual gifts that) edify the church so that you may excel.”

confusion and disorder gained the upper hand (1 Corinthians 14:33,40). Although the apostle Paul rated the spiritual gifts as valuable, he forbade practices that disturbed the meetings! He commanded that in all the Christian churches in the world and in all their meetings everything that happens must edify the church, its members and visitors. The freedom with which every Christian may exercise his spiritual gift must remain within the boundaries of love, edification and service. Christians must remain within the boundaries set by the rules which the apostle Paul laid down in the Bible (1 Corinthians 14:26-40).

In this way the apostle Paul put the speaking in tongues in its rightful place in relation to the other spiritual gifts. He exhorted especially the Christians who had the permanent ability to speak in tongues (the Christians who were used to speaking in tongues) to speak, pray and sing not just with their human spirit, but also simultaneously with their human mind (thus, intelligibly). 1 Corinthians 14:13-19 says, “For this reason anyone who is used to speak in a tongue (present continuous tense), must (a command) continuously pray (present continuous tense) that he may continuously interpret (immediately say in intelligible words with his mind what he wanted to say in unintelligible tongues with his spirit) (Greek: di-hermeneuó) (present continuous tense). For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will *definitely* (future tense) pray with my spirit, but I will also *definitely* (future tense) pray with my mind. I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. (Otherwise) if you are praising God with your spirit, how could one who finds himself among those who do not understand (one not initiated, a visitor who is not yet a member) (Greek: idiótes) *very surely* (future tense) say ‘amen’ to your thanksgiving, since he does not understand (Greek: oida) *what you mean/are saying?* You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is *not for a moment* (present continuous time) edified.” During the meetings of the church Paul only speaks words with his mind *in order to make himself understood and thereby instruct* (Greek: katecheó, <catechism) others (1 Corinthians 14:19)! When Paul speaks about “speaking, praying and singing with his (human) mind”, it can only mean that he uses words in the church that everybody can understand!

Paul commanded the Christians who *used to* (present continuous tense) speak, pray and sing in unintelligible words, that they *must continually* pray (that things will be changed), that they would from now on immediately say in intelligible words with their mind what they wanted to say in unintelligible sounds with their spirit. They must not first speak in unintelligible tongues (because that would immediately cause confusion!) and afterwards interpret in intelligible words what they had said in unintelligible tongues, but on the contrary must immediately say in intelligible words with their mind what they had wanted to say in unintelligible sounds with their spirit!

Because *the human spirit is completely under their own control* (1 Corinthians 14:32), they are able to choose not to speak in unintelligible tongues with their spirit, but to speak intelligible words with their mind, so that every person present would be edified (1 Corinthians 14:19). Only in this way can all people present in the meeting be edified (1 Corinthians 14:12)!

## **16. Interpretation of tongues.**

### **(1) Interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10,30; 14:27-28).**

This is the extraordinary ability to *understand, translate and interpret*, not only the known foreign languages of people, but also the various unknown tongues of angels, so that the listeners in the church may be edified. This spiritual gift is the indispensable supplementary spiritual gift of the gift of speaking in known human languages or unknown tongues which people did not understand. Christians with this permanent spiritual gift are able to:

- translate or interpret what is said in another unintelligible human language or tongue
- discern whether Christians with the permanent gift of speaking in languages or tongues are genuine or false (fake)
- discern whether what they say (the contents) edifies or destroys the church.

### **(2) Speaking simultaneously through one’s spirit and one’s mind.**

It is clear that those people that were used to speak in unintelligible tongues in the congregation of Corinth generally did not possess the spiritual gift of the interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 14:13).

It was possible for a person that had the permanent gift of speaking in tongues to interpret what he would have said in an unintelligible tongue, but then he had to *speak simultaneously with his spirit and his mind, that is, speak only in intelligible words!* What he wanted to say in unintelligible sounds with his spirit, he must express in intelligible words with his mind (1 Corinthians 14:5,13-19)!

But this ability was not automatic (1 Corinthians 14:5,13). In general, if there was an interpreter present in the congregation, then he was a person that was known in the congregation to possess the permanent gift of interpretation and also that he was someone else than the person who had the permanent gift of speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:27-28). If there was no interpreter present in the meeting of the church or such an interpreter was unwilling to interpret, then the apostle Paul forbade the speaking in unintelligible tongues in the meetings of the church (1 Corinthians 14:28).

### **(3) Apostolic limitations for the speaking in tongues.**

Moreover, the apostle Paul clearly commands that if an interpreter is present and is willing to interpret, then a maximum of three people are allowed to speak in unintelligible tongues in turn during the meeting of the church, but only if another interpreter immediately interprets it in intelligible words!

He also commands that people may not speak simultaneously in unintelligible tongues during the meetings of the church (1 Corinthians 14:27). And he forbids women to speak (in prophecy or in tongues) during the official meetings of the church (1 Corinthians 14:34-38).

### **17. Celibacy.**

Celibacy (1 Corinthians 7:7,32-35; Matthew 19:10-12) is the extraordinary ability and choice or calling to *remain unmarried in order to serve God and his kingdom in an undivided and wholehearted manner*. As all the other spiritual gifts, also this spiritual gift may be given permanently or only for a period of time, namely, as long as God deems it necessary.