

What Are Spiritual Gifts

by James Jennings

This sermon delves into the various manifestations of the Spirit of God through spiritual gifts as outlined in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. The speaker emphasizes the importance of serving one another and loving genuinely to avoid grieving the Holy Spirit, which can hinder the manifestation of spiritual gifts. The sermon highlights the need to be actively involved in the church to discover and utilize these gifts for the common good.

Scripture: Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 12:4, Ephesians 4:29, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Spiritual Gifts", "Community Service"

Description

This sermon delves into the various manifestations of the Spirit of God through spiritual gifts as outlined in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. The speaker emphasizes the importance of serving one another and loving genuinely to avoid grieving the Holy Spirit, which can hinder the manifestation of spiritual gifts. The sermon highlights the need to be actively involved in the church to discover and utilize these gifts for the common good.

Transcript

This is going to be part three of a series I started looking at Romans 12, specifically doing so so we can consider this topic of the spiritual gifts. So we're going to make it to an overview today of different spiritual gifts. That's my hope, my desire, but before we consider that, I want to just give a couple reminders and a recap, especially for those who maybe missed some of the previous sermons, but let's read Romans 12, 1, down to verse 8. Paul says here, I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body, we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function.

So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them. Prophecy in proportion to our faith.

It's service in our serving. The one who teaches in his teaching. The one who exhorts in his exhortation.

The one who contributes in generosity. The one who leads with zeal. The one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness.

And then we should just read v. 9. Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil. Hold fast to what is good.

And he goes on to talk about loving one another. So, just a quick recap. One of the first things I sought to emphasize in the first sermon from Romans 12, I wanted you to recognize that in Paul's thinking leading up to this chapter that's dealing with very practical realities in the life of the church, Paul is not approaching this with an individualistic mindset.

He's thinking about us as a body corporately. And you see that two clear places here. It's really clear when he talks about us being one body and having many members, right? V. 4. It's pretty clear.

You see, Paul's thinking corporately here. He's thinking about how we all affect one another together. And the other place that is often not emphasized that I sought to show you is in v. 1. And I ask the question, how many sacrifices does Paul describe us offering as a church? And the answer is, he talks about one sacrifice.

And you see that in the Greek word, he says, A, living sacrifice. And so Paul, after all this theology for 11 chapters, he's coming to this church, and he's looking at our church, he's looking at us as a group of believers that we're all together seeking to work together as one another to offer pleasing sacrifices to the Lord as a church body. And that's how Paul thinks.

Paul is not primarily thinking about your own personal sanctification here. He's thinking about all of us together arm-in-arm for the Gospel. And you see this all over the Bible.

This is the emphasis of the Scriptures. And this is a reminder to you and me that your ability to worship the Lord, you can't just go and detach that and say I don't need a local church. I don't need a body of Christ.

Our worship of the Lord is inescapably bound to the church and to the brethren. Paul does not want you saying, well, I'm a healthy ear, so it doesn't matter if my leg is rotting out or my hand is just falling off. That absolutely will affect you in how you worship the Lord in your life.

And so that was one of the first things I wanted really to emphasize here because Romans 12 is so often emphasized as a chapter on personal sanctification, and you miss the whole corporate reality of Jews and Gentiles like us all coming together to offer a sacrifice that is pleasing to the Lord. And this is something that's ongoing. It's an ongoing living sacrifice.

Second thing as a recap, we learned this last time that believers need to be transformed in how they think about themselves. And we saw from what Paul is saying here, right there, he mentions this danger. And it's not that we all might have a possibility of heart disease, but he says in v. 3, our danger is to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think.

Paul recognizes in the life of the church, there is the danger of manifestations of pride in our own perspective of how God has designed us where we can exalt ourselves over against other members in the body. And Paul, he wants us to think with a sober judgment. And then a third thing that we saw last time, we saw right here in v. 6, he talks about God has assigned to us the very spiritual gifts that you and I possess.

And Paul defines that as grace being given. And I looked at that as one of the gauges on the dashboard. And then I described a second gauge that you see is the measure of faith in v. 3. He says we ought to think about ourselves according to what measure? And he says the measure of faith that God has designed.

And I tried to describe that to you all as not being synonymous with the gifts that we're given, but it's a faith and a confidence and a trust in the Lord by which to operate and use one's spiritual gifts. All of us have to embrace not only the gifts that God has given us, but the measure of confidence and trust by which to use those very gifts that God has given us. And Paul wants us to think about that.

So that's kind of a recap. Now, I wanted to share a quick thought here before we dive in that really encouraged me. Look at v. 3. Notice this language.

Each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. Think of that phrase, God has assigned. Where else does the Bible speak of God assigning something to you and me? What are some other places in Scripture? Can anyone think of one? Yeah, a salvation.

There's verses that talk about a salvation being appointed. Appointed being a synonym of assigned. Listen to these verses.

2 Corinthians 10. When you think about the area you have a spiritual influence on, listen to this. The area of influence that God assigned to us.

Notice how Paul, he looks at the area where he had an impact and why did that even happen? God assigned it. Think of you going to the post office. You're looking for something that's earmarked with your name on it.

Well, Paul had an area that was earmarked with his name on it to have an impact on those people. What did the Corinthians? They had a problem of boasting in who the Lord used to bring them to salvation. And look what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3.5. He says, what then is Apollos? What then is Paul? Servants through whom you believed as the Lord assigned to each.

Wait a minute. The Lord knew who He would use in my life to lead me to salvation? God's assigned that? Wait, you mean then the Lord has assigned me a measure of faith? Wait, you mean the Lord's assigned me an area of influence? I mean, He's assigned all of this? That shouldn't surprise us when we're talking about a Lord who has predestined us before to the foundation of the world that we should be in Christ. But we want to remember this, brethren.

This is so important. And even for you who are single. 1 Corinthians 7, Paul says the same language.

Only let each lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him and to which God has called him. Right? I mean, the Lord has assigned some of you. You're in a season of singleness right now because that's God's exact assignment for you and you want to be faithful in the midst of that trusting the Lord.

So why do we have what we have? God has distributed. God has assigned. This should make you think of Ephesians 2.10. What's Ephesians 2.10 say? You hear that? Good works that God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

All the assignments are already there in the stack of papers and God has given those to us. It's just hard to discern at times. I mean, what's the next assignment, Lord? So even taken into the gifts, this is important to remember this reality in every area of your Christian life.

But Hebrews 2.4 says, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will. You hear that? So, brethren, look at every area of your life. Where is God not involved in your life, Christian? Can you find one area that He's not involved? You're not going to find it.

He's not involved in you sinning. That is you going and sinning. But everything good is ultimately a gift from the Lord.

His Son was assigned to come and to pay for our sins. God has predestined us to eternal life. He's caused us to be born again.

He's freely given us gifts of the Spirit. He's working in us to manifest fruits of the Spirit. He's given us gifts to use to have unity in the Spirit in the church.

That our church might together offer spiritual sacrifices that give a pleasing aroma to the Lord. That we might all be spiritually conformed more to the image of Christ. And that we might even take the Gospel forth that more people might experience the spiritual birth and come to know the Lord.

And so, one of the things you're going to see as I'm speaking right now is brethren, I'm freshly reminded of how spiritual of creatures we are. You're a spiritual creature. Your body is what does Paul call it? He says it's what? A temple of the Holy Spirit.

I mean, the Spirit of God living in the Christian. You're a spiritual creature. A spiritual member and a spiritual body bearing spiritual fruits, given gifts of the Spirit to spiritually edify other people in order to not be spiritually deceived, in order to offer spiritual worship to the Lord, in order to see spiritual children brought into the kingdom.

Are we thinking that way right now? Do you see how spiritual your life is? There's a lot of opposition in our lives to get us to forget this reality of the spiritual nature of our lives and what really, really matters. So desiring to know what God's assignment is for your life, that is a right desire. You and I should want to know the works He prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

And as you see in Romans 12, verse 6, Paul says here, the grace given, He wants you to use them. Paul wants us to be concentrated in doing what God has designed us to do and pour ourselves into that and be faithful to Him. You know, some people, they start a garden, and they just want to plant everything.

But what tends to happen with the garden? Eventually, they find a couple things that they really can get to survive and they pour their energy into that. And the same thing can happen in the Christian life. You get saved, you spread yourself so thin.

But as you grow, there's specific plants that you're really investing in and you're able to turn over a really good crop. And obviously, as one of your shepherds, I want to help you identify that which God has assigned for you to do. That's one of the ways we're going to find that out in the abundance of counselors.

There's guidance. There's safety. The Lord uses all of us in one another's lives to help us discern different things.

So, what are the spiritual gifts? Spiritual gifts. Where do you even find the phrase spiritual gifts? You don't find it right here in Romans 12, but you do in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. It actually uses this phrase spiritual gifts.

And we're going to turn to that chapter, but not yet. But it's spiritual because it's from who? From the Holy Spirit. Not just from the Spirit, but what is the Spirit also doing? Empowering the gift.

Right? It's from the Spirit and the power to even be active in that specific spiritual way is from the Holy Spirit. And then the word gift. Why spiritual gift? Because it's given.

Are these spiritual badges? Are they certain things that someone has earned because they've put their years in? No, it's a gift. God has graciously given us what Paul even calls spiritual gifts. He's given to spiritual people.

Because you're a spiritual person. And he says in 1 Corinthians 12, there are a variety of gifts, the same Spirit, there are varieties of service, but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all and everyone. And listen to verse 7. We really want to get this established in our mind.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. Why are gifts even given? For the common good. For others.

Is it given primarily for yourself? No, not at all. And how does Paul describe the spiritual gifts are what? A manifestation of who? The Spirit. What's a manifestation? Yeah, to make known.

To clearly reveal in detail. And so the Spirit of God is at work in the Christian's life and something happens. And people look.

Something spiritual happened through that person's conduct, through their life. It's interesting to me, Craig in his series, what's he looking at every Sunday? He's looking at one of the fruits of the Spirit. So you and I are a spiritual person.

We're all seeking to bear all the fruits of the Spirit. At the same time, there's different manifestations of the Spirit that God has given us in this area of gifts. And so, according to Paul, a spiritual gift is from and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

It's something that clearly expresses the Spirit's gracious activity in God's people. It happens and you have a sense of the Spirit's presence working through that person. Paul uses the word.

A manifestation of the Spirit. Something happens there that is entirely spiritual, that the Spirit of God worked, that's a spiritual gift. Rather than just thinking about it as someone has a specific gift and it just happens whenever they want it to happen, Paul looks at this and says there are manifestations of the Spirit.

Something happens where the Spirit of God displays His power through a believer in a specific way, and the fruits and what happens is ultimately something the Spirit of God has brought about for the edification of the body. The person can't take credit. The Spirit of God worked through them and manifested Himself

in a specific way for the common good of the body and for someone else.

And you guys, you know that. That happens, right? There's certain times you're talking to someone or someone's in the pulpit and there might be some natural ability there. There might be something, but there's times something unique happens.

The Spirit of God has manifested Himself in that conversation and ministering to you in a specific way through that person. And you look and they had a gift in a specific way at that moment that God worked in them for your own good because the Lord, He cares about you. He cares about His body.

And so, when you think about spiritual gifts, think about a manifestation of the power of the Spirit of God on display through a Christian, through a believer. That's what we're talking about according to how Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 12. And so Paul's saying the Holy Spirit gives believers abilities for the common good of other believers.

And this display of the Spirit's power is to strengthen other believers and in certain believers, specific manifestations are more frequent and effective. I think those are safe words to use. Paul talks in a way even about people having specific gifts.

Well, the implication seems to be that more frequently happens in their life. Where the Spirit of God works in a unique way in that person, it's just a frequent manifestation, a revealing, a clear detail of a characteristic of the Godhead or something that He wants His people to have that's coming through that specific individual. And it might be more frequent and it's clearly effective and it's the work of God in their life.

And obviously, these spiritual gifts, these things that Paul talks about, it's something separate from natural ability. This is God the Spirit at work in the life of the Christian. It's rather remarkable, brethren, that the Lord would be delighted in any way to use us to have any type of impact on anyone in a way that the Lord gets all of the credit.

So, I hope that was clear. Just to restate it, let me read the statement again. A spiritual gift is from and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We saw that in 1 Corinthians 12. Meaning the gift is a clear expression of the Spirit's great expression. There's the word manifestation.

The clear manifestation of the Spirit's gracious activity in God's people. That's how I want you to think about spiritual gifts. It's not just some specific gift a specific person has and at any moment they go and they use that gift whenever they so determine.

It's the Spirit of God working in that Christian something very specific, very unique for the edification of the common good of the body. And so I want to give basically a broad overview of these different activities or these different gifts, because Paul mentioned spiritual activities. And each one of these items deserves an entire full sermon in itself.

So some of you, there's going to be certain items I'm going to mention, and you're going to wish I would have said far more than I did from this pulpit right now. But each one of these deserves, maybe prophecy probably deserves five sermons in and of itself. But I wanted to throw all of these out with a brief definition.

Whether you disagree with my definition, whether I can hone it some more, I would agree I probably can. Just like there's a variety of gifts, there's a variety of perspectives on the gifts. And you've heard the technical terms continuationism and cessationism.

Continuation meaning continue. Cessation meaning ceased or eliminated. So you've got different people out there with different views on that.

Even in our own church, different people have different views on that topic. Is something been eliminated from still being given? I'm not seeking to deal with that right now here today. Another perspective is people believing these sayings have not ceased, but that they are not normative.

That we shouldn't expect all of these sayings to be happening as frequently as they did when the Gospel was advancing right there at Pentecost. And so that's a whole other topic that I'm not going to seek to dive into this morning. So the Spirit can be active in a believer's life in a unique way by which they are effective in a unique, specific way.

And Paul lists some of those ways right here. Look at v. 6. Let's just go through all of these briefly and then we'll go to 1 Corinthians 12 and go through what he says there. This will at least give you an idea as a Christian of specific ways that the Spirit of God might be manifesting Himself in your own life for you to be able to build up the body.

That's what He gives these abilities for and these manifestations. It's for the common good. It's not about you.

It's about Christ's church. He's very concerned and jealous for His church. And lo and behold, what's the first one Paul mentions right here? It's prophecy.

I wish that wasn't the first thing Paul mentions, but it is. Again, so much could be said, but it's interesting here. What's something Paul seems to always bring up when he talks about this topic? It's the gift of prophecy.

What's something Paul even says to those Thessalonians? Do not what? Yeah, do not despise prophecy. Look, there's a lot of definitions. There could be five sermons on this.

But the first manifestation of the Spirit of God in His people for the edification of the body that Paul puts right here, he says, prophecy. And this is something he brings up often. And maybe if you do keep your hand in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, that will help.

It will flip back and forth. But 1 Corinthians 14, Paul even... I'm not going to go wrong by reading a verse from the Bible where Paul describes this, right? It's a safe ground. Verse 3, On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

Paul's saying, however you define prophecy, notice even the purpose of it happening. It upbuilds people. It encourages people.

And it consoles them. God's given certain people something where that happens. There's an encouragement from something that they say to you.

And obviously it's called prophecy, so people would say, well, there's some spontaneous reality that the Spirit of God puts on some person's mind in a specific situation. You find this even in Acts with Agabus

who predicted a famine would occur during the reign of Claudius. You find in 1 Thessalonians not despising these things.

You find verses talking about weighing these things after they are said. And so you get into arguments as New Testament prophecy the same as Old Testament prophecy. There's so many debates here.

But Paul unashamedly puts right here in 1 Corinthians 14 that there are people who are prophesying and it was used to upbuild, encourage, and console other people. Maybe even give practical guidance in specific situations like it seems happened in Acts. In prophecy, depending on your definition, it's obviously not something that trumps Scripture.

It's obviously not something that we believe would be added to the Bible. Some do go believe that. There's a whole lot of charismany out there.

It causes people to even hear the word prophecy and they right away just want to run away from even discussing it. And so I hope in the future we can discuss this more. But that's the first thing Paul puts here.

He puts prophecy. And like I even mentioned in my last message, he says in proportion to our faith. Meaning, you better be very careful here to go and not have trust in the Lord and say something to some individual and say it in too strong of a way where you're missing the will of God in whatever it is that you're communicating to that person.

It's not for their upbuilding. It's for their binding and bondage. So that's all I'm going to say on prophecy.

What's the second thing Paul mentions here? That this grace given that he wants believers using, he says, if service in our serving. What's Paul talking about here? You guys know this is the most sought-after gift in all the Bible, right? When we have people come all the time, brother, why didn't God give me the gift to serve? I want to have a unique ability. Look, you're going to see with a lot of these things, are all of us called to serve? Yes.

The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve. We're called to imitate Christ. Don't look at this and say, I'm not good at serving.

I shouldn't try harder. But clearly what he means, there's a unique manifestation of the Spirit of God in certain people's lives where it's a unique serving of someone else and their need, and even being sensitive to the reality of those needs, that the Spirit of God, He's at work doing that. I mean, there's others serving, but when that person served in that specific situation, God brought it about.

And He used it to build you up in your own life. Paul talks in 1 Corinthians 12 about gifts of helping. These would seem to be a similar reality.

The Spirit of God working to allow you to be a help to someone or to serve them. A lexicon, it puts an ability to render assistance or help by performing certain duties, often of a humble nature. And you know what? Some would rightly say a lot of times those who are really gifted in this way, they become the deacons in the church.

I mean, there's just an awareness there to serve the body and the church in a unique way. And it's because the Spirit of God has worked that in them. Maybe even Stephanas was gifted in this way.

1 Corinthians 16, it says that they were devoted to the service of the saints. I mean, why does Paul call that one man out and his family? It's like there was some devotion there that they had to the body in a unique way. That's the second thing we have here.

If you're in service and are serving, and the third thing, the one who teaches and is teaching, what does it mean to teach? We tend to think rightly about the Nehemiah text. Nehemiah 8.8, it says they gave the sense so the people understood the reading. And there's ability to unpack the Word of God that people come away understanding the Scriptures.

Everyone has the same ingredients right before them, but when some people cook it, it tastes really good and they use specific amounts of ingredients in a specific way. And another person, they come to the same table and there's a struggle there. Well, that's a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good of the body.

Paul even says in 1 Corinthians 14, how will I benefit you unless I bring a revelation or knowledge? And then he goes again and says prophecy, meaning revelation, and then he says teaching. So meaning teaching and knowledge. There's bringing of knowledge of who the Lord is and unpacking it from the Word of God where it helps saints.

Titus 1.9, give instruction in sound doctrine. So there's an ability to give instruction in the sound doctrine and to rebuke those who contradict it. And obviously, within this gift, there are different degrees of it.

1 Timothy 5, it talks about those who labor in preaching and teaching, implying some don't labor in it. There's a different degree of faith there given to that person. You know what? There's a lot of people who have a natural ability to teach and they end up teaching heresy because there isn't a Spirit-given discernment and ability to unpack the Word of God.

I'm amazed with all the people popping up on YouTube who are heretics where they have a great ability to speak, a natural ability there, but they're lacking the spiritual discernment to go to the Word of God and understand these things. Paul says people twist things to their own destruction. So that's a third thing.

Teaching. A fourth thing. What's the fourth thing that Paul puts here? Manifestation of the Spirit for the common good of the body.

It says, the one who exhorts. The one who exhorts in his exhortation. So the Spirit expresses Himself through some believers who have an ability to urge you to live out specific content in your life, to call you to action in a powerful way.

You talk to ten people about the same thing, but one of those people, you talk to them and you just feel exhorted. You feel called to go and to do something. They had a way through the Spirit of God manifesting Himself in their life to just put some fire under your feet to make you feel like I've got to go.

I've got to go do this. This is right. This is honoring to the Lord.

What letter in the Bible is an exhortation? Specifically states it is Hebrews. And if you know Hebrews, it's pretty clear it's an exhortation. He says in Hebrews 13.22, I appeal to you, brothers, bear with My word of exhortation.

So imagine after the service, someone exhorts you and they basically quote the whole book of Hebrews. How long does it take to read Hebrews? Is it like 30 minutes? That's a long exhortation. But what did that writer do? He had an ability to show people that Christ was better, to call them out of their idolatry, to call them out of going back to Judaism.

He had all these illustrations. He talks about your drooping hands. I mean, God just gave him an ability to help those Hebrews with what he wrote.

And you just see that in the whole letter. He's calling people to not abandon the truth. He's calling them to abandon certain errors.

And they're exhorted. They're challenged. So obviously, some teachers, they also have this manifestation in their life where they have an ability to exhort.

Another thing when you think about exhortation is the idea of what's also happening in the book of Hebrews. What's also happening when you exhort, there's counseling. There's a manifestation of the Spirit of God to offer counsel and call someone in a certain direction that has an impact on their life that God has given you at certain points.

It points you in a path, a clear path ahead. And so, exhortation, counseling, there's some mix there. The Spirit of God does that.

Manifests Himself in a unique way for the common good of other Christians. Alright, fifth thing here. Verse 8, the one who contributes in generosity.

So, another manifestation of the Spirit of God in certain believers' life in a unique way that they are effective in is giving. Isn't that interesting? All are called to give, but there's again, something unique about certain individuals. What is unique about it? Some of these, it's not like the Bible goes really in-depth, but you know, what does Paul call, he says, in contributing, and then he says what? In generosity.

What's generosity make it sound like Paul's thinking about? Yeah, even just the amount is part of it. Meaning, there is a willingness there that the Spirit of God puts in their heart. They give you something that you leave, you get the little thing and you open it up, you go home and you see the check and you're thinking it's going to be a \$100 check.

And it's \$2,000. Something unique happened there where the Spirit of God is burdening them not only to recognize your need and to see your need, to see the timing of it, but then to give in such a generous way to that need. I mean, some of you, you've experienced that.

There's just remarkable and unusual ways by which the Spirit of God works in others' lives for them to find out about a need in your life and God sends a person around to generously give to help you in that financial situation. Don't look at that and praise the person. That was God at work in their life for the edification of you being part of this body.

And so that's part of the Spirit's activity. And they're able to do this in a cheerful way, in a remarkable way. Isn't that what Paul said? Even to the rich, let them be rich in good works.

So, sixth thing here, after contributing in generosity, the one who leads with zeal. The one who leads with zeal. And you find in 1 Corinthians 12, he mentions a gift of administrating.

And so there could definitely be some overlap here in what he's talking about in 1 Corinthians 12.28, what he's speaking about here. God has given some people the grace to be a rudder in the ship. When we're in the steering wheel, they've got a call to put their hands on that wheel and help direct the ship in the right direction and the church in the right way.

There's a sense that God's given them a vision, a sense of where we're going. They have a unique ability to help call people not only to action to exhort them, but to call them together to work together for this great cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And without leadership, a church, they could just float around rudderless, not end up going in any direction.

And obviously you have leaders who, Peter says, they're domineering over the flock, right? So you've got people who, so many people want to domineer over the believer's consciences and they think that's leading with zeal and that's actually being a Pharisee. But then you've got the others where there's two passives. So there's certain people, God's manifested an ability to lead where they're not micromanaging the body and choking out certain people's Spirit-given activities that God's burdening them to do, but at the same time, they're seeking to manage it and encourage everyone in a specific direction.

That's a work of the Spirit of God. I mean, there's certain times, it's like where are we going? What should we be doing in a specific situation? And the Spirit of God might manifest Himself in a certain person at that exact moment and give clear clarity, put all the thoughts in their mind and line it up straight, and they express that to the others and everyone's like, that sounds exactly like what we should be doing. Spirit of God doing that.

And he says here, with zeal. That's with diligence. There's a diligent management that happens.

So that's another thing he mentions here. That's number six. Number seven.

The seventh thing Paul says here, the one who does acts of mercy, they are to do those acts with cheerfulness. Okay, Paul's already talked about contributing with generosity. So if he's already brought in this issue of finances, and he's already talked about if service and our serving, what's he mean by an act of mercy? What's Paul thinking of here? I think what he's saying is for some, the Spirit of God displays Himself in a unique way for them having an ability and a desire to show mercy and sympathy to people who are suffering.

That's a common way that people define this. And you kind of think of the child. When the child is hurt, who do they run to? When they're a little child.

They go to their mother. There's a specific sympathy. Not all mothers have it, but most mothers show a specific sympathy to their own children.

Well, God's designed some people in the church like that. They have an ability to show you sympathy and compassion and to show mercy towards you and to be an encouragement to you, to be just a soothing balm that soothes the pain and the distress that you're going through. Well, that's the Spirit of God working that in them.

Again, just like with generosity, how are people even becoming aware of specific things that are needs in your life? How does that even happen? Think of how many needs are met and nothing's being broadcasted from the pulpit about the need. The Spirit of God is at work in us as spiritual people to put you in providence in specific situations to meet different needs of different people. And you know what?

There's some people, there's such an immediate ability and sensitivity to alleviate the suffering and the grieving, where you just step back and you're amazed at their love.

The Spirit of God is doing that. That act of mercy. And you know what their attitude is? They're cheerful.

And there's just such a cheerful attitude and perspective that they have. It's just incredible. Have you ever thought of that? Showing an act of mercy as a manifestation of the Spirit of God? People tend to not think of that.

Alright, turn to 1 Corinthians 12. So far, we've looked at seven of these ways the Spirit of God reveals and shows the character of God and expresses a power in a certain way in certain people's lives to help the body in a more frequent way. And we just read seven of those ways.

And again, as you're looking at your own life, maybe God has designed you with something I've already read through here. And you look and there's a unique way the Spirit of God is at work in your life to show people acts of mercy with cheerfulness. Well, if that's the case, that's something you want to concentrate in on.

Because God's given you that to use that for the edification of the body rather than like that garden, you just spread yourself too thin. So 2 Corinthians 12.9 There's some overlap here. 1 Corinthians 12 Again, it says right here that we already looked at v. 7, each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

V. 8, for to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom. To another, the utterance of knowledge. And I would say those already fall under teaching and what we look at.

Maybe even prophecy and utterance of wisdom. According to the same Spirit. And then v. 9, to another faith by the same Spirit.

To another faith by the same Spirit. So the eighth manifestation of the Spirit that it seems Paul creates a category for is faith. Aren't we all called to have faith in the Lord? So again, what's Paul saying? There's some unique revealing of the Spirit of God in a person, in a certain situation, where they have a trust and a confidence and a promise of God that something is going to happen.

And they've had an ability to lay hold of it and you haven't had that happen. I mean, you're sitting there. You don't have that faith.

And God has worked that even for your own good in the other person. You don't get jealous of that amount of faith and confidence that they have. You'd be encouraged by it.

How often that happens. At a specific moment when the church needs it, God Himself gives a person an extraordinary faith to believe the Lord for something very specifically. And like Paul, he already said, if I have all faith, then what does He link all faith to? All faith so as to remove a mountain.

And so there's something supernatural happening here that God works in a Christian to have faith. And we shouldn't despise that. We should be encouraged by that when the Spirit of God does that in certain people.

And you know what? You might question it. You might think they're crazy that they believe the Lord for the salvation of a specific person. What if this is the Spirit of God at work? And it's not their emotionalism.

What if the Lord's actually burdening them in a unique way to believe the Lord? A ninth thing here, he mentions to another faith by the same Spirit. Then he says this, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit. And then he says to another the working of miracles.

Again, a lot is debated here on if these things cease. Does the Spirit of God still manifest in a unique way and these things happen? I'd say with the gift of healing, one text you tend to think about when you think about healing is what text? James 5. It talks about a prayer of faith will save the one who is sick. It's interesting, even in James 5, you just see this wrestling with believing God and having this faith like Elijah had to believe the Lord.

And him saying that he's a man like us. But you know what? God will do that. There's certain people, they have a faith and a confidence in a specific situation to pray for someone to be healed and the Spirit of God can work in that way and heal that individual.

And they had a confidence. Even when people come to us and they want us to anoint your head with oil and lay hands on you according to James 5. You know what? One of us elders in that moment of prayer might just have more of a faith to believe God for healing of that individual than the others of us might. And the Spirit of God is manifesting Himself in that way for the common good of the body and for the glory of the Lord.

Again, this whole idea that any of these gifts are just something that you flick on with a switch and you use it whenever you want. These are manifestations of the Spirit. That's how Paul describes it.

That's not just something that is turned on. A tenth thing he mentions here is this working of miracles. And obviously, if you just dealt with healing and he's making something specific here that's different than that, it seems like this could refer to the Spirit's power displayed through being given an ability maybe even to cast out demons or something in a miraculous way.

God the Spirit works in someone to see something happen in that unique way. And if you read church history, there are certain men, even like Pastor Shi in China, where they had all these demonic problems. And the Spirit of God manifested in his life in a specific way.

His own wife was full of demons and he fasted and prayed and went into the house and just lived out what the Bible said and commanded them to leave in the name of Jesus Christ. And those demons left their wife. She was shortly thereafter saved.

What do you think that is? The Scripture's teaching that's a manifestation of the Spirit of God. It might not happen but once every 100 years. But the Lord is able to work in this way in unique ways.

He's able to do the miraculous. Eleventh thing here. Look at v. 10.

He mentions prophecy. And then he says this, to another the ability. There's an ability.

There's a manifestation that's frequent and effective from someone's life to do what? To distinguish between spirits. Discernment that is from the Spirit of God. And you know what? You feel that in the church, right? There's certain people, they know all this truth and at the same time, they're able to have a conversation or watch something on the Internet and they're able to see and discern something in a specific way that others can't.

Well, that's a manifestation of the Spirit of God to pick up on certain things that others can't. The Lord manifests Himself in that way to protect the church. Even to protect others.

And obviously, discernment is something we should all have. Hebrews 5.14, it says, solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. Well, clearly, he's talking about something more than that.

There's a unique ability of the Spirit of God at work in certain Christians' lives where there is an ability to distinguish between spirits, between certain situations. I mean, I think of situations in our own church. There's people who've come in here and they are so zealous.

And people think, they're the greatest, most spiritual person in the world. And others are like, I've got a really uneasy feeling. And their feeling is based on objective things they're discerning and comparing to the Word of God.

And they ended up being right. They picked up on something. Well, the Spirit of God does that.

Manifests Himself to help certain people distinguish spirits. A twelfth thing that we find right here after that is to another various kinds of tongues. And then he goes on and makes another distinction to another interpretation of tongues.

And I realize, again, there's so much that could be said, but from my own definition in this overview, let me just state this. For some, the Spirit's power is displayed through a unique ability to speak in another language that the person has not learned. Acts 2, each one was hearing them speak in his own language.

That's where I get my definition. And so right there in the new era in God's plan, the Lord spreads the Word in such a rapid way and that gift was very normal back then. Now it is something, there's so many definitions, there's so much falsehood going around with this whole topic of tongues.

It's amazing, the same God who took all the people who knew the same language at the Tower of Babel and He dispersed them, right? There at Pentecost, He allows them all in a way to have one language again for His truth to advance. And so God is incredible. He manifests Himself at the right time in the right way to meet a specific need in a unique way.

And then you have the interpretation of tongues. That's the thirteenth thing here. And I just described this.

The Spirit's power is on display through a unique ability to understand and interpret what someone says in their own language. And they get it. And God uses that.

In 1 Corinthians 14, it says as they interpreted, the church was built up by understanding what the other person was saying. I remember sharing about a conference up in Canada and some lady came in from the mountains, a native woman, and she didn't understand the language, but she sat there and the Lord allowed her to hear the message in her own language and she was converted. Is that a manifestation of the Spirit of God? Is that something that's quackery and has ceased? There's all manner of debates over all of this, but brethren, we have a God who controls and owns everything.

And He seeks to manifest and reveal Himself, yes, primarily through the Word of God and everything is tested through the Scriptures, the inerrant Word of God. But so much more again could be said on these things. Turn to Ephesians 4. This is the last stop.

Ephesians 4. 7. Here you find this language again. Grace given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gifts. And then you go down to verse 11.

And he says, He gave the apostles. Again, this is another hotly debated topic. But there's this category of the Bible that mentions apostles.

It even says in Romans 16, greet Andronicus and Junius, my kinsmen, my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles. So you had some group of apostles and Paul even says certain ones were outstanding among those apostles. And there's nothing that indicates that all these, like a capital A Apostle, saw the Lord.

But you've got other people operating with this term apostle. And some, it's becoming more and more common that people now would basically say an apostle is a representative of a pioneer missionary. And different people like Andy and Paul, they're using that definition that there's a lower case apostle, which just means it's a sent person, a messenger, that the Spirit of God works in certain believers in a unique way where they're able to go to a foreign land, and they're able to lay the foundation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a missionary, and they're able to establish a church.

And that's a manifestation of the Spirit of God at work in their life. So that would be my definition to you of one possibility of what he talked about here that he gave apostles. Some would want to say it's talking about people who are really gifted in the area of missionaries and church planting.

Fifteenth thing, he says right after this, he says the prophets. We already looked at that briefly. And then he says the evangelists.

And then he says the shepherds. And then makes a distinction between the shepherds and the teachers. But evangelists.

He's saying there's a grace given for some people in a unique way. And I don't think he means they just desire to evangelize. The desire's got to be there, but there's an ability to win souls.

That the Spirit of God has worked in this person's life. And you're amazed at it. They say certain things in certain conversations that the Spirit of God puts in their mind to say to that person that they're reminded of from the Word of God, and God uses it.

And they see people brought to Christ. In many ways, Charles Spurgeon had the gift of evangelism. The amount of people that were converted through his preaching and his ability to speak to people's hearts.

And then you have the sixteenth manifestation of the Spirit that at least is somewhat expressed is the saying of shepherds. Shepherds. Grace is given to some to shepherd.

We read about that in Isaiah 40. The Spirit of God's worked in them to tend to the flock, to care for the needy. Now, let's turn to one other place.

1 Peter actually. Let's see. It's interesting, in v. 9, show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

And then look at v. 10. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another. So some would even want to say there's a unique Spirit-given ability to show hospitality that God has worked in certain Christians.

Again, even though all are called to manifest this. But again, look at v. 10. As each one has received a gift, all of us are included.

No one is left here today without some manifestation of the Spirit of God in your life. And what's Peter say? Use it. And again, you use it, does he say, to serve yourself? No.

To serve one another. And then he calls us, be good stewards of God's varied grace. And then he says in v. 11, whoever speaks is the one who speaks oracles of God.

Whoever serves is one who serves. And then he says this, by the strength that God supplies, in order that in everything, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. Brethren, all of these 17 manifestations of the Spirit of God that He's given for the common good of building up this body, none of us can do any of it without the power of the Lord.

He says right there, serve with the strength that God supplies. If God the Spirit doesn't give strength, nothing's going to happen in a unique way. There might be something natural happening, but not spiritual manifesting itself in that situation.

And so these are some of the clear expressions of the way the Spirit of God manifests Himself through His activity in the life of Christians, in the life of the church, and He puts His power on display in certain ways. This is just 17 of these manifestations that you can find right there in the Bible, right on the pages. Prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, acts of mercy, faith, healing, miracles, discernment, tons, interpretation of tons, apostles, evangelists, shepherds.

Let me give a couple in the time left, just a couple general observations. What have we got? 106. Look, this list I don't believe is exhaustive because notice even the overlap that Paul gives from Romans 12 going all the way to 1 Corinthians 12.

It's not like Paul has some list of ways the Spirit of God manifests Himself that is written down and that's an exclusive list and nothing goes beyond that. So we don't want to get that idea in our mind. I had some other questions, but maybe we'll think about these in another time because I do feel like we're running out of time.

But let me close with one thought here. I appreciated what Thomas Schreiner said. When people ask the question, how do we discover our spiritual gifts? I tried to hit on this last time, but I like the way Schreiner says this.

Tests and surveys, such as an abstract way of discovering our gift, is actually contrary to the Spirit of the New Testament. And then he says this, where we are summoned to give ourselves to other believers in the congregation. Right? Isn't that what's true? All of us are called to love, to give ourselves to one another in the congregation.

And then he says this, to put it another way, we will discover our gifts when we pour ourselves into the lives of other believers. Where we get involved in the life of the body. So you want to know how God uniquely manifests Himself in you in a specific way to build up this body? Be involved.

And be involved in loving one another and serving one another. And you know what's going to happen? Certain needs are going to arise and the Spirit of God is going to manifest Himself in you in a unique way to help another person in the church. And that might start to happen enough where other people, they're

starting to recognize that reality in you.

That that's some frequent, effective manifestation of the Spirit of God in that person's life. Gifts are granted to serve one another, right? So it makes pretty good sense. You could just go serve people and it's going to become evident how God has designed you.

Verne Poitras, he makes the exact same statement. He says, we are to seek Christ in all He has to give and then serve His people. In doing so, the gifts will come to light.

Well, one other thought here. This is kind of back to my last message. Brethren, remember this.

It's not a failure to not do something God has not designed you to do. A lack of action that God has not intended you to do is not a failure. If you're a hand, be the best hand you can be, right? God's going to continue as the months and the years go on.

The Lord is going to make it evident and the body is going to help identify in you in specific ways that the Spirit uniquely manifests Himself through you for the edification of the body. You've got to trust the Lord with that. Just serve the brethren.

Don't get caught up in what type of gift do I have or do I not have? But this is the last thought. Really think of this, please. Brethren, we're spiritual creatures.

Craig's going through it. We're trying to bear spiritual fruit. Can you and I be prevented from bearing spiritual fruit? How? By what? Interesting.

Grieving the Spirit will prevent me from bearing spiritual fruit. What also is that going to prevent me from having happen in my life? Manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit as well. Like, this is major.

If I grieve the Spirit, what's in context there? Paul has something specific on his mind. And I do not think we take this to heart as we should. Ephesians 4. So if I grieve the Spirit, I'm not manifesting the fruits of the Spirit, and I'm not manifesting the gifts of the Spirit.

You want to shut both of those things down? You go grieve the Holy Spirit. And then you don't repent and you continue on in that. But listen to Ephesians 4. Verse 29, let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only as is such for building up.

Incredible. Paul's all about building up. As fits the occasion that it might give grace to those who hear.

And then look at verse 30. And don't grieve the Holy Spirit. Well, in context there, what specific is on his mind even that leads to grieving the Holy Spirit? You could grieve the Holy Spirit with what? With your words.

By whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. And then he says this, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you along with all nihilists. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God and Christ forgave you.

You know, 1 Corinthians, what's he deal with after he talks about all these gifts? He talks about love. What's the exact same thing Paul does in Romans 12? After talking about the gifts, what's he talk about? Let your love be genuine. I mean, are you getting a theme here? Paul wants you to have love.

You don't want to... okay, you grieve the Spirit, you don't have the fruits of the Spirit, you don't have manifestations of the spiritual gifts. Well, go not love people. And you'll shut both those things down.

They won't happen. It's like turning the hose off. No more water's coming.

If we fail to love, if we sin in our speech here and we grieve the Spirit... Brethren, is there some area in your own life you've grieved the Spirit? And you know what's scary about grieving the Spirit? There's certain people that grieve the Spirit and they don't know they've grieved the Spirit. They don't even recognize that's happened in their life. Who's someone in the Bible that that happened to? Samson.

One of the scariest verses in that account is he didn't know the Spirit had left him. And there's a grief of the Spirit of God and he didn't even recognize it. If that happens in my own life, I'm not going to have the fruits of the Spirit.

I'm not going to have the gifts of the Spirit being manifested. It doesn't matter if I think I have some gift. If I say, well, I know God's given me this gift frequently.

You go grieve the Spirit, it doesn't matter how frequent it was being manifested before, it's not going to happen. And so brethren, may God help us to not grieve the Spirit by failing to love. Specifically to love in our speech.

And the conversations that we have can be used to build up the church or tear the church down, grieve the Spirit, and then the Spirit of God does not manifest Himself here in a powerful way. Alright, well, so much more could be said on that list. If anyone has any questions, talk to me.

But I hope I can try to work through some of these things individually in the months ahead. Let's pray. Father, Lord, thank You for Your great goodness to us and Lord, I think of the ways I've seen You manifest Yourself even in different precious saints here through having some unique, effective, frequent manifestation in one of these 17 things.

Lord, I thank You for that. Lord, I thank You that there are brethren seeking to concentrate their energy in specific areas that You've designed them in a unique way, Lord. You reveal Yourself and Your character through that spiritual creature, that believer that You've adopted into Your family.

Lord, it's just remarkable. I pray, Lord, we all pray You'd continue to do such. Lord, that You'd be with us.

Father, if we being evil know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more do You give the Spirit to those who ask? And Lord, I pray You'd give us more of the Spirit of God to love one another, to speak truth to one another, Lord, to do acts of mercy to one another, to lead one another, to serve, to distinguish spirits, to protect one another for the common good. Lord, we just want to abound as spiritual creatures in seeing You work in specific ways. Lord, I pray, Father, we all stand here and this whole topic can easily be uncomfortable in different points because there's so much craziness out in our world today.

But Lord, help us to be balanced and do whatever Your Scriptures, we can clearly see is there. Father, we want to be able to obey it as best as we can. We want to understand it.

And so, Lord, even give us the ability to teach and to understand and have knowledge from Your Word that we would not be led astray in any way. And so, Lord, we're just needy. We think about 1 Peter 4, the one who serves.

Serve with the strength that God supplies. Lord, would You provide us with strength to serve one another? Lord, even right now as we're about to close, Lord, different serving is going to happen. And Lord, You know, there's specific burdens probably on people's minds already of different needs of different people.

And Lord, Your Spirit, You've done that. You guide us, You direct us, and we're just utterly grateful, Lord, for Your work in our lives. And Lord, help us.

I pray You'd help these precious saints. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/6C1ovJwhJi4.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-jennings/what-are-spiritual-gifts/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net