

Much More

The Power and Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Romans 12:3-8

There are two primary lists of the gifts of the Spirit in scripture: one is in 1 Corinthians 12 and one is in Romans 12.

Last week, we looked at the manifestation gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12. This morning, we will look at [the list of the gifts of the Spirit in Romans 12:6-8](#). If you have your Bible with you, and I hope you do, open with me to Romans 12. **(Handout)**

The list of the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 were both written by the Apostle Paul, but the lists are different. Why is that?

Two obvious reasons for two different lists of the gifts of the Spirit:

- 1. The list of the gifts of the Spirit is not complete without both lists (the whole counsel of God).**
- 2. The church at Corinth was facing an entirely different set of challenges than the church in Rome.**

Corinth was inundated with evil spiritual practices. Idol worship, sorcery, black magic, and divination were commonplace in the church in Corinth. It makes sense that the Apostle Paul would choose to address the more spectacular gifts of the Spirit with this church, the gifts Paul called “manifestations.” We saw last week that “manifestation” literally means “to put on an exhibition.” These are the showier gifts of the Spirit, gifts that put His power on display. It appears Paul thought it was important for the Corinthian church to understand how the Spirit worked these manifestation gifts in light of their context and unique challenges.

The challenges facing the church in Rome were different than the challenges in Corinth. In Rome, the church was battling sharp divisions over the issue of race. Jews and Gentiles in Rome were

struggling to live out the Christian life in this context of extreme diversity. You know, Romans is the longest and most developed gospel presentation in the entire Bible. Doesn't that make sense? Where sin has broken down relationships and caused sharp divisions among people, the gospel is the only realistic solution! In Romans 1-11, Paul lays out the gospel. In Romans 12, Paul transitions to application by defining what Christian living looks like based on the gospel. Guess what? Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts is at the very front of his application.

The focus of Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts in Romans 12 is different than 1 Corinthians 12. Rather than address the manifestation gifts of the Spirit, Paul decided to share another list. Paul refers to these gifts of the Spirit as gifts of grace, and he says they are to be used in proportion to our faith:

Romans 12:3-8

3 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. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 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.

Body

If the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 are manifestation gifts that put the power of the Spirit on display, **what is God's purpose for the gifts of grace in Romans 12?**

Each one of the seven gifts of grace in Romans 12 is geared to a particular type of motivation that the Holy Spirit inspires. Through

these gifts, the Holy Spirit motivates His people to work as a team. Every single one of these motivations can be seen in the life of Jesus. By giving us these gifts of grace, the Holy Spirit is actively working in us to motivate us to love and good works.

Let me give you an illustration, then we will dive into the gifts.

Imagine you are at a birthday party for a one-year-old. Mom has been slaving away all day to make this party special. The big moment has finally arrived... mom is carrying the cake over to the highchair. As she walks, the cake slips off the pan and makes a terrible mess on the floor. How devastating! Immediately, several opportunities for showing love like Jesus loves surface all at once. The people at the party all see these different needs and can begin to spring into action. The need each person sees first will greatly be influenced by how the Holy Spirit has gifted them with these gifts of grace, and how He has chosen to motivate them to love and good works. Some of you are probably already thinking about how you would personally jump in and serve in that moment! Before we get ahead of ourselves, let's consider each of these seven gifts in Romans 12, then we will come back to this illustration to complete the picture.

1. Gift of Prophecy

The gift of prophecy is the only gift of the Spirit that shows up on both lists. This is no surprise. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul said he wished every believer would prophesy.

Last week, we looked at the manifestation gift of a “word of prophecy.” We defined a “word of prophecy” as the foretelling of a future event. When this happens, it is spectacular! The manifestation gift of prophecy puts the power of the Holy Spirit on display.

But in the Bible, there is more to the word “prophecy” than just foretelling a future event. In a broader sense, prophecy is interpreting the divine will or purpose of God. This can include foretelling future events, but it isn't limited to a word about a future event. The gift of prophecy in this broader sense would include looking past the physical

and into the spiritual realm to discern God's activity in a particular circumstance. People who have the motivational gift of prophecy are often very quick at being able to discern right from wrong from God's point of view. Prophets can come across as very black and white, but what is really happening is they have a greater sense of clarity about what God is doing and what would be most pleasing to Him.

People who have the motivational gift of prophecy would relate to this phrase: God is always using our circumstances in the physical realm to accomplish His purposes in the spiritual realm. A person with the gift of prophecy has faith to look past the surface issues and to consider the bigger picture of what God is doing.

Those motivated with a gift or prophecy regularly have this strong inclination: they do not stop at what is apparent on the surface, but they allow the Spirit to pull back the curtain so they can take a peek into God's divine will or purpose.

Bible Stories Illustrating this Type of Prophecy:

- When surrounded by an enemy army, the prophet Elisha told his servant, "Those who are with us outnumber those who are with them." God opened the eyes of the servant to see an angel army in the spiritual realm surrounding them, ready to fight on their behalf. (2 Kings 6:8-23)**
- Peter saw past the humanity of Jesus and looked into the spiritual realm when he declared, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!" (Matthew 16:13-20)**
- Jesus told His disciples, "I have food that you do not know about." He was not talking about physical food; He was speaking of the spiritual substance He found in doing the work of His Father. (John 4:31-34)**

2. Gift of Serving (or ministry)

The Greek word for "serving" is "diakonia." It means "service," "ministry," or "table of service." The imagery of this word is a picture of someone coming along side another person as an attendant or to

provide assistance. The word implies action: “Be doers of the word and not hearers only.” Those who have this motivational gifting tend to see all they have as something they were given by God to be used for the good of others.

Those motivated with a gift of serving would regularly have this strong inclination: they are very aware of the needs of others around them, and they have a strong desire to take action to help meet those needs.

Bible Stories Illustrating Serving:

- **Jesus said that He did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:35-45)**
- **When Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law, she immediately got up and served them by cooking them a meal. (Luke 4:38-39)**
- **The first seven deacons were appointed because of the neglect of a particular group of widows in the church during the daily distribution of food. These deacons would carry the load and meet this need through serving so the apostles could continue to devote themselves to the ministry of the word. (Acts 6:1-7)**
- **When Paul was traveling back to Rome, Philip (one of the first deacons) opened up his home to Paul so that Paul would have a place to stay. (Acts 21:7-8)**

3. Gift of Teaching

This Bible word means, “to instruct in a formal or informal setting, to tell someone what to do.” The Spirit’s gift of teaching would imply teaching others to know and to do the will of God. Sometimes people tend to limit this gift to preaching, but the gift of teaching can happen in formal or informal settings, or in large groups or one-to-one. Jesus was constantly teaching. As a Rabi, Jesus desired that His teaching would be received and observed in the way a person lived. Through His teaching, Jesus wanted His life to be lived out in others. One of the most difficult things that can happen to a person who is motivated by the Spirit to teach is that they pour their heart out in teaching and then the person goes on to ignore their words and continue to live their lives in a way that is damaging to themselves and to others.

Those motivated with a gift of teaching tend to regularly have this strong inclination: they clearly see a problem in the way someone is living, and they desire to help them by showing them a better way.

Bible Stories Illustrating Teaching:

- **Jesus spent A LOT of time teaching...**
 - **Jesus taught His disciples to pray. (Luke 11:1-13)**
 - **Jesus went throughout all Galilee teaching and proclaiming the gospel. (Matthew 4:23)**
 - **Jesus said the people who do His commandments and teach them to others would be called the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 5:19)**
 - **Jesus taught His disciples and Mary, and Jesus told Martha she missed out because she was distracted by much serving. (Luke 10:38-42)**
 - **Jesus said He would send His Spirit to be our Teacher. (John 14:25-26)**
 - **Jesus told His disciples to go teach others to observe all He had commanded them. (Matthew 28:18-20)**

4. Gift of Exhorting

Through His gift of exhortation, the Spirit motivates His people to inspire others with courage or cheer, to comfort, to encourage, and to urge others to joy. Exhorters love to help create a culture of fun and celebrating! An exhorter will quickly become your biggest cheerleader or strongest supporter. Exhorters tend to have an ability to see the good and find joy even in difficult circumstances. They are gifted to point out what is good and excellent.

Those motivated with a gift of exhortation would regularly have this strong inclination: they show us what it looks like to be encouraged by God and to encourage others with the same encouragement we receive from God.

Bible Stories Illustrating Exhortation:

- **Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4)**
- **After he was nearly stoned to death, Paul received encouragement from the Spirit to get up and go back into the city to make disciples and strengthen the church. (Acts 14:19-23)**
- **Paul and his team returned to churches he helped plant to strengthen them, encourage their faith, and remind them that it would be through many hardships that they would enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:19-23)**

5. Gift of Giving

Giving means to share or impart what you have to another. A person with the gift of giving does not treat their possessions as their own. They are motivated to get involved in God’s activity through giving! When a person who is motivated to give by the Spirit hears about a need, their impulse is not typically, “Should I give?” it is, “I’m going to give, the only question is ‘how much.’”

Those motivated with a gift of generosity will regularly have this strong inclination: they give with extreme generosity and cheerfulness, not reluctantly or for the praise of people, but because they know their giving is pleasing to God.

Bible Stories Illustrating Giving:

- **The people of Israel were so delighted to give freewill offerings to God at the construction of the Tabernacle that the leadership had to ask them to stop giving because they ran out of space for all the gifts! (Exodus 36:1-7)**
- **Jesus said the widow who gave a couple pennies gave the greatest gift because she gave willingly and out of her need. (Luke 21:1-4)**
- **The first church sold their possessions and laid the proceeds at the feet of the church leaders to distribute to those in need. The result was that there was not a need among them. (Acts 4:32-37)**

6. Gift of Leading

To lead means to direct, to rule, or to be at the head, to manage, to administrate, and to organize. This Bible word also has strong implications for the one who leads: the leader is personally devoted to what God calls them to do, even at great personal cost. Romans 12 says that those who lead should lead with ZEAL! Leading with zeal means to lead with haste, speed, eagerness, earnestly, diligently, and willingly. Like prophets, sometimes those who have the gift of the Spirit to lead are viewed unfairly. There is such a thing as a leader that is too pushy, but leaders are supposed to call on others and get them to be active on the team! They are supposed to help the church move forward with haste and to make the most of the time we are given here on the earth. Cheer for those who are gifted by the Spirit to lead! The most encouraging thing you can do for a leader is get on board when you see that God is clearly trying to lead you through them.

Those motivated with a gift of leading will regularly have this strong inclination: they devote themselves to what God is leading them to do and they are active in recruiting others to join in God's activity.

Bible Stories Illustrating Leading:

- **Joshua provided leadership for Israel by leading them into the Promised Land, "Choose you this day who you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:14-15)**
- **David changed the culture of the armies of Israel through his faith and by his example of trusting God in combat. (1 Samuel 17)**
- **Jesus had a clear vision for ministry from the Father and He recruited the apostles and others into that ministry. (Mark 3:13-19)**
- **Paul raised up and appointed elders in all the churches he planted. (Acts 14:23)**

7. Gift of Mercy

Those who have the Spirit's gift of mercy are quick to recognize the outcast, the mistreated, the overlooked, and the lowly. They have

incredible empathy and compassion for others. They will show unmerited kindness and favor through the power of the Spirit.

Those motivated with a gift of mercy regularly have this strong inclination: they give favor to those who haven't earned it and they instantly have compassion on those who are experiencing pain or trouble.

Bible Stories Illustrating Mercy:

- **Jesus showed mercy to the Samaritan woman at the well. (John 4)**
- **Jesus showed mercy to the woman caught in adultery. (John 8:1-11)**
- **Jesus showed mercy to tax collectors and sinners like Zacchaeus and Matthew. (Matthew 9:9-13, Luke 19:1-10)**
- **Jesus showed mercy to the lepers, the blind, the lame, the deaf, and the poor. (Luke 7:22)**
- **Peter and John showed mercy to the lame man at the temple gate. (Acts 3:1-16)**

Conclusion

These are the seven gifts of grace from the Spirit of God listed in Romans 12. These gifts are used by the Spirit to stir up our motivation so that we will work together to create a culture of unity, faith, and love in Jesus' Church.

Let's return to our cake illustration. The cake just hit the floor! Immediately, there are several opportunities for those at the party to show the love of Jesus in this situation. The people at the party have gifts from the Spirit. Those gifts help stir our motivation. What would that look like at this birthday party?

- **The mercy immediately responds, "Oh! I am so sorry that happened! Are you okay?"**
- **The servant asks, "Where's the broom?! I'll take care of this mess."**

- **The giver says, “I’ll be back, I’m going to buy a new cake.”**
- **The exhorter says, “You know what? This is unfortunate, but we are still going to have an incredible time here together.”**
- **The teacher notices, “You were carrying that cake pan with one hand, and the pan didn’t have a lip on it. A couple small adjustments would make a big difference in the future.”**
- **The prophet observes, “There is a bigger picture going on here. Perhaps it is that God is trying to get us to all come together and serve. Perhaps there is something going on in someone’s life here that needs to be revealed. Lord, what is the bigger picture You are working to accomplish?”**
- **The leader would quickly look to see if any of the needs were going unmet and helping organize everyone to meet the need.**

These are the grace gifts of the Spirit in action, motivating His people to faith and love. Can you see it? Can you see any of these in yourself? Can you see any of these active in other people in your life? I see them all the time in my group, do you?

Paul said God does not want us to be ignorant about the gifts of His Spirit. As we consider what we have learned about these gifts, let’s ask and answer three important questions that help us know how God wants us to use them...

Question 1: We know that Paul says we should use these spiritual gifts. However, should you always immediately act on every motivation you feel?

Answer: No. Instead, respond with discernment by asking God what He wants you to do and how to best love others in this situation.

Consider what Paul says immediately after covering the list of the grace gifts in Romans 12.

Romans 12:9-10

**9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.
10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.**

LET LOVE BE GENUINE. Just because you feel a motivation, even a good motivation from the Spirit, doesn't mean that you should immediately act upon it. Rather, you should ask God, "How do you want me to love others?"

For example, the moment the mom dropped the cake may not be the right time for the prophet and the teacher to use the gifts the Spirit has given them.

Question 2: Once I discover I have a strong inclination in a particular gift, how should I relate to the other gifts?

In other words, if I have the gift of giving, should I restrict my activity to giving? Or the gift of serving, should I just be someone who serves?

Look at this list of the **grace gifts of the Spirit in Romans 12 again**. Do you notice something about them? All of them are commanded as part of our general obedience to God in scripture!

- **Paul expresses his desire that we would all prophesy. (1 Corinthians 14:1-2)**
- **Jesus commanded all His disciples to serve others. (John 13:14, Matthew 23:11-12)**
- **At the Great Commission, Jesus told all of us to go teach others to observe His commandments. (Matthew 28:18-20)**
- **Hebrews says we are all to exhort one another daily so that our hearts will not become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3:13)**
- **Paul tells all Christians to give to the church generously and cheerfully and not under compulsion, but as God wills. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)**
- **We are all called to lead. Husbands to lead their families. Parents to lead their children. Disciple-makers to lead those they are**

discipling. Christians to lead others to the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:2, Ephesians 6:1-2, 2 Timothy 2:2, Acts 1:8)

- **We are all called to be merciful like God is merciful. (Luke 6:36)**

If we are all called to all do these things, what's the point of the list of gifts?

Through these gifts, we get to see how the Holy Spirit does these things by watching His giftings in one another. We are all encouraged in our obedience to Jesus and in the way we address our hearts as we learn to live to honor Him. Through the gifts, we see Jesus in one another!

Do not limit your activity to a particular gift. Rather, set an example for the believers in the way you use your gift, and learn from others as they exercise their grace gifts from the Spirit.

Question 3: Where are these gifts best practiced?

Unfortunately, many Christians consider “serving as part of Jesus’ Church” as something they do on the weekend at the church campus. This is a terrible limitation on what God intends for ministry in His Church! **The best place to practice these gifts is first and foremost in meaningful relationships! Practice these gifts in your home with your family members, and learn from them as they practice the gifts God gave them so that you can become more like Jesus. Practice these gifts in a small group of disciples of Jesus who are working together to become like Jesus and help each other become more like Jesus. Practice these gifts as you go out into the world and work to love others who don't know Jesus or are not connected to His Church and lead them to come and see what God is doing.**

That's the first place to practice!

In addition to practicing the gifts in meaningful relationships outside of our campus, **the gifts of the Spirit in you are also needed at your local church. For us to be the team God wants us to be and to do what**

God is calling us to do, we must work together as a team, as one body. We need the gifts of the Spirit in you! There are places to get involved here on Sunday, Wednesday, and throughout the week. Get out of the seat and into the game!

Not only do we need your gift, but we need you to learn from the gifts of the Spirit in others and become more like Jesus. God is not just calling our givers to give, He is calling our givers to set the example for giving so that we will all learn to give! God is not just calling those motivated by His Spirit to serve to volunteer, He is calling all of us to learn from their example and get involved in serving!

Invitation

The worse thing we can do is hear this message and not respond with action. This is a message that calls us to action! [Will you respond?](#)

- 1. [Will you believe that God has given you a gift of grace that He desires to use to motivate you to love and good works?](#)**
- 2. [Will you use your gift to build up His Church in faith and love?](#)**
- 3. [Will you allow God to use these gifts in His body to help you become more like Jesus and to lead others to become more like Him?](#)**

Church is a team sport. Discipleship is a team sport. Growing in faith and love and becoming like Jesus is a team sport. Let's be the team God wants us to be. Let's use the gifts He has given us. Jesus says if we will BE His Church we will win. Winning according to Jesus is becoming like Him and helping others become like Him. It is making disciples who make disciples. Let's be a church that wins together. Let's be His Church. Let's use His gifts to increase faith and love.