



Gifts of the Spirit

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CHAPTER 1

ARE THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT FOR THE CHURCH TODAY?

Few subjects in the New Testament are as important as the gifts of the Spirit. Paul, in the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, reveals the Church as the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). He explains that the members of this Body are believers exercising varying gifts, even as the members of the human body have different functions and purposes. All these members, working harmoniously together, become the mystical Body of Christ on Earth. In the light of this, without the gifts of the Spirit, the Church is something quite different from that which God intended. Instead of being a supernatural organism, the Church is then only another human organization.

It is a matter of history that, within a short time after the Apostolic period, the gifts of the Spirit gradually began to disappear from the Church. Many reasons have been given as to why this happened. A common explanation is that when the New Testament canon (the books of the New Testament recognized by the Christian Church as genuine and inspired) was completed, these gifts were no longer needed.

As the well-known writer, Donald Gee, points out in his excellent book, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts*, there is no evidence in the New Testament to support any such view. He writes:

“Such an argument rests upon a complete misconception of the true nature and purpose of the Gifts of the Spirit. It assumes that in the Early Church, utterances through these gifts had all the authority of the Scriptures, but the New Testament utterly disproves such an idea. The Early Church is consistently found always appealing to the Scriptures of the Old Testament (note: never to their own ‘prophets’), for support for all doctrine and final settlement in every dispute (Acts 2:16; 15:15; 26:22). The ‘prophecy of Scripture’ (2 Peter 1:20) provided a totally different level of authority to the spiritual gifts among them, and it does so still.”

Although the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit ceased to a great extent after the Apostolic age, there is no evidence that this occurred because the Lord withdrew the gifts. They ceased because the Church became lukewarm. The start of one becoming lukewarm can be seen in the Lord’s warning to the Church at Ephesus, when He gave the revelation to St. John about the year AD 96. (Prophetic students fairly well agree that this Church symbolizes the Apostolic period of Church history.)

“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen; repent, and do

the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and will remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent” (Revelation 2:4, 5).

During the period of the great persecutions of the second and third centuries, the gifts of the Spirit continued to be more or less manifested. However, shortly after Constantine decreed Christianity as the national religion and the Church came into Imperial favor, the ministry of the gifts rapidly declined.

It is important to note that the operation of the gifts of the Spirit never altogether ceased. The St. Francis story contains thrilling incidents of miracles of healing. When he sent his preachers out, he gave them the same command Jesus gave His disciples in Matthew 10:8. They were to preach the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand and “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.”

The history of the persecuted sects of the Waldenses and Albigenses show that the gifts of the Spirit were in manifestation even during the Middle Ages. John Wesley, in the 18th Century, records in his journals remarkable Pentecostal phenomena in the meetings of the early Methodists. The Moravians and other contemporary groups experienced many unusual supernatural manifestations. While the use and operation of the gifts greatly diminished during the ensuing centuries of the Church Age, they never entirely disappeared. When at last, men began to earnestly pray for the restoration of the gifts to the Church, the present latter-day outpouring of the Spirit resulted.

WERE THE GIFTS TO CEASE?

There is a passage of Scripture that has been commonly used as a proof-text by those who hold the position that the gifts of the Spirit have ceased from the Church. This is 1 Corinthians 13:8-10:

“Love never fails. But where there *are* prophecies, they will fail; whether there *are* tongues, they will cease; whether there *is* knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.”

This Scripture says prophecies, tongues and knowledge, will cease or be done away. *However, just one glance at the Scripture shows that the period referred to is not this age at all, but the perfect age which is yet to come!* Even an unlearned person knows quite well that “that which is perfect” has not yet come.

THE SIGNS WERE TO FOLLOW

In His Great Commission, the Lord gave the promise of miraculous signs

which would follow and confirm the preaching of the Word (Mark 16:15-18). These signs were intended to convince the heathen of the genuineness of the Gospel message. There was no hint that the terms of the Great Commission were to change in any way. In fact, Jesus implied that all generations to come, even to the end of the age, were to observe “all things that I have commanded you.”

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age. Amen” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

The above are the very last words written by the Apostle Matthew. Who will deny that this Great Commission is not still in effect?

The need of supernatural signs, in order to get the attention of the masses, is illustrated in Elijah’s challenge on Mt. Carmel when he confronted the prophets of Baal. Elijah asked the people the question, “‘How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord *is* God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him.’ But the people answered him not a word” (1 Kings 18:21). The people had no response, but when the fire fell miraculously from heaven in answer to Elijah’s prayer, the people fell on their faces and cried, “The LORD, He *is* God, the LORD, He *is* God!” (verse 39).

IS THE WORLD EVANGELIZED YET?

The assumption by some that the world is now evangelized, so the signs are no longer needed, is so obviously far removed from the truth that it needs no refuting. The facts simply are that the population of the heathen nations is multiplying at such a fantastic rate that unless the spreading of the Gospel is speeded by some means, the fulfillment of the Great Commission can never be accomplished. So far, the only successful means of mass evangelism that ever has been demonstrated is the ministry of healing and miracles. We would be the last to criticize any sincere effort to reach the heathen, such as the use of medical missionaries and the building of schools and hospitals. Such means however, are entirely too slow, especially if we are to reach the heathen in our generation. In view of the fearful increase of the destructiveness of war, he who predicts that the Church will have more time to evangelize, beyond the period of this generation, is indeed optimistic.

Will we face the truth? The real reason the gifts of the Spirit are missing from the Church is because the Church has been satisfied without them. The Church needs to realize that she is the Body of Christ, and without gifts of the Spirit manifested in her midst, she can never fulfill her destiny. As Paul admonished Timothy to stir up the gift that was in him, so we need to awaken the Church to the fact that Christ has set certain gifts in His Body, and we do well to put them into action.

RETURN OF THE GIFTS HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED

It is interesting to note that discerning Bible scholars of the 19th Century, realizing that the disappearance of the gifts of the Spirit from the main body of the Church was due to her lethargy and just being lukewarm, predicted a last-day outpouring of the Spirit and reappearance of the gifts.

Michael Baxter, founder of the *Christian Herald*, wrote a famous book in 1866 entitled, *Baxter's Forty Wonders*. Many of his predictions have been startlingly fulfilled. In his book, he had this to say concerning the reappearance of the supernatural in the Church:

“Increased faith to work miracles ... and unparalleled boldness in preaching the Gospel will characterize the coming Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit—the various gifts of the Spirit were bestowed upon pastors, prophets, evangelists and teachers for the perfecting of the saints and the gathering and completing of a perfect Church. But this end is not yet attained. Therefore these gifts could not have been totally stopped or entirely withdrawn, although they have been suspended and temporarily withdrawn as a mark of displeasure for the apostatizing of the Church from her first love.”

At the turn of this century, Michael Baxter's prediction came true. The great Pentecostal outpouring, beginning in America, spread out over the world with a new manifestation of the gifts. However, some of those who were used the most in this outpouring, saw a greater move of the supernatural that was yet to come. In H.V. Roberts' book, *New Zealand's Greatest Revival*, he writes of a brother remarking to Smith Wigglesworth, “One is tempted to envy you when you have had such great success.” He received the following reply:

““Young man, it is the other way around. I feel like envying you. I have had three visions—three only. The first two have already come to pass, but the third is yet to be fulfilled. I will most likely pass on to my reward, but you are a young man and will most likely be in what I saw.’ He burst out, ‘O, it was amazing.’ He was asked what was amazing. ‘O,’ he said, ‘I cannot tell God's secrets. But you remember what I say—this revival we have had is nothing to what God is yet going to do.’ The one to whom Brother Wigglesworth addressed these words commented: ‘It was quite evident that the evangelist had a special vision granted him of the coming outpouring of the Spirit in an unprecedented effusion in the days just before our Lord comes to snatch away the Church.’”

Dr. Charles S. Price, noted evangelist, said in a sermon he preached shortly

before his death:

“Yesterday we sang, ‘Showers of Blessing’, but now we are waiting for the deluge! It is coming, and nothing can stop it. Like every precious outpouring, this glorious experience, which is about to burst upon the world, will not be the product of any established system. Established systems may experience it, enjoy it and flow along in the clear stream of its beautiful, onward flowing, but even then, they may not do it as systems, but only as the multiplied thousands within their borders, who are hungry for God and are spiritually conscious of the fact that there is more to follow.

“You have thought, have you not, that you have been in some glorious healing service? Perhaps you have and for them we praise the Lord. But wait a little while. I declare to you that God is going to do better in your tomorrows than He has ever done in the past.”

FEAR OF THE DEVIL’S POWER

One circumstance that holds back some in seeking the gifts of the Spirit is an almost morbid fear of the devil. They see demon power and delusion everywhere. Of course, we know that there are many deceiving spirits in the land. However, the Scriptures give us the methods to use to test the spirits to discern which are not from God (1 John 4:1-3). Moreover, one of the gifts is the discerning of spirits—a gift designed to detect the presence of evil powers.

Some fear they might receive something of the devil if they seek the gifts of the Spirit. These should remember Christ’s Words in Luke 11:11-13:

“If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!”

Here, Jesus points out that if earthly fathers give good gifts to their children, certainly the Heavenly Father is more than capable of doing the same and better for His children!

It is also significant to note the incident that followed this statement of Christ. It involved His healing of a dumb man. After the man was healed, witnesses and skeptics charged the miracle was performed by the power of Beelzebub. Jesus pointed out that if Satan cast out Satan, then his kingdom would be divided, and it could not stand.

“If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. And if I cast out

demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the Kingdom of God has come upon you” (Luke 11:18-20).

What is the conclusion of the matter? Surely, on the basis of Christ’s Words, we don’t need to fear to press forward and claim this ministry. Fear kept the children of Israel from going forward and possessing the land that had been given them. The ten spies cautioned them to play it safe, that the inhabitants of the land were giants, and that the risks and hazards were too great. Because of their fear, that generation never entered into the Promised Land. They were doomed to wander and die in the wilderness. God grant us wisdom, so we won’t repeat their foolish error.

CHAPTER 2

PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Now that we know the gifts of the Spirit are still in the Church, and they are manifested wherever faith is being exercised, we are going to look at their purpose and what God intended for them to accomplish. The gifts of the Spirit are not toys; they are God's love gifts to the Church. Therefore, any attempt to use them for selfish or frivolous purposes, would be a tragic mistake.

What are the purposes God had in mind when He ordained these special gifts of the Spirit to be bestowed upon the Church? As we will see, the biggest purpose is so the Church would become the functioning Body of Christ on Earth through the operation of these gifts.

I. To manifest the Body of Christ on Earth

In the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul considers the Church as the Body of Christ.

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many ... Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually” (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27).

Here is a vital truth, which is not as fully understood as it should be. We are told that the Church is the Body of Christ, and each one of us is a member. The point is, as long as Christ was on Earth, He could only be in one location at a time. He could only minister to a few at a time. However, after the Spirit was poured out, it became possible for Him to manifest Himself through an unlimited number of believers. These members of His Body could go forth into all parts of the world and minister to the people, even as He ministered when He was on Earth. “... as He is, so we are in this world” (1 John 4:17). This is how the ministry of Christ was multiplied many-fold.

Through the power of these supernatural gifts, Christ, through the Holy Spirit, may manifest Himself and His ministry in any part of the Earth. The Church truly becomes the Body of Christ, doing His works and ministering His love and compassion to the needy. In a real way, the Church is His eyes, His ears, His feet and His hands, to carry on His work on Earth.

This truth also shows us that when the Church loses the manifestation of her gifts, she becomes weak, ineffective and something completely different than what God intended her to be.

2. *To assist in the evangelization of the world*

In Mark 16:15-18, the Lord gives the Great Commission as a command to believers for the evangelization of the world.

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

How was this evangelization to be done? Not through the use of gimmicks or gadgets, but through certain miraculous signs which are manifested through the gifts of the Spirit.

It has not been easy to evangelize the heathen. William Carey, the first missionary of modern times, spent six years to win a single convert. The evangelization of the nations has been a slow and tedious process. Missionaries have labored all their lives to win a few souls. Compare this with the results of the great mass revivals that were conducted by those with sign-gift ministries.

SIGN—GIFTS AMONG MUSLIMS

One of our associates began a campaign in a Muslim country. About ten thousand Muslims gathered to hear him speak. They were not really hostile, but neither were they convinced that Jesus is the Son of God, or that He is alive. They had been taught He was a prophet such as Mohammed. The evangelist presented a proposition to the people. If Christ were to heal the people before their eyes—giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf and the lame to walk, would they believe? They readily signified they would. So, when these miracles actually began to take place and the people saw them with their own eyes, the vast audience of Muslims began to shout, “Jesus is alive, He is alive! Jesus is the Son of God! He heals our people.”

One great purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is to confirm the Gospel message.

3. *To edify the Church*

“But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men ... Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual *gifts*, *let it be* for the edification of the church *that* you seek to excel ... How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a

teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification” (1 Corinthians 14:3, 12, 26).

A number of the gifts have a definite purpose in edifying the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 14 gives considerable instruction on the order of the apostolic service. For example, we are advised that if one is moved to give a message in an unknown tongue, he should first ascertain whether there is one present who can interpret it (verses 5, 13). Several times in this chapter, Paul emphasizes that one of the great purposes of the gifts is for the edification of the Church. The gifts especially adapted for the edification of believers is the gift of prophecy and the speaking in other tongues with interpretation. Of course, any gift which is manifested in the Assembly can result in blessing the believers.

4. For the deliverance of God's people

As certain gifts are especially designed for the edification of the saints, so there are other gifts that are ordained for their deliverance. The Old Testament is full of occurrences where the people of God received supernatural deliverances. The ministry of Christ was marked by miracles of supply, such as the turning of water into wine and the feeding of the five thousand. His ministry was also marked by miracles of deliverance, such as when He calmed the sea.

There are gifts specifically designed for the deliverance of God's people in times of crisis. These gifts are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, gifts of healings, working of miracles and the gift of faith. In fact, at times, almost all the gifts of the Spirit may serve to effect a supernatural deliverance for the people of God.

5. For the perfecting of the Church

“And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Closely associated with the edifying of the Church is God's eternal purpose to perfect the Church. The gifts of the Spirit are not only manifested through apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, but anyone who asks, so the Church may be perfected, that is, made ready for His Second Coming.

Even though people become devout Christians, there is always a possibility they may be misled by some plausible, but self-deceived leader, who happens to win their confidence. God's people need teaching, by God-anointed men, who

can discern between what is true and what is false, as Paul shows in the 14th verse.

“That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting” (Ephesians 4:14).

SOME GENERAL FACTS ABOUT THE NINE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

The nine gifts of the Spirit fall into three general classifications.

First, there are the revelation gifts:

- 1) Word of wisdom
- 2) Word of knowledge
- 3) Discerning of spirits

Second, there are the power gifts:

- 1) Faith
- 2) Gifts of healings
- 3) Working of miracles

Third, there are the inspiration gifts:

- 1) Prophecy
- 2) Different kinds of tongues
- 3) Interpretation of tongues

GIFTS BLEND ONE WITH ANOTHER

Although the gifts of the Spirit are all uniquely and individually defined, the working of the gifts in these three groups, tend to merge from one to another, kind of like the colors of the rainbow all flow together. The word of knowledge and the discerning of spirits are similar gifts. The supernatural knowledge obtained through the gift of discerning of spirits is really a specialized kind of knowledge. Again, gifts of healings are for the deliverance of the human body from sickness and disease. Yet, for a healing miracle that needs a creative touch from God, it would be correctly classified under the working of miracles. Certainly, the raising of the dead (calling back the human spirit to a dead body) is beyond the scope of the gifts of healings; yet, healing is involved. It is evident the boundaries between the two gifts are not sharply defined.

Again, those familiar with Pentecostal meetings will frequently observe that those who interpret speaking in tongues may move into the realm of the gift of prophecy. The two gifts are similar in operation, except that with prophecy, there is no speaking in the unknown tongue, as with the gift of interpretation.

However, it is often true that two or more gifts operate together at a given time. The word of wisdom and the word of knowledge work closely together. Knowledge is the raw material, but we must have wisdom to know how to use it. In 2 Kings 6, we see as many as seven of the gifts in operation during one occasion!

ARE GIFTS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE BELIEVER?

We believe, with possible rare exceptions, the recipient of a gift has complete control of his faculties. On occasion, a person, while receiving the Baptism or some special revelation, is so lost in the Spirit, he isn't aware of what is going on around him. However, during public ministry, the speaker, even while deep in the Spirit, in almost all cases, knows what he is doing and saying. If he chooses, he can cease speaking in tongues or prophesying. Of course, when the Spirit is upon him to do these things, he will obey the Lord, but nevertheless, what he is doing is under his control.

Paul confirms this when he says "and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Corinthians 14:32). He instructs those in the Church to prophesy one by one, and to let everything be done in order to avoid confusion. If there is no interpreter, let the one who speaks in the unknown tongue be silent (1 Corinthians 14:28). All these instructions indicate that the gifts are subject to the prophets. The Spirit does not force anyone to manifest a gift.

CHAPTER 3

ARE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT ACTUALLY IMPARTED TO BELIEVERS?

Before we go any further in studying this fascinating subject, we need to give careful consideration to an important question. The question is this: Are the gifts of the Spirit actually imparted to believers? Do the individual members of the Body of Christ actually receive these gifts, or are they given to the Church as a Body and manifested by the Spirit through its various members? There is a most important reason why we must know whether the Spirit of God directly imparts the gifts or merely passes them through various members of the Body at times and seasons of His choosing.

THE THREE POSSIBILITIES

There are three possibilities of how this might be:

First, God could give the gifts to a person like an inheritance or legacy. The gift would be his to do with exactly as he pleases, with no accounting required. He would not need permission from the deceased, or anyone else, to take care of the request. However, we know the gifts of the Spirit are not given on this basis.

Second, it might be that all initiative in manifesting the gifts lies in the Holy Spirit, with members of the Body of Christ as passive instruments. A notable illustration of this is seen in the incident of Balaam's donkey, in which God spoke through an animal. In this case, it is true that God did manifest Himself through the animal, but we also know the latter did not receive any gift.

On the other hand, members of the Body of Christ are not only instruments in the operation of the gifts, but unlike the animal, they have responsibility for the proper manifestation of the gifts, which the Scriptures plainly state.

This brings us to the third possibility, and the one we believe is the Scriptural one. The believer is an actual recipient of a gift as an active partner (not just a figurehead, nor a passive instrument, as in the case of the donkey) in the manifestation of the gifts.

It is very important to clearly understand this. If individuals get the impression the gifts are entirely sovereign manifestations of the Spirit, apart from human responsibility and cooperation, it can lead to serious error. If they suppose the responsibility for the operation of the gifts lies entirely with God, there is danger that they will confuse their own faulty actions with those of the Spirit. When such persons get out of order, they will resist instruction, claiming that the Spirit of God makes them do what they do.

Paul, of course, refuted this fallacy when he said, "... the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Corinthians 14:32). The Apostle is not referring here to the Spirit of God, but to the spirit of the prophet. Paul further explains that much depends on the prophet and the gift being used properly and in the right timing (1 Corinthians 14:23-32).

DO INDIVIDUALS RECEIVE GIFTS TO
DO WITH AS THEY PLEASE?

We may emphatically state, however, that no one receives spiritual gifts so he may do with them as he pleases. Not only would it be wrong to deny the believer's responsibility in the manifestation of the gifts, but it would be even more serious if we failed to emphasize the importance of the Holy Spirit's place in the operation of the gifts. A partnership exists between God and man, and the cooperation of both is indispensable.

Believers receive gifts only as stewards of the gifts, as is illustrated in the Parable of the Talents.

“For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey” (Matthew 25:14, 15).

The talents did not belong to the servants. They were only stewards of them. All of the talents and the increase were to be accounted for when their master returned. One of the servants failed to use his talent and hid it in the Earth. The fate of that “wicked servant,” who had acted as if the talent were his to do with as he pleased, paid a terrible penalty for his disobedience.

It is extremely important that we have a balanced understanding of the basis on which the gifts are given. They are not something to be “turned on or off” at the person's will. Nor are they to be used for personal benefit or gain. The gifts are given by the Spirit to qualify a person for a special service in the Body. As Paul declares:

“Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:27, 28).

One person is set in the Church in a prominent position as pastor or teacher. To another is given the position of “helps,” a ministry which may include many things. Romans 12:8 tells us that giving is considered one of the “helps.” God may bless a certain man above others with financial miracles, so that he is able to help the Church financially in a special way. God will use other members in different ways.

While no one receives the gifts of the Spirit to use as he pleases; nevertheless, the Scriptures plainly teach two things: 1) a gift is given in such a way that we can say one person has it and another one does not, and 2) the gifts

do reside within the believer and are to be manifested on a partnership basis with God. Since God will always do His part, it remains up to the believer to do his.

It is important for every Spirit-filled believer to realize God wants him to be able to operate in the manifestations of the Spirit, and he is responsible to exercise them accordingly. All of us must stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of our stewardship.

We will now look at the Scriptural evidence that shows the gifts of the Spirit are actually imparted to believers.

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT ARE BOTH GIFTS AND MANIFESTATIONS.

Are the “spirituals” Paul speaks of, gifts of the Spirit, or are they manifestations? They are both. As we study 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, we see these nine different spiritual areas fall into both categories, “gifts” and “manifestations.” “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*” (verse 7). This tells us every man should have the manifestations, but they are also called gifts, as the fourth verse plainly says:

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:4).

Paul, in verses 4-7, is giving an introduction to the nine gifts, which he enumerates in verses 8-10. If Paul speaks of these manifestations as “gifts,” we should do the same. They are both “gifts” and “manifestations.”

WE ARE TO EARNESTLY DESIRE THE BEST GIFTS.

Does the Holy Spirit give gifts to believers?

Here we are told to “earnestly desire the best gifts.” Is Paul referring to the gifts of the Spirit or to the ministry-gifts of verse 28? Well, the ministry-gifts include apostles and prophets. Surely, Paul does not mean that the members of the Church are to all desire the offices of apostle and prophet! The verses which follow show that Paul *is* referring to the gifts of the Spirit, for he mentions several of them: the speaking with tongues, prophecy, the word of knowledge, faith and miracles.

The King James Version of the Bible uses the word covet, instead of desire. This word speaks strongly of desiring possession of something. The 10th commandment warns us against coveting or desiring what belongs to another. However, Paul encourages us to covet or desire God’s best gifts.

SOME RECEIVE GIFTS OF HEALING

“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the

best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:29-31).

The manifestations of the Spirit are gifts of the Spirit, and Paul actually speaks of one of these as “*gifts of healings*.” “Gifts of healings” is a gift of the Spirit. “Do all have gifts of healings?” Paul asks. Obviously, all do not have them, but some do. In other words, gifts of healings are made available to the Church, although they are given only to certain members. Some have gifts of healings, others do not. The conclusion is, yes, believers have gifts of the Spirit.

THE SPIRIT DISTRIBUTES TO EACH ONE AS HE WILLS

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:7-10).

Paul says, “There are diversities of gifts” (verse 4). In the seventh verse, we are told that the manifestation of these gifts is given for everyone’s profit—for to one is given the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, and so on.

After listing these nine manifestations of the gifts, he adds, “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (verse 11). Notice that Paul devotes the whole balance of the chapter to explaining that through the operation of these gifts, each member of the Body of Christ (which he likens to the members of the human body) has a special function of its own. This means each person has the opportunity to become a gift to the Church. God sets him in the Body to fulfill a certain purpose (verses 28-30).

It seems logical that God should give certain gifts to the individuals who by nature and temperament are best fitted for those gifts, rather than rotating them indiscriminately through all members of the Body. Observation confirms that this is what happens. Yet, it is true, that only God knows what is in the heart of man. Some that we would not suppose would be qualified for a certain ministry will receive it. God reserves the right to manifest His gifts through anyone, at anytime and on any occasion He deems fit. Neither Samuel nor Jesse thought David was the one to receive the anointing, but God gave it to him anyway.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE IMPARTED.

“For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established” (Romans 1:11).

In writing to the Church in Rome, the Apostle Paul is filled with concern for their spiritual growth. He declares that he has them on his heart, and he hopes God will permit him to visit them. Why was it so important for him to see them? So he might impart to them “some spiritual gift.” Did Paul mean the spiritual gift to be imparted was only to the Church as a whole and not to the individual? Paul’s epistle to the Romans is not only about the Church’s possessing gifts, but also her individual members. He points out that believers have “gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.” Let us read the entire passage of Romans 12:4-7:

“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; or ministry, *let us use it in our ministering*; he who teaches, in teaching.”

GIFTS CAN BE MISUSED

Careful consideration of the Scriptures on this subject show that man is a full partner with the Holy Spirit in the manifestations of the gifts. Because of this, man has a certain responsibility in their operation. If it were wholly the initiative of the Spirit, it would be impossible for a gift to be misused, for whatever the Holy Spirit does by Himself, He does perfectly and well. Yet, the Scriptures overwhelmingly show us that it is possible for the gifts to be misused.

When Moses struck the rock twice in the wilderness, he disobeyed God and, in doing so, did not hallow the Lord before the children of Israel (Numbers 20:11, 12). Yet, the water still flowed out of the rock. Moses misused his gift by not believing and following God’s orders and by not hallowing the Lord in the eyes of the children of Israel when performing this miracle.

In another instance, the Lord’s disciples would have brought fire down out of Heaven upon the heads of the people in a village of Samaria, if Christ had not restrained them (Luke 9:51-55).

Paul makes it very clear that speaking in other tongues can be misused if exercised at the wrong time (1 Corinthians 14:23). Prophets are not only to manifest their gift in the Assembly in proper order, but also to restrain their gift under certain circumstances (1 Corinthians 14:29-32).

We all know that it is possible to misuse the gifts of God. This being true, it is evident there is a joint responsibility of both God and man in their manifestation.

CHAPTER 4

HOW THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT ARE RECEIVED

David was the youngest of Jesse's sons. Neither Jesse nor Samuel could have known the Lord would choose David to be the king. When Samuel came to Jesse's home to choose a king from among his sons, Jesse didn't even call David in from herding his sheep (1 Samuel 16:11).

The twelve apostles were all chosen from among men of lowly and humble position. Not one of them was taken from the ranks of the scholars who had been trained and schooled in Judaism.

It is evident the Spirit of God does not impart His blessings indiscriminately. He is wisdom personified, and nothing takes place randomly or by accident. In the impartation of the ministry-gifts, He takes into consideration the person's temperament and general make-up. One person may have natural talents that lend themselves to evangelism. Yet, he may also have hidden tendencies that may lead to self-exaltation or ruinous conceit. As one writer puts it:

“It seems that in some cases, the Spirit's distribution of gifts is determined in a measure by the makeup and inherited characteristics of the individual person. Usually, He imparts such gifts as the person can most readily lend himself to. The natural orator is anointed to become a preacher, and the one with an analytical mind becomes a teacher. The one for whom it is more natural to have great faith receives the gift of healing, and such as have a combination of strong willpower, great faith and fiery nature, become endued with power to the working of miracles or the casting out of demons. Others who are very susceptible to spiritual influences are endued with the gift of discernment of spirits.”

Now, let us consider some of the elements and conditions that enter into the impartation of the gifts of the Spirit.

1. Receive the Holy Spirit

It is self-evident that if the gifts are of the Spirit, we must have the Holy Spirit for their proper manifestation. While it is true that every saved person has the Spirit, and may even have some operation of the Spirit in his life, the full Baptism of the Spirit is necessary for the gifts to work.

However, it is apparent the apostles exercised gifts of healings, and perhaps, some working of miracles before the day of Pentecost. Indeed, they were commanded to “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out

demons” (Matthew 10:8). Yet, we know that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a most important factor in the full manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. The early Pentecostal writer, we have just quoted, makes the following interesting and instructive remarks as to what degree one who does not have the Baptism of the Holy Spirit can manifest the gifts of the Spirit:

“Some of the gifts of the Spirit, such as healing the sick, discerning of spirits, casting out demons, the anointing to preach and teach the Word and producing prophecy in its first forms, can be had in a measure before the full Baptism occurs. While others, such as speaking with tongues and their interpretation, the deeper phases of prophecy, discerning of spirits, the working of miracles and the casting out of more powerful demons, cannot be possessed before the full Baptism has taken place.

“Some may question this. As all saints have some measure of the Spirit, this measure manifests itself in some way of the degree in which the Holy Spirit has control over the individual. If the person has only partly yielded, the Spirit has just a partial or fractional control over him. As a result, His operations are limited. This means, there can be a mixture in the manifestation or operation—part Holy Spirit and part the flesh and mind of the individual. Healings of the sick can take place under such conditions. Also, a small measure of discernment, like the casting out of a less powerful demon and the ordinary preaching of the Word under a partial anointing, can also take place. But the deeper and more powerful manifestations cannot, because their successful operation is independent of the ordinary workings of the mind. In fact, in order to come forth in clearness and purity, the will and mind of the person, at that time and moment, must be so completely surrendered to and under the control of the Holy Spirit, that His wish and will are in no way interfered with. The mind, unless in that condition of complete submissiveness to the Spirit of God, will interfere and effectually prevent the operation and manifestation of the Spirit. These gifts and manifestations cannot take place unless the Baptism has occurred, not because the experience has made the person any more worthy, but because the experience has prepared him in such a way that the Spirit can more successfully operate through him and upon him.”

2. “*But earnestly desire the best gifts*” (1 Corinthians 12:31).

Since the Holy Spirit is the Giver of the gifts and that choice belongs to Him, it is thought by some that there is little we can do about it—that we must wait patiently for God to move in His own good time and His own way. This is a very inadequate view of the matter and has encouraged the Church in times past to be both lethargic and lukewarm. By the same reasoning, certain

theologians have argued that although the new birth is a supernatural work, the sinner must await the Lord's time for him to be saved. Others have thought since healing is a work of God, we must leave the matter entirely in His hands, and wait until He is ready to heal. Putting all of the responsibility on God may sound fine, but the Scriptures plainly teach that man also has a very definite responsibility. God always fulfills His part.

Therefore, although the distribution of the gifts to individuals is the Spirit's right or choice, Paul still urges us to "earnestly desire the best gifts." We must have a deep desire for them; indeed, we must prepare our hearts if we are to properly exercise the gifts we receive. Even as a child asks gifts of his father, so Jesus tells us that God's gifts are given to those who ask for them (Matthew 7:11). As an illustration of this, Paul admonishes that those who speak in tongues in the Assembly should pray that they may interpret. "Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret" (1 Corinthians 14:13).

An example of a man earnestly desiring a certain gift or ministry is found in the story of Elijah and Elisha. Elisha followed after the prophet, refusing to accept anything less than a double portion of the spirit that Elijah possessed. Elijah pointed out that Elisha had asked a difficult thing. He knew full well that God's best is not given lightly. Elisha, however, passed every test, and after the translation, the sons of the prophets observed, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha" (2 Kings 2:15). *Observe also that the gifts followed the giving of the ministry!*

What are the "best gifts" the believer should desire? We would not attempt to decide the order of their value. The gifts of the Spirit, operating through members of the Church, are compared to the members of the human body; each having its own vital purpose.

The loss of a little finger can cause severe suffering. Paul tells us we are not to say to the weaker members, "I have no need of you" (1 Corinthians 12:21). The "best gifts" for each member of the Body are the gifts that the Spirit chooses to manifest through them. As each believer earnestly looks to the Lord, the Spirit will reveal the gifts He has prepared for their ministry.

While we are on the subject, we can say without fear of contradiction, that one of the "best gifts" is wisdom. We need this in the successful manifestation of all the other gifts. James tells us that any of us may ask for and receive wisdom.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5).

Some may believe that James is not speaking of the gift of the word of wisdom, but verse 17 does indicate he is speaking of the gifts.

3. *Dedication to God*

He who manifests gifts of the Spirit bears a definite responsibility of holy living. Since he has in his hands the special tools necessary to cause severe damage to the kingdom of Satan, he becomes a special target for the attacks of the enemy. Satan seeks to intensify the temptations of anointed ministers, and at times, only the most steadfast and continued resistance to the temptation brings victory. A good illustration of this is seen in Christ's spiritual conflict in the Garden of Gethsemane (Hebrews 5:7, Luke 22:44). The gifts of the Spirit bring the recipient into realms of warfare in the heavenlies. One of the greatest dangers is to let down in one's prayer life.

We have only to look at the examples of Balaam, Saul, Samson and Judas to understand what is meant by these warnings. Each of these men had been given unusual ministries, yet none were adequately prepared for the responsibilities they undertook. As a result, their earthly careers closed in tragedy and disaster.

We see one of the important preparations for receiving the gifts of the Spirit is a complete surrender and consecration to God. This ministry requires the services of completely dedicated individuals. There must be a total commitment to God, so there will be no faltering, no turning back. The consecration must be final, like that of the three Hebrew children, who for their faith were cast into the fiery furnace.

“If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up” (Daniel 3:17-18).

4. *The laying on of hands.*

Paul said, “Do not lay hands on anyone hastily” (1 Timothy 5:22). This must include reference to the laying on of hands for the gifts of the Spirit. Simon, the sorcerer, wanted power so that “anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:19). Peter's rebuke settled the question for all time about thoughtlessly laying your hands on people.

However, it is true that gift-ministries may be imparted through the laying on of hands. Paul told the Romans it was his deep desire to visit Rome, so he might “impart to you some spiritual gift” (Romans 1:11). Certainly, the Spirit of God may lead God-anointed ministers to lay hands upon certain persons for the receiving of a gift-ministry. This was evidently true in the case of Paul's laying hands on Timothy.

“When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your

mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands” (2 Timothy 1:5, 6).

“Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership” (1 Timothy 4:14).

Clearly, the direct guidance of the Spirit of God is all-important in the laying on of hands. It appears that Paul and the presbyters did not lay hands on Timothy to give him some predetermined ministry. Rather, it was the Spirit Who spoke by means of a prophecy and told them what his ministry would be. An overzealous person can, by their well meant, but unscriptural actions, do things that are out of order and lead to expectations that can never be fulfilled. Paul laid hands upon Timothy, but he knew all about him, about his mother, and even his grandmother. It is significant that Paul refers to the young man’s background in connection with the laying on of hands on Timothy. Moses laid hands on Joshua, so he might receive the spirit of wisdom (Deuteronomy 34:9), but this only took place at God’s instruction and after he had known Joshua for a long time—after Joshua had thoroughly proven himself.

CHAPTER 5

CAN THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT BE COUNTERFEITED?

Can the gifts of God be counterfeited? The correct answer to this question is extremely important. Many people take for granted that every manifestation, resembling the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, must be genuine. Yet, the Apostle John warns us to test the spirits, for not every spirit is of God.

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world” (1 John 4:1-3).

Jesus warned that as the days of the Great Tribulation draw near, there will be false prophets, showing great signs and wonders.

“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24).

The Book of Revelation reveals that at that time, spirits of demons will be able to do miracles and will deceive the whole world (Revelation 16:14).

In light of these warnings, there can be no doubt that the gifts of the Spirit can be imitated with the same results which can and will lead many astray. In the same way Satan spoke through the serpent to deceive Eve in the beginning, he will speak through his false prophets to allure many into paths of deception and error until the end. Yet, there is no real excuse for these delusions to ensnare people. The Scriptures provide full information on how we can discern between the true and the false. Those who apply themselves prayerfully to the study of the Word of God will not fall victim to these deceptions.

THE MAGICIANS AND MOSES

Perhaps the most striking illustration of the ability of Satan to imitate the work of God is provided in the story of Moses. God had given the prophet authority to execute judgment upon the land of Egypt. The Lord gave Moses the sign of the rod and the serpent. When Moses threw the rod God had given him down on the ground, it became a serpent (Exodus 4:3). This was the sign Moses and Aaron were to demonstrate before Pharaoh when he asked proof of their

authority (Exodus 7:9).

God told Moses and Aaron to go to Pharaoh; they did as the Lord had commanded, and the rod turned into a serpent (verse 10). When the magicians saw what had been done, they threw their rods down, and they also became serpents! (verses 11, 12). How would it be possible to tell which miracle was of God and which was of the devil? In further reading the Word, we find that *Aaron's rod swallowed up the magicians' rods!*

Today, spiritualists and sorcerers are able to perform many mystifying acts, including materialization and dematerialization. Sorcery is the art of producing false miracles. However, none of these are a part of the gifts of the Spirit. Elijah and Elisha created oil, but the *oil did not disappear; it remained to bless*. Oil that dematerializes is sorcery. Divine power swallowed up the magicians' serpents. Sorcery may imitate a creative miracle, but its miracles are illusionary and not real. Satan does not possess creative powers.

The magicians with their sorceries kept on trying. Aaron took his rod and stretched it out over the waters of Egypt, and they became blood (Exodus 7:19-21). The magicians tried their enchantments. They could not counteract the plague; they were only able to imitate what had been done.

Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not repent, so another judgment came to him—the plague of frogs (Exodus 8:5, 6). Once again, the magicians were able, by their enchantments, to imitate what Moses and Aaron had done, but the sorcerers were nearing the end of their resources. The next plague was the plague of lice. Here, the magicians failed in their attempts to imitate the miracles of Moses.

“Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, ‘This *is* the finger of God.’ But Pharaoh’s heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said” (Exodus 8:18, 19).

The magicians now recognized that the judgments were the finger of God. The perverse, self-willed Pharaoh, however, stubbornly refused to repent or change his course.

What do the signs the magicians produced teach us? They reveal that Satan has a certain degree of power. He can imitate some of the gifts of God. Therefore, we must be alert to Satan’s deceptions. However, there is a definite limit to what Satan is able to do; he is in no sense all-powerful, and he can only go so far.

HUMAN FAILURE AND EVIL SPIRITS

Can the men who have this kind of supernatural ministry miss God or make mistakes? People have a tendency to think that if a man manifests a gift, he can do no wrong. Some even think they’re practically infallible. Though we should

extend honor to the office, this is no excuse for us to shut our eyes and surrender our powers of discrimination to the point we cannot recognize wrong when it exists. A man, ministering the gifts of the Spirit, is not only accountable to God, but also to the people to whom he is ministering.

There is something we should understand about the one manifesting the gifts. Just because a man has sin in his life, does not mean that the gift of God will no longer be manifested through him. In fact, we are told that "... the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable" (Romans 11:29). This is hard for people to understand. They think if a man sins, the Spirit of God will at once cease manifesting Himself in his life. Even though it may not be immediately, the gift will cease. A man with a sign-gift ministry may actually have fallen into a state of disobedience to God and still continue his ministry, but it will only be for a time. This is clearly portrayed in the life of Saul, who was not only the king of Israel, but he was also given a prophet's ministry.

"Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man ... When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them" (1 Samuel 10:6, 10).

Unfortunately, Saul was an unstable character. Being self-willed, envious and filled with a violent temper, were only a part of his erratic temperament. Eventually, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, and an evil spirit took control. The servants of Saul apparently discerned what had happened to him and took measures for his deliverance. David, upon whom the Spirit of the Lord had come, was brought into Saul's house, and during his ministry with the harp, the evil spirit left Saul.

"But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul's servants said to him, "Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. Let our master now command your servants, *who are* before you, to seek out a man *who is* a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well ... And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play *it* with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him" (1 Samuel 16:14-16, 23).

Then, after David had slain Goliath, a spirit of jealousy ran through Saul's heart, and it opened the door to the return of the evil spirit.

"And it happened on the next day that the distressing

spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played *music* with his hand, as at other times; but *there was* a spear in Saul's hand" (1 Samuel 18:10).

Saul, under the influence of this demon, actually became murderous. He now sought to kill David (verses 11, 12). From that time on, evil was a huge influence in the life of Saul (1 Samuel 19:9).

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT AND GODLY LIVING

It is often assumed that any person who is able to have any of the gifts of the Spirit must be living a holy life. All of us have a great responsibility before the Lord to live a holy and separated life. Unfortunately, there are some who manifest genuine gifts and later fall into sin. When this happens, they can potentially bring confusion into the house of God. David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, a man who manifested the prophetic gifts in a marked way and whose Psalms have provided inspiration to millions of people, is just one example.

As anointed as David was, this inspired writer became guilty of the most flagrant conduct. He committed adultery with Bathsheba, and she became pregnant. To cover up his sinful action, he conspired in the death of her husband. God forgave David because he became deeply repentant of his sin, but there were still serious consequences. First, it brought reproach upon the cause of the Lord (2 Samuel 12:14). Second, for the balance of his life, David paid the penalty for his actions. Not only did the child die, but treachery and betrayal occurred in his own household. David continued to manifest the ministry of a prophet (see Psalms 51), but he paid a fearful price for his indiscretions.

BALAAM

Balaam was a hireling prophet, but he was not a false prophet. Some of his prophecies are among the most beautiful in the Scriptures. Consider his prophecy of Christ:

"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult" (Numbers 24:17).

Balaam's sin was his love of money. God forbade him to go to Balak, the Moabite King, who wanted him to curse the children of Israel (Numbers 22:12). Yet, because Balak promised him riches and honor, Balaam sought the Lord again for permission to go his way. It brought Balaam neither riches nor honor. The Prophet retained his position as a seer, but his ministry degenerated into soothsaying and divination.

“The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them” (Joshua 13:22).

Was it the Spirit of God or a deceiving spirit that was responsible for the soothsaying of Balaam? Divination, according to Acts 16:16, is the work of familiar spirits. As in the case of King Saul, the Spirit of God evidently forsook Balaam and an evil spirit took its place.

SAMSON

Samson was one of the Judges of Israel. His birth had been foretold by an angel. God ordained him to be a Nazarite. Early in his life, the Spirit of God began to move upon Samson at his home in the camp of Dan (Judges 13:25, 14:6). Samson’s great supernatural strength enabled him to confound and put to flight Israel’s enemies, the Philistines. His colorful exploits are a familiar story to all Bible readers.

However, he had one fatal weakness which caused him to continually ignore his Nazarite vow of separation. One night, he visited a harlot in Gaza. Although he had sinned, the gift of God did not fail him immediately. At midnight, he carried the gates of the city to the top of a hill that faced Hebron (Judges 16:1-3). It might seem to the casual observer that God was ignoring his immoral conduct, but God does not always demand justice the exact day the evil is committed. Samson, morally weakened by consorting with harlots, now fell in love with the treacherous Delilah. As a result of her seductions, Samson told her the secret to his strength, and while he was sleeping, she shaved his head. Suddenly, his strength left him. The Philistines took him captive, put his eyes out and made him grind in shame in their prison like an ox. Having deliberately played with fire, he became a victim of his folly, and the Lord had departed from him!

One day, the Philistines called Samson from the prison to perform for them. While he was stationed between the pillars, Samson asked the lad who held him by the hand if he would put his hands on the pillars which supported the temple. That day, on the rooftop of the temple, there were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. Samson called to the Lord and asked Him to remember him and strengthen him, just this once, so he could take vengeance on the Philistines for losing his eyes. At that moment, Samson took hold of the two middle pillars and braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. He cried out, “Let me die with the Philistines!” After this, he pushed with all his might. God restored his strength, and the temple fell on all the people who were in it. Samson, like David, was able to see the hand of God move in his life again, but it was his final act. The dead he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life. In the end, Samson had judged Israel twenty years.

NECESSARY STEPS TO SALVATION

1. *ACKNOWLEDGE*: "... for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (Luke 18:13). You must acknowledge in the light of God's Word that you are a sinner.
2. *REPENT*: "... but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out..." (Acts 3:19). You must see the awfulness of sin and then repent of it.
3. *CONFESS*: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "... with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). Confess your sins to God.
4. *FORSAKE*: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD ... for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). Sorrow for sin is not enough in itself. We must want to be done with it once and for all.
5. *BELIEVE*: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). Believe in the finished work of Christ on the cross.
6. *RECEIVE*: "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:11, 12). Christ must be received personally into the heart by faith, if the experience of the New Birth is to be yours. (Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International)

Now, if you will pray this prayer, it will help you to receive Jesus Christ into your soul and life:

Dear Heavenly Father,	Help me to love my fellow man as You
I thank You that You love me.	have loved me.
I ask Your Son Jesus Christ to come	And, Father, show me step by step the
into my life.	plan You made for my life.
I know I have sinned and committed	I give You myself and my life.
deeds unpleasing to You.	I worship and praise You, my Creator
I ask you now to forgive me of these	and Lord.
sins and to cleanse my life.	I will continually thank You for
Help me to follow You and Your	sacrificing Your Son on the cross that
teachings.	I might have eternal life with You.
Protect me from Satan and evil.	Help me to win others to Christ.
Teach me to put You first in all my	I await the return of Christ to take me
thoughts and actions.	to heaven.
	Come soon, Lord Jesus. Amen



CHRIST 
FOR THE NATIONS