

INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS

This class will attempt to clarify some misunderstandings about spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12:1 says we should not be "ignorant" about them) and to give us a Biblical understanding of gifts and their operation.

Each session will include an outline for the material being covered, as well as articles to help us in our understanding of gifts. These articles do not in any way reflect the positions taken in this class and may in fact represent a view contrary to what we are teaching. As adults our assumption is that you will be able to sort out the differences and come to Godly conclusions. No one person possesses complete knowledge of the truth, and many aspects of truth are being rediscovered and clarified. We hope that the articles are helpful in further explaining some of the issues we speak of in class.

You will need to bring a Bible to every session as we will constantly be referring to it and as some of our teaching will be a verse-by-verse exposition/explanation of Scripture related to gifts. We will be using the NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, but any translation will be adequate and should shed light on the text under consideration.

Our course of study shall be as follows:

- (I) OVERVIEW OF GIFTS, THEIR OPERATION, AND VARIOUS VIEWS (Includes personal testimony and pilgrimage)
- (II) DEFINITION AND CATEGORIES OF GIFTS: SPEAKING GIFTS
- (III) DEFINITION AND CATEGORIES OF GIFTS: MINISTRY AND HELPING GIFTS
- (IV) DEFINITION AND CATEGORIES OF GIFTS: POWER GIFTS
- (V) GIFTS, FRUIT AND THE RENEWED CHRISTIAN MIND

Each session will include teaching, and opportunity for questions and answers and dialogue. We also hope to have an opportunity to pray with each other and to experiment with gifts in our lives.

Also, we would ask that you pray regularly for this class, its participants, the instructors and for yourself - that you would operate in the fullness of God's blessing for your life. We're hoping for an exciting and fruitful time of growing and learning together. Since we believe that we are gathered together in HIS name, we anticipate that valuable contributions will come from others and not just the instructors.

A few words about our approach to the subject. We intend on taking a "fundamental" approach to the study. What we mean is that our sole authority for this class will be the Bible. We intend to build all of our understanding from this starting point. Having said this we will supplement our study with the witness of history and personal experience. We feel any other approach will simply lead to more confusion, the exalting of opinion and mere division. In short any other approach (we believe) is doomed for failure.

Basically there are two viewpoints on spiritual gifts

(1) THAT ALL SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOUND IN SCRIPTURE EXIST TODAY AND ARE USEFUL TO THE CHURCH.

(2) THAT CERTAIN BIBLICAL GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT NO LONGER EXIST, NOR ARE THEY NEEDED TODAY.

Either of these viewpoints must prove its position first from Scripture. Following a careful study of Scripture evidence can be supplemented through history and the experience of faithful believers. It is our understanding that the second viewpoint is inadequate and cannot be substantiated or supported by applying these tests.

LISTING OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

ROMANS CHAPTER 12

- 1) Prophecy
- 2) Service
- 3) Teaching
- 4) Exhortation
- 5) Giving
- 6) Leadership
- 7) Mercy

FIRST CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 12

- 8) Word of Wisdom
- 9) Word of Knowledge
- 10) Faith
- 11) Healing(s)
- 12) Miracles
- 13) Discerning of spirits
- 14) Tongues
- 15) Interpretation of Tongues
- 16) Apostle
- 17) Helps
- 18) Administration

EPHESIANS CHAPTER 4

- 19) Evangelist
- 20) Pastor
- 21) Prophet

OTHER POSSIBILITIES FROM SCRIPTURE

- 22) Celibacy (I Corinthians 7)
- 23) Voluntary Poverty (I Corinthians 13)
- 24) Martyrdom (I Corinthians 13)
- 25) Hospitality (I Peter 4)
- 26) Missionary (Acts 13)
- 27) Craftsmanship (Exodus 31)

POSSIBILITIES OUTSIDE OF SCRIPTURE

- *Supernatural Intercession
- *Music (Andre Crouch story)
- *Memory (Jerry Falwell remembers names of thousands of members)
- *???????

SOME THINGS SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE NOT

(I) SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE NOT NATURAL TALENTS

- A) Common Grace and Gifts versus Spiritual Grace and Gifts
 - 1) Not every ability is turned into a spiritual gift
 - 2) People outside of the salvation experience have natural gifts (usually we call them talents. God is their author whether they recognize it or give Him glory)

(II) GIFTS ARE NOT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

- A) Fruit (Galatians 5) describes what a Christian is supposed to produce: love, joy, peace, gentleness, etc.
- B) Gifts are something that is either given or received. (usually you have an intimate relationship with the gift-giver / gift-bearer.
- C) Gifts define what Christians DO in the Body; fruit defines what Christians are and what they experience.
- D) Fruit is required for the effective use of gifts.
 - 1) I Corinthians 13
 - 2) Ephesians Chapter 4 goes from gifts to fruit.
 - 3) Romans 12 deals with Christian lifestyle in the context of spiritual gifts
 - 4) I Peter 4 talks about love in the context of gifts.
 - 5) Gifts are temporary (they help us "do the stuff" now/Love is eternal.

(III) GIFTS MUST BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE "ROLE" OF A CHRISTIAN

- A) A Christian fulfills his / her role by obey ALL the commands of lifestyle found in the New Testament
 - 1) We are all called to be "merciful" yet some seem to have a special gift of the Spirit to extend "supernatural" mercy.
 - 2) All are "called" to contribute to the work of Christ, yet some seem to have a "supernatural" ability to give beyond that which is "normal".
 - 3) We all need to help, evangelize, intercede, give, etc.

THE ABUSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Our desire is not to dwell on the negative aspects of gifts, but to get us involved in the use of gifts in our own lives. A few precautions are in line. Here are at least a few ways we can abuse gifts.

(I) THE "PROSTITUTION" OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

This refers to the use of one's gifts to benefit one's self. Jesus threw the money-changers out of the temple for a similar practice and He continually rebuked the Pharisees for their "use" of God's people. I Peter 5 warns shepherds not to "fleece the flock" or to be greedy for the gain you can get from His sheep. This includes the desire to be recognized, have title, etc.

(II) THE "EXALTATION" OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- A) The idea that some gifts are more important than others
- B) "First class believers have the gift of"
- C) Which of the gifts is the most important?
(The answer according to I Corinthians 12:27 - 33 would be those that build up a particular Body at a particular time)
- D) Usually in these cases the person is exalted rather than the Giver of the gifts. (Read Matthew 5:16 & Chapter 6)

(III) THE "PROJECTION" OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- A) Thinking that everybody should have the gifts that you and / or your church has. (By this kind of thinking we can accomplish making the whole Body an eye or an ear only-the very thing Paul teaches against in I Corinthians.)]
- B) This view fails to realize that ALL gifts are from God and He decided who would get what.
- C) By embracing this attitude we frustrate others.
- D) Neglects a proper view of the Wisdom of the Spirit in the distribution of spiritual gifts. In essence we are saying we could do a better job than God. (This is one of the cores of idolatry---"If I were God...". The problem of course is that you are NOT God!)

POSSIBLE GROUPINGS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

While the Bible makes no attempt to group gifts into categories or groupings, sometimes it is helpful for us to look at them in this way. Our goal is to better understand their purpose and operation and groupings can help clarify this task. Some possible groupings might be:

GROUPING ONE

- A) Gifts of Speaking
- B) Gifts of Serving
- C) Gifts of Power

GROUPING TWO (John Wimber)

- A) Gifts of Discernment (The Eyes of God)
- B) Gifts of Power (The Hand of God)
- C) Gifts of Speech (The Mouth of God)

GROUPING THREE (I Peter 4:11)

- A) Gifts of Serving
- B) Gifts of Speaking

GROUPING FOUR

- A) Gifts of Office/Role
- B) Gifts of Speaking
- C) Gifts of Service
- D) Gifts of Power

SOME POSSIBILITIES FOR IDENTIFYING THESE GIFTS IN THEIR GROUPINGS MIGHT BE (but not limited to) THE FOLLOWING:

***GIFTS OF SPEAKING**

Prophecy; Teaching; Exhortation; Tongues; Interpretation of Tongues; Evangelist

***GIFTS OF SERVING**

Service; Giving; Mercy; Helps; Administration; Leadership; Missionary; Hospitality; Voluntary Poverty

***GIFTS OF POWER**

Prophecy; Word of Knowledge; Word of Wisdom; Faith; Healing(s); Miracles; Discerning of Spirits; Intercessory Prayer Warrior

***GIFTS OF OFFICE / ROLE**

Pastor; Apostle; Prophet; Leadership; Evangelist; Administration

WHO HAS SPIRITUAL GIFTS / HOW DID THEY GET THEM?

There are different understandings of the operation and method of reception of spiritual gifts even among those who believe that all the Biblical gifts are operative today. We will look at some of these positions and attempt to evaluate their validity, their strengths and their weaknesses.

(I) EACH CHRISTIAN HAS RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT AT CONVERSION (or possibly at some further 'experience')

BIBLICAL BASIS: I Peter 4:9-11 and I Corinthians 12

STRENGTH: Each believer is said to have a gift and therefore should use it responsibly to build up the church.

WEAKNESS: Seems to limit the work of the Spirit to one or possibly a few gifts, thereby closing the door to future gifting.

(II) GIFTS ARE "LATENT" IN BELIEVERS AND NEED TO BE DISCOVERED, DEVELOPED AND USED.

BIBLICAL BASIS: Same as above.

STRENGTH: No need to strive; assurance of God's work in your life.

WEAKNESS: Control. Believers "develop" gifts and "use" them.

(III) GIFTS ARE GIVEN OR OPENED UP TO BELIEVERS AT AN EXPERIENCE SUBSEQUENT TO CONVERSION (Pentecostal / Charismatic model)

BIBLICAL BASIS: Interpretation of the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" and the understanding of "tongues" in Acts.

STRENGTH: Emphasis on "seeking"

WEAKNESS: Control. Believers "develop" gifts and "use" them.

(IV) GIFTS ARE "IMPARTED" TO BELIEVERS

BIBLICAL BASIS: II Timothy 1:6

STRENGTH: Accountability to a local Body of Believers/Recognition of Gifting.

WEAKNESS: "The Spirit divides severally as HE wills."

(V) WHEN THE BODY MEETS TOGETHER THE SPIRIT IS PRESENT AND MOVES SPONTANEOUSLY AS HE WILLS.

BIBLICAL BASIS: I Corinthians 11 - 14

STRENGTH: Openness to God's Spirit, expectancy, freshness in meetings.

WEAKNESS: Doesn't take into account office/role gifts; sometimes leads to confusion.

PROPHECY

Prophecy is often misunderstood and either neglected or misused. Usually when most people think of prophecy they think of "predicting or foretelling" the future. While this is in fact a common characteristic of Old Testament Prophecy it does not seem to be the scope of New Testament prophecy except occasionally.

1 Corinthians 14:3 says once someone prophesies he speaks for "strengthening, encouragement and comfort. Further 1 Corinthians 14:31 says "you may all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed or encouraged." Prophecy seems then to be a gift open to all believers at some time in their experience. While prophecy seems to be open to all believers, it does not mean that all have the OFFICE OF A PROPHET (Ephesians 4:11). These "prophets" seem to have messages for the entire Body of Christ of a very timely fashion.

The best definition for prophecy would seem to be "inspired speech." This does not have to happen in a public setting contrary to many models. It can happen one-on-one, while praying for another, in a small group, or in a large group. It does not have to be prefixed with "Thus saith the Lord" nor does it need to be delivered in a voice or fashion other than that which is normal for you.

DEFINITION: "Prophecy is any speech inspired by the Holy Spirit that ministers directly to individuals or group of individuals for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. God can inspire anyone at anytime to speak forth His message of ENCOURAGEMENT, STRENGTHENING, AND COMFORT.

If you have ever felt that there was something that you needed to say to someone or to a group and it encouraged, strengthened, or comforted them, then you probably prophesied. Stay open to God and keep saying HIS WORDS AND HIS THOUGHTS.

PROPHECY

- 1) **WHAT SHOULD OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROPHECY (SPEAKING INSPIRED WORDS) BE?**

Numbers 11:29,30 Moses desires that all God's people be prophets.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Seek to prophesy

1 Thessalonians 5:19, 22 Don't have a bad attitude towards prophecy, but test it and with it.

- 2) **WHO CAN PROPHECY?**

Acts 2:17 - 18 Men and women (note: this scripture says that prophesy from men and woman i.e. the church would be a sign that the "last days" were upon us.)

1 Corinthians 14:29 - 31 2 or 3 at the most in a meeting, but all at some time may.

1 Corinthians 14:39 Be eager (all of you) to prophesy:

- 3) **WHAT DOES PROPHECY ACCOMPLISH?**

1 Corinthians 14:3

STRENGTHENS

ENCOURAGES

COMFORTS

Try to think of some examples of how this works and share together in the group times you have heard of experienced **TIMELY WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT** either in prayer, conversation or in a meeting.

1 Corinthians 14:4 - 5

Who is helped by prophesy?

Who is helped by tongues?

Read 1 Corinthians 14:23 -25 share how prophecy can help unbelievers.

- 4) **WHAT SHOULD THE GOALS OF PROPHECY AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS BE?**

1 Corinthians 12:14

1 Corinthians 14:26

- 5) **HOW SHOULD PROPHECY HAPPEN?**

1 Corinthians 14:32 "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets control"

1 Corinthians 14:33 Not disorderly (interrupting, etc)

1 Corinthians 14:40

Fitting: (Webster) to be suitable for; harmonize; to be seemly or proper; to make a place for

Orderly (Webster) not marked by disorder; arranged or disposed in some pattern

We have been praying that peoples' tongues will be released to:

- 1) WORSHIP GOD FREELY
- 2) SPEAK ENCOURAGEMENT TO EACH OTHER (PROPHECY)
- 3) SPEAK ABOUT JESUS TO NON-BELIEVERS

1 Corinthians 14:3 says he who prophesies's speaks to men. We need to learn to speak God's words to each other! It is a major part of what it means to be HIS Church.

THE ROLE OF A PROPHET

The role of a "prophet" seems to differ in many respects from the "gift of prophecy". The gift seems to be more spontaneous, while a prophet might "have a message" which he/she shares at appropriate times. This may include through Sunday sermons, newsletters, tapes, etc. While the gift of prophecy seems to seldom speak of future events (it is for building up) the role of a prophet may well include future events. His message in this case would be aimed at correcting behavior or preparing for action in view of expected events. The latter would seem to hold true in the case of Agabus in the Book of Acts. John the Baptist would also be a prophet with this description (see Luke 1:76). While individuals may prophesy occasionally to a gathered group, prophets would seem to be recognized across local groups and possibly even have a trans-denominational ministry.

SOME THINGS ABOUT PROPHETS

- A) Prophets Are Given To The Body To (Ephesians 4:11-16):
 - 1) Prepare God's people for works of service.
 - 2) To help reach unity in the faith.
 - 3) Help attain the measure of the fullness of Christ.
 - 4) Help us grow up in Christ.

- B) The First Prophet Was Abraham
 - 1) Genesis 20:7
 - 2) Psalm 105:15 (Don't "touch" god's prophets)

- C) The Initiative of Making a Prophet Rests With God
 - 1) Exodus 3:1 - 4:7
 - 2) In contrast false prophets set themselves up.

- D) Moses Wished That All God's People Were Prophets
 - 1) Numbers 11:29

- E) Role Of A Prophet: Spokesman For God.
 - 1) Exodus 7:1

- F) Haggai: The Lord's Messenger (Haggai 1:13)

- G) Prophets Initiate God's Action
 - 1) Agabus in Acts 11:27ff

- H) "A Voice Shall Sound In Your Ears, This Is The Way, Walk In It."

- I) Prophecy Can Happen In Music
 - 1) I Chronicles 25:3

- J) Prophets Often Know What Is Said And Done In Secret.
 - 1) II Kings 6:12
 - 2) II Samuel 12 (Nathan rebukes David)

- K) Prophets Often Can See Into The Spiritual Realm Of Angels
 - 1) I Kings 6:16 - 18

- L) Prophets Often Operate In Great Power And Work Miracles
 - 1) Moses and Pharaoh
 - 2) The Two "Witnesses" (Revelation 11)
 - 3) Elijah and the "prophets" of Baal (I Kings 18:16ff)

- M) Prophets "Monitor" the Church And Thus Leave Little Room For "Missing" God.

- N) It Would Seem God Still Uses Prophets Today. Can You Think Of Any Examples Or Illustrations?

JUDGING A PROPHECY OR A PROPHET

There are several considerations in the testing of prophecy. What we know is that it can and should be done, but the question arises as to who judges then and how.

As to who judges a prophecy, Randy Emelo makes a case for the elders of the church deciding whether a prophecy is from God and for the Body. Other arguments and viewpoints can also be taken into consideration. His arguments stem from the concept or "delegated authority" that God has given to His church. Scriptures to back up this viewpoint include:

God protects unity by protecting His authority in I Timothy 5:19 (don't entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses). Acts 23:5 (Paul before the high priest). Exodus 22:28 (don't curse the ruler of your people). I Samuel 15:20 - 30 (rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft) Psalm 105:15 (God says to do his prophets no harm). In light of these scriptures it might be "safer" to not judge Prophets too quickly or too severely.

Having said all this here are some tests we can apply:

- A) I Thessalonians 5:19 - 22 should be applied to each prophecy.
- B) Don't quench the Spirit, and don't despise prophecy.
- C) The spirit of the prophet's is subject to the prophet. (I Corinthians 14:32, 33)
- D) Examine everything carefully. (This implies that true believers can miss God and fall into error.)
- E) Compare everything with the Bible.
- F) Does it come to pass? (Deuteronomy 18:22)
- G) What place does it give to Jesus? (I John 4:1 -p 3) this is also a test for "testing the spirits".
- H) John Wimber's Test:
 - 1) Test the context
 - 2) Does it confirm what God is already doing?
 - 3) Test it by determining its benefit
 - 4) Test the prophet
 - 5) Test its accuracy
- I) The "James" Test (James 3:17)

"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all PURE, than PEACE LOVING, CONSIDERATE, SUBMISSIVE, FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUIT, IMPARTIAL AND SINCERE."

HOW PROPHETS CAN MISUSE THEIR ROLE / GIFT

We have already looked at how we can misuse our gifts and all of these warnings apply to prophets as well. This material has been gathered primarily through material given by Bill Gothard at a Pastor's Meeting.

- A) Prophets may have a tendency to correct people or groups who they are not responsible to / for.
- B) Prophets may tend to jump to conclusions about motives, words and actions. This is based upon their very strong internal sense of right and wrong.
- C) Prophets may often be more concerned with exposing offenses than restoration.
- D) Prophets may find it easy to "write off" those who have failed.
- E) Prophets often may have a tendency to dwell on the negative rather than the positive.
- F) Because they feel their message is so "urgent" they may lack tactfulness in their approach.
- G) Prophets may demand a positive response to an extremely negative message.
- H) Prophets may reinforce a negative or condemning spirit. Remember Jesus DID NOT come into the world to condemn it, but that through Him the world might have life.

DEFINITIONS OF GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

These definitions are not by any means exact or even complete. However, they serve to give us a good starting point in our understanding of gifts and their use. Some definitions are more comprehensive than others, but most of the gifts are given at least minimal consideration.

To understand gifts we must remember that there are varieties of gifts, their operation and their effect (I Corinthians 12:4 - 7 and Romans 12:3). The gift of evangelist can operate in many different ways with differing effects.

The characteristics certainly are not "etched in stone", but are helpful.

THE GIFT OF SERVICE / SERVING / HELPS

The gift of serving is the ability God gives to certain individuals to identify unmet needs and to work diligently, joyfully and often times quietly and unseen to meet those needs. By helping others the work of the kingdom is increased.

- 1) Example: Deacons in Acts 6 (designated "servers" in the body). As a result of their gifts the church grew.
- 2) Characteristics Often Associated With Servers
 - A) Very practical
 - B) Tendency to recall like and dislikes of those you're serving.
 - C) Aware of the best way and products
 - D) They like to meet needs quickly
 - E) Disregard weariness
 - F) Willingness to use private funds
 1. because of their joy
 2. to meet the need quickly
 - G) tendency to go the extra mile
 - H) Ability to discern sincere appreciation
 - I) Inability to say "NO"
 - J) They enjoy short-range goals

THE GIFT OF TEACHING

The ability God give to certain members of the Body of Christ to communicate information / Biblical truth in a way that others learn. This does not need to happen exclusively in preaching / classroom situations, it can happen through writing, singing, skits, etc.

- 1) Example: Paul's Epistles
- 2) Some Characteristics

- A) Tend to be accurate in words and detail
- B) Able to "put together" information from a wide variety of sources/understandings into understandable language.
Illustration: "What makes good Bible teaching?" (Chuck Smith Sr. to Chuck Jr.)
- C) Uses a systematic approach
- D) Explains

THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION

A special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement, challenge, and rebuke to motivate others into action.

- 1) Three Aspects
 - A) Encouragement: comfort and console Jn. 14:1,2
 - B) Challenge: Inspire, stimulate Rom.12:1,2
 - C) Rebuke: Reprimand or correct Acts 3:14, 15
- 2) Ministries of Exhortation
 - A) Preaching Acts 2:40, 2 Tim. 4:2
 - B) Teaching Timothy "Exhort with instruction"
 - C) Prophecy Matt. 3:2
 - D) Mercy Acts 9:26,1 27
 - E) Evangelism Acts 2:40
 - F) Counseling Gal. 1:1
- 3) Characteristics
 - A) Motivator (primarily)
 - B) Listens, analyzes, gives principles and steps
 - C) He helps others to see the attitude of God

THE GIFT OF GIVING

The special ability God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to contribute to God's work cheerfully and liberally beyond what would be considered normal giving / tithing.

- 1) Christian Role
 - A) Regular giving / tithing
 - B) If you see a need, meet it (James 2:14 - 16)
- 2) Some Characteristics
 - A) Often "mixed" with other gifts: helps, administration, voluntary poverty, mercy, etc.
 - B) Often involves the ability to make lots of money

THE GIFT OF LEADERSHIP

The special ability that God gives to the Body of Christ to set goals in accordance with Gods purposes for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they will voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for the glory of God.

The gift of faith tells a person where he is to go then the gift of leadership tells him how to get there.

- 1) Example: Moses
- 2) Characteristics
 - A) Voluntary followers
 - B) Very relaxed
 - C) See the whole picture and know next step
 - D) Motivate them to take the initiative
 - E) A good leader will not get too far ahead of his followers.
 - F) Generates confidence in where they're going and the next step to get there
 - G) A leader will not try it by himself
 - H) He learns to delegate responsibilities, many leaders dislike administration

THE GIFT OF MERCY

The special ability God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to extend His compassion and concern upon those in desperate need (the poor, sick, handicapped, etc.)

- 1) Role: Every christian needs to be merciful
- 2) Characteristics
 - A) Ability to feel distress (or stress)
 - B) An attraction to people in distress
 - C) Desire to remove hurt and bring healing
 - D) They are sensitive to actions or words that hurt others
 - E) Often overcome with pity for others and are "drawn into" their suffering

THE GIFT OF FAITH

The Gift of Faith In Genesis through Revelation, faith is mentioned many times, but only in Hebrews 11:1 is the definition given. Faith is now in the present tense, it is believing before seeing, but it will bring substance--it is not passive but active. There are three kinds of supernatural faith

1. Saving faith (Acts 16:31)
2. Faith which is "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22)
3. The gift of faith--it is given instantaneously a sudden surge of faith, usually in a crisis. The gift of faith is distinct from the working of miracles, though it may produce miracles.

THE WORKING OF MIRACLES

The Working of Miracles Miracles are events that seem to override or contradict the so-called laws of

nature. There are not any "laws of nature" as such. The concept of physical "laws" has been discarded by the modern physicists who define natural events in terms of "probability". The gift of miracles is one of the gifts which brings much glory to God and one which should be seen more today than ever before. Many times God's miracles are done in such a "supernaturally natural" way that we may miss them if we are not on the alert.

THE GIFT OF DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

The Discerning of Spirits By this gift the believer is enabled to know supernaturally and immediately what is motivating a person or situation. It is kind of a "police" gift, to keep the enemy's influence from causing serious problems in the fellowship. An important use is for bringing deliverance (the casting out of evil spirits or demons) that may be oppressing a person. this gifts helps us to know the "origin" of teachings, words, etc., whether they be divine, demonic or human.

1) Examples:

Blind and dumb demoniac (Matt. 12:22 - 24)

Jesus to Peter (Matt. 16:21 - 23)

Paul (Acts 16:16 - 18)

THE GIFT OF TONGUES AND INTERPRETATION

The Gift of Tongues and Interpretation Speaking in Tongues is prayer with or in the Holy Spirit--our spirit is speaking to ?God, inspired by the Holy Spirit. When a believer speaks to God, instead of using the intellect, he trusts God to provide the words. The interpretation is the bringing of the meaning in English of what has been spoken in tongues. Our total person is built as we pray daily in tongues. Our intellect is humbled and this gift has become for many a key to the continuing freedom in the walk in the Spirit. When tongues with interpretation are brought in a meeting, it is a sign to the unbeliever and secondly to the edifying of the church.

THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE

The Word of Knowledge is the supernatural revelation of facts past, present or future which were not learned through the efforts of the natural mind. It may be described as the Mind of Christ being manifested to the mind of the believer, and is given when needed in a flash of time (1Cor. 2:16). This gift is used to protect the Christian, to show how to pray more effectively or to show him how to help others. This gift is not a psychic phenomenon or extrasensory perception such as telepathy (the supposed ability to read minds), clairvoyance (the supposed ability to know things that are happening elsewhere) or precognition (the supposed ability to know the future). These "abilities" are forbidden in God's words (1 Choron. 10:14 and Duet. 18:9 - 12). We are not to reach out for such things--or we will open the door to satan. Experimentation with such psychic phenomena is toying with the fallen powers of this world which are controlled by satan. The Word of Knowledge is a sheer gift of God and is not "developed" as the demonic manifestations may be, but is manifested as a result of staying close to Jesus.

THE GIFT OF WISDOM

The Word of Wisdom is the supernatural application of the Word of Knowledge. It is knowing what to do with supernatural knowledge God has given you--and is given for proper judgement for action. The word of knowledge is supernaturally revealed information, but the Word of Wisdom tells how to apply the

information. If you receive a word of knowledge, it is good to wait patiently for the word of wisdom to find out how to use the information before rushing off with the knowledge. Wisdom will show how to do what God has shown you need doing, how to solve problems that arise, or what and how to speak in a given situation--especially when challenged about your faith. The Word of Knowledge or the Word of Wisdom may be manifested through a sudden inspiration which remains with you. This can be a knowing deep within you spirit, through the interpretation of a dream from the Lord, a vision, or parable, through the vocal gifts of the Holy Spirit and through hearing the audible Voice of God or Angelic visitation.

HOW GOD SPEAKS

Our assumption from the offset of this study is that God speaks to us primarily through His Word (the Bible) and secondarily through those He has given to the church for the building up of His Body (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor and teachers as found in Ephesians 4). It stands to reason the anything spoken through God's vessels is subject to the tests of a prophet which we have already reviewed and their continued faithfulness to God's revealed Word as found in scripture.

We will attempt to review other ways God speaks and we will try to examine how to distinguish between "voices".

1) WAYS GOD MAY SPEAK

- A) Through His word (Psalm 119, 1 Timothy 3:15 - 17)
- B) The testimony of nature (Psalm 19, Romans 1:20)
- C) Through others (Proverbs 24:6, 27:17)
- D) Through dreams
- E) Through visions
- F) Through angels
- G) Through open doors, closed doors, circumstance
- H) Through counsel
- I) Through prayer, trust
- J) Through prophecy, prophets
- K) Through word of knowledge
- L) Through word of wisdom
- M) Through the incarnation. The life of the Son.
- N) Through rational judgements
- O) Through authority relationships
- P) Through family relationships
- Q) Through signs, wonders and miracles (Acts 2)
- R) Through trials, troubles, difficulties

A) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS WORD

This is the primary means of God speaking to us and all must be weighed in the light of scripture. However many of the daily and practical necessities of life are not covered in the scripture: Should I take this class? Who should I marry? Should I go to college? Should I go into ministry? Should I buy this house? Should I confront them on this issue? Should I be a missionary? There are thousands of questions that face us throughout a lifetime without clear Biblical mandates. What should we do?

Scripture is the basis of all truth and the test of everything.

- A) Psalm 119
- B) 2 Timothy 3:14 - 17

B) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE TESTIMONY OF NATURE

- 1) Romans 1:18ff says nature speaks plainly to us of God's nature
- 2) Psalm 19 says "the heavens declare", "the skies proclaim", "they display knowledge", "their speech, language, voice, words"

C) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH OTHERS

- 1) Ephesians 5:19, "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs".
- 2) God allows trials and difficulties into our lives to perfect our character (see James 1) This includes "difficult" people who God uses to show us our weakness, sin, and failures.
- 3) Proverbs 27:17, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another".
- 4) In Genesis 13, Abraham and Lot separate and God being in control of their conversation (see Psalm 139:4) uses their decision to move Abraham where he wants him (Proverb 16:33)

D) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH DREAMS

This is one of the most common ways God speaks in scripture. Almost every "now thing" God does in Scripture is preceded by a dream (or vision)

- 1) God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:1)

E) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH VISIONS

This is another frequent form God uses and has used to communicate with His people.

- 1) Numbers 12:6 - 8, "When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in his dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles."
- 2) Isaiah 1:1, "The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem."
- 3) Acts 2:17 - 18, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women I will pour out my spirit in those days and they will prophesy."

F) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH ANGELS

- 1) Revelation 22:6, "The angel said to me, these words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the Spirit's of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."
- 2) Hebrews 1:7, "Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire". (NKJ)

- 3) Hebrews 13:2, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing it."
- 4) Acts 8:26, "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go South..."
- 5) Acts 10:3 - 7, "an angel of God coming in to him...the angel which spoke unto Cornelius"
- 6) Acts 27:23 - 24, They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the Kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the prophets. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.

G) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH OPEN/CLOSED DOORS

- 1) Acts 16:6 - 8, "Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them so they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.
- 2) 2 Corinthians 2:12, "The Lord opened a door"
- 3) Philippians 4:3, "Pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message".

H) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH COUNSEL OF OTHERS

- 1) Proverbs 11:14, "For lack of guidance an nation falls, but many advisors make victory sure."
- 2) Proverbs 15:22, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors make victory sure."
- 3) Acts 16:6 - 7, "The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion..."
- 4) Galatians 2:9 - 10, "...they agreed that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do."

I) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH PRAYER / TRUST

- 1) Proverbs 3:5, 6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make straight your paths."
- 2) Acts 13:2, "While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
- 3) Daniel 9:20 - 23, "While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill, while I was still

in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision.

J) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH PROPHECY / PROPHETS

To understand the difference between these definitions see the section in Spiritual Gifts: Prophecy and Prophets.

- 1) Acts 21:10, "After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "the Holy Spirit says, in this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt."
- 2) Acts 11:27 - 29
- 3) Acts 21:9
- 4) 1 Corinthians 14:3, 4,

K) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

Defined word of knowledge essentially is knowing something we could not have known unless God told us or showed us. In this regard it is insight/knowledge into the things "freely given us by God". Word of knowledge may be used to:

- 1) Reveal sin
2 Samuel 12:1 - 7, Nathan and David
- 2) To help find something I Samuel 10:22, "So they inquired further of the Lord, "has the man come here yet? and the Lord said, "yes he is hiding among the baggage">
- 3) To reveal thoughts / motivations/ intentions
Acts 5:1 - 11, (the account of Ananias and Sapphira)
- 4) Other Examples:
Acts 9:1 - 18, The account of Ananias and Paul's conversion

L) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH WORD OF WISDOM

Words inspired by God and applied to specific situations.

- 1) Supernatural wisdom in I Kings 3:16 - 28, Solomon and the two women.
- 2) Supernatural wisdom in church decisions, Acts 15:5 - 22 (results in agreement)

M) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE INCARNATION / HIS SON

- 1) John 1:14, "The word became flesh and lived for awhile among us".
- 2) Hebrews 1:1,2, In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets, many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, when He was appointed heir of all things and through whom He made the universe.

N) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH RATIONAL JUDGEMENTS

In the pastoral Epistles Paul encourages the appointing of deacons and elders through the examination of character.

O) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH AUTHORITY RELATIONSHIPS

- 1) In state (Romans 12)
- 2) In church (Hebrews 13:17)
- 3) At work (Ephesians 6:1 - 4)

P) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- 1) Husbands and wives (Ephesians 5:22ff)
- 2) Parents and children (Ephesians 6:1 - 4) (Exodus 20:12)

Q) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH SIGNS, WONDERS AND MIRACLES

- 1) Jesus said, "If you do not believe my words then believe because of the works."
- 2) Acts 2:19, "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know."

R) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH TRIALS, TRIBULATIONS AND DIFFICULTIES

- 1) James 1
- 2) PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF HOW GOD SPEAKS
 - A) Dreams (at night)
 - B) Visions (by day)
 - C) Impressions
 - D) Thoughts
 - E) In your mind's eye
 - F) Images, pictures (universal language)
 - G) Facts you could not know
 - H) Words
 - I) "See it", "feel it", "know it"
 - J) Pains
 - K) Essentially it is simple although it sounds / seems difficult

- L) "I don't know if this fits"
- M) Daniel's Explanation

1) "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream" Daniel 7:1

a) Here vision and / or dreams seem somehow related to thoughts, impressions or images in Daniel's mind. Since it is at night it may be that what he experienced was a dream as many of us know it, however, we cannot be certain. The Hebrew words which are used for the word "visions" are chazah, chezev, chazow, and chizzayown. They mean:

- *mentally to perceive
- *contemplate
- *prophecy
- *see (may go beyond sight)
- *sight
- *revelation

- 2) It is probably safe to say that Daniel perceived something, "saw" something or was "revealed" something but not necessarily and most likely NOT visually. **THE VISION WAS IN DANIEL'S MIND.** The key here for us is that Daniel recognized that what he "saw" was from God and he wrote it down and gave it to us.
- 3) It is possible to understand Joel's prophecy about dreams, visions and prophecies this way. Joe's paraphrase: "In the last days your young men will "see / Perceive mentally, and have revelations in their minds." Loose translation, but possibly accurate.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE PENTECOSTAL, CHARISMATIC, AND "THIRD WAVE" MOVEMENTS

1. Pentecostal Movement

A. John Wesley and the Methodist Movement

1. Emphasis on holiness, perfection, and conscious religious experience
2. Strongly Armenian as opposed to Calvinistic "predestination"
3. Read much on "holy living."
4. Converted from "high church" Anglicanism, May 24, 1738 when attending a meeting of the reading of the preface to Martin Luther's Romans.

5. Wesley's Experiential Christianity

"Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Layham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles were present at our love-feast in Fetter Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, inasmuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we broke out with one voice, "We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord."

Works of John Wesley, Vol. 1, 170

6. Wesley and sanctification (Intro to "Second Work") "...the sanctified soul, through careful examination, godly discipline, and methodical devotion and avoidance of earthly pleasures, could live a life of victory over sin. This perfection, Wesley taught, could be attained instantly as a "second work of grace," although it was usually preceded and followed by a gradual "growth in grace."

The Holiness / Pentecostal Movement]

7. Shakings, jerking, dancing, "holy laugh".

8. "Tongues"

In a revival at university of George in 1800 - 1801: "They swooned away and lay for hours in the straw prepared for those "smitten of the Lord," or they started suddenly to flee away and fell prostrate as if shot down by a sniper, or they took suddenly to jerking with apparently every muscle in their body until it seemed they would be torn to pieces or converted into marble, or they shouted or talked in unknown tongues.

The Holiness/Pentecostal Movement

B. The Expansion of Holiness Movement

1. 1867, National Camp Meeting Association
2. Charles Finney, A.J. Gordon, A.B. Simpson, R.A. Torrey, D.L. Moody

C. Pentecostal Roots

1. Holiness Movement
 - a. Second experience subsequent to conversion which eradicates desire for sin.
2. Purification
 - a. Subsequent experience which endues one with power for witness and service.
 - b. Charles Finney, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists writers.
3. Dispensational Premillennialism
 - a. Secret rapture of the saints
 - b. Second coming
 - c. Millennium, tribulation
 - d. Taught by Plymouth Brethren, R.A. Torrey, Schofield
4. Faith Healing
 - a. Healing in the atonement
 - b. A.B. Simpson
5. Hunger for New testament Signs and Wonders
 - a. Belief that a "latter rain" would precede the end of the age.
 - b. Churches of Christ / Landmark Baptists

At this point we must point out that in church history, certain characteristics of the pentecostal movement are beginning to manifest. A "Second Experience" (with different emphasis and results is being taught by many popular teachers. A life that is purified is one which is said to be open to an experience with, will give you power (ie., Finney). The end of time is taught by many, with the expectation that miracles will increase as we get closer. Healing is a common teaching among many of the now established denominations, and people are hungering for more "{New Testament" experiences.

D. Charles Parham

1. Believed all "baptisms of the spirit" would be accompanied by tongues.
 - a. Departure from others
 - b. His Bible school in Topeka
2. New Year's Eve, 1900
 - a. Agnes N. Ozman asks Parham to "lay hands on her."

E. Charles Seymour and Azuza Street

F. Assemblies of God

1. 1914 - Pentecostal followers of Parham's from Christian Missionary and Alliance.

G. Untied Pentecostal

1. 1916 - Over the nature of the trinity.

H. Aimee Semple McPherson

1. Assemblies of God incorporated Foursquare in 1927.

I. Pentecostal Today

1. Church of God
2. Untied Pentecostal
3. Assemblies of God
4. Church of God in Christ
5. Ken Hagin, Jimmy Swaggert, Jim Bakker, Paul Yongghi, Cho, etc.

II. CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

- A. Definition: "transdenominational; mostly in 'historic' denominations (Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, etc.); penetration of the established churches; 'Renewal' (also known as neo-Pentecostalism)>

B. Characteristics

1. "ecumenical"
2. historic ties
3. not bound to familiar Pentecostal practice (subdued)
4. theological diversity

C. History

1. Dennis Bennett, 1960, St. Marks Episcopal Church, Van Nuys, California.
2. Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship, Los Angeles, 1951 (non-denominational fellowship of Pentecostal businessmen).
3. David DuPlessit (Pentecostal "Observer")

4. Other early leaders

- a. Ralph Wilkerson (Melodyland)
- b. Herald Bredesen...First Reformed

5. Catholic Charismatics

- a. 1965 - Vatican II
- b. Cursillo Movement
- c. 1967...Wildfire in the Church!
 1. Ann Arbor, Michigan

2. Notre Dame

The Charismatic movement is very similar to the Pentecostal movement in that it believes in a second experience (various names) which results in speaking in tongues as evidence of the reception of the Spirit. This is generally held to be true, however, in certain segments of the movement, tongues are not viewed as evidence.

III. THE THIRD WAVE

- A. Definition: "Mainline evangelicals who operate on the assumption that they already have received the Spirit at conversion. The view is that what you only need do is operate in your God-given authority.
- B. Articulated by Peter Wagner
- C. Requires no "second experience".
 - 1. Standard evangelical positions
 - 2. "Laten gifts"
 - 3. Authority to heal
 - 4. Belief in being filled with the Spirit
 - 5. Tongues are "played down"
 - 6. Believes that all gifts of the Spirit operate
 - 7. "Seek earnestly" results in operation
- D. Very popular position, growing in intensity
 - 1. Pentecostals and Charismatics are reacting

IV. HOW MANY PENTECOSTALS / CHARISMATICS ARE THERE? (U.S.)

- A. 1980 Gallup Pole = 29 million
- B. Same poll says 5 million speak in tongues.

READING LIST

Pentecostal Movement:

The Pentecostal Holiness Movement in the United States by Vinson Synam: Eerdmanns Press.
(Best Pentecostal history available. Invaluable!)

Charismatic

The New Charismatic The New Charismatic II
by Richard Quebedeaux; Harper and Row
(Best history of personalities and organizations labeled "Charismatic")

Third Wave:

No books available, however, books by Peter Wagner, especially Your Spiritual Gifts Can Make Your Church Grow and On the Crest of the Wave allude to this position. Magazines might include:

Fullness (Southern Baptist: Ras Robinson, Jim Hylton, etc.) Charisma (more and more Third Wave types)
Firstfruits (Vineyard Ministries, International)

Other Books:

The Holy Spirit by Billy Graham

Your Spiritual Gifts by Peter Wagner