

PNEUMATOLOGY (96)

Positive Manifestation #6 - The Spirit of God will manifest Himself through a life of prayer.

Spiritual people are praying people. Those who are being developed by the Spirit of God will have a Spirit-produced desire to pray. There can be absolutely no question or doubt about the fact that there is a definite connection between the believer, the Holy Spirit and prayer.

- 1) Romans 8:26-27 – “And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”
- 2) Ephesians 6:18 – “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”
- 3) Jude 20 – “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit.”

Even though there are great mysteries between our intercessory ministry and the Spirit’s intercessory ministry, one fact is very evident; people who are becoming spiritual will also become prayerful. Spiritual people are moved by God’s Spirit to take prayer seriously. People with no passion or conviction to pray are not those who are really spiritual, regardless of how religious or pious they present themselves to be.

Positive Manifestation #7 - The Spirit of God will manifest Himself through spiritual gifts.

The good and acceptable and perfect will of God is that the believer develops to the point where the Holy Spirit can supernaturally work through an individual by means of a special spiritual gift. This section will discuss the matter of spiritual gifts in question and answer form:

Question #1 - Where in the Bible do we find the subject of spiritual gifts?

There are four major N.T. passages: 1) Romans 12:1-8; 2) I Cor. 12-14; 3) Ephesians 4:7-16; and 4) I Peter 4:7-11.

In order for a proper doctrinal understanding of spiritual gifts to occur, these passages must be carefully considered. Notice that the basis for this information is not the book of Acts !

Question #2 - What is a spiritual gift?

A. There are some major misconceptions concerning this question right here:

1. A spiritual gift **IS NOT** a spiritual office. i.e. Pastor/teacher is gift; Elders/deacons=office
2. A spiritual gift **IS NOT** a natural talent. i.e. Natural talent given by God through parent
3. A spiritual gift **IS NOT** a spiritual ministry. i.e. Gift of working with youth or elderly
4. A spiritual gift **IS NOT** a spiritual opportunity. i.e. Opportunity to give, not proof of gift.

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B. There are some key biblical words clearly connected with the subject of spiritual gifts: Several key words show up in I Peter 4:10-11:

1. Gift ; 2. Serving ; 3. Steward ; 4. Grace ; 5. Strength .

The word “gift” refers to a free gift or endowment given by God .

The word “serving” (form of word deacon) refers to a minister who serves others.

The word “stewards” refers to one responsible for managing as an administrator.

The word “grace” refers to a grant from God which is undeserved and unearned .

The word “strength” refers to special power and ability from God.

C. There are many good definitions given of a spiritual gift:

- 1) Dr. Walter Elwell defines it–“Gifts of God enabling the Christian to perform his (sometimes specialized) service” (*Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 1042).
- 2) Dr. Paul Enns defines it–“The ‘grace gifts’ that are sovereignly given to believers by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation as a special ability for service to God and to others, particularly believers” (*Moody Handbook of Theology*, p. 636).
- 3) Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer defines it–“...a gift is a divine enablement wrought in and through the believer by the Spirit who indwells him. It is the Spirit working thereby to accomplish certain divine purposes and using the one whom He indwells to that end.”
- 4) Dr. Charles Ryrie defines it–“...a spiritual gift is a God-given ability for service” (*Basic Theology*, p. 367).
- 5) We define spiritual gift as–**A spiritual gift is a gracious and divine grant from God in which He entrusts to a believer a special ministry stewardship called a gift, and supernaturally develops, empowers and enables that believer to use that gift to accomplish many things in ministry to others.**

In any true understanding of a spiritual gift, the emphasis will always be on the grace and strength which comes from God, not on any natural ability of one’s self.

Question #3 - Who gets a spiritual gift?

The biblical record is very clear that every believer receives a spiritual gift.

Romans 12:3 says gifts are given to “every man,” “to each .”

I Corinthians 12:11 says gifts are distributed to “each one individually.”

I Peter 4:10 says that “each one has received a special gift.”

Every believer has a spiritual gift; however, not every believer knows what his or her gift is and not every believer is actually utilizing his or her gift and some will never discover what theirs actually was.

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Question #4 - Who determines which spiritual gift a person receives?

Every passage that deals with the subject of spiritual gifts explicitly emphasizes that it is the Triune God who determines what specific gift is given to a person.

Romans 12:3 says, "God has allotted to each..."

I Corinthians 12:11 says the Spirit distributes gifts as "He wills."

I Corinthians 12:18 says God placed each in the body as "He desired."

I Corinthians 12:28 says God made the appointment of gifts "in the church."

Ephesians 4:11 says Christ "gave" gifts to His body.

I Peter 4:11 says God supplies the "strength" for spiritual gifts.

This is a key point which must not ever be overlooked. A believer does not get a gift because he wants it or because others have it or because he begs for it or even because he prays for it. He does not get this gift because he thinks he has a natural inclination or ability for it. Any believer receives his or her gift **ONLY** because God has sovereignly chosen to give that gift to the person. Most likely, since God's ways aren't ours, it will be something you never expected.

There are churches who teach people to beg and plead for a gift (i.e. tongues). The Bible does not ever support such activity. God sovereignly distributes gifts according to His will, not ours.

Question #5 - When does God give the believer his spiritual gift?

This is a difficult question but it seems that God actually gives a person his or her spiritual gift at the moment of salvation, even though he does not discover it at that time.

We come to this conclusion based on the following:

- 1) Paul wanted every believer to discover his spiritual gift; in fact, he considered this discovery to be the "good and acceptable and perfect" will of God (Rom. 12:2). His assumption is that every believer has the potential to discover his or her spiritual gift.
- 2) Paul assumed every Corinthian believer had a spiritual gift. I Cor. 12:7
- 3) Paul stated that an unsaved man is incapable of anything that pertains to God's Spirit, which certainly means no unsaved person has any spiritual gift given by God's Spirit (I Cor. 2:14).
- 4) Paul connects the subject of spiritual gifts with the subject of salvation by grace (Eph. 4:4-7).

Based on this information, we may assume that one receives his spiritual gift the moment he receives the Holy Spirit, which is the moment of salvation. However, this does not mean one will automatically discover his gift for in order for that to happen, certain prerequisites must be met.

Question #6 - Why does God give spiritual gifts?

Why does God give spiritual gifts to His people? There are at least six biblical reasons why God gives spiritual gifts to His people:

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(Reason #1) - So that every believer might potentially accomplish God's perfect will for his or her life. Romans 12:2

The perfect will of God for the life of a believer is recognizing and utilizing his true spiritual gift. The believer is never more fulfilled or useful or on target in God's program as when this is happening. Every believer has the potential of accomplishing God's perfect will through the use of his gift, but not every believer will.

(Reason #2) - So that every believer might develop and minister to others. I Cor. 12:5-7; Eph. 4:12; I Pet. 4:10

God wants His people developing and maturing and ministering to each other in the way and in the power that He has given. We do have a gift and we are to use it and one place where this truly begins to happen is in God's church. If a person does not get actively involved in God's church, that person will not ever develop and serve in the way God wants. In fact, the gift is wasted because it is not being developed and used.

(Reason #3) - So that every believer will continually realize that we need each other. I Cor. 12:12, 14, 20, 25

Spiritual gifts are given to keep us connected to each other. We cannot grow or develop without each other. Spiritual gifts bring us to the point where we realize this. We are mutually dependent on each other and that is the way God wants it. One who thinks he can worship God his own way without the church—at home or on a boat or on a mountain—will not ever grow into a strong God-honoring believer nor will he ever accomplish God's perfect will for His life.

(Reason #4) - So that every believer can accomplish powerful things for God. I Cor. 12:6

The word "effects" and "works" are from the same verb which is the word from which we get our English word "energize." The point is that God has given to every believer certain energized power that can and should be activated in order to accomplish His work. The believer who never sees God powerfully work through him or her will not ever be able to blame God because, for one reason, God has given a spiritual gift for this very purpose.

(Reason #5) - So that every believer can manifest the grace of God. I Pet. 4:10

When a believer is involved in the work of God and is using his gift from God, He is demonstrating the grace of God. Every gift is important—some are more public and some are more private, but all are very important. When a person uses his gift, he is demonstrating the amazing grace of God.

(Reason #6) - So that every believer may glorify God. I Pet. 4:11

The believer who is faithfully using his gift to minister in God's work is one who is bringing great glory to God. Spiritual gifts are not given to glorify self, they are not given to dominate others; they are given to glorify God. These are some of the key reasons God gives spiritual gifts.

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Question #7 - How may a believer discover his spiritual gift?

There is a seven-fold formula which may be used for determining one's spiritual gift. This teacher did not invent this formula, he just compiled it; however, it is one that will work.

(Ingredient #1) - To discover one's spiritual gift one must be spiritual. Rom. 12:1-2

One does not have to be perfect to discover his gift (no one would ever discover it) but one does have to meet certain spiritual prerequisites clearly set forth in these very verses. One must be consistently living a holy and sacrificial life for God and must be continually having his mind transformed by the Word of God. Many do not discover their spiritual gift because of a neglect right here.

(Ingredient #2) - To discover one's spiritual gift one must be prayerful. James 4:2

It is certainly biblical and spiritual to ask God to reveal to you what your specific gift is. James says, "you do not have because you do not ask." Many do not know what their gift is because they have never asked God to reveal it to them.

(Ingredient #3) - To discover one's spiritual gift one must be informed. I Cor. 12:1

God does not want us ignorant of this subject. Hopefully this doctrinal study will make us better informed concerning the works of the Holy Spirit and the subject of spiritual gifts. The more we know biblical truth, the more we are in a position to discern what is true even concerning our own spiritual gift.

For example, I have known people who really believe they have a spiritual gift that is clearly stated in Scripture to have been a temporal gift (I Cor. 13:8). Some spend most of their Christian lives in ignorance of what the Bible does say and therefore cannot possibly come to understand their real gift.

(Ingredient #4) - To discover one's spiritual gift one must be opportunistic.

One who will discover his or her spiritual gift will be one who sees opportunities and takes advantage of opportunities to serve God in the church. Every opportunity one has in the church is an opportunity for God to reveal what one's gift is or isn't. Certainly a submissive attitude will be demonstrated here—one will not try to push and shove his way to use his gift—but one will take advantage of opportunities for service and more than likely will feel so insecure that there will have to be a total dependency on God.

(Ingredient #5) - To discover one's spiritual gift one must be active.

One must be active in God's church. One must plug in and fit in. A person may not succeed at everything, but that is all part of the process of development. But one who sits on the sidelines and is not actively involved will never discover his or her gift.