

1 Corinthians #22  
**Introduction to Spiritual Gifts**  
1 Corinthians 12:4

**The Bible makes it clear, there is a God-designed, vibrant pathway of life intended for every believer. That pathway includes:**

- **Fullness (overflowing of the Spirit)**
- **Fruitfulness (service to others), and**
- **Fulfillment (joy through relationship)**

**Once you know Jesus as your personal Savior, the pathway to a life in the fullness of the Holy Spirit is open. It is important that we each discover what that life is and how we can walk forward in it.**

Jesus made this prophetic promise in Luke 24:49, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

**This matter of spiritual gifts began on the Church’s birthday, the Day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem (30 AD).** Jesus made given this promise in Acts 1, “You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” And “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...”

**Through my years of ministry I have had the opportunity to preach in many and varied churches. I have seen those who claim to have the Holy Spirit stand and shout and speak in tongues and cause no small stir in some worship service. I have preached in those services where no one seemed to know what anyone else was doing. I have listened as they have centered their theology around the Person of the Holy Spirit, to the point of almost forgetting that there salvation was from Jesus Christ.**

**On the other hand, I have sat in other worship services where I longed to see some evidence that God even knew where I was. I have preached in those churches where there was no evidence of life and no evidence of any love, and everything was cut and dried and programmed.**

**The longer I preached and the more I studied, the more aware I became that somewhere in the midst of what I was experiencing there had to be some measure of truth. With that understanding, I became determined to find out the truth concerning the workings of the Holy Spirit in my life and ministry. And as I began to understand the meaning of the Trinity, then I began to realize that what I was looking at was the indwelling presence of the Person of Jesus**

Christ. What a day that was when I realized that the fullness of the Holy Spirit was nothing more than my yielding to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in my everyday living. His word came alive in my heart. His presence was vivid and exciting. Although I did not understand all that was happening in my life, but I knew that I liked the results.

**The more I studied the more I wanted to know, until I was buying books, listening to sermons, and finding out all I could about the Holy Spirit.** And I don't really know how to explain what happened in my life, but there was joy unspeakable, a breakthrough in liberty, and I began to realize a greater revelation of Jesus Christ. My ministry took on a new dimension, as the excitement began to show in my life.

**But, it did not take me long to realize that not every one wanted to hear about my encounter with this new found truth and experience.** I found that when I wanted to talk to people about the "Spirit filled life" they wanted to talk about things like "speaking in tongues" or the pros and cons of shouting in church. But all I really wanted to do was to tell them about the Christ-in-me revelation that involved the Holy Spirit.

**Now the issue of speaking in tongues was not new to me.** With my family's Pentecostal background, I had witnessed what was supposed to be speaking in tongues when I was just a boy. I had witnessed it but I had never experienced it. You see, for the greater part of my relationship with Christ, the practice of speaking in tongues was confined to small Pentecostal groups who were looked on by most people as fanatics. Then the practice began to jump denominational lines and has become in our day a major issue with thousands of reputable and respectable scholars standing at extremes to declare at once: "All tongues are of the devil" or "Everybody must speak in tongues that is filled with the Holy Spirit."

**And I must confess to you tonight that have been greatly bothered by this issue.** I am as bothered by the one extreme as I am by the other. Without going into the various interpretations of Scripture, allow me to share with you the restful position to which God has led me. I have known what it is to be both intimated and attracted by the modern movement which is characterized by the tongue trademark. I have moved all along the spectrum, saying at various times, "Lord, surely you would not do this to me" and "Lord, surely you would not withhold this from me." I found myself, like a lot of other people, when it came to this matter of "spiritual gifts," and that is this - every time I was confronted with this matter of "spiritual gifts" my mind went immediately to this matter of "speaking in tongues." And I could not agree with those who said, "Nobody will," and I could not agree with those who said, "Everybody must." And I must

confess to you that it was not until I took my eyes off men and restudied the Scripture did I come to an understanding of what the Bible really said about this whole matter.

When we get into an extensive study of 1 Corinthians 12, I will deal with this matter in great detail, but for now just let me say this about this matter of tongues – nobody must, somebody might, I haven't. When on an occasion somebody might it will not call attention to itself, it will not be divisive, and it will not demand that everybody else follow suit.

This stance will be unacceptable to both extremes. The truth is that I have been as open as I know how to be to the Word of God, and I have discovered that if we will focus our eyes on Jesus and keep them there we can have respect *for* and fellowship *with* each other.

In the midst of the excitement of discovering spiritual truth, I suddenly became very aware of the work of the devil. I had never really paid much attention to him before. I knew who he was and I didn't like him, but I never thought much about him. But when my understanding of the Holy Spirit began to bring about a new excitement in my life, the activity of the devil became rather decisive. Attacks became too frequent to be coincidental. And I soon realized what I already knew – the devil was alive and active. Therefore, I began to change my study to include the person and activity of the devil to better prepare myself to stand against his ways. And for the first time, I discovered that the believer really does have authority over the devil in the name of Jesus. There are few truths as immediately rewarding as this one when applied in our every day living.

I then asked God to teach me what he wanted me to know about demons. I really had no exciting desire to be aggressive in this area of study, but if God had truth for me I wanted to know it.

And out of that particular study, I wrote a book entitled "The Reality of the Kingdom of Demons." It includes the basics concerning the devil, demons, and Jesus Christ our Lord. And although there are many cases where people are victims of genuine demonic activities, there are hundreds of others where people just conveniently give in to the flesh and blame it on demonic activity. Where there is genuine demonic activity there must be *deliverance*, but where we have simply given way to the flesh there must be *discipline*.

Therefore, I once more issue to you this warning; there must be a scriptural balance in our theology. While there are those who "go to seed" over finding demons under every chair, and behind every frown, there are

others who go even so far as to totally deny any demonic activity at all, and therefore deny any need for deliverance.

**While I am sharing with you in this introduction of “spiritual gifts,” please allow me to spend just a little time in this area of healing. Once more we have come to an area where there is much confusion. Let me begin by saying that I have prayed for people and they have been healed. I have witnessed the disappearance of growths that were awaiting surgery. And I must confess to you the feeling of exhilaration that results from being used to pray for someone’s healing and watching it happen. I must also confess to you that I have prayed for others to be healed only to watch them die sick and pass on into glory.**

**To make a point, I want to share with you from the Word of God, and then seek to show you what happens when we lose sight of balanced thinking.**

In Matthew 20:29-34 we are told, “And as they departed from Jericho, a Great multitude followed him. And, behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, that they should hold their peace; but they cried the more saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I should do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.” And in Mark 8:22-25 we are told, “And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up, and said, I see men like trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.” Now look at John 9:1-7, “And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing.”

**Now, what I want you to see is this – Jesus is not locked into any process of healing. And if we are not careful, this is what we allow to happen in our lives. Let’s just suppose these three men were talking about what Jesus had done**

for them. The first says, "Fellows, I will tell you, He touched me and I saw perfectly. It was wonderful. He touched me once and that was all." And the second man said, "Well, I'll tell you right now that you are not right. He touched me and I saw, but not well, I saw men as trees walking. He touched me again and I saw every man clearly. If you are going to have a genuine experience you must have one like mine." And the third man said, "My observation is that neither of you had a genuine experience because you did not have an experience like mine. You see, he put spittle and clay together and rubbed it in my eyes. He then commanded me to go and wash in a pool. When I did what he said, I saw perfectly." **Vance Havner said if those men were here today, we would have three different denominations before the end of the week.** We would have the "One Touch Church," the "Two Touch Church," and the "Mud-in-the-Eye Church."

**The outstanding thing about each of these blind men was not the *method* of healing, but the *fact* of healing.** As long as the earth stands there will be differences in interpretations and terminology. And if we are not careful we will get more excited about removing demons or getting sickness healed than in bringing men to Christ for salvation.

**So, as we go into this section of 1 Corinthians that deals with the "gifts of the Spirit," let me remind you not to get carried away from the basics of what got us here in the first place. What are those basics?**

Number one, Christ died for sinners. Number two, all men are sinners. Number three, Christ died for all.

**Therefore, we are responsible to tell the story of His redeeming love.**

Remember, Christ died *for* us on the cross; He wants to live *in* us in our every day life, and manifest himself *through* us to minister to others.

If you have never been saved, why not tonight?