

Understanding the Gifts of the Spirit

Main text — 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 (NKJV) · Co-Pastor Frank Jimenez

Scripture quotations from the NKJV, with NIV, ESV, and NLT where noted.

OPENING TEXT

One Spirit, Many Gifts

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 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. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4–11 (NKJV)

In verse 7, Paul says the *manifestation* of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. The Greek word for manifestation is **phanerōsis** — a disclosure, an unveiling, a making visible. Paul isn't saying you were handed a tool you can use on command. He's saying the Holy Spirit is making **Himself** visible through you.

CORE TRUTH

The spiritual gifts center on the Revealer, not the conduit. It's about the Presence breaking through — not the person standing in the room.

PART 1 · HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Why Is Paul Even Writing This?

The promise

In Numbers 11, a couple of men begin prophesying in the camp, and Joshua runs to Moses: “Moses, my lord, stop them!” Moses answers:

“Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!”

NUMBERS 11:29 (NIV)

In the Old Testament, the Spirit **came upon** a few — prophets, priests, and kings — for a task or a season. Then the prophet Joel, centuries later, prophesies something bigger:

“I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy... your young men shall see visions.”

JOEL 2:28 (NKJV)

Young people — that's you. This is the **promise** of the gifts of the Spirit.

The fulfillment

1. **The gifts are tied to the ascension of Jesus.** “When he ascended on high... he gave gifts to men” (Ephesians 4:8, ESV).
2. **Jesus told the apostles it was coming.** “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you” (John 16:7, ESV).
3. **Then Pentecost.** The Holy Spirit falls in the upper room with tongues of fire, a crowd gathers, and about three thousand are added that day (Acts 2:41). Peter explains: “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16, KJV).

PENTECOST

Pentecost is the democratization of the Spirit. The Spirit went from resting over a select few to filling everyone — every believer, every son and daughter, every man and every woman.

A church in crisis

When Paul writes “Now concerning spiritual gifts...” in 1 Corinthians 12, he's stepping in to fix a church in crisis. The Corinthians were obsessed with speaking in tongues and treated it as the ultimate badge of spiritual status. Instead of building up the church, their spiritual arrogance created chaos, division, and confusion.

These were former pagans who grew up worshiping Greco-Roman gods, coming out of mystery cults where religious experience was measured by frenzy, emotional highs, and loss of self-control. They carried that baggage into the church — idolatry, sensationalism, and spiritual pride. If it wasn't loud, wild, or supernatural, they didn't think it was real.

We need both the fire of the altar and the anchor of the Word. A healthy church needs the balance.

The abuse of the gifts is as old as the gifts themselves. Paul's answer wasn't “shut it down,” “stop speaking in tongues,” or “stop prophesying.” His answer was: **it's time to grow up** (1 Corinthians 14:20).

PART 2

Two Lists, Two Kinds of Gifts

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

ROMANS 12:6–8 (NIV)

In Romans 12, Paul lays out **seven motivational gifts** — the primary ways God shapes your heart to serve and build the kingdom:

1. **Mercy** — “Are you okay? Let’s sit down and talk through what you’re feeling.” *Focus: emotional care and relieving pain.*
2. **Serving** — Instantly grabs the paper towels and the mop; gifted at doing the dirty work well. *Focus: meeting practical, tangible needs.*
3. **Teaching** — “Let’s open the Bible and look at the context.” Breaks complex information down clearly. *Focus: imparting truth and preventing future error.*
4. **Encouragement (exhortation)** — “I know this season is hard, but you have what it takes.” *Focus: inspiring action and personal growth.*
5. **Giving** — God shows you the financial gaps before your pastor sees them. Some are called to spread the gospel; others are called to finance it. *Focus: releasing resources to solve a problem.*
6. **Leading (administration)** — Steps into a chaotic room, creates a clear game plan, delegates roles. *Focus: organizing chaos, casting vision, bringing order.*
7. **Prophesying** — “We cannot compromise God’s standards here — we need to realign with His Word.” *Focus: exposing wrong alignment and proclaiming divine principles.*

NOTICE

None of these require a supernatural spark. The Romans 12 gifts are how God built your soul — your default setting, your hardwiring, the lens you see the world through.

A prophetic person vs. a prophetic moment

A prophetic person (Romans 12) tends to be more serious — think of Jeremiah. Prophetic people have a **radar** for compromise, hypocrisy, and deception; a **watchman’s** eye for what’s coming; and it’s part of their **personality**.

A prophetic moment (1 Corinthians 12) is a manifestation: a sudden, Spirit-inspired utterance in a specific moment. It doesn’t depend on the person — children, women, and the elderly all prophesy — and someone without a prophetic personality can still operate in it. You don’t control when it happens.

Not everybody is gifted the same way

“Unos cantaban, otros oraban, pero todos alababan.” — Some sang, others prayed, but everyone praised.

Stop trying to mimic other people’s anointing. If God wired you with **mercy**, stop feeling guilty that you aren’t a sharp administrator. If God hardwired you to **lead**, stop feeling inadequate because you’re not as strong at **giving**. Prophetic, merciful, a leader, a servant — be who God anointed you to be. Different gifts, same Spirit; different ministries, same Lord; different activities, same God (1 Corinthians 12:4–6).

PART 3

The Nine Gifts of the Spirit

The classic Pentecostal 3×3 framework (associated with Howard Carter and Donald Gee) groups the nine gifts into three categories:

REVELATION <i>God reveals something</i> • Word of Wisdom • Word of Knowledge • Discerning of Spirits	POWER <i>God does something</i> • Gift of Faith • Gifts of Healings • Working of Miracles	UTTERANCE <i>God says something</i> • Prophecy • Divers Kinds of Tongues • Interpretation of Tongues
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CATEGORY 1 · GOD REVEALS SOMETHING

Revelation Gifts

These gifts reveal something we could not know through natural observation or intelligence.

REVELATION · 1 OF 9

Word of Wisdom

DEFINITION

A supernatural insight from God that gives direction, strategy, or understanding for a specific, complex, or hard situation.

This gift isn't about being smart. When someone who isn't naturally the sharpest in the room suddenly speaks with heavenly wisdom — that's how you know it's God. Pastors and ministers operate in this gift constantly: called into hard situations — couples wanting to divorce, sin that has been exposed — with no idea what to say, until they begin to speak words of heaven that heal, restore, and give direction. **My recommendation:** pray before you walk in — “Lord, give me Your wisdom. Give me Your words.”

Sometimes God doesn't remove the situation. He gives you wisdom for what to do inside of it.

REVELATION · 2 OF 9

Word of Knowledge

DEFINITION

When the Holy Spirit reveals a fact about a person or situation that you could not have known naturally — to reveal sin for repentance, or a situation for edification.

My father, Pastor Sabas Jimenez, was preaching at a church in Houston led by Pastor Montes. Not knowing anyone there, he said: “There's someone here who has been planning to move out of state. You've been looking at houses and you're ready to put in an offer — but the Lord is telling you, I have called you to the

city of Houston and to this church.” After the service, Pastor Montes called a brother and his family to the altar; they had already come to him about moving. The brother wept. He owned a construction company and was helping the church finish its building — without him, the church would have had to sell the unfinished property. The family stayed, the building was finished, and the church is now growing exponentially.

You didn't investigate it. Nobody told you. God revealed it.

Revelation is never given so we can embarrass people. God reveals things because He wants to redeem, heal, warn, encourage, or minister.

REVELATION · 3 OF 9

Discerning of Spirits

DEFINITION

Supernatural perception that enables someone to recognize the spiritual source or influence operating in a situation.

Not every manifestation in a service comes from God. This gift lets someone perceive what is actually at work behind what they're seeing and hearing.

Not everything spiritual is the Holy Spirit.

CATEGORY 2 · GOD DOES SOMETHING

Power Gifts

These gifts demonstrate God's supernatural power in situations human ability cannot accomplish.

POWER · 4 OF 9

Gift of Faith

DEFINITION

A supernatural certainty, given by the Spirit, that God is going to act in a particular situation.

This is different from simply living faithfully. There are moments when God places an unusual confidence inside someone: **“I know without a shadow of a doubt that God is going to provide. He is going to heal. He is going to do it!”**

Normal faith says, “God can.” The gift of faith sometimes rises up and says, “God will.”

Gifts of Healings

DEFINITION

Supernatural works of the Holy Spirit through which God brings healing.

Paul uses the plural: **“gifts of healings.”** God heals the body, the soul, and the spirit. The gift is not a superpower you turn on and off — God uses people in it as *He* wills. **God's healing always comes to pass in one of three ways:** instantly; progressively, through medicine and treatment; or eternally, in glory.

The gift is supernatural, but the person carrying the gift is still dependent on the Spirit.

Working of Miracles

DEFINITION

Supernatural acts of God's power that accomplish what natural human ability cannot.

The Red Sea parts. Jesus multiplies the bread and fish. The important word is **working**: Moses lifted the staff; Jesus blessed and broke the bread, over and over. Sometimes you have to *work* the miracle — we've seen healing that didn't manifest until someone acted on it in faith.

CATEGORY 3 · GOD SAYS SOMETHING

Utterance Gifts

These gifts involve Spirit-enabled speech for a specific moment, for the benefit of the believer, the unbeliever, and the church.

Prophecy

DEFINITION

A Spirit-prompted message that communicates what God wants expressed in a specific moment.

“But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.”

1 CORINTHIANS 14:3 (NKJV)

Prophecy can confront or correct, but New Testament prophecy should ultimately move people toward God's purposes. **Before you believe every “God told me” video, test the fruit:**

1. Does it agree with the Word?
2. Does it point people toward Jesus?
3. What fruit does it produce?

A pastor once claimed God told him to divorce his wife and marry a younger woman. Run it through the three questions. Biblical prophecy always comes into agreement with the Word.

UTTERANCE · 8 OF 9

Divers Kinds of Tongues

DEFINITION

A supernatural utterance in a language the speaker has not learned, given through the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12–14, Paul addresses tongues functioning in the church.

Three types we teach (these labels are categories, not scriptural terms):

1. **Personal** — edifies the believer; the spirit speaks to the Lord directly.
2. **Sign** — edifies the unbeliever toward salvation; a real human language the speaker never learned (Hebrew, for example).
3. **Prophetic** — edifies the church; spoken boldly in a service and always followed by interpretation.

UTTERANCE · 9 OF 9

Interpretation of Tongues

DEFINITION

A supernatural ability given by the Spirit to communicate the meaning of a prophetic tongue so the church can understand the message and be edified.

It is **interpretation**, not word-for-word translation — it carries the heart of the message. A minute-long tongue may be interpreted in fifteen seconds; a tongue sung as a song may be interpreted as a statement; a tongue in sign language may be interpreted in spoken words. The interpretation doesn't always match the tongue's cadence, style, or timing.

What was spoken by the Spirit becomes understandable, and the whole church is edified.

AT A GLANCE

Romans 12 vs. 1 Corinthians 12

DIMENSION	ROMANS 12 GIFTS	1 CORINTHIANS 12 GIFTS
Core question	How has God shaped me to serve?	How can the Spirit manifest through me?
Biblical term	<i>Charismata</i> — grace-endowments	<i>Phanerōsis</i> — manifestations, outshining
Nature	Who you are — personality, motivational DNA	What the Spirit does — event-based power
Ownership	Resident, indwelling — woven into your nature	Hosted, ambient — flows as the Spirit wills
Analogy	The appliance — a lamp, a phone, a heater	The electricity — the current flowing through it
Activation	Constant orientation — you wake up seeing the world this way	Occasional, situational — “as He wills” (v. 11)

PART 4

Show Me the Fruit

The gifts are nothing without fruit.

“If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1–2 (NIV)

All gifts of the Spirit must be founded in **love** — love for God and love for His people. People who don't love God's people become abusive and manipulative with the gifts. Platforms don't collapse from a lack of gifting; they collapse from a lack of fruit — because gifts can take us to places our character isn't ready for.

You can be anointed, but not rooted.

You can be gifted, but immature.

You can be powerful at the altar, but powerless in your marriage.

You can be filled with the gifts of the Spirit, but full of yourself.

At the end of the day, we're looking for **fruit** — evidence of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). Show the receipts.

THE BALANCE

There are nine gifts of the Spirit and nine fruit of the Spirit. We need both.

This is why Paul was so frustrated with Corinth: extremely gifted, but deeply immature. So he brings order to a gifted, immature church and calls them to be accountable.

Talent doesn't excuse you from accountability

If your leadership calls you into accountability, maturity, or obedience, that's not the time to look for another church, stop serving, or gossip about how they hurt you. That's when God is testing your maturity. **You can operate in a gift and still need God to work on your character.** Someone holding you accountable isn't attacking you — it means they care. This generation has lost the art of submission.

- If you can obey spiritual authority in private, God will elevate you publicly.
- God will always test your character in the shadows before He trusts you with a spotlight. “If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones” (Luke 16:10, NLT).

REMEMBER

Gifting is not the measurement of maturity. Fruit is.

TAKE IT HOME

Four Keys for Your Gift

1. Your gift is not about you

God didn't give you gifts to grow your follower count. He gave them so you could edify the church and bring Him glory. **Your gift isn't about making you important; it makes you available.**

2. Discovery of your gifts requires movement

Don't use your search for your spiritual gift as an excuse for spiritual laziness. When your pastor needs a youth leader, a Sunday admin, a treasurer, or someone to plan an event, be the first to raise your hand. You'll quickly find out what you're good at and what you're not — and discovering what you are **not** gifted for is just as valuable as discovering what you are.

3. Surrender precedes discovery

CORE TRUTH

God doesn't show His plans to spectators. He shows them to servants.

Stop coming to God with, “Show me my gift, and then I'll decide if I want to use it.” The posture of a disciple is: “God, my yes is already on the table — now show me where to go and what to do.”

4. People are attached to your obedience

Withholding your gift starves the body of Christ. There are real people attached to your obedience.

Somebody needs the encouragement God wants to give through you.

Somebody needs the word of wisdom God wants to speak through you.

Somebody needs the healing God wants to release through you.

Somebody needs the faith God wants to stir through you.

Somebody needs the prophetic word God wants to deliver through you.