

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

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THE HOLY SPIRIT: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Definition Of Spiritual Gifts

A spiritual gift is a miraculous ability given to man by the Spirit of God. For a list of these abilities see 1Corinthians 12:7-11, 28. If gifts used today: expect balanced use as in NT, not just tongues & healing.

Use Of The Word “Gift” In The New Testament

Salvation - Romans 6:23, 5:15-16, Ephesians 2:8

One's natural abilities - 1Corinthians 7:7

The indwelling Spirit - Acts 2:38

Holy Spirit baptism - Acts 10:45, Acts 11:17

Spiritual gifts - Romans 1:11, 1Corinthians 12:14, 1Timothy 4:14, 2Timothy 1:6

The grace of God - Ephesians 3:7

Source Of Spiritual Gifts

Laying on of apostles' hands - Acts 8:5-19

Paul's hands / Christians - Acts 19:1-7

See also - 1Timothy 4:14, 2Timothy 1:6, Romans 1:11

Purpose Of Spiritual Gifts

To confirm the word - Mark 16:20, Hebrews 2:3-4, Acts 8:5-6, 1Peter 1:12

To edify the church - 1Corinthians 12:7+, 1Corinthians 14:2-19

Duration Of Spiritual Gifts

Since they were given only by the laying on of Apostolic hands, they were to last only so long as the Apostles and the next generation lived - Acts 8:13-19.

The word was confirmed once - Jude 3, Galatians 1:6-9, Ephesians 2:20, 2Thessalonians 2:9-15, 2John 7-11.

The written word replaces miraculous gifts - Matthew 13:18-23, Romans 1:16, Romans 10:17, 1Peter 1:22-23, John 20:30-31.

The Table on the following page shows a present day alternative to each of the various spiritual gifts. The second table on the page following shows that the spiritual gifts were temporary and were to be replaced by love and completed revelation as the church matured past its infancy stage. The fact that they are no longer needed by the church and that there is a more excellent way indicates that one should expect that they would have ceased.

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YESTERDAY'S SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND TODAY'S ALTERNATIVES

SPIRITUAL GIFTS	TODAY'S ALTERNATIVE
Wisdom	James 1:5, 3:13-18
Knowledge	Ephesians 3:3-4
Faith	Romans 10:17
Healing	James 5:14
Miracles	1John 3:22
Prophecy	2Timothy 3:16-4:2
Discerning Spirits	1John 4:1-3, 2Thes. 2:9-14
Tongues	Bible translations
Interpretation of Tongues	Not needed

1Corinthians 12:31 - A more excellent way than spiritual gifts to come.

1Corinthians 13:1-7 - Love is that more excellent way.

1Corinthians 13:8-13 - Spiritual gifts to cease when the church grew up.

As one can see from the information above, the use of spiritual gifts has been replaced by love, completed revelation (the Bible), and by prayer. Spiritual gifts were a wonderful way to begin the church in absence of love and completed revelation, but these blessings of the more mature church have taken the place of the temporary and "childish" things that have been "put away." The mature church operates by faith and not by sight as did the early church. See 2Corinthians 5:7.

COMPARISON OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS WITH HOPE FAITH AND LOVE

SPIRITUAL GIFTS	HOPE, FAITH, LOVE
(1CORINTHIANS 13:8-13)	

<u>TEMPORARY SIDE</u>	<u>ABIDING SIDE</u>
[8] gifts to cease	[8] love <u>never fails</u>
[9] partial prophecy	[10] if complete, discard partial
[9] partial knowledge	[10] if complete, discard partial
[11] immature/childish	[11] if mature, discard childish
[12] dim vision	[12] clear vision
[12] partial knowledge	[13] faith, hope, charity <u>abide</u>

HOPE, Romans 8:24, will last only until the Lord comes and the same with FAITH, Hebrews 11:1 and 2Corinthians 5:7. So gifts which are more temporary than faith and hope must cease BEFORE the Lord comes again. Judging by this evidence, the time to expect a ceasing of gifts was when the church grew up to depend on completed revelation and upon love. The period after the second generation of gift recipients fits as the period of completed revelation and maturity of the church. The first generation to use spiritual gifts was that of the Apostles and the second and last generation to use them was the generation upon whom the Apostles laid their hands in order to impart the spiritual gifts. When the second generation died, the gifts died with them.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS: SUMMARY

Spiritual Gifts were miraculous abilities conveyed by the hands of the apostles to members of the early church. They should not be confused with baptism of the Holy Spirit or with the indwelling measure of the Spirit. Spiritual gifts could not be passed on by those who had them. These gifts were under the control of the user and were not to be used selfishly because their purpose was to confirm God's word and to edify the church. Since spiritual gifts were a temporary boost for the early church, they were intended to be replaced by love and the completed Bible as the church matured. If they were to be used today, they would serve no scriptural purpose that is not already being met by a combination of the word, love, and prayer.