

But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

1Corinthians 12:31

Store In My Heart

1Peter 5:8

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

The Apostle Peter reminds us that we need to have clear minds that can focus on what needs to be done. We must be ready to act in a right and proper way no matter what we might face.

The warning here of the destructive nature of the devil is something we must heed. But the initial idea of sober-minded and watchful will give us what is necessary to react properly when he confronts us. Our minds must be steady and prepared. We are not to lose focus on what we must do or what is happening around us. As we navigate through life we must always be on guard, thus our mind needs to be free of those things that might distract us or hinder our actions.



Gifts Of The Holy Spirit

George Hutto

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.” (1Corinthians 12:1)

Bible students have a challenge on the subject of the Holy Spirit. On Pentecost Peter said *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:38)* But what is that gift? For sure, it was some measure or power of the Spirit.

Stick with me: Jesus had promised to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles, and John the Baptist had said *“(Christ) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”* After the church was well underway, the writer of Hebrews said this concerning the Holy Spirit: *“while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.” (Hebrews 2:4)*

The work of the Holy Spirit was not a “one-size-fits-all” operation. God *“bore witness,”* endorsed the preaching of the apostles by *“various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit.”*

On Pentecost, when Peter referred to the “gift,” there was a dramatic display of God’s power with audible sound from heaven and visible divided tongues which sat upon the apostles. They *“spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance,”* in languages which they had not known (there was a diverse crowd of many thousands), and a message which they had not previously known altogether. This work of the Holy Spirit was surely the “baptism” of the Spirit they had been promised - an immersion in the power of the Spirit.

Afterward, the Holy Spirit’s miraculous work continued. *“Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles ...” (Acts 5:12)* *“And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem ...” (Acts 6:7)* The first gospel sermon on Pentecost moved 3,000 to respond in water baptism, and by this time, a year or two later, the number had **MULTIPLIED**. The growth of the early church was phenomenal, because of the miracles which were done by the power of the Holy Spirit, which brought attention and credibility to the gospel message.

When Philip the Evangelist goes up to Samaria preaching Christ, his preaching is accompanied by eye-opening and credible miracles. Even Simon the Sorcerer believed and was baptized (**Acts 8:4-13**), attesting that the miracles were real. A magician like Simon would know the difference between magic and reality.

However, miraculous powers were not imparted to others until the apostles Peter and John came from Jerusalem, *“who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:15-17)*

Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord's Kingdom.

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For Our Information

Joyce Venable is in the heart hospital in Little Rock. Bill is with her. His test was negative for covid.

Ruben Keisler is recovering from strep throat. Brenda Keisler has been suffering with severe headaches. They are isolating after testing for covid on Friday.

Jon Ross Simpson is in isolation following possible exposure in basketball.

Amy Simpson will have hip surgery in December.

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

Simon's error clarifies even more the different powers administered by the Holy Spirit. He wanted to buy, not just the gifts of the Spirit, but the ability to impart those gifts (**vss 18-19**), for which he was severely rebuked by Peter, who had promised the gift on Pentecost.

So, there are: 1) the baptism of the Spirit; 2) the miraculous gifts such as Philip had; 3) and the power to impart those gifts, which Peter and John had. Furthermore, each of these "manifestations" of the Holy Spirit was reserved for those selected by God. Not every Christian received a gift, certainly not Simon. (**Acts 8:21**) Not just any Christian could lay hands on another and impart a gift. And the baptism of the Spirit was a power promised to the apostles. (**Acts 4:1-8**)

Also, friends, there is an "indwelling" of the Spirit with each faithful Christian. "*You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*" (**Romans 8:9**) How the Spirit indwells a child of God is debated. The writer's contention is that the Spirit teaches (**1Cor. 2**) and leads (**Romans 8:14-16**), indwelling by agency and character.

However, the thing to consider at this point is that the indwelling of the Spirit does not guarantee miraculous powers or a direct operation of the Spirit to Christians. Otherwise, all Christians would be walking about as Spirit-led prophets. But even in the days of spiritual gifts, "*the spirits of the prophets (were) subject to the prophets.*" (**1Corinthians 14:32**) Those who had miraculous gifts were in control of their behavior so that their behavior could be "*decent and in order.*" (See **vss 26-31.**)

Another consideration; the miraculous work of the Spirit was temporary. The Corinthian Christians had misused their spiritual gifts out of envy rather than using gifts for love and decency. The correction from Paul compared their gifts to faith, hope, and love.

"Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away." (**1Corinthians 13:8-10**)

The gifts certainly had a part in the work of the early church. But the bigger parts of faith, hope, and love - all brought by the truth of the gospel today as then - were to be perfected (completed) by Bible teaching and the mature church.

Christ still accomplishes His will and His teaching through the Word, although separated by time, distance, language, and culture. As one is "*born of the Spirit,*" so is he "*begotten by the Word.*" (**John 3:3-5; James 1:18**) As the Holy Spirit moved the apostles on Pentecost, so is His same Word preached when we read **Acts 2**.

Noteworthy is that we are studying the Scripture to explain the work of the Holy Spirit, as we look to the Bible as the definitive reference for God's will and work. And, the Holy Spirit is the very One who brought us the Scripture.

"For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (**2Peter 1:21**, ESV) Along with a "running commentary" on the Spirit in his two letters, Peter refers to Paul's writings and "*the rest of the scripture,*" explaining that those who twist the Word of God do so to "*their own destruction.*" (**2Peter 3:15-16**)

The Spirit's work in the Holy Scripture is for reasonable people to study, for critical thinking, and for persuasion. Beyond the baptism of the Spirit, the gifts, the imparting of gifts; the Bible is the medium through which the Spirit indwells Christians.

"Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual." (**1Corinthians 2:12-13**)



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!