

# UPLOOK

NOV-DEC 2008

Assess the Need • Catch the Vision • Take the Challenge

## *The Indescribable Giver*

**DISCOVER  
YOUR GIFT**  
Jack Spender

**GIFTS OF  
GRACE**  
Robert McClurkin

**HE DOES ALL  
THINGS WELL**  
Carl Knott



## Enjoying & Employing Spiritual Gifts

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*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Jn. 3:16)*

## The Indescribable Giver

Seeking the greatest blessing

**W**e all know the joy a gift can bring. Children sometimes make gift lists (one of our sons once helpfully divided his list into "reasonable" and "unreasonable") in the hopes of things to come. As we grow, our idea of the perfect gift grows with us.

At some point, however, we discover a joy greater than receiving. As the Lord Himself said, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."* (Acts 20:35b) At first glance, this seems counter-intuitive. Surely receiving is to be preferred! Yet, we see the truth of the Lord's words everywhere we look.

There are those who come into a local church with the singular desire to receive. They avoid any kind of regular commitment or service. They choose only those meetings or events which suit them. One might think—on a natural level—that they would be the happiest people in the assembly since they constantly receive and never have to give. But quite the opposite is true. They are usually among the first (and most frequent) to criticize, complain, and take offense. If you want to find those who truly enjoy the assembly, you'll have to look somewhere else: to those who give.

What about in the family? Again, our age has no shortage of spouses whose primary goal in marriage is to be on the receiving end. Sacrifice for their wife or husband isn't high on their priority list. They can (and do!) list the ways their spouse should change in order to accommodate them. Requests, demands, hints, bargains, strategies—all designed to get their own way. And yet, no matter how much they "get," few people are more miserable.

Furthermore, the child who gets everything he wants; the child who has discovered that he can bend his parents (or his friends) to his will, provided he makes a big enough fuss—is he a happy child? Is he a blessed child? There's a reason we call such children "spoiled." Unless this spirit of receiving is quenched when he is young, he is in for a bleak, lonely, frustrating life.

No, the Lord Jesus was, as always, perfectly right when He told us that giving was the path to blessing and happiness. We understand this as soon as we love someone. Don't get me wrong—I'm deeply grateful for the various works of fine art that my children have made for me over the years—treasures that will never grace the Louvre. But my real joy is to give to them. Not necessarily in the terms of the possessions that our society is obsessed with. There are far more important gifts to give. But seeing their faces light up is a far greater present than anything that comes in wrapping paper. It truly is more blessed to give than to receive.

But is even giving the greatest good? Let us take one step higher. Above gifts, beyond giving, there is the great, incomparable Giver. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."* (Jas. 1:17)

Nobody has ever given like He has. Think of the recipients of His gift: we give to those we love; He gave to His enemies. Or the extent of His giving: His giving never ends—He showers us with *"grace upon grace"* (Jn. 1:16). But eclipsing all, there is the cost of His gift—a gift that outweighs heaven and earth: His only begotten Son. A gift to fill our hearts with joy and blessing for all eternity.

*"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"* (2 Cor. 9:15)

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- 2) by using the form on our website at:

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## Lessons from President-Elect Obama

Sometimes, bad times (materially) can be good times (spiritually).

**T**he election of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States should be a time of “great searchings of heart” for American believers. He has promised change and don’t be surprised if he delivers. Rated as the most liberal U.S. senator, with his V.P. not far behind, he will come to power with a Democrat-dominated Congress in his corner as well. But what lessons can he teach us?

First, he should cause us to rejoice in the sovereignty of God. Whatever powers he may wield as Chief Executive, he would do well to remember that, to paraphrase Paul, he has a Chief Executive in heaven. World affairs are not finally in the hands of men. It may be that the next four (or eight) years will be used by God to bring many in this nation to a place where they will lose hope in men and be ready to hear of real hope—“the hope of the gospel.”

Which brings us to his second lesson for us: Christians should not be looking to politicians to do what only the Savior can do. Many of those to whom has been committed the ministry of reconciliation have retreated into holy clubs (some not so holy) where entertainment and trendy preaching is intended to attract and convince unbelievers. This is not the way of the Master.

Real societal change is brought about one life at a time by an individual’s repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus. Only in this way does a new day dawn in the life of a soul. Soul winning is hard work, as commercial fishing and big-time farming are. Christians in the West need to abandon hope in the red pottage of world politics and the thin gruel of seeker-focused religious entertainment. After all, the healthiest churches seem to be thriving under the most oppressive regimes. It’s time for Christians serious about the Great Commission to reclaim our ambassadorial status, and get back into the harvest fields.

Senator Obama should also teach us something by his historic rise as the first black President of the United States. Many Americans, whatever their political affiliation, feel a certain closure in the fact that, in a fuller measure than ever before, the documents and the deeds are in agreement. But we are also reminded



Barack Obama speaking in Asheville, NC one month before the election.

Derrick Brasington/BigStock

that, according to the Barna Group, the most segregated hour in America is still Sunday morning at 10 o’clock. Is it not time for evangelicals to bring their documents and deeds into alignment? If secular politicians applaud such a step, what of disciples who affirm at least in theory, “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, ...there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Gal. 3:28)? Not that there should be coercion in the first instance, or unbiblical compromise in the second, but rather that they might have hearts as big as the God who “*will have all men to be saved*” (1 Tim. 2:4).

Let’s remember, too, that whether we voted or not, a subject on which the New Testament is silent, it is not silent about us praying for the man. Where ballots may have failed, prayers may yet turn the tide of history. It would not be the first time. —JABE NICHOLSON



Gospel.com

## Christian Media Pioneer Closes

BibleGateway.com and Gospel.com get a new caretaker

**G**ospel Communications Inc. (GCI), the developer of the **BibleGateway.com** web site will be closing in December due largely to financial reasons. The not-for-profit organization based in Muskegon, MI was started in 1950 as “Gospel Films.” In 1994 they added a video-loan program called “Free Media” to their list of ministry media, and began doing the impossible: showing evangelistic videos to millions of public school students across North America.

When the Internet was still in its infancy, GCI saw the need to form a division to assist Christian ministries in establishing their own web presence and provide free email and hosting (long before free web services like Gmail or Blogger existed). They also helped share collective knowledge about web technologies through conferences and newsgroups to help others make an impact online for Christ. Early on, Uplook Ministries joined the Gospelcom Ministry Alliance, which grew to a network of 300+ Christian ministries, all working in various ways to use the Net

for evangelism and ministry. GCI pioneered the use of the BibleGateway website and it has become a standard online for web-based Bible reference in many languages. More recently they developed **Gospel.com** to provide a place where Christian ministries could tag specialized content to help it reach a much wider audience. We were relieved to learn that these two helpful resources are not being closed at this time, but are in process of being transferred to a new owner, Zondervan, a Bible and book publisher also based in western Michigan.

*Uplook Ministries wants to publicly thank Gospel Communications for the provision of free email and web hosting, as well as key technical support we received over the years.*

Robby Richardson, Acting COO,  
Gospel Communications Inc.



John Nicholson

Gordon Loutz introduces  
Maureen “Moe” Girkins of Zondervan  
to the Gospelcom Alliance.



### JEFFERSON CITY MO CONFERENCE

The believers at Jefferson City Bible Chapel, Jefferson City, MO will host their second annual conference Jan 9-11. John Brower (VA) is the invited speaker. Accommodations and meals provided. **Contact:** Adam Horn ph: 573-694-9821 or Isaac Williams ph: 573-298-2499 email: [jcbiblechapel@gmail.com](mailto:jcbiblechapel@gmail.com) web: [www.jcbiblechapel.org](http://www.jcbiblechapel.org)

### FLORIDA CONFERENCE

A conference on Dispensationalism sponsored by Cornerstone Bible Chapel, 190 Patricia Avenue, Dunedin,

FL 34698 is planned for Jan 30-31. Sessions begin Friday evening at 7:00 PM, continuing Saturday at 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM with lunch provided.

**Contact:** Bill Davis ph: 727-466-0991 email: [billandkarend@earthlink.net](mailto:billandkarend@earthlink.net) Frank Partridge ph: 727-789-3036

### GET FOCUSED IN KANSAS

Northside Bible Chapel, 4510 E. 61st North, Wichita, KS, will host their annual FOCUS Young Adult Conference Feb 6-8. The scheduled speaker is Scott DeGroff (KS). **Contact:** Randy Horn ph: 316-832-9756 Tom Goodson ph: 316-744-3977

email: [thmsgdsn@yahoo.com](mailto:thmsgdsn@yahoo.com)

For housing, contact Josh or Angie Hughes ph: 316-213-7772

### SOUTHEASTERN WORKERS CONF.

The annual Conference will be held at Fairbluff Bible Chapel, Charlotte, NC beginning Monday evening Feb 16 until Wednesday the 18th at noon. The topic will be “The Great Commission” with Jabe Nicholson (MI) and Chris Schroeder (MI) speaking. **Contact:** Ken Gross, 2328 Laurel Lane, Augusta, GA 30904 ph: 706-738-5697 email: [chphn@bellsouth.net](mailto:chphn@bellsouth.net)

## FRONT LINES *continued*

### 2009 BIBLE BOOK CHALLENGE

ECS Ministries invites your assembly to fellowship with other assemblies across the country in studying the book of Ephesians, all at the same time, using the 12-lesson ECS course *The Letter to the Ephesians*. Register by Nov 30. For more details, visit [www.ecsministries.org](http://www.ecsministries.org) or e-mail: [ecsinfo@ecsministries.org](mailto:ecsinfo@ecsministries.org)

### COMMENDATIONS

The Christians at Believers Bible Chapel, Sault Ste. Marie, ON commend *Matthew and Carly Reese* to serve the Lord in a full time capacity. They have been actively involved in the Assembly since moving to Sault Ste. Marie seven years ago. They are burdened to continue to help in the local assembly and to reach the city and surrounding area with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Matt and Carly have three children, Mackenzie (6), Taylor (5) and Matt (2).

The saints of Fenton Crossing Bible Chapel, Fenton MO have commended *Micah and Christina Williams* to the Lord's service at Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp (THRBC). Micah and Christina have been active in fellowship and service in Kansas and THRBC. Their combined gifts and abilities in administration and nursing are well suited for this ministry.

The elders at Bethel Gospel Chapel in New Liskeard, ON are pleased to announce the commendation of *Emily Hartford* to the full-time service of the Lord at Tyndale Bible Seminary near Amsterdam, Holland. Emily has been used of the Lord at Tyndale as an administrative assistant since July 2007 and will continue in this ministry as the Lord leads.



Agapé Valley, Niagara Region

### NEW WORK IN RALEIGH NC

After several years of seeking the Lord's will to see a new work in the metro Raleigh area and a weekly Bible study in the target area, the saints of North Ridge Bible Chapel have commended five families to begin an assembly in the western Wake County North Carolina area. Please pray that the Lord would be magnified and many would come to know Him as Savior. The saints will initially be meeting from house to house for breaking of bread, prayer and family Bible hour. Individuals, students, or families seeking to fellowship in this area, please contact:

Roy Arrowsmith ph: 919 303-8692  
email: [reakda@gmail.com](mailto:reakda@gmail.com) or  
Jonathan Peck ph: 919 363-3443  
email: [jpeckdrc@bellsouth.net](mailto:jpeckdrc@bellsouth.net)

### NEW WORK IN MANITOBA, CA

On August 17th, 2008 about 15 Christians sat down to remember the Lord together in Winkler, MB. This meeting marked the official start of a new assembly in southern Manitoba. The assembly has chosen the name Garden Valley Christian Fellowship to identify them in the community. They meet at Red River College, 100-561 Main Street, Winkler, MB  
**Contact:** Kevin Minnett, 102 Mountain Street S. Morden, MB R6M 1H3  
ph: 204-362-6044  
email: [canadiakev@gmail.com](mailto:canadiakev@gmail.com)  
web: [www.John4fourteen.com](http://www.John4fourteen.com)



### MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

*Agape Valley Bible Day Camp*, located in the Niagara Peninsula in Southern Ontario, is looking for a Camp/Property Manager who would live year round in a house provided on the property. The chil-

dren's day camp season is during the months of July and August with a weekly attendance of 50 campers and a minimum of 10 staff volunteers. There is also a maple syrup operation and a honey production ministry that requires seasonal attention and work. The applicant would need to be recommended by his local assembly, have some practical administrative and hands-on skills with a willingness to be involved in directing other volunteers throughout the year. **Contact:** Tim Hartwick, 2601 Hwy 20E, Unit 2, Fonthill ON L0S 1E6 ph: 905-732-8051  
email: [agapevalley@agapevalley.ca](mailto:agapevalley@agapevalley.ca)  
web: [www.agapevalley.ca](http://www.agapevalley.ca)



*Horton Haven Christian Camp*, Chapel Hill, TN is looking for applicants to fill the following positions:

- An individual to serve as food services director. This is a year-round position with 10 weeks of summer camp and groups most weekends throughout the year.
- An individual to serve as Health Care Director. This requires a R. N. degree and is for 10 weeks of summer camp from May 24 – Jul 31.

**Contact:** Matt Phelan ph: 931-364-7656  
email: [Matt@Hortonhaven.org](mailto:Matt@Hortonhaven.org)  
Horton Haven Christian Camp,  
P. O. Box 276, Chapel Hill, TN 37034  
web: [www.hortonhaven.org](http://www.hortonhaven.org)



Camp Li-Lo-Li desires to fill the position of Camp Administrator. The camp is located in southwestern New York State. The applicant should have a local assembly commendation. Responsibilities include: promoting the camp's mission, managing a central office, interacting with governmental and accrediting agencies, guest group ministry, and communication with assemblies and individuals within camp's sphere of influence. **Contact:** Clyde Tyson, 3667 Spice Creek Road, Wheatfield NY 14120 ph: 716-693-1995 e-mail: [heirlooms@verizon.net](mailto:heirlooms@verizon.net) web: [www.camp-li-lo-li.com](http://www.camp-li-lo-li.com)

The Calendar Project provides calendars with Scripture verses in twelve languages. The goal of the Project is to enable missionaries to get Scripture verses into homes. The calendars are available to assembly missionaries and nationals via a network of volunteer workers throughout the U. S. and Canada. In 2007, more than 40,000 calendars were sent all over the world. New workers are always needed. Visit [www.calendarproject.info](http://www.calendarproject.info)

As a result of a prison ministry ongoing for 9 years in the Apple Valley of Southern CA, the Crabb's have sensed the Lord's leading to begin a small Bible school for no more than 12 hand-picked parolees from across North America. These must be saved and indicate a developing reality of the true Christian life and have a desire to rise above the plagues of sin to live and walk with Christ. Help is requested to be part of this effort for Him. **Contact:** Doug Crabb email: [goto@bigescape.info](mailto:goto@bigescape.info)

Parkside Ranch, located in Orford Quebec, Canada has a need for a full time cook, (single or couple). The

cook position includes 8 weeks of summer camps with weekend and weekly groups during the year and the responsibility of ordering food. web: [www.parksideranch.com](http://www.parksideranch.com) email: [registrar@parksideranch.com](mailto:registrar@parksideranch.com) Fax to: 819-868-6730 c/o Mr. Dean Somers

Bethel Bible Camp, Woolwine, VA requires a maintenance man with mechanical aptitude. He will need to be commended by his home assembly. Lodging is provided. **Contact:** John Hand ph: 276-930-4289 e-mail: [keptbyhim1936@va.net](mailto:keptbyhim1936@va.net) Bethel Bible Camp, P.O. Box 71, Woolwine, VA 24185



**REGISTRATION DEADLINE DECEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>**

To register after this date you must speak with the registrar directly for availability!



## The Gates Cracking

Offense or defense?

**M**atthew 16:18 is an interesting verse because most Roman Catholics misunderstand the first half of the verse and many Protestants misunderstand the second half of the verse. This verse tells us, “*And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*”

Rather than being hard on others, let’s consider our own misunderstandings. Many of us see the difficulties within the church. We see a world that is hostile to the church. We see evil triumph. As a result, we often misunderstand this verse. We take comfort that while the forces of hell rage against the church, they will not overcome us. This is certainly true, but it’s not what this verse is teaching. Matthew 16:18 says, “*I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” Gates do not attack.

Gates get attacked. The Lord Jesus Christ’s teaching is that the church will attack the very gates of hell, and the gates of hell will not prevail against us. To view this verse as if the church were on the defensive is to miss the point of the verse.

But we can misunderstand this verse further. We might think that we are about to overcome the forces of evil and establish Christ’s kingdom on earth. But this is to misunderstand our battle. Our battle is a spiritual one. Every time the gospel goes forth, every time a precious soul is delivered from death unto life, another successful attack has been made on the gates of hell.

Some suggest that the gospel message will spread over all the earth with all men eventually responding, and, in this way, Matthew 16:18 will be fulfilled. To our fellow brothers and sisters who think like this, our doctrines of pre-tribulationism, premillennialism, and dispensationalism might seem like doctrines

of defeat. After all, if the gates of hell will not prevail against the church, why would we believe in a pre-tribulation rapture?

By way of making an answer, let’s state that a pre-tribulation rapture does not represent a failure in God’s great program of the ages. Each dispensation ends in judgment, and this present dispensation of grace will be no exception: the tribulation is the concluding judgment to the dispensation of grace. We are mistaken to think that the world is necessarily going to get worse and worse until the Lord Jesus Christ takes the church to be with Himself. We know that the tribulation will be a time of great trouble, but the times immediately preceding the rapture do not necessarily need to be a time of worldwide difficulty for the church. The rapture is God’s merciful protection from the judgment at the end

of this dispensation and does not represent the failure of God’s plans. God’s great dispensational program remains perfectly on track.

So, practically speaking, what does this mean? It means that we do not get excited or lose hope based on worldly conditions. Whether governments establish righteous policies or whether persecution breaks out against the church, is not a cause for hope or disappointment for us. God’s program is still on track. We need not expect the world to get sufficiently bad for the Lord Jesus to return, because His return to the air could happen at any time. Setbacks do not surprise us. At the same time, we look expectantly for revival and for great moves of the Holy Spirit in saving many souls. We expect to see the church fighting and suffering and yet taking the gates of hell, until the dispensation of grace ends in a judgment on unbelievers and the Lord Jesus Christ takes us to be with Himself. —SHAWN ABIGAIL





## Gifts of Grace

Four words and four principles

Wherever spiritual gift is in exercise, Christ will be set apart as Lord, and God's people will be edified—built up in their most holy faith.

There are in the New Testament four words that describe the gifts God has given to the church. First of all, they are called “spiritual gifts,” reminding us that they are given by the Spirit of God and can only be used rightly in the spiritual realm. They are called “gifts of grace,” and that means that they are given by the unmerited favor of God. Then they are called “ministries,” and by that word it is inferred that they are intended for the blessing of others. They are also called “powers,” because they are employed by the Spirit of God to accomplish the high purposes for which they are given.

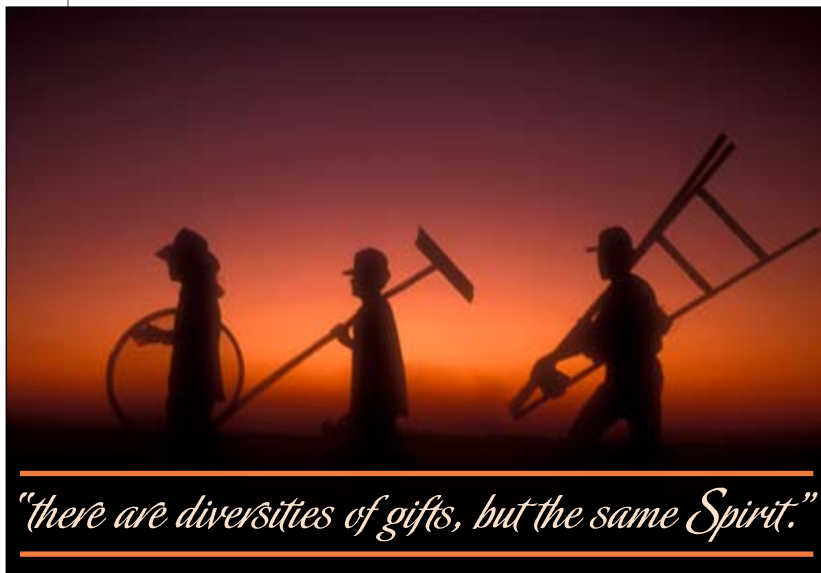
In verse 5, “*There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.*” There is a variety of service, and yet behind that variety there is one Lord. Then in verse 6, “*There are diversities of operations.*” There is a variety of ways of going about our ministry. So there is a variety of gift, and a variety of ministry, and a variety of operations; but behind that variety there is the one Spirit, the one Lord, and the one God.

There are two earmarks of faithful ministry. The first is in verse 3: It will always sanctify Christ as Lord. The second is in verse 7: It will always be to the edifying of God's people. Wherever spiritual gift is in exercise, Christ will be set apart as Lord, and God's people will be edified—built up in their most holy faith.

Now let us look at four principles that operate in the body of Christ. The first is that every member of the body has some gift through which he might function in the body of Christ. Look at verses 15 to 18: “*If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? ... But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him.*” In this variety of gift, the first principle that operates in the body of Christ is this: every member has some gift so that each might function for God where God places us. Let us write over that principle: **no laziness.**

The next principle in this chapter is that there is a variety of gift. Look at verse 17. The body is not one great eye. It is not one great hand. The body of Christ is made up of many members. There is variety of gift in the assembly. Let us write over that principle: **no monotony.** There is not the monotony of

Look at the divine Trinity as they link themselves with spiritual gift: the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4); the same Lord (v. 5); and the same God (v. 6). Thus the divine Trinity enriches the church with gift. We are told that “*there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*” That is, there is a variety of gift and that variety of gift is given to meet a variety of need.



*“there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.”*

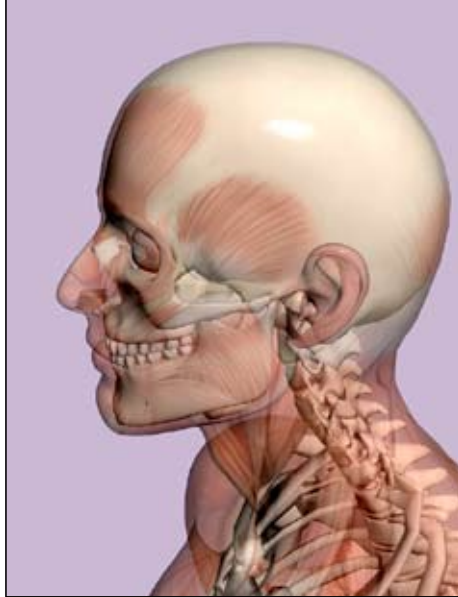
## FIRST THOUGHTS *continued*

a one-man ministry—not one great eye—but a variety of gift, so the variety of need will be met.

Look at another principle in verse 21: *“And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee.”*

Let us write over that principle: ***no independency***. All gift is necessary so that God’s people and God’s assembly may appreciate the riches of God for the enrichment of each other. There is independency in government—every assembly stands upon its own base and is responsible to God alone, but there is an interdependency in fellowship. We are all the complement of each other.

But now we see another principle in verses 25 and 27: *“That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another ... Now ye are the body of Christ.”*



That is, you at Corinth are part of this great whole. We write over this principle: ***no jealousy***. God has so fitted the body of Christ that we all need each other.

This variety of gift is baptized in the sea of love in chapter 13, and it rises to resurrection ground to function under the superintendency of the divine Spirit of God. 📌

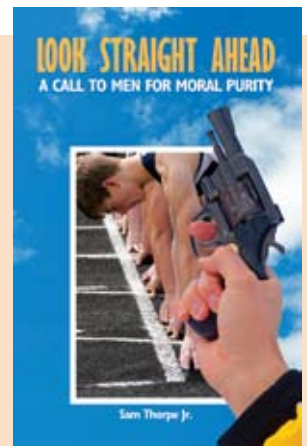
## *Look Straight Ahead* Written by Sam Thorpe, Jr.

Everyday Publications is pleased to announce the publication of a new book: *Look Straight Ahead — A Call To Men for Moral Purity*. This timely book addresses a critical issue for Christian men in today’s world. Sam writes:

“People face many temptations, especially in the area of moral purity. One of the most appealing lures to the fallen flesh is sexual lust. Pornography has become increasingly brazen, readily visible to the unguarded eye of those who are not even seeking it. It has become one of the most successful weapons against the child of God. Our church families are plagued with failed marriages as the enemy has rushed in to ruin the testimony of saints. There have been casualties among public leaders, the last to be suspected of such moral sin. This all-too-common tragedy has burdened my heart to exhort and encourage men in particular to echo the call of the psalmist as he stood before his Lord and cried out, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.’ (Ps. 51:10)”

Amen! EPI is thrilled to be able to come alongside brother Sam to publish this much-needed message among God’s people. We trust that God will use this book in a mighty way to edify men regarding moral purity.

This 152-page book will normally retail for \$7.12, however, through the end of 2008, it will be offered at an introductory price of \$5.00. Churches ordering this book will be eligible for a 40% discount off the retail price. Get the latest news, shop for books, and sign up to receive our quarterly newsletter, *Impressions*, and our daily prayer guide, *Pray Every Day for Everyday*, at [www.everydaypublications.org](http://www.everydaypublications.org)



## The Use of Spiritual Gifts

Maximizing our effectiveness

Are we using our gifts in the right spirit? Take this inner man checkup to heart.

The common expression “It’s not what you say, but how you say it” reminds us of a key biblical principle on the use of our spiritual gifts. The apostle Paul, when writing to the saints in Rome, expressed this same thought. Note Romans 12:8, “...*he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.*” Note the previous caution in verse 3 of this chapter where each of us is told “*not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly.*” God not only desires that we exercise our gifts, but that we do so with the right attitude. In other words, we are to use our spiritual gifts in the right “spirit.”

### The Spirit and the flesh

This brings up an interesting question: Can one use his spiritual gift in the wrong spirit? The Scriptures give us the answer: yes, we can. Gifts can be exercised with the wrong attitude, energized by the fallen flesh and not by the Spirit of God within us. The epistle of 1 Corinthians demonstrates this abuse of gifts. The Corinthians were motivated by carnality and selfish interest. Note how the context of chapter 12 sets the stage for the powerful

verses of chapter 13. Selfish attitudes regarding our spiritual gifts must be recognized and replaced with a heart motivated by love. The first three verses of chapter 13 drive home this principle. Paul states that when public speaking, prophecy, and giving are exercised—even when exercised to their ultimate level—they are worthless without love. Biblical love is inherently selfless and sacrificial.

We are now at the core principle for the use of our spiritual gifts: The gifts of the Spirit must be exercised in accordance with the fruit of the Spirit. This fruit is the very character of Christ. Just as the gifts are listed for us in at least four locations in Scripture, so is the fruit. In addition to Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit is found in Ephesians 4:22-5:11, Colossians 3:5-15, and James 3:13-18. In each case, the fruit of the Spirit is contrasted with the works of the flesh. This is significant because our natural temptation is to act out of the flesh. Paul gives us an example of this in Philippians 1:14-17, where preaching is exercised out of false and fleshly motives instead of out of love.

### Given, not earned

The term “gifts” should help us have the proper attitude in their use. These abilities are from God; their distribution has nothing to do with us. Therefore, the profitable exercise of gift does not exalt the human instrument but only the Giver of the gifts. We cannot take any personal glory in the use of our gifts and still be motivated by love, for love does not seek its own glory. We have been “gifted” by God’s grace. It is entirely His favor toward us. How much more should we use these gifts as He has asked us to, waiting on His Spirit’s power and enabling to function through these gifts.

Recognizing this will eliminate the wrong attitudes that often permeate our use of the gifts. We will no longer be jealous of others’ gifts. We will not be discontent with our own gifts. We will not allow our gifts to lie dormant or abused in their practice. The bottom line is that we should be humbled by God’s gift to us and seek to exalt Him by using the gifts in a way



## FAITHFUL STEWARDS *continued*

that reflects the fruit of the Spirit. Remembering that the gifts are entirely of Him should cause us to wait on His power from on high to profitably exercise them.

### An account of our stewardship

We often wonder what Christ will judge us for at the Judgment Seat of Christ. We know that our sin is not before Him—He has put all our sin out of His sight and out of His remembrance by His blood. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: we will be judged by Christ—not for sin, but with regards to the motives, attitudes, and quality of our service. I could imagine a line of questioning from the Lord on this subject as I stand before Him.

- Did you identify which spiritual gifts I gave you?
- Did you develop those gifts to their fullest extent for the most profit to My body?
- Did you exercise these gifts for your glory or for My glory?
- Did you use these gifts in a spirit of love for the saints?
- Did you exercise these gifts in your own strength or wait on My strength to flow through you?

When writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul gave some further principles related to the use of spiritual gifts in chapter 4. Verse 16 of this section presents the metaphor of the human body, where every joint supplies its support and function to make the body whole and healthy. I appreciate the language used here of each joint, or each believer in the body, supplying not receiving. The focus of spiritual gifts is the edification of the other saints. Thus, as we gather with the local body of believers, our attitude is to be that of giving, and not getting. What a difference it would be if each child of God ministered to the local assembly using a developed spiritual gift, motivated by love, and seeking the edification of the other saints.

### A final lesson

As a young man in my mid-twenties, I was asked to lead the singing at our Easter Conference in our local assembly in Charleston, South Carolina. The speaker was John Bramhall of Charlotte, North Carolina. As a young



boy raised in New England, I had heard Mr. Bramhall preach many times and was eagerly awaiting his uplifting ministry that week-end. We sat together in the front row ready to start the meeting. As I reviewed the hymns we would sing, I noticed that Mr. Bramhall appeared to be uneasy, as if he were very nervous. He seemed unsettled, repeatedly crossing his legs and arms, occasionally opening his Bible and then shutting it again, only to pick it up once more. I leaned over to Mr. Bramhall and asked if he felt okay. He responded, “I’m always full of butterflies before I speak, but, once behind the pulpit, facing the saints, my heart is filled with peace as I open my mouth and begin.” John was in seventies at this time, a seasoned, veteran preacher with a finely-developed spiritual gift. The lesson I learned that day has followed me through life: No matter how mature you may be, or how developed your spiritual gift may be, it must always be exercised with a spirit of dependence upon God for His enabling power and wisdom. Human experience and self-confidence will leave our ministry and service for Christ empty and unedifying.

Remember: our spiritual gifts are gifts from God, to be exercised out of the fruit of the Spirit who also provides the enabling power for the edification of the body of Christ. We are all accountable to God as stewards of His grace for the biblical use of our spiritual gifts. The attitude and motivation involved in the use of our gifts will be revealed in eternity as that of wood, hay, and stubble, or gold, silver, and precious stones. May the apostle’s words to the saints in Corinth challenge our hearts as well: “*But let every man take heed **how** he buildeth thereupon*” (1 Cor. 3:10b). 📖

## Temporary Spiritual Gifts

“... when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.”

**The supernatural gifts of the early church age have now, by divine intention, disappeared from the scene.**

In the early stages of church history, as recorded in the Acts, the ministry of the apostles was accredited by accompanying supernatural demonstrations of power—the dispensing of healing, speaking in tongues, etc.—as the Holy Spirit continued the work that the Lord Jesus had begun in this world. Now, it is evident to most that none of these spectacular manifestations are current in our day, and some have questioned why. Some have said that if we claim to follow apostolic precedent, we should be demonstrating the spectacular powers of the Spirit in support of the gospel that we preach. We intend to show that this thinking is in error and that the supernatural gifts of the early church age have now, by divine intention, disappeared from the scene. We will also identify which gifts are permanent in their nature.

### The temporary nature of the sign gifts

**The dramatic reduction in gifts** The chart shows the three lists of gifts given in the New Testament. It should be noted that the number of gifts reduces significantly within a very short time, as follows:

Corinthian listing in A.D. 56	13	Given by the Holy Spirit.
Romans listing in A.D. 58	7	Given by God.
Ephesians listing in A.D. 60	5	Given by the Lord.

This reduction is highly significant and demonstrates that the apostle’s teaching that the spectacular gifts would pass away (1 Cor. 13:8) had become a historical reality. Indeed it should be noted that the spectacular, supernatural sign gifts are unique to 1 Corinthians 12 and do not appear elsewhere in the New Testament epistles. This indicates that such gifts passed away in the early stages of the church’s history, and we offer comment to that effect as follows.

**Evidence from Acts and the epistles** It is noteworthy that the early chapters of Acts show a great deal of spectacular activity under the direction of the Holy Spirit, but, in the latter chapters of the book, these manifestations are notably absent. For example, nothing more is heard about tongues after chapter 19. Also, apart from the listing in 1 Corinthians 12, which belongs to the early phase of church history, there is no mention of the spectacular gifts whatsoever in the epistles. Sick people were



healed by the apostles in Acts, but when Paul writes to Timothy, he exhorts him *“use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and for thine oft infirmities.”* Writing to the Philippians, the apostle refers to the beloved Epaphroditus and the fact that he had been sick (Php. 2:27). Yes, Epaphroditus was “sick nigh unto death,” but there was no instantaneous intervention that made him well. It appears the sickness ran its course and, “in the mercy of God,” he recovered. We think also of the experience of the apostle, standing before some of the greatest men in the world at that time, and what an impact could have been made by some spectacular demonstration of the power of God. But all this is absent, and Paul suffers imprisonment, hardship, and death for the sake of the Gospel.

### **Evidence from 1 Corinthians 13**

*“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part”* (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

After identifying the gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle makes it quite clear that these spectacular manifestations would serve a purpose and then would pass away. He writes, *“But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”* Given the context in which this statement is made, it would indicate that the “coming of that which is perfect” refers not to the future eternal state, but to the completion of the canon of Scripture. By way of illustration, the apostle appeals to the natural development from child to manhood. There are things that children enjoy in the early stages of their development, but we would not expect that kind of behavior to continue into manhood. He writes, *“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”* He is clearly saying that these spectacular sign gifts belonged to the early development stage of the church.

### **Evidence from Hebrews**

The writer to the Hebrews also confirms the temporary nature of these supernatural gifts when he wrote. *“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”* (Heb. 2:3-4) It must be noted that the writer speaks of these spectacular gifts in the past tense. He is looking back to the early apostolic age and confirming that these sign gifts were indeed given of God, but that they are not current.



### **The evidence of our own experience**

On the day of Pentecost, the international multitude gathered at Jerusalem heard the apostles speak to every man in his own language. What is our experience today? In our day, missionaries going to foreign countries do not receive the gift of tongues; they must go through the difficult and agonizing task of learning a language. This underlines the folly of what is happening in our day in the so-called tongues and healings movement. Tongues are exercised in a context where the hearers have no ability to understand what is being said and where someone professes to be

able to interpret, but to what purpose? It seems that the whole exercise is intended to excite the emotions rather than increase one's knowledge of the Lord. Also, the gift of healing, which some profess to have, is always exercised in a carefully-staged environment where people are susceptible to the hypnotic charisma of the healer. It is noteworthy that these healers never offer to perform in the reality of some hospital ward, where their claims to healing can be scientifically verified. No, in our times, people who get sick resort to the care of a physician and should not look for some spectacular intervention as being the norm. These are realities that cannot be denied.

### The foundational gifts

*"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation" (1 Cor. 3:10). "...and [ye] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20).* The gifts of apostles and prophets are presented as foundational, meaning that they belonged to the early church age when fundamental church doctrine was being established for future generations. Both of these gifts are mentioned in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians 4. Being foundational, the gifts of apostles and prophets fulfilled a vital role in the establishing of the church. Once the church was founded, these foundational gifts passed away. However, while apostles and prophets are no longer present, their ministry to the church has been given permanency in the completed canon of Scripture.

In our consideration of this subject we offer the following conclusions:

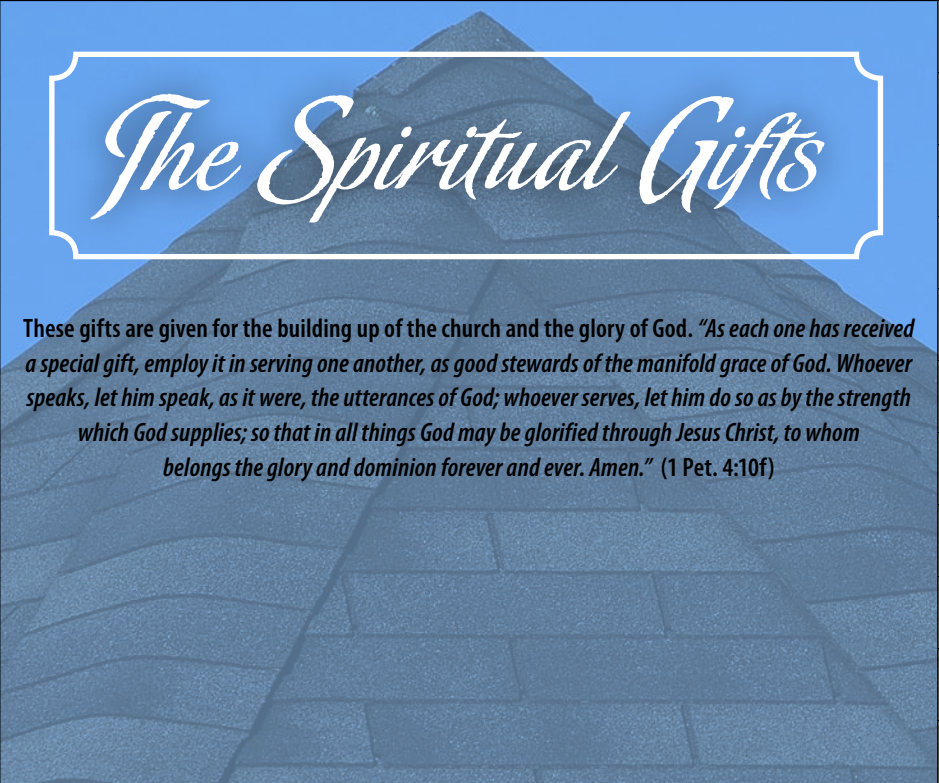
- Spectacular and supernatural manifestations were exercised by the apostles in the Acts.
- These manifestations decrease and eventually end altogether as the book progresses.



- Within the scope of four or five years from the birth of the church, the number of gifts being exercised is dramatically reduced.
- None of the sign gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 are mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. This endorses the apostle Paul's teaching that such things would pass away.
- The indisputable evidence of our experience is that such gifts are not in operation today. Missionaries going to the foreign field must learn languages. The sick must resort to the physicians. The Lord's servants suffer hardship and privation.

We conclude that spectacular and supernatural sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, as seen in the early days of the church, were only introductory and are not in operation today. We recognize the presence of permanent gifts given to men for the benefit of the church.

One is only too conscious that the treatment of this complex and vital subject has been limited in its scope, and that a much more exhaustive exploration of this subject is merited. We trust that these remarks will at least provide some pointers that can be pursued in further study. ⓘ

SCOPE	SPHERE		GIFT
Permanent	Private and/or public	 <p><i>The Spiritual Gifts</i></p> <p>These gifts are given for the building up of the church and the glory of God. <i>"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."</i> (1 Pet. 4:10f)</p>	Evangelists
	Private		Shepherds
			Teaching / teachers
			Exhortation
			Leadership
			Service
			Giving
			Mercy
			Faith
			Helps
			Administration

SCOPE	SPHERE		GIFT
Temporary	Foundational gifts	A building has only one foundation, and it is laid at the beginning of its construction. Similarly, the church has been <i>"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets"</i> (Eph. 2:20). God used these men to establish the church. Once the foundation of the church was laid, these gifts ceased.	Apostles
	Revelation gifts	While awaiting the completed canon of Scripture, the early churches required another means of divine guidance. These gifts met that need, but ceased once the Scriptures were complete. <i>"For we know in part. . . but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away."</i> (1 Cor. 13:9f)	Prophecy / prophets
			The word of knowledge
			The word of wisdom
			Distinguishing of spirits
	Sign gifts	God provided these gifts in order to authenticate the message and messengers of the New Testament. <i>"God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will."</i> (Heb. 2:4) See also 2 Corinthians 12:12.	Healings
			Miracles
			Languages (tongues)
			Interpretation of languages (tongues)



DEFINITION	GREEK WORD(S)	REFERENCES
able to clearly communicate the gospel and teach other Christians to do so as well	<i>euaggelistēs</i>	Eph. 4:11
caring for the sheep – individually and collectively	<i>poimēn</i>	Eph. 4:11
the coherent explanation and application of the Word of God	<i>didaskalia / didaskalos</i>	1 Cor. 12:28, 29; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11
using the Scriptures to encourage God's people and provoke them to good works	<i>paraklēsis</i>	Rom. 12:8
directing God's people, primarily by example, but also by word	<i>proistēmi</i>	Rom. 12:8
ministering to others	<i>diakonia</i>	Rom. 12:7
the wise and timely redistribution of the Lord's resources	<i>metadidōmi</i>	1 Cor. 13:3; Rom. 12:8
supernatural compassion for others	<i>eleeō</i>	Rom. 12:8
supernatural trust in God and His ways, stimulating others to trust Him more	<i>pistis</i>	1 Cor. 12:9; 13:2
assisting others in their service and work	<i>antilēmpsis</i>	1 Cor. 12:28
guiding or steering God's people, often in an inconspicuous or private manner	<i>kubernēsis</i>	1 Cor. 12:28

DEFINITION	GREEK WORD(S)	REFERENCES
those men divinely commissioned to set the infant churches in order	<i>apostolos</i>	1 Cor. 12:28, 29; Eph. 4:11
revelation imparted directly from God to the prophet	<i>prophēteia / prophētēs</i>	1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 29; 13:2, 8; Rom. 12:6; Eph. 4:11
knowledge imparted to the speaker directly and miraculously by God	<i>logos gnōsis</i>	1 Cor. 12:8; 13:2, 8
wisdom imparted to the speaker directly and miraculously by God	<i>logos sophia</i>	1 Cor. 12:8
the ability to unerringly discern the spirit (human, divine, or demonic) responsible for a speaker's words	<i>diakrisis pneuma</i>	1 Cor. 12:10
the ability to instantly heal physical and mental ailments, including death; requires no faith on the part of the recipient	<i>iama</i>	1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30
spectacular demonstrations of God's power	<i>dunamis</i>	1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 29
instantly speaking in an actual human language that was previously unknown to the speaker	<i>glōssa</i>	1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 30; 13:1, 8
revealing to listeners the meaning of a message in tongues	<i>hermēneia glōssa</i>	1 Cor. 12:10, 30

Content supplied by W. H. Burnett, Steve Gonder and Jabe Nicholson



## Synthetic Life

### Unintelligent design?

Is it possible to make life from scratch using just its raw materials? After all, living and non-living things are made from the same atoms and elements—they differ only in the quantities and arrangements of those atoms. A recent History Channel (THC) program called “How Life Began” leaves the impression that life “formed” relatively easily based on standard chemistry. If this is true, why not deliberately make a living cell in the laboratory using standard methods and readily available biological molecules? Take as many living cells as you want and break them apart into their component proteins, fats, nucleic acids, and inorganic salts. Then reassemble them into at least one living cell. Why not? Because it turns out that making synthetic life is not so easy after all. But if it was easy for random chance and basic chemistry to produce life originally, then why is it so hard for highly intelligent and experienced researchers to produce synthetic life on purpose?

To date, no one has succeeded in making synthetic life, but there are several research groups working toward this goal.<sup>1</sup> One group hopes to make a “minimal” living cell by starting with a “simple” bacterial cell and cutting down its 528 genes to the bare minimum for survival. Other groups are starting from scratch and hoping to assemble something that just meets the definition of life, which itself is controversial.<sup>2</sup> Along the way, they will certainly learn more about how cells work, while others hope to gain insight into what “primitive” cells may have been like.

What is the reasoning behind these efforts to create synthetic life? The premise is that if life can be constructed by just putting parts together in the correct way, then life is not really special. It is a lucky accident of chemistry, and there is no need to suggest that a Creator was behind life in the beginning. Using this reasoning, building a Ford Model T car using parts out

of modern Ford cars means Henry Ford never existed, and the original Model T just made itself out of random metal parts.<sup>3</sup> If one day there appeared on your driveway a new Ford pickup truck, is the best explanation of how

it got there that it simply made itself? This is what Isaac Newton once told an atheist friend who wondered aloud who had made the exquisite model

of the solar system in Newton’s study. “No one made it” Newton said. “It made itself”. The absurdity of Newton’s point is clear. Someone had to have made the model solar system, the pickup truck, and, yes, life.

The History Channel program ends with the admission that it doesn’t really matter if we can’t figure out how to make life synthetically after years of dedicated, intelligent effort. Life may have formed spontaneously in space and been seeded on earth by meteors, or the “Earth” must have figured out how to make life on its own because, after all, we’re here aren’t we?”

—MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.

**Should scientists eventually succeed in creating “life” in a laboratory, what will they have proven? That life can be created by an intelligent being. Which is what Christians have maintained all along.**



1 P. Barry, “Life From Scratch,” *Science News Online*, vol. 173, no. 2 (week of Jan. 12, 2008), <http://www.sciencenews.org/>  
2 M. Madiagan and J. Martinko, *Brock Biology of Microorganisms*, 11th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005).  
3 J.C. Lennox, *God’s Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford, England: Lion, 2007).

## Discovering Your Spiritual Gift

Finding a focus

**“As every man hath received a special gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Pet. 4:10)**

Once upon a time, two friends were building their houses on adjacent lots. One house made good progress, but the other seemed to struggle. Concerned for his friend, the man whose house was now getting its roof put on made a visit next door. When he asked how things were going, the neighbor replied, “We’re encouraged, but you know, it’s slow going as our workmen have only three tools in their tool box.”

This is a picture of some churches today. They know the Lord is building His church, and they have willing workers, but they are ignorant of the wonderful tools He has given to move the work along. The tools, of course, are spiritual gifts. Here is a simple definition: “Spiritual gifts are divine enablements given for service.”



Some Christians have become suspicious of the whole subject of spiritual gifts because of abuses. Certainly there can be no substitute for the fruit of the Spirit in the life of the believer. But the fact remains that the Lord Jesus gave gifts to His church and expected them to be used. I am often amazed at how many Christians can quote Romans 12:1-2 about presenting their bodies and being renewed in their minds, but they never observe that, *in the very next*

*verses*, the subject is spiritual gifts. Yet the presenting and renewing instruction is linked to serving in the power of the Spirit using the provisions supplied by the risen Christ.

### Some points to remember

Before we consider some points that can help you discover your own gift, there are a couple things we must keep in mind, because spiritual gifts (like all tools) can be dangerous if misused.

Spiritual gifts operate in the realm of faith, so we must believe they exist and that God gives them. They are not ornaments for showing off but tools by which we can bless others. Some gifts are difficult to understand, so don’t get hung up on arguments about which ones no longer exist. There are enough gifts available to get the job done! Also remember that humility is involved (Rom. 12:3). It is not the claim you make about your abilities, but the blessing perceived by those who have been served that counts. Gifts entail self-denial and hard work. Do I have a servant’s heart and hands? Finally, spiritual gifts are love gifts given by the Lord Jesus to His people, and, although different, all have the underlying goal of promoting unity in the body (“profit” in 1 Corinthians 12:7 is literally “carrying together”).

### Finding your gift

1. Know the gifts and relevant passages. They’re easy to remember: 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12; Ephesians 4; 1 Peter 4. Altogether, about 20 different gifts are listed.
2. Pray for wisdom and guidance to identify your gift (Jas 1:5).
3. Fellowship in a New Testament church. You will grow faster in a church that depends on the involvement of all the people and gives opportunities to young believers than in a church where the “laity” are spectators.
4. Seek the guidance of older believers. Rarely will one have a gift that is not eventually seen by mature believers. Elders are called



Wouldn't it be wonderful to see God's people more excited about serving...?

the stewards of God (Titus 1:7). Part of good stewardship is to identify and use resources (people and their gifts) wisely.

5. When you see an area of need in the church, try to meet it. Gifts are discovered and developed among active believers.
6. God gives the gift but we are responsible to exercise it. Gifts are like muscles: they respond to working out.
7. Maintain an attitude of honesty. Both pride and false humility are unacceptable attitudes in servants. We must learn to distinguish between the blessing that comes from the exercise of gift and superficial compliments of well-meaning people.
8. Have patience. "A man's gift maketh room for him..." (Prov. 18:16). It is not necessary to push open the door. Faithful service is the greater part; identifying your particular gift is the lesser part.
9. Identify areas where you probably have no gift. Do I think I have a gift in an area of administrations, but my affairs are always in a mess?
10. What gift do you desire? A gift lying dormant may be producing desires to be released in service.

### A word to elders

No article on helping people discover their gift would be complete without a reminder that gifts need a context in which to operate. This is where the assembly—the training place of the spiritual family—comes in. Here are four suggestions to help elders take a positive and helpful approach to the subject.

**1. Be open to accepting help from others.** In Ephesians 4:1-16, Paul's supplies some wonderful insights on the matter of gifts. A crucial part comes in vv. 11-12, where we learn that one of the responsibilities of gifted men such as the evangelist, the pastor, and the teacher is "for the perfecting [equipping] of the saints for the work of the ministry." In other words, these men don't monopolize the ministry; they train the saints to participate through the use of their own gifts.

**2. Preserve flexibility.** If we remember that gifts reside in unique individuals with different natural talents, personalities, life backgrounds, etc., it will keep us from looking for something stereotypical and delight us with great variation in expressions of service. In addition, multiple gifts may reside in the same person as many examples in Scripture prove, making the result all the more interesting.

**3. Pursue genuineness.** It is no help to the individual or the church when someone "fakes" a gift he does not have. Often this occurs because those who should be serving are lazy or asleep spiritually. Assemblies are the ideal environment for the practical exercise of the priesthood of the believer, since there is no professional clergy with its "all-the-gifts-in-one-person" approach.

**4. Think outside the box.** Suppose someone told you that a fine Christian man was relocating to your area and had earned a reputation of being an excellent Bible teacher. Would there be opportunity for him to function in your assembly? Most places I know would quickly answer "Yes!"

Now substitute each spiritual gift, one by one, for the word "teacher" and see if you would have the same enthusiasm! If not, here is a fruitful topic for discussion among elders. How can we take full advantage of all the resources God has given for the building up of His church? You may not agree about every gift listed, but wouldn't it be wonderful to see God's people more excited about serving because there are opportunities with which they can identify personally?

This subject reminds me of a verse in Proverbs about two barns—one with and one without an ox (14:4). You cannot expect the blessings of strength and hard work from the ox, yet insist on a neat, tidy barn! Spiritual gifts will bring many blessings but also many challenges. However, those who have taken a practical approach to the subject will testify that they would not go back to a sterile barn for anything! 📌

# The Gift of Tongues

Sense out of confusion

The gift of tongues was one of the sign gifts: gifts designed to show the legitimacy of the gospel to the Jews.

The gift of tongues is one of the most controversial and misunderstood gifts found in the New Testament. We are first introduced to this gift in Acts 2, where it says, “*And they [the disciples] were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*” As we read further in the chapter, we find that speaking in tongues was not speaking in some sort of “heavenly language” that sounded like gibberish. It was the ability to speak in actual human languages previously unknown to the speaker (vv. 7-11).

The gift of tongues was one of the sign gifts: gifts designed to show the legitimacy of the gospel to the Jews. The Jewish people had rejected Christ, and the leaders were

trying to suppress the message of the disciples. God used tongues and other sign gifts to authenticate the disciples’ message and to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 28:11: “*For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people*” (see 1 Cor. 14:21). Tongues, then, were a sign to unbelieving Jews (1 Cor. 14:22).

It also had another very practical purpose. As demonstrated in Acts 2, the Jewish people were scattered over many nations but

would come to Jerusalem for certain feasts such as the Passover and the feast of Pentecost. Through the gift of tongues, these Jews were all able to hear the gospel in their own language and dialect. This would be comparable to my listening to someone who had never previously learned or spoken English, but who could now instantly speak not only fluent English, but fluent English with a southern twang and ver-

naular. (Which means words like “y’all” would flow naturally.) What an incredible miracle!

I find this concept fascinating. Because of men’s rebellion and conceit, God divided the people of earth at Babel by confusing their languages. Now, after the work of Christ on the cross, He reaches out by giving individuals the ability to supernaturally speak to people of other tongues, thus bringing all men back together.

## Tongues in Corinth

The gift of tongues, as described in Acts, was given as a sign and for the spread of the gospel, particularly to the Jewish people visiting Jerusalem from many nations. Today, however, there is some debate as to what the tongues were that we read about in 1 Corinthians 14. Many see them as the same ability described in Acts 2. Others view the tongues of 1 Corinthians 14 as specifically referring to the ability to speak Hebrew: the language of the Old Testament, which is used to convey many of God’s teachings in its picturesque structure; a language that was nearly dead by this point. Those in the modern day signs and wonders movement hold a different view: they believe tongues to be some heavenly language spoken by the Spirit through an individual.

We hold to the first view: tongues is simply the ability to speak a human language other than the speaker’s learned language. There is no warrant for believing that a new and completely different kind of tongues appeared in 1 Corinthians 14. But in reality, the main point is not knowing what the actual language was. The crucial point is that we see how the Holy Spirit worked among the early church and how spiritual gifts are used to further the work of the Lord.



Walkway in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem.

## STRAIGHT TALK *continued*



Remains of the temple  
to Apollo at Corinth

### The biblical use of tongues

In 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul lays out guidelines for the use of spiritual gifts, particularly tongues. We see from these chapters that the Corinthians were using their gifts for purposes other than the work of the Lord, and it was becoming a matter of pride. This is why in chapter 13 we are given the classic work on love and how it should govern our daily lives and service. Love should be the overriding principle in the use of our spiritual gifts.


It is interesting when we compare the way “tongues” are used today with how Paul described them and their appropriate use. We quickly see that this is not the same gift that the Bible talks about. The way “tongues” are taught and practiced among the signs and wonders movement today is nothing like what Paul describes.

In verse 4 of chapter 14, we read that the individual speaking in tongues usually understands what he is saying in the tongue. In verse 28, we are told that the person should remain quiet if there is no one to interpret, and verse 27 encourages those speaking in tongues to speak “by course.” Furthermore, we are instructed that the women should be in silence (v. 34). The chapter concludes by admonishing the believers to “*Let all things be done decently and*

*in order.*” Most importantly, we are taught that tongues was one of many spiritual gifts given among believers and not everyone received this gift. Compare those scriptural guidelines to what is often practiced today and you will notice that today’s norm is almost the opposite of Scripture.

### Tongues shall cease

In considering the temporary nature of the gift of tongues, it is helpful to notice one more point. 1 Corinthians 13:8 states “*whether there be tongues, they shall cease.*” It doesn’t say, “they shall go away for a couple of thousand years and come back.” It says they will cease. It is clear from history that, as the canon of Scripture was nearing completion, all of the sign gifts, including tongues, faded away. They had a purpose and that purpose was completed.

What we learn from the gift of tongues is that God works in marvelous ways to accomplish His purposes. We also see that we, as believers, must yield to the Holy Spirit and use the gifts we are given for the glory of God and not for any selfish gain or boasting. It is marvelous to think how God graciously enables us. We who are so inconsistent and self-centered are entrusted with special gifts. To properly utilize them we must exercise love and self-control and submit ourselves to the guidelines of the Word of God. 

**What we learn from the gift of tongues is that God works in marvelous ways to accomplish His purposes.**

## Workers Together with Him

God has chosen to work through men and women (often quite obscure ones at that!) and He has done this in preference to carrying out His purposes independently. We who are God’s servants are therefore called with the high honor of entering into partnership with Him. The whole Trinity is vitally interested. The Father’s work is carried on as the Lord Jesus uses the gifts given to His servants and these gifts come from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

– R. Forrest-Hall, “The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Service,”  
in *Church Doctrine and Practice*, Precious Seed Publications



## Gifted to Give

Whose gift is it anyway?

**A gift is not ours to dwell on and enjoy in solitude. Rather, a gift's primary purpose is to be carried to its intended recipients: the church."**



**N**either snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these courageous couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds"

Though Herodotus wrote these familiar words some 2500 years ago, it wasn't until 1912—when they were inscribed above the entrance to the New York City General Post Office—that they became more widely known as the unofficial slogan of the U.S. Postal Service.

But in both the relatively obscure original and the more commonly known modern application of the quote, the words imply a nobility of purpose and a focused intent on the part of the couriers. It was vitally important millennia ago—as it is vitally important now—that those materials which were addressed and intended for specific recipients were delivered both faithfully and speedily by those to whom they had been entrusted for passage. Thus, we rightly condemn the occasional mail carrier who, through indifference or indolence, fails to perform his duty.

What has all this to do with spiritual gift? Simply speaking, all believers are like couriers that have been entrusted to carry spiritual gifts to others. A gift is not ours to dwell on and enjoy in solitude (though enjoy it we surely eventually will); rather, a gift's primary purpose

is to be carried to its intended recipients: the church. It is our sacred duty and privilege to deliver the gifts God entrusts to us faithfully and speedily.



### Pass It On

Sadly, many Christians have come to regard their spiritual gifts (if they regard them at all) as if they were a birthday present meant only for personal enjoyment; instead, our spiritual gifts find their intended roles and provide the intended satisfaction only when being given liberally in turn. Look again at any number of those verses which tell us who the true recipient of spiritual gift is intended to be:

*"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."* (1 Cor. 12:7)

*"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."* (1 Pet. 4:10).

*"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."* (Eph. 4:11f)

Once we begin to appreciate that the spiritual gifts we have received are not solely ours but are ours to carry for a time as stewards, it becomes clear that any given local church may be struggling in part because the couriers God has sent to carry His blessing and provision to a local body are not taking their jobs seriously. In short, the mail is not getting through! Those who have gift are not actively using that gift, and their failure is to the detriment of the church.

Scripture clearly and repeatedly states that every individual Christian has been given at least one gift, and, further, that every gift is sent for the benefit and building up of others. As a consequence, we should give serious study to understanding the vital role that delivering, or applying, our gifts ought to take in our lives.



### Misuse of gift

The apostle Paul was under no illusions about the importance of the application of spiritual gifts in the church. He had two admonitions in this regard for Timothy: *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.* (1 Tim. 4:14)

Timothy was warned that it was possible that he could neglect his gift, that he could leave undelivered that which was desperately needed. Neglecting a gift in any other setting is an indication that the giver has made a mistake and misunderstood your needs or desires; it is a repudiation of the giver. It is troubling to realize that this is also true in the spiritual realm. Are we sending God the message, day after day, that we do not think He has considered us appropriately, that His gift is unwanted? Have we, by our neglect, challenged the wisdom of the Great Giver?

Of course the problem with a neglected spiritual gift never lies with the Giver; it is always the fault of the recipient. God knows you fully—as He knew Timothy—and has tailored the perfect gift to suit your circumstance and your new nature. He has given you your particular spiritual gift as a purpose and a mission and as a fulfilling role to play in church life. It is not an overstatement to say that neglecting your gift will ensure that you will miss a significant part of what God wants for your life. Paul did not want Timothy, through simple indifference, to miss even a portion of God's call.

The Christian life is more than the simple absence of evil; it is the active presence of that which is good. Scripture provides that balance time and again in the form of a “don't” which precedes a “do.” Paul not only advised Timothy with a negative (“don't neglect”) but shortly thereafter follows up with an assertive positive: *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.* (2 Tim. 1:6)

If Paul were concerned earlier about neglect and indifference, here he is concerned about inactivity and indolence. “Stir up” conveys the image of a fire that has died down from what it once was, language that the NASB renders appropriately as “kindling afresh.” Timothy was encouraged by Paul to make a concerted effort to re-apply his gift in order to bring about the effect he once had, and should continue to have, in the church. The remediation for a neglected gift is considered and repeated application.

Too many Christians have been saved and are now passively waiting for God to call them home; they have clenched their teeth and are riding out the bitter storm until He returns. They are unsatisfied with their local church, unhappy with their own inactivity, and unsure what should be done about it. Changing churches (again) is not likely the cure.

In reality, God intends the Christian life to be one of joyful service, even in difficult circumstances and imperfect local churches. He has given us ideally-suited spiritual gifts and called us to be employed in using them for others with whom we share fellowship. In Acts 20—some of Paul's last words to those he loved—he quoted the Lord Jesus: *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”* This is proven true in the matter of spiritual gift; we will surely find satisfaction and blessing in serving others when we do so in the way God has asked of us. We will find our local church improving as we apply God's blessing to it.

### Getting the most out of our gift

If we are serious about pleasing God, fulfilling our duty, and finding lasting joy we ought to be:

**Aware of our gift.** It is easy to neglect a gift you do not know you have. Far better to make a concerted study of what the Bible says our gifts might be. In that way, even if we do not know them yet, we will eventually be able to recognize them.

**Appreciating our gift.** It is a common enough flaw to fear that God has given you a gift that is inappropriate for you. It is not so. He knows you better than you know yourself, and, if you are faithful with your gift, you will ultimately find joy and blessing in exercising it. Be grateful to the Giver.

**Applying our gift.** Use your gift liberally, for God loves a cheerful giver. Give boldly, knowing that the source of your gift remains undiminished by generous application. God desires to bless the church through you. The extent of that blessing, the effect of your gift, and the eternal reward that awaits you, will be limited only by your character, not God's.

It is long past time for many of us to stop casting about to find the faults and the source of our dissatisfaction in our peers. May we labor instead to give gladly in service to our brothers and sisters that which God has intended for them through us. May we truly be “workers together with Him.” 🕊





## The Heavenly Guru Speaks

“Go...and make disciples of all nations”

**O**verwhelming is the word that first comes to mind when I think about India. Overwhelming *need*, with one sixth of the world’s population crammed into 2.4% of the world’s land area (one-third the size of the U.S). Soon expected to become the world’s most populous country, it also has to be one of the most diverse.

Overwhelming *challenges*, too. Although India has two national languages (English and Hindi), the constitution also recognizes 22 official languages. However the total number of languages listed for India is 428. Add to that about 844 dialects. India’s literacy rate varies from 36% to 65% (some estimates are higher).

All the statistics regarding this land seem to overload the mind’s ability to grasp them. The blind and deaf population is estimated at more than 15,000,000 (2001). Indians younger than 15 years of age? There are 400 million of them! About 70% of the people live in more than 550,000 villages. The remainder continue to accumulate in about 200 larger towns and cities, cities like Mumbai, formerly Bombay (16.4 million), Kolkata, formerly Calcutta (13.2 million), Chennai, formerly Madras (6.4 million), Bangalore (5.7 million), Hyderabad (5.5 million) and the capital of New Delhi (12.8 million).

### SERVANTS IN SECUNDERABAD: Evangelists’ Conference

Secunderabad, twin city with Hyderabad, capital of the state of Andhra Pradesh, was the location for the 17th All India Worker’s Conference, Oct 16-19. Set on the grounds of OM’s conference center, the event was arranged by the Gospel Fellowship Trust of India (GFTI), a non-profit ministry utilized by individuals and assemblies to disburse funds to assembly-commended evangelists and Bible teachers across India.

About 450 Christian workers attended the four-day gathering, the number being limited to those fluent in English as all sessions were in that language. Ministry was given by Kurian Parayil (MN), William Yuille (ON) and others. There were also some helpful seminars.

Reports were given by those serving in many of India’s 28 states. Ironically, the greatest freedom for



gospel work seems to be in those states where the Communist party is in power. They resist Hindu or Muslim influences from suppressing evangelistic activity, something enshrined in the Indian constitution. It is a very moving thing to speak privately with many of these dedicated servants of the Lord. Here is one saved while studying to be a Catholic priest. There is a former Hindu pundit. One worker from Orissa—an area recently in the news for a violent outburst against Christians—told me how he was mobbed, beaten and left for dead, then rescued by some sympathetic Hindus! He asked prayer especially for his wife and two small children in these uncertain times. Another asked for prayer as he felt the Lord calling him to take the gospel to one of the leaders of a terrorist group in his area. It might cost him his life.

India has had the gospel for 2000 years, and although many foreigners have labored here, evangelistic work is now in the hands of the Indians. And the reports are very heartening. More than 1200 (plus their wives) from assemblies have responded to God’s call to serve across the sub-continent in this rigorous and often dangerous work. Until recently, the majority of these were working among those who were not of their language or people group. But at this conference, the Christians were encouraged to see this trend is rapidly changing. The Lord is raising up a new generation within these states who are more suited to work among their own people.

Although 82% of the people are Hindus, India also is home to more than 126 million Muslims—one of the world’s largest Muslim populations. The country also includes Christians (of all stripes) 2.3%, Sikhs 1.9%, and others including Buddhists, Jains, and Parsi (2.5%).

Religion, caste and language are major determinants of social interaction in India. The caste system includes four categories: priests, warriors, traders and farmers, but there are also many tribals and outcasts. In reality, Indian society is divided into thousands of *jatis*—smaller subgroups organized according to complex ideas of purity and pollution. Despite modernization and laws countering the caste system, this oppressive structure remains a dominant force today.

I hung my head in shame as I heard the reports from evangelists in each state represented at the conference. These people are serious about seeing the Great Commission accomplished in India in their generation. That means “*every creature*” as Jesus said. State by state, district by district, city by city, village by village (yes, they knew the number of villages in each region), they spoke of their methodical work. They knew the populations, literacy rates, religious percentages, and language groupings. And I wondered how many of us in the West evidence such care for our regions, and how systematic and comprehensive we are in our gospel work. Pray for India!

**CRUISING NEXT YEAR! Who will go?**

After prayerful discussion with those who worked with Team C<sup>3</sup> (Cross Canada Cruisers), it was decided to consider a similar effort in the coming year, Lord willing.

All things considered, the six-month journey (mid-April through early October) was very encouraging. The six classic cars drew crowds wherever they went, and the team members became adept at transitioning from talking cars to talking souls—both ruined and in need of rescue and restoration.

The old cars barely limped across the finish line, made a brave showing for the finale in Georgetown, but most will need significant work to make them roadworthy for next year. We are grateful to the Lord for all the saints who brought “*them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God*” (3 Jn 1:6).

In addition to two weeks helping to distribute Seed Sowers literature in Quebec, the teams handed out over 60,000 literature packs with gospel texts, CDs and other material. As well, another 10,000 homes were left packs in Georgetown, ON during the final week. In parades, car shows, fairs, shopping malls, door to door, and in scores of other ways, the Lord went before to provide thousands of opportunities to share the glorious gospel with many needy Canadians.

Much will need to be done if the work is to start up again in the Spring. Not only will the cars need to be readied, but fresh provisions of gospel materials will have to be laid in store, and a route mapped out to assist willing assemblies. Of course, the Lord will have to exercise some serious young men, encouraged by their elders to take up the challenge for 2009. Please pray. Those interested, please contact brother Grant Canfield (PE) for an application or for further details:  
**gandscanfield@pei.sympatico.ca**

**GEORGETOWN, ONTARIO, a blessed time**

At the beginning of Oct (4-10), about one hundred believers from across the U.S. and Canada joined the two C3 teams as they linked arms with the new assembly in Georgetown, just west of Toronto, for a serious week of outreach in the Canadian headquarters town of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, and a strong RC center as well. Some told us they had never had the gospel brought to their doors before. The new Good News on the Move team of eight also joined in for the gospel fellowship.

The four couples that comprised the new assembly (two more have since been added)

Top row (L to R): Jayson Ball, Keith Trevolt, and Elijah Middleton. Bottom: Dale Martin, Steve Owens, Steve Dick, Joel Laperriere, Daniel Scott, Joshua Caplan, Darin Yanisiew, Mike Donahue, Mitchell Jay, Stan Wells and Ben Canfield. Photo: Jerry Denny



Team C3 graduates in Georgetown after a final week of outreach with local and visiting Christians. Please continue to pray for their guidance and blessing!

**How you believe  
 God perceives  
 people will  
 determine  
 how you  
 respond  
 to them.**

—J. K. Heasley



were heroic in their efforts, ably supported by the Hopedale (Oakville, ON) assembly from which they had been sent out in full fellowship to start this work. Brothers Larry Sax (SD) and Jerry Denny (NC) also helped in the extensive planning needed.

The Lord wonderfully provided happy and eager workers, some who came from as far as BC on the west and PEI on the east, from WI, SD, NC, OH, NY, KS, and many other places.

A bonus was to also provide some classic cars, some manpower, and about 20,000 packets of literature (the packets costs about \$1 each) for the small Erin, ON assembly. Half of these were taken to every door in the town by believers (wonderfully helped by a crew from the Listowel assembly). The other half were distributed to the large crowds attending the Erin Fall Fair, held the weekend after the Georgetown effort. The GNOM team assisted.

Much follow-up is still in progress, however about seven people contacted from the community during the outreach are attending a Monday night “Christianity Explored” Bible study. Please also pray for the small assembly as they endeavor to deliver 1,000 gospel calendars door-to-door before December 25.

### GNOM IV well on the way

Believe it or not, Good News on the Move, Year IV, has made the journey from upstate NY all the way to Texas already! They have had profitable weeks spent in Binghamton, NY; Georgetown, ON; Westlake, OH; Pittsburgh, PA; Hinton, WV; Waynesville, NC; Nashville, TN; and Little Rock, AR (this year is their 10th anniversary as an assembly). At time of writing, they are in Golden/Tyler, TX and head next to North Richland Hills, TX. Texas is where the big

bus will winter—in Houston (for three weeks), storm-battered Galveston, Austin and San Antonio. Then, as the Lord gives help, the eight-man team will head to the northwest for a few months through NM, CO and a few other stops yet to be determined. Then on to three weeks in OR and WA, an area of the country GNOM has not visited before. The journey will continue eastward, cross-country to Minneapolis by Easter, DV. We hope then to make stops in WI, MI and OH before the conclusion in Kentucky.

We are appreciative of the new team, including three young men from one small assembly in Richmond, KY (where we hope to have the final GNOM IV outreach in June, Lord willing). In fact, half the team this year hales from the Bluegrass State!

So far, young men have served on GNOM from the following areas: NH, CT, RI, NY (Eric Smith, recently commended by his assembly, has served as a team leader all four seasons), PA (2), OH, KY (4), NC, CO (2), SD, IA, MO, KS, NE, MI (5), IL, CA (2), WI, and MN, as well as from the provinces of QC and ON (2), one from England and one from Mexico.

Thanks to all who are linked with the teams in happy gospel fellowship. If you would like to send an encouraging note directly to the team, please email: [onthemove@goodnewsnow.info](mailto:onthemove@goodnewsnow.info)



GNOM IV Team with some of the leaders

Sympathy is no substitute for action.  
—David Livingstone

# FOR YOUR STUDY



## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

### What are spiritual gifts?

- They are not:**
- natural talents
  - secular skills
  - evidences of spirituality

- but they are:**
- the God-given ability to serve Him in a particular way – Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12
  - manifestations of Christ's character
  - the permanent gifts all reflect various aspects of the normal Christian life

### What main passages in the Bible are concerned with spiritual gifts?

Rom. 12:1-8; 1 Cor. 12-14; Eph. 4:7-16; 1 Pet. 4:10f

### Who are spiritual gifts given to?

Every believer – 1 Cor. 12:7, 11; 1 Pet. 4:10

### When are spiritual gifts given?

Since every believer has been gifted, gifts must be given at conversion rather than as some subsequent "second blessing"

### How are spiritual gifts given?

- by God – 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 11, 18; Eph. 4:7f
- as He chooses – 1 Cor. 12:11, 18 (deity of the Holy Spirit)
- on the basis of grace rather than earned; they are gifts, after all – Rom. 12:6; Eph. 4:7
- these points ought to reassure us that God, in His infinite wisdom, has given us the gift best suited to us
- no assembly is overlooked or short-changed

### Why are spiritual gifts given?

- for the common good, not for self – 1 Cor. 12:7
- to build up others so that they can serve more effectively (a chain reaction) – Eph. 4:12ff; 1 Pet. 4:10
- to glorify God – 1 Pet. 4:10

### Why is it important to study spiritual gifts?

- to use them effectively and responsibly
- to focus our service appropriately
- to confirm in our minds and in our daily living that the "service" of the church is the job of every believer, not an elite few
- to keep from thinking too little of ourselves – 1 Cor. 12:15-17
- to keep from thinking too much of ourselves – 1 Cor. 12:21ff
- God cares about us individually and has equipped us to serve Him in a unique way – are we? – 1 Cor. 12:4-6
- to be faithful stewards of the grace of God – 1 Pet. 4:10
- Rom. 12:1 is only realized through the proper exercise of gift

### The Trinity and spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12)

v. 4	gifts	general types of service	Spirit
v. 5	ministries	specific avenues of service within each gift	Lord
v. 6	effects	results of service	God

### Distinctions

- speaking and serving – 1 Pet. 4:11
- public and private
- permanent and temporary
- men (Eph. 4) and abilities (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; 1 Pet. 4)

### The gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit (1 Cor. 13:1ff)

- the gifts describe what we do – the fruit describes how we do it
- the gifts describe service – the fruit describes character
- the fruit of the Spirit is greater than the gifts of the Spirit

### How do we know some gifts were only for the early church?

- some are specifically stated to be foundational – Eph. 2:20
- some are specifically stated to be temporary – 1 Cor. 13:8ff
- their purpose was fulfilled – Heb. 2:3f; Acts. 2:43; 5:12; 1 Cor. 14:21f
- miracle workers are very rare in the Bible
- we see them fade away in the book of Acts
- we see them fade away in early church history – 2 Tim. 4:20
- those who claim to have them today ignore the scriptural commands concerning their use – e.g. 1 Cor. 14:27ff
- we don't see them operating in the world today; rather, we see pale, easily-counterfeited imitations: So-called "healing" of lower back pain instead of instantly restoring withered limbs and raising the dead, ecstatic speech (an easily produced emotional phenomenon practiced by unbelievers around the world) instead of speaking in genuine human languages previously unknown to the speaker, and vague, ambiguous, unverifiable "prophecies."

## He Does All Things Well

What does perfection look like?

**“We have never seen anything like this.”**

— Mk. 2:12

**“Never man spake like this Man.”**

— Jn. 7:46

In Mark 7:37, the multitude praised the Lord Jesus with these words: *“He hath done all things well,”* and they were right. But I wonder if we spend much time thinking about what those words mean. Our Lord never did anything half-heartedly or second-rate. He is the master worker, the heavenly artisan. If His works were on display at a great fair, they would be covered in blue ribbons!

What the multitude said admiringly that day, we can say adoringly and gratefully every day. We who are saved ought to praise and worship our blessed Lord for the perfections of all His work as the Son of Man. “All things well.” Did we ever know the Lord to do things any other way? Of course not!

of the hearing to the deaf, or make a dumb person mutter or mumble instead of giving him clear speech? Did the lame go away limping or staggering? Did the paralytic have to go to therapy to complete his recovery? When He cast out demons, did He ever fail? Did He ever partly raise someone from the dead or say that He couldn’t raise the person because he wasn’t a believer? When all the sick and demon-possessed were brought to Him, did He only heal certain ones?

When He spoke of what His enemies were thinking and saying about Him in their hearts, was He ever wrong? Did anyone ever ask Him a question that He couldn’t answer? Absolutely not! But He asked questions that they couldn’t answer. His knowledge is perfect. Even in Mark 13:32, when He spoke of not knowing the time of His coming, we believe it was in His capacity as the perfect Servant. *“A servant does not know what his master is doing”* (Jn. 15:15). *“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world”* (Acts 15:18).

And His teaching—that wonderful, astonishing teaching, so unlike that of the scribes and Pharisees, the theologians of the day. He taught so that the common people could understand and He taught with conviction and authority. From the time of His childhood interview in the temple with the doctors of the law, He amazed all who heard Him. *“Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?”* they asked in wonder (Mt. 13:54).

When He directed the casting of the net, it never returned empty or half-full, but came in practically bursting with fish. Even the wine that He made from water was the best wine of all! He did all things well.



### Perfect works

Did He ever leave anyone halfway healed? We remember the man in Mark 8:24 who received his sight gradually, but he was completely healed—the Lord knew what He was doing and He did it well. Did He ever give the blind vision in one eye, restore only part

### Perfect salvation

And what shall we say of His mighty work on Calvary's cross? It was a work perfectly done. Words fail us as we attempt to describe how well He accomplished that which He came to do. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15), and He did a wonderful job; a complete job. Nothing was left to be done when He cried out, "It is finished!"

Did He suffer only for some sins or for the sins of just a few people? Away with such a thought! Hebrews 2:9 proclaims that He tasted death for every man. What if He had only died for the sins that you committed before you were saved? It is a foolish thought because all our sins were future when Christ died on the cross. Sin's question was completely settled at Calvary by God's perfect Lamb who took away the sin of the world. "Burdens are lifted at Calvary." The Lord Jesus Christ has done all things well.

But it doesn't stop there, does it? How would we understand Scripture without the Holy Spirit whom the Lord has sent? What foundation would the church have if it were other than the Lord Jesus Christ? Are we sealed until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13) or only until we sin and fail Him? We know the answer, don't we? No one can pluck us out of His hand.

Moment by moment, all through our lives, He continues to do all things well. As our great High Priest, He sits at the Father's right hand in the majesty on high, and intercedes for us as we go along our pilgrim way in the spiritual wilderness of this world. He promises that our prayers to the Father in His Name will be answered: "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." 1 John 1:9 tells believers

**Moment by moment,  
all through our lives,  
He continues to do  
all things well.**

that "When we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He does a wonderful job! The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. Who wouldn't want to stay close to a Person like that?

### Perfect hope

One blessed day, faith will give way to sight and we'll see this wonderful Lord and Saviour who does all things well. He'll come for us just as He promised. He has never broken a promise and never will. He will not come for some of the church, but for all of it. It's the way He does things! Then He'll take us to the place that He has gone to prepare for us, and we can only imagine how beautiful and glorious a place it is. We can be sure that He has done that well, too.

When we see Him face to face, we'll probably exclaim something like what the queen of Sheba did when she was with Solomon: "The half had not been told me!" Throughout eternity we will survey and admire His wonderful person and works, praise Him, and sing "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" All praise, honor, and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ! He has done all things well. 🕊

*"The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just:  
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,  
Righteous and upright is He." (DEUT. 32:4)*

Mapping a local  
gospel outreach.



One of the devil's tactics is to convince God's people that the Lord Jesus was unreasonable when He told us to take the gospel to every creature. Was He?



Sharing the good news with the next generation.

## Methodical Missionaries

How did they “preach the gospel to “every creature”?

**A**nd Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom...” (Mt. 9:35). All? How many were there?

In His final instructions to His own, the Lord expressed His desire that the Good News be disseminated as widely and comprehensively as possible. Matthew records His instructions as follows: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations (*ethnos*)...” (Mt 28:19). Mark’s account makes it more inclusive, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15). Luke records the Lord as speaking of earth’s furthest extremity: “and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part (*eschatos*) of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Away with the dishonoring idea that the Lord loves only a select few! Reach out to every ethnic group, He says, to every creature, and in order to find them, go to the furthest extremity, the last settlement on the most remote island, for these are souls for whom Christ died. “Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof” (Isa 42:10).

But how were they to reach every creature? I’m afraid that the concept of the Great Commission has shrivelled in the minds of many today. Many assemblies think that their collective responsibility is to make an occasional effort to reach a few folk in the immediate area of their chapel or hall, to arrange an event in their building to which neighbors are invited. Is this what the Lord Jesus asked us to do? See how the early believers understood Him.

In the verse at the beginning of this article, you will notice how the Lord worked in Israel. He “went about all the cities and villages.” And of Paul’s work in Turkey, we read that he “went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order” (Acts 18:23).

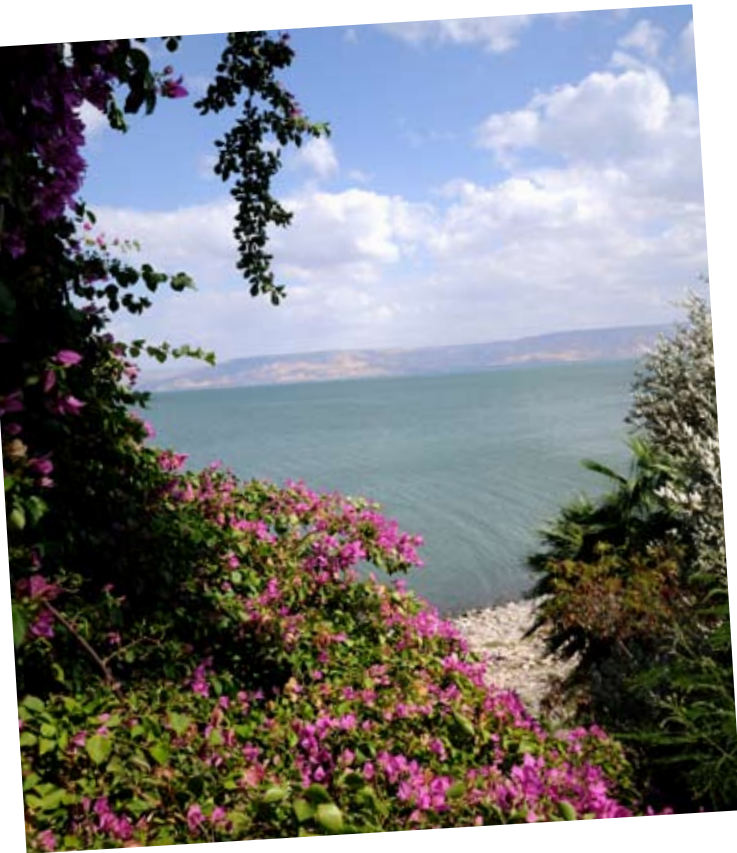
If a cruise ship caught fire, the captain would not instruct his crew to run around shouting, “Fire!” Each crew member would be given a deck, and be expected to knock on each door. Only in that way would they be sure that everyone had been sufficiently warned.

Notice the methodical approach indicated by the Lord’s words: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost part of the earth. This is how we must begin to think again.

How many cities, towns and villages are there in North America? The answer might surprise you. In the whole United States there are 10,016 cities, 4,431 towns, and 3,770 villages, for a total of 18,218 cities, towns and villages in the 50 states (U.S. Census 2000 Gazetteer Files). There would be about ten percent of that number in Canada. Ontario, with 39% of the Canadian population, has about 500 cities, towns and villages; BC has about 130.

In his book “*It Can Be Done*,” William Williams tells of the way a handful of missionaries preached the gospel in every city, town and village in Venezuela. If we began to think again that every person is either a missionary or a mission field, and lifted up our eyes to look at the fields around us, and gave ourselves again to the reason we have been left here—not to advance our careers, or stuff our bank accounts or live the American dream—but to fulfill our Lord’s parting instruction to share the most wonderful news in history to the people in every city, town and village in this broken-hearted world, yes, it could be done. 📍

# *To share...* or hoard?



THE SEA OF GALILEE receives but does not keep the River Jordan. For every drop that flows into it, another drop flows out. The giving and receiving go on, equal in measure. The other sea is shrewder, hoarding income jealously. It will not be tempted into any generous impulse. Every drop it gets, it keeps. The Sea of Galilee gives and lives. This other sea gives nothing. It is named—the Dead! —ANONYMOUS