

## INTRODUCTION

Please excuse me in advance for another one of those Dykes groaners, but did you hear the story about the set of identical twin boys born in Rome? They were given up for adoption immediately and one of the identical twins was taken to Spain where he was named, “Juan.” The other was taken to Saudi Arabia and he was named, “Amahl.” Juan and Amahl never knew each other during their lives, but when they became young men, they began to trace their roots and discovered they had a brother. So, they arranged to meet their biological families in Rome. Well, it was an exciting day for all the family members. They were at the airport as Juan arrived. They were so happy to see Juan; they greeted him as their long lost relative! Then Amahl’s plane was running late. So, they had to leave. Somebody said, “You wait here and when Amahl arrives and bring him to our family reunion. They said, “Well, I’ve never seen Amahl before. How in the world will I recognize him?” They said, “That’s easy! If you have seen Juan you have seen Amahl!” Now, you say, “Well, how is he going to make the transition?” The good news is that in the Christian life in the church there is no such thing as spiritual identical twins. Nobody is exactly alike in the body of Christ. We are all totally different and you are an especially gifted child of God. God has gifted you to serve the Lord and that’s what we are talking about—spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:1, 7-11. “Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant...Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.”

## I. A SPIRITUAL GIFT IS A SUPERNATURAL ABILITY GIVEN BY GOD

We have a lot of territory to cover tonight so first of all let’s see again the definition of spiritual gifts. What is a spiritual gift? I remind you that a spiritual gift is a supernatural ability given to Christians to empower them to minister in the church. It is an ability—it is not some material gift. It is an ability God gives you and he empowers you. It’s power to minister in the church. Do you remember a couple of weeks ago when I started this series, I asked all of you who are ministers to hold up your hand and some held up their hands and some were not sure. Every Christian is a minister! That means you serve the Lord in the body through the gifts God has given you. Let me just remind you that every Christian has one or more gifts. Also, let me remind you that there is *no* Christian who has *all* of the gifts, because that would make that person a church in and of themselves. So, no Christian has all the spiritual gifts. The Bible also teaches there is no gift that *every* Christian has. We are also going to learn in chapter 13 that gifts without love are useless. This is just a reminder of the definition of spiritual gifts.

## II. THE DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Now let’s move to number two as we talk about the description of spiritual gifts. Where do we

find spiritual gifts described? We have one list here in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. There are nine different spiritual gifts mentioned. Now look at verse 28. “And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.” You also find another list of spiritual gifts in Ephesians 4 and another list in Romans 12. When you look at 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and Romans 12, you come up with about eighteen different gifts mentioned in the New Testament. Tonight we want to look at the nine described here.

## **1. Gift of Wisdom**

Number one, the gift of wisdom. What is it? It is applying spiritual principles in a modern challenge or situation. Bible says we all ought to pray for wisdom, but there is a special gift of wisdom, or the word of wisdom that is given. Some people think this is common sense, but it is not. A lost person can have common sense. We often call it “horse sense,” because horse sense is stable thinking if you know what I mean! Some people have horse sense or common sense, but that is not what this is. The gift of wisdom is the ability to have insight into the truth of God’s word and apply it to a certain situation. Solomon had this gift. Two women came to Solomon, both claiming to be the mother of the child. One baby had died and that evening, both these mothers said, “That’s my child.” Solomon had the gift of wisdom and he said, “All right. I will take this baby and I will cut it in half. I will give one half of this infant to you and one half of this infant to the other.” The true mother of that child said, “No! Don’t kill the baby!” but the one who wasn’t the mother said, “That’s a good idea. Go ahead and do it!” Immediately, Solomon knew which one was the true mother of that child, the one who did not want the child to be harmed. That’s the gift of wisdom. How does it relate today? Have you ever been in any kind of a committee meeting or any kind of a gathering where there seems to be a difference of opinion or confusion? Nobody knows what to do. Have you ever heard somebody suddenly say, “Well, the Bible says...” and then they bring out a spiritual truth and apply it to that situation? When that happens you just say, “Wow! That’s the answer!” Well that is the gift of the word of wisdom.

## **2. Gift of Knowledge**

Number two is the gift of knowledge. It is understanding truth by divine revelation. By the way, Satan has a counterfeit for every one of these gifts. Satan’s counterfeit for knowledge would be what we would call “clairvoyance” or “psychics,” people who claim to be able to know what’s happening by some kind of supernatural power. There is this word of knowledge and it is actually demonstrated in the New Testament. Simon Peter had this gift. In Acts 5, when all different members of the church were bringing money to the church in Jerusalem, there was a couple named Ananias and Sapphira. They sold a piece of property and Ananias said, “Peter, I have brought all this money from this land and we are giving it to the church.” But Ananias was lying. He kept some of that money for himself. Now, if he had just been honest about it, everything would have been all right, but he lied about it and Peter, who on this occasion had the gift of knowledge, said, “Ananias, Satan has filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost! You are lying! This is not all the money!” How did Peter know that? It was a word of knowledge truth revealed by God.

You need to be very, very careful about exercising these gifts and be very, very careful about some people who claim to have some of these gifts. There are a lot of people going around today saying, “I got a word from the Lord and the Lord told me to tell you to do this!” The word of knowledge will never ever contradict the written word of scripture!

### 3. Gift of Faith

Number three is the gift of faith. It’s mentioned in verse 9. “To another is given faith.” This is unusual trust in God for power and provision. I’m saying *unusual* trust in God for power and provision. Some Christians have a gift to envision and trust God for big things. Of course, one of the most famous Christians with this gift was George Mueller of Bristol, Scotland. For nearly sixty years, Mueller operated an orphanage in Bristol. He was a man of considerable faith and prayer. He kept a prayer journal, and in this series of journals, he mentions over fifty thousand incidents where God answered prayer specifically. Fifty thousand answers to prayer!! This would have been a typical day in the life of George Mueller. He operated this orphanage strictly by faith. He never asked anybody for money; never asked anybody for support, but they were always struggling and always right on the edge of collapse. One morning all of the little orphans and workers were gathered for breakfast. George Mueller sat down and there was no food to serve for breakfast. George Mueller bowed his head and he said, “Father, we thank you for the food that you are going to provide for breakfast.” According to George Mueller’s journal, when he said “Amen” to that prayer there was a knock on the door. He opened it and it was a baker. The baker said, “Mr. Mueller at 3 a.m. this morning, God woke me up and impressed upon my heart that I needed to bake some bread for the orphans here. Can I unload my wagon? I have bread for you!” They unloaded the bread. A few minutes later there was another knock on the door. It was a dairy farmer who was taking his milk in to sell, but his wagon broke down. He said, “Mr. Mueller, my wagon has broken down and I have to unload the milk but it will spoil before I can fix the wagon. Would you mind if I gave this milk to your orphans?” That’s the kind of faith George Mueller had—he trusted God for big things! There is story after story after story. One of the greatest books you can read is simply entitled, “George Mueller of Bristol.” He was a man of faith. This kind of faith is an amazing gift from God. Some people have this gift!

### 4. Gift of Healing

Number four is the gift of healing, in fact, it is a plural gift in the text here. It says in verse 9, “To another gifts of healing.” What is that? That is a God given ability to heal sickness. This is one of the most misunderstood and abused gifts—that and speaking in tongues, because you know there are a lot of people going around claiming to be faith healers. I want to say up front I don’t believe in faith healers, but I certainly believe in faith healing. Any time healing takes place, God does it! God has gifted certain individuals throughout the years, but as I myself learn about spiritual gifts, this may not be a gift someone has their entire life. It may be a special gift God imparts for special times of ministry. Growing up, I had a friend I played football with named Sean. Sean was born with an unusual medical condition: His body didn’t perspire. He simply didn’t sweat. He went to doctors and the doctors told him he probably wouldn’t live very long, because his skin couldn’t breathe and his body would heat up but, when he was eight, his parents took him to an Oral Roberts service. This was back when Oral Roberts went around having tent

meetings. My friend Sean said when he was a child, he can remember Oral Roberts praying for him for God to heal him and Sean said that night he began to sweat for the first time in his life! That was his testimony. I don't have any way to document or to disprove it, but that was his testimony. There are some people, apparently, according to the word of God who have been given this gift. But there is a dangerous edge to the doctrine of faith healing. There are some people going around who say, “God wants to heal you of every sickness.” The Bible doesn't teach that! Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda, where there were numbers of sick people and he only healed one. There are some people going around saying, “If there is sickness in your life, it is absolutely always the work of the devil and it's not God's will for you to ever be sick!” There is a word for that kind of teaching and it's called, “garbage!” You have to be very careful about that. In spite of all the abuse and the misuse, that gift exists!

## 5. Gift of Power

Number five is a gift of power. It is the word in the New Testament here, *dunamis*, which means “power” but we could also translate it “miracles.” It is the ability to reveal the miracles of God. Look at verse 10. It says, “to another miraculous powers.” This is the ability to allow God to override the laws of nature to do something that will glorify Him. You say, “Is that gift still in use today?” I happen to believe all the gifts are available today but some are much more prominent than others. There seem to be very, very few Christians who have this gift. It may be at times God gives this gift for special occasions. When you study miracles in the Bible, you can't miss the fact that miracles in the Bible come in clusters. There were clusters of miracles surrounding the life of Moses and the Exodus. Then, there was a period without many miracles. There were miracles surrounding the ministry of some of the judges. Then there were miracles surrounding the ministry of Elijah and Elisha. Then, there was a period with almost no miracles. Of course, there were miracles surrounding the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and that of the early church. So, it seems like there were times in history when in the sovereignty of God, he allowed miracles to be performed. You say, “Are modern miracles happening today?” I believe so absolutely!

One of my heroes in the faith is Brother Andrew, God's smuggler. Before the fall of the Iron Curtain did you know Brother Andrew took hundreds and hundreds, even thousands of Bibles into Communist countries? You can read his little book, *God's Smuggler*. You can read about how he would load his Volkswagen bug down with copies of the Bible and would drive up to a check point. It was illegal to take Bibles in. Brother Andrew would pray a prayer like this, “God. Just as you made blind eyes to see, please make seeing eyes blind.” He'd come up to a checkpoint time and time again and these guards would look in and apparently wouldn't see the hundreds of Bibles that were there and pass him on through! Brother Andrew believed that was a miracle of God, just as much of a miracle as when Jesus made blind eyes to see.

Here again, you have to be careful, because there are people who take this truth of God and spew it and misunderstand it. There are groups out there who are saying, “You have to have a miracle! Every Christian out there has to have a miracle.” You even hear their testimonies and they say, “I had my miracle!” like every Christian has to have a miracle. Every Christian actually does have a miracle and it's called “the new birth.” AMEN. That's the greatest miracle that will ever take place in your life! But there are people whom I call “miracle mongers.” I'm going to talk

about that next Sunday morning. Jesus talked about it. There are some who say, “You have to have a miracle. The filling of the Holy Spirit will always produce miracles.” You had better be careful of that. If I were to ask you, “Who was the one man in the Bible that it says, ‘he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb.’” Who was that? That was John the Baptist. The Bible says, “John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb” and in John 10:41 the Bible says, “John the Baptist performed no miracles.” So you have to be careful if you say the filling of the Holy Spirit will always empower you to perform miracles.

## **6. Gift of Prophecy**

Number six is the gift of prophecy. If you think this is “fortune telling” or “predicting the future” you are wrong. This word literally means “to proclaim God’s truth proclaiming God’s truth.” This is what we would call, “inspired preaching.” We do know there are levels of importance of spiritual gifts. Some gifts are more important than other gifts. How do I know that? Look chapter 12:29. “Are all apostles?” The answer to that question is “No.” We don’t see a “No” there. But in the Greek New Testament when a yes or no question was asked, the answer was always presumed. According to the little particle where there was “Ooooh” or “may,” the answer to all these questions is “No.” In other words, we would probably better translate it “all aren’t apostles, are they?” “All aren’t prophets, are they?” “All aren’t teachers, are they?” “All don’t work miracles, do they?” NO. Do all have the gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? but here’s what we know. Verse 31: “but eagerly desire the greater gifts.” So what are the greater gifts? There are only two gifts ranked in value to each other: Tongues and prophecy. When we get to chapter 14, Paul spends a whole chapter talking about why preaching is much more valuable than talking in tongues.

What is “inspired preaching?” We are going to learn in chapter 14 that “inspired preaching” builds up fires up and cheers up. You may have that gift. You may have the gift of prophecy and not be a pastor. There are some women who have the gift of “inspired preaching.” The Bible talks about Philip’s daughters who were prophetesses.

## **7. Gift of Discernment**

Number seven is the gift of discernment. Discernment is testing spiritual truth, discerning of spirits. It’s what I would call, “supercharged intuition.” Someone who has the gift of discerning the spirits can hear a false prophet speak and can spot a false prophet a smile away. They just *know* when they hear someone talking, “That is not of the Lord!” That’s why the Bible says in I John that they need to test the spirits to see whether they are of God. Most Christians do not have that gift. That’s why most Christians get duped or deceived. It is very important for someone in the body to have that gift of discernment of spirits and to exercise it.

## **8. Gift of Speaking in tongues**

Number eight is the gift of speaking in tongues. This is a gift that probably has more confusion and more controversy than all the other gifts put together. By the way, that’s why Paul devotes so much attention to it. In chapter 14 what is the gift of speaking in tongues? “It is praying in an unknown language.” Is it always “praying?” Yes! Turn chapter 14:2. This makes it as simple and

as clear as anything you can ever read. "For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God." That is always speaking to God. Sometimes you will hear of some charismatic churches or some Pentecostal churches that the way they exercise the gift of tongues is they will have somebody stand up in church and say, "Ah beg ka goba go lo aba" and they think they are speaking in tongues. The pastor will say, "Is there someone to interpret this?" Because they are correct in that you have to have somebody interpret it. Somebody will stand up and they will translate some message from God. They'll say, "Oh, my children. Persevere. Be faithful. Do not be discouraged. I love you. I'm coming soon!" These people go "Oh WOW, that's a message from God spoken through that tongue!" There's only one thing wrong with that and that is that it is wrong, because speaking in tongues is not God speaking TO man, it is man speaking to GOD! I believe that in about 95% of the cases, that gift practiced today is abused and used wrongly but we will be talking a whole lot more about that when we get to chapter 14.

## **9. Gift of Interpretation of tongues**

Number nine is interpretation of tongues. That simply means translating the prayer to a known language. Some people are given that gift according to the New Testament. Why would God give that gift? In chapter 14, Paul again makes it clear. "When someone is praying in tongues, there has to be somebody to interpret it or they can't pray in tongues; how then will the church know when to say, 'AMEN'?" It's like when I'm in some foreign country and somebody is praying and maybe there is an interpreter standing next to me. This is not the gift of interpretation, it is natural interpretation, but they are letting me know what that person is praying. As they are praying and this person is interpreting that prayer to me, I can say, "Yes, Lord. I agree with that prayer. I say, 'AMEN' to that." That's why it's important to have the gift of interpretation.

## **III. THE DESIGN OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

Look at that list of nine gifts. You say, "Well, I don't know, Pastor. I don't really see anything in there that I think I have." Don't get discouraged. That's only nine of about eighteen different spiritual gifts. Actually, many of these are what I'm calling the "sign gifts," the supernatural "sign gifts" I think relatively very few people have today. We are going to be describing all eighteen of these gifts before we finish this study. That leads us to the third point. What about the design of spiritual gifts? How are they designed? What is their purpose? Let me make three quick statements and then we will be through.

### **1. They are given by God, not sought by men**

Number one, they are given by God not sought by men. Notice again in chapter 12:11. It says, "God gives them to each man just as he determines." It's up to God to give you your gifts, not up to you to ask or to seek certain specific gifts. Ladies, today many of you received a Mother's Day Gift. That was a true gift indeed if you didn't go out and buy it, if you didn't go out and seek it, if you didn't go out and pick it out. If you had to, it wasn't much of a gift, was it? If your children got it and gave it to you and you didn't even know what it was, and you didn't have anything to do with picking it out or paying for it, they just gave it to you, that is a pure gift. You don't seek a gift. You don't earn a gift. By its very nature it is something you are given that you

do not deserve. That word, *charismata* we studied a couple of weeks ago means “grace gifts.” So, God gives it. It’s not up to you to say, “Lord, I think I want this gift or this gift and I think I’ll take that one too.” It’s not up to you to go down that list of nine gifts and say, “I want that one. I don’t want that one I want this one.” No, God will give it to you as he determines.

## **2. Gifts are given to serve the body, not self**

Number two about the design of the gifts is this: They are given to serve the body, not self. As I explained it a couple of weeks ago, they are for employment, not enjoyment. It’s not to make you feel good, it’s to build up the body, to edify the body of Jesus Christ. It is the beauty of a team. Without a doubt, I believe Michael Jordan is the best basketball player who has ever walked on planet earth. He is phenomenal, isn’t he? But without a team, how good would Michael Jordan be? Have you ever known people we call a “one-man team?” That means they hog the ball! They are selfish, a one man team. Without a team, Michael Jordan wouldn’t be very good. You may not believe this, but I honestly believe with all my heart that you could put Michael Jordan on the court against the five starters for Tyler Junior College and he wouldn’t stand a chance. He would score some and he would play some pretty good defense, but there is no way he could win the game! All they would have to do is spread out the offense. When he is in one place guarding some guy, they whip it in there to another guy and nobody is guarding him and he scores. They could not only triple team him, they could put five men guarding him everywhere he went! He would not score very much, although he is the greatest basketball player in the world. I’ll take it a step further. I think you could put Michael Jordan on the court against the five starters for Robert E. Lee and he still wouldn’t win. That would be closer, but he would not win! Why? They are a team; he’s one man. But you could put Michael Jordan on the court against the five best basketball players on our staff team and he’d kill us! But you put him on a court against fairly good basketball players five of them and he wouldn’t have a chance. Why? It’s the difference between a super star and a team.

There are some churches that seem like they are built on a superstar but the churches that are really growing, really ministering, really serving God use the team approach where everybody has a gift and everybody is ministering in the body. The biggest tragedy in my mind is that there are multitudes and multitudes of Christians whose names are on the church rolls who are not serving God anywhere!

I told you about my friend early in my ministry. As I was looking at his membership list in his study I noticed beside about every third name he had these letters “FBPO.” Finally I asked what it meant. He said, “Oh, that means, ‘For burial purposes only.’ That’s the only reason they are a member of this church. They don’t come. They don’t give. They don’t serve. Their name is on this church roll just so when they are buried, their obituary will say, “He was a member of Lakeview Baptist Church.” FBPO. How many folks in Green Acres Baptist Church could we write FBPO beside their names? Everyone who is not serving and trying to discover and use their spiritual gift you might as well write FBPO.

## **IV. SOME GIFTS ARE GENERAL COMMANDS**

The final point is this: Some gifts are general commands. Now, this is very important! Don’t get

confused about this. We are all to exercise faith right? Don't look just because there is a gift of faith and say, "Well, that's not my gift." All Christians are to exercise faith. There is a gift of evangelism. You say, "Well, that's not my gift. I don't need to evangelize." No, you are wrong. All of us are commanded to do the work of an evangelist. By the way, we're going to see there is a gift of giving. You say, "Well, I don't have that gift. I don't have to give anymore!" No, you are wrong! Every Christian is to give cheerfully, but some people just have a special gift to do that. There is a gift of mercy. Just because you don't have that gift does not mean that you aren't to show mercy. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful." So, many of the gifts are general commands, so don't get confused.

One day when you and I as Christians stand at the judgment seat of Christ, what are we going to be judged on? That's not a salvation judgment. That's not who's going to be lost and who's going to be saved. It's not the Great White Throne Judgment. It's the judgment seat of Christ. Do you know what I am going to be judged on? Same thing that you are going to be judged on, believer, what you did with the gifts God gave to you. That's what you are going to be judged on. That story Jesus told about the servants who received talents in that story he's talking about money, but I think it applies to spiritual gifts. God has given some of you one spiritual gift. God has given some of you two spiritual gifts. God has given some of you five spiritual gifts. When you stand before him and he asks you, "Why didn't you use this gift I gave you?" and you say, "I buried it. I never used it. I covered it up." Do you know what he's going to say to you? "Wicked and unprofitable and lazy servant." But for those of you who discovered your spiritual gifts and used them in ministry, he'll say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." That's what we are going to be judged on.

It's not too late. God's not through with any of us yet. Find out what your gifts are and start using them in the body.

## OUTLINE

### I. A SPIRITUAL GIFT IS A SUPERNATURAL ABILITY GIVEN BY GOD

### II. THE DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. Wisdom
2. Knowledge
3. Faith
4. Healing
5. Power
6. Prophecy
7. Discernment
8. Speaking in tongues
9. Interpretation of tongues

### III. THE DESIGN OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

They are given

1. by God, not sought by men
2. to serve the body, not self

### IV. SOME GIFTS ARE GENERAL COMMANDS



**DISCLAIMER:** These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. There is no legal copyright on this material. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material to stimulate your own Spirit-driven imagination. Additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners. You have my full permission to use any of this material as long as you cite the source for any substantial amount used in your message.

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes