

A Journey Into the Spirit World
The Filling, Fruit, and Gifts of the Holy Spirit
September 7, 2016

To be prepared to live for God in a world of evil spirits, we must know the Holy Spirit. We must also understand how He equips us to live victorious lives in this world.

I. How Can I Be _____ with the Holy Spirit?

Every Christian must know the answer to this question because being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a suggestion; it is a command. God tells us not to be drunk on wine because it leads to reckless living (Ephesians. 5:18a-b). Instead what does Ephesians 5:18c command?

Ephesians 5:18 - And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

To obey this command, we must know that the word filled means "controlled by." When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, there is no room for selfishness, pride, or sinful desires. Being filled with the Holy Spirit requires obeying what command in Ephesians 4:30a?

Ephesians 4:30 - And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

In the next verse (4:31), Paul lists six sins that grieve the third person of the Trinity and prevent us from being filled with the Holy Spirit. We must empty ourselves of *bitterness*, which is the opposite of forgiveness. We must also empty ourselves of all *wrath*, or rage, which is a violent outburst of frustration. Wrath is the outward manifestation of anger. Wrath is anger let loose. *Clamour* means "loud cry" and refers to loud insults. It includes shouting, or yelling, in anger. which is the first sign we are losing control and letting the Evil One fill, or control, us.

Evil speaking means saying something to damage one's character or reputation. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must also empty ourselves of all *malice*, which is intent to harm or hurt someone with words or actions. When we empty ourselves of all these evil emotions, there will be a vacuum that can be filled by the Holy Spirit. Only then is it possible to obey what command in Ephesians 4:32?

Ephesians 4:32 - And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

The word translated filled (Ephesians. 5:18c) is a present tense verb, which denotes continuous action--something we must do every day.

How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? Only by emptying ourselves of all the sinful emotions listed in Ephesians 4:31. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit will be produced in our lives. This brings us to the second question...

II. What is the _____ of the Spirit?

The fruit of the Spirit has nine components that we find in Galatians 5:22-23a.

Galatians 5:22 - 23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The fruit of the Spirit is singular, like a pie divided into pieces. Each of the components is required for there to be a whole. The fruit of the Spirit is a word picture of Jesus Christ, who is the Ultimate Example of each component.

The fruit of the Spirit is a trio of threes. The first trio--love, joy, and peace--- concerns our relationship with God. If one is missing, something is wrong in our relationship with God. Love (AGAPE, ah-gah'-pay) is a self-sacrificing affection for others. Joy is a constant, deep-seated gladness. Peace is an inner tranquility not affected by circumstances.

The second trio--longsuffering, gentleness, and goodness--concerns how we treat people. Longsuffering means we put up with irritating people. Gentleness (kindness) is the opposite of rudeness, crudeness, mad cruelty. According to Proverbs 11:17, why should you always be gentle, or kind?

Proverbs 11:17 - The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.

The word goodness refers to helping people by being generous and benevolent with our time, talents, and treasure.

The third trio--faith, meekness, and temperance--relates to our inner beings. Faith refers to dependability both toward God and others. Meekness is not weakness, but power under control, like a wild animal that has been domesticated (such as a horse).

Jesus is the greatest example of power under control, As He is being arrested to be crucified, He tells His disciples not to fight back. He then informs them that He could ask His Father to immediately send more than twelve legions of angels to rescue them (Matthew 26:52-53).

Temperance refers to the ability to control our desires and emotions. It is the restraint of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

We have now answered two questions: how can I be filled with the Holy Spirit and what is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. However, not only does the Holy Spirit fill us and produce the fruit of the Spirit in us, but He also gives us spiritual gifts. Therefore, we need to answer this question...

III. How can I Find and _____ My Spiritual Gifts?

God doesn't want us to be ignorant about spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1). However, most Christians know very little about spiritual gifts. The devil wants to keep Christians ignorant so they will not use their spiritual gifts to advance the kingdom of God. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift. What does Romans 12:6 declare?

Romans 12:6 - Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

Spiritual gifts are received by grace. So, like salvation, spiritual gifts are not earned or deserved.

There are at least twenty spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament. The first step in finding and developing our spiritual gifts is knowing what they are. **Seven** are listed in Romans 12:6b-8. First in the list is the gift of *prophecy*, referring to the gift of a prophet, or preaching God's Word.

What are three functions of a prophet, according to 1 Corinthians 14:3?

1 Corinthians 14:3 - But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Romans 12:7 lists two gifts. The first is the gift of *ministry*, which translates the word from which we get our word "deacon." It is the gift of serving others in practical ways. The gift of *teaching* is proclaiming God's Word to promote spiritual growth.

Romans 12:8 lists four gifts, beginning with the gift of *exhortation*, or encouragement. It is the God-given ability to encourage or comfort believers.

The next gift is *he that giveth* and refers to people with the gift of making money and giving back cheerfully and generously to the Lord. *He that ruleth* is the gift of leadership. It refers to those with the gift of organizing and leading people. The last gift in this verse is showing *mercy*, which is compassion for hurting people.

1 Peter 4:10 - As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Eight other gifts are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, beginning with the gift of *speaking wisdom*, which is the ability to apply biblical truth. *Knowledge* is the ability to explain deep truths in the Bible (12:8).

In verse nine, the gift of *faith* is listed first. This gift is the supernatural ability to trust and believe God. Every believer has faith, but some have far more than others.

The gifts of *healing and miracles* (12:9b-10a) were given to the apostles to authenticate them as messengers of God. During his third missionary journey at Ephesus, handkerchiefs or aprons that touched Paul were used to heal the sick (Acts 19:12). However, as the New Testament neared completion, Paul had lost that gift. Therefore, what does Paul write just before his death (2 Timothy 4:20b)?

II Timothy 4:20 - Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

Today, God's messengers are not verified by healing and miracles, but by testing their lives and teaching by the Word of God.

The gift of *discerning of spirits* (1 Corinthians 12:10e), is the God-given ability to discern between the things of God and the things of Satan. Persons with this gift can immediately identify false doctrine by which many others are being led astray.

In 12:10d, the *gift of tongues* (GLOSSA, glow-sah') refers to the ability to speak in a language one has not learned (Acts 2:1-11). Many missionaries demonstrate the modern gift with an ability to learn a new language with amazing speed. The interpretation of tongues (12:10e) is the ability to explain and amplify what a tongues-speaker says. **(Turn to Page 8 for further discussion)**

Ephesians 4:11 lists four gifts, **three** of which we have not previously mentioned. First is the *gift of apostles*. The word translated apostles means one sent forth with a message and is the modern equivalent of "missionary." The *gift of evangelists* is the God-given ability to proclaim the Gospel and win the lost. The *gift of pastors and teachers* probably refers to the same gift because a pastor must be able to teach and could be translated "pastor-teacher. A pastor-teacher leads and feeds the church with the Word of God.

One other gift is hospitality (1 Pet. 4:9-10), the God-given ability to make people feel welcome. This is an essential gift for ushers and greeters.

What does 1 Corinthians 7:7b-c declare about spiritual gifts?

1 Corinthians 7:7 - For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

One additional gift is *singleness, or celibacy*. This gift can be lifelong for some and temporary for others. It is referred to in 1 Corinthians 7:7 and Matthew 19:8-12. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul states that it is not wrong to get married, but that it is better if a Christian can stay single. (The reason is that a married man's attention is "divided" between pleasing the Lord and pleasing his wife; a single man is free to be more focused on the Lord's work, verses 32-34.) Paul says, "I wish that all men were [unmarried] as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that" (verse 7). Paul is careful to state that this is "a concession, not . . . a command" (verse 6). The ability to stay single and serve God apart from marriage is a gift. Paul and some others had this gift, but not everyone. Singleness is a gift that God gives everyone, at least temporarily. For some, the gift of singleness is permanent; for others, God takes that gift away and gives the gift of marriage in its place. The Bible encourages those who are celibate in Christian service that they are an important part of God's family.

How do you find and develop your spiritual gift? You must do five things: investigate, participate, evaluate, dedicate, and cultivate. First, investigate the gifts listed in the Bible--learn what they are. Participate in the ministry of your church to find what fits you and discover your gift. If you haven't found your gift yet, you haven't participated in enough ministries in your church.

After participating in various areas of ministry, evaluate. Ask yourself, "Did I enjoy that? Did it seem to fill a deep desire in my heart?" Fulfilling the desires of our hearts is one way God reveals our spiritual gifts. Using your spiritual gift produces indescribable joy and fulfillment. It is then you can experience what promise in Psalm 37:4?

Psalms 37:4 - Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

When you discover and use your spiritual gift, you will realize you're fulfilling the desires of your heart. Then, you will finally say "Eureka," which is the Greek word for "I have found it." You will have found God's purpose for your life.

When you have discovered your gift, or gifts, dedicate them to the Lord. This means you will use them exclusively for His purpose and glory.

For the rest of your life, cultivate your gift by using and developing it through ministering to others. Gifts are like seeds that grow and produce fruit when properly cultivated through use. If you do not use your spiritual gift, it will become like a dormant seed. But as you use your gift, you will learn to exercise it more proficiently and it will be more and more a blessing to you and your church. Finding and developing your spiritual gift, or gifts, is the way to obey what command in 1 Corinthians 14:12c?

1 Corinthians 14:12 - Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

The filling, fruit, and gifts of the Holy Spirit are all vital requirements for being victorious in the spirit world.

Question: "What is the gift of speaking in tongues?"

Answer: The first occurrence of speaking in tongues occurred on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4. The apostles went out and shared the gospel with the crowds, speaking to them in their own languages: "we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." (Acts 2:11). The Greek word translated tongues literally means "languages." Therefore, the gift of tongues is speaking in a language a person does not know in order to minister to someone who does speak that language. In 1 Corinthians chapters 12–14, Paul discusses miraculous gifts, saying, "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?" (1 Corinthians 14:6). According to the apostle Paul, and in agreement with the tongues described in Acts, speaking in tongues is valuable to the one hearing God's message in his or her own language, but it is useless to everyone else unless it is interpreted/translated.

A person with the gift of interpreting tongues (1 Corinthians 12:30) could understand what a tongues-speaker was saying even though he did not know the language that was being spoken. The tongues interpreter would then communicate the message of the tongues speaker to everyone else, so all could understand. "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret." (1 Corinthians 14:13). Paul's conclusion regarding tongues that were not interpreted is powerful: "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." (1 Corinthians 14:19).

Is the gift of tongues for today? First Corinthians 13:8 mentions the gift of tongues ceasing. If the gift of speaking in tongues were active in the church today, it would be performed in agreement with Scripture. It would be a real and intelligible language (1 Corinthians 14:10). It would be for the purpose of communicating God's Word with a person of another language (Acts 2:6-12). It would be in agreement with the command God gave through the apostle Paul, "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God." (1 Corinthians 14:27-28).

It would also be in accordance with 1 Corinthians 14:33, “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

God most definitely can give a person the gift of speaking in tongues to enable him or her to communicate with a person who speaks another language. The Holy Spirit is sovereign in the dispensation of the spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11). Just imagine how much more productive missionaries could be if they did not have to go to language school, and were instantly able to speak to people in their own language. However, God does not seem to be doing this. Tongues does not seem to occur today in the manner it did in the New Testament, despite the fact that it would be immensely useful. The vast majority of believers who claim to practice the gift of speaking in tongues do not do so in agreement with the Scriptures mentioned above. These facts lead to the conclusion that the gift of tongues has ceased or is at least a rarity in God's plan for the church today.

Question: "Is cessationism biblical? What is a cessationist?"

Answer: Cessationism is the view that the “miracle gifts” of tongues and healing have ceased—that the end of the apostolic age brought about a cessation of the miracles associated with that age. Most cessationists believe that, while God can and still does perform miracles today, the Holy Spirit no longer uses individuals to perform miraculous signs.

The biblical record shows that miracles occurred during particular periods for the specific purpose of authenticating a new message from God. Moses was enabled to perform miracles to authenticate his ministry before Pharaoh (Exodus 4:1-8). Elijah was given miracles to authenticate his ministry before Ahab (1 Kings 17:1; 18:24). The apostles were given miracles to authenticate their ministry before Israel (Acts 4:10, 16).

Jesus' ministry was also marked by miracles, which the Apostle John calls “signs” (John 2:11). John's point is that the miracles were proofs of the authenticity of Jesus' message.

After Jesus' resurrection, as the Church was being established and the New Testament was being written, the apostles demonstrated "signs" such as tongues and the power to heal. "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." (1 Corinthians 14:22, a verse that plainly says the gift was never intended to edify the church).

The Apostle Paul predicted that the gift of tongues would cease (1 Corinthians 13:8). Here are six proofs that it has already ceased:

1) The apostles, through whom tongues came, were unique in the history of the church. Once their ministry was accomplished, the need for authenticating signs ceased to exist.

2) The miracle (or sign) gifts are only mentioned in the earliest epistles, such as 1 Corinthians. Later books, such as Ephesians and Romans, contain detailed passages on the gifts of the Spirit, but the miracle gifts are not mentioned, although Romans does mention the gift of prophecy. The Greek word translated "prophecy" means "speaking forth" and does not necessarily include prediction of the future.

3) The gift of tongues was a sign to unbelieving Israel that God's salvation was now available to other nations. See 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 and Isaiah 28:11-12.

4) Tongues was an inferior gift to prophecy (preaching). Preaching the Word of God edifies believers, whereas tongues does not. Believers are told to seek prophesying over speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:1-3).

5) History indicates that tongues did cease. Tongues are not mentioned at all by the Post-Apostolic Fathers. Other writers such as Justin Martyr, Origen, Chrysostom, and Augustine considered tongues something that happened only in the earliest days of the Church.

6) Current observation confirms that the miracle of tongues has ceased. If the gift were still available today, there would be no need for missionaries to attend language school. Missionaries would be able to travel to any country and speak any language fluently, just as the apostles were able to speak in Acts 2. As for the miracle gift of healing, we see in Scripture that healing was associated with the ministry of Jesus and the apostles (Luke

9:1-2). And we see that as the era of the apostles drew to a close, healing, like tongues, became less frequent. The Apostle Paul, who raised Eutychus from the dead (Acts 20:9-12), did not heal Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25-27), Trophimus (2 Timothy 4:20), Timothy (1 Timothy 5:23), or even himself (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). The reasons for Paul's "failures to heal" are

1) the gift was never intended to make every Christian well, but to authenticate apostleship; and 2) the authority of the apostles had been sufficiently proved, making further miracles unnecessary.

The reasons stated above are evidence for cessationism. According to 1 Corinthians 13:13-14:1, we would do well to "pursue love," the greatest gift of all. If we are to desire gifts, we should desire to speak forth the Word of God, that all may be edified.