

How to Pursue the Gifts of the Spirit

Lesson 2: The School of the Holy Spirit

“Why should I pursue spiritual gifts? If God wants me to have certain spiritual gifts, wouldn’t I have them already?”

Point # 1: We are to desire and pray for the gifts, rather than presume and decide for God.

Spiritual gifts are distributed according to the Spirit’s will (1 Corinthians 12:11). *However*, we are to still commanded to desire and pray for the gifts.

“Pursue love, but strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts, above all that you may prophesy.” (1 Corinthians 14:1)

- Don’t *presume* which gifts God wants to release to you, but *pray for the gifts*.
- Don’t *decide* for God which gifts He should or shouldn’t give you, but *desire* from God all the *gifts*.

“Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret.” (1 Corinthians 14:13)

- When tongues is released in a public gathering, only when there is an *interpretation*, are the people in the room built up. So they should pray for the interpretation.

- **Wait! Doesn't God want people to be built up?** Then, shouldn't He automatically release the interpretation of tongues? If so, why are we instructed to "pray" for it?
 - Perhaps the Lord wants to give an interpretation. However, if the people aren't even looking for it, they will miss it. The lack of *anticipation* will effect our *reception*.
 - Example: If someone on the basketball team doesn't expect the ball to be passed to them, when it is, it will fly past him or her.

 - Praying for and desiring the gifts of the Spirit, makes us more *attentive* to the Holy Spirit — so we can catch what He is releasing. The higher the anticipation, the higher our reception.

- Jesus taught us that the Father loves to give good gifts to His children, so we are to ask.

- ***“If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:11)***
 - The Father does the giving, but we do the asking.
 - The word “*gifts*” is in the plural.

Point #2: Even if you operate in one of the gifts, we are to pray for the other gifts.

Even though Corinthian church had one spiritual gift that was operating quite *frequently, specifically tongues*, they were instructed to ask for another gift — *the interpretation of tongues* (1 Corinthians 14:13).

“Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.” (1 Corinthians 12:31)

- The Corinthian church was very into speaking in tongues, but Paul was calling them to pursue something they weren’t as passionate about.
 - He didn’t want them to stop speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:39).
 - However, Paul wanted them to earnestly desire another gift— prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:39). His reasons were that while

speaking in *tongues* builds up the tongue talker, *prophesy* builds up the church.

- We see that while they could have just assumed God didn't want them to prophesy, they were supposed to eagerly *desire it*. The key to unlocking these higher gifts was *eager desire*.

- We are to earnestly desire for the Holy Spirit to use us to bless someone on *earth* with a gift from *heaven!*
 - **Prayer:** *"I want to be a mailman Lord, because I know people need your letters of love. And we here on earth could use packages from our future home by tasting **"the powers of the age to come"** (Hebrews 6:5).*

 - **Warning:** We were made to DESIRE! We will FANTASIZE about something.

 - When we aren't contending for the Kingdom of God, the power of God, and the glory of God — we become lustful towards the things that the kingdom of darkness has to offer. The more we desire heaven to invade earth, the less we desire the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and we are less attached to this temporary world.

- When we are no longer walking by faith and believing for the impossible, we are no longer pleasing God.
 - *“For we walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7)*
 - *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)*

Point #3: Impartation is biblical. We can operate in a gift— we do not yet operate in — after an impartation.

Just because you aren't walking in a certain gift now, doesn't mean you won't be walking in it later. We see that *gifts* and *graces* can be imparted through the laying on of hands all throughout Scripture.

“I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong” (Romans 1:11)

- This impartation was not available through a letter, but it could only be imparted by being with Paul in person. From other Scriptures, it is believable that they would receive when Paul laid hands on them.

***“For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God,
which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”***

(2 Timothy 1:6)

- There was a gift the the Lord released to Timothy through the laying on of Paul’s hands.
 - Spiritual gifts need to be fanned into flame, because through intimidation, discouragement, and disillusionment— they can grow dormant.
 - We fan these gifts into flame by desiring them again, praying for them, and stepping out to serve them.

“When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.”

(Acts 19:16)

- This verse captures Paul’s ministry in Ephesus among those who were disciples of John the Baptist. Paul baptized them and then laid hands upon twelve of them them, and gifts were released. Two amazing gifts were imparted when Paul laid his hands upon them.
- While the Spirit can fall sovereignly upon people (Acts 2:1-3, 11:15), we see the Spirit filling people as *hands* are laid upon them, which is more often the case in the book of Acts.

- Peter and John were releasing something very evident, so Simon the Sorcerer offered them money to get that power that they had.

“14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money 19 and said, “Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” 20 Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! 21 You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. 23 For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”

(Acts 8:14-23)

What was wrong about Simon wanting an impartation to impart the Spirit upon people?

- **1. We can want the right things for the wrong reasons (Acts 8:21).**
 - Simon had a history of impressing people with his magical arts. He was more into wowing people than winning souls. He was a showman, not a true servant. He wanted to power, prestige, and influence — rather than just wanting to see people blessed and Jesus glorified.
 - Typically, people who need deep inner healing and carry bitterness — have *impure* motives. They are out to prove themselves.
 - 1 Corinthians 13 is the love chapter— and holds the other chapters about spiritual gifts together. When seeking impartation or releasing it, we must remember that the motive is the love of God in our hearts. We should be seeking the gifts because we are seeking to reveal God’s love through the gifts. We love God and we love people, therefore we want to *receive* impartation and *release* impartation.

- **2. We can want the right things, but go about it the wrong way (Acts 8:20).**

- Impartation is not something we buy with cash. Impartation is something we receive through spiritual hunger and honor. And this is not an automatic transaction like at a store. God has to be in it! Otherwise, we are just laying empty hands on empty heads.

- **Joshua teaches how how to receive an impartation:**

- He spent a lot of time in the presence of God (Exodus 33:11).
- He had a long history of serving Moses, defending Moses, honoring Moses, and was corrected by Moses (Num. 11:27-29). He served Moses faithfully, not conveniently. He even knew Moses' shortcomings, but did not sever the relationship.
- He had the spirit of leadership on him. He wasn't going to get caught up with the herd mentality (Numbers 13). He feared God more than people. He had faith for the impossible.
- Joshua was the one God instructed Moses to lay hands on:

- *“So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him.” (Numbers 27:18)*

- *“Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the LORD had commanded Moses.” (Deuteronomy 34:9)*

Other keys to receiving an impartation:

1) Never attack the gifts or throw out the baby with the bathwater.

- *“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.” (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22)*

2) Study all you can about the gifts (the Scriptures, books, and biographies).

3) Build relationships with people who are more advanced in the gifts than you are. Honor what the Lord has given them. Beware of familiarity setting in (John 6:42).

4) Seek out impartation at events and services, where these gifts are operating.

- 1) The pursuit of a blessing can transform us (Genesis 32).

- 2) Be sensitivity to the movements of the Spirit and don't delay in responding.
 - 3) When receiving prayer, just receive like a sponge.
 - If you are on the floor, don't pop back up, but marinate in it, until it's easy to move around again.
 - 4) Expect to receive when hands are laid on you. Rather than overanalyze, receive with childlike faith.
 - *“experiencing God is a thing of romance, not analysis. Analysis ruins it.” — Randy Clark*
 - 5) Don't fake manifestations and don't resist them either.
- 5) **While we should pursue a holy lifestyle that is surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus, don't think that you have to first be perfect before you can receive these gifts.** The gifts aren't for the *perfect*, but part of the *perfecting* of the saints.
- These gifts will operate through some broken people (like the Corinthian church) because they are not “worksmatas” but “charismatas”. This will be *offensive* to the religious mind.
 - Trust in the righteousness given to us by Christ, not our own righteousness.
 - *“I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ.” (Galatians 3:5)*

Appendix: The Laying on of Hands

The laying on of hands is one of the elementary teachings for followers of Jesus Christ.

***“Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings (baptisms) and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.” —
(Hebrews 6:1-2)***

The power of laying on of hands

“His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from his hand, where his power was hidden.” (Habakkuk 3:4)

The purpose of laying on of hands

1. Transference of spiritual blessings

“But Jacob crossed his hands, and put his right hand on the head of Ephraim, even though he was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, who was the older.”

2. Ordination or commissioning

“These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.” (Acts 6:6)

“Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.” (1 Timothy 4:14)

3. Healing

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mark 16:17-18)

4. Impartation

*“For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the **gift** of God which is in you through the **laying on of my hands.**” (2 Timothy 1:6)*

The practice of laying on of hands

“Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.” (1 Timothy 5:22)

- ORDINATION: Be careful who is appointed to a position of leadership.

- If we ordain someone based on their gifting alone, rather than their character, we will be *partially responsible*.
- If we ordain someone who is asking to be ordained, but the Spirit is saying “no”, we are at fault and will suffer backlash.

- IMPARTATION: Not everyone should be given an impartation who asks for it (Acts 8).

- Release an *impartation* in the time the Spirit and to the people the Spirit leads you to.
- When laying hands for *impartation*, make sure we are full of the Spirit and led by the Spirit.

- HEALING: When praying for healing we are to believe in the promises of God.

- Trust in the power of the Holy Spirit, not in our own ability apart from the Spirit.
- The gifts of healing are not talents we developed or lessons we learned or the result of willpower, God as to drop it or they won't be healed.