

Paul's First Letter to The Corinthians  
Lesson 5

**1 Cor. 12:1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. **2** You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led. **3** Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

**Concerning Spiritual** – In verse one we see the word “gifts” in italics. This means that this word is not found in the original text. It was added to try to help us understand what Paul is saying, at least in the opinion of the translators. If we leave it out, we understand that Paul wants the Corinthians to “not be unaware of the spiritual.” That is the important point in this portion of Paul’s letter. This has to do with the supernatural involved in a person’s life. A person who is truly led by the Spirit of God can never say that “Jesus is accursed.” In addition, no one can say “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. Polycarp, the Pastor of Smyrna who was a disciple of John the Revelator was demanded by the Roman government to say Kurios Caesar [Lord Caesar], yet each time he would reply Kurios Iêsous [Lord Jesus]. He paid the penalty for his loyalty to Jesus with his life. Lighthearted men today can say “Lord Jesus” in a flippant or even in an irreverent way, but no Jew or Gentile in the first century would say it who did not mean it because it would cost him his life.

**1 Cor. 12:4** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. **5** And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. **6** And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. **7** But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

**The Same Spirit** – In verse 4 the word “gifts” is in the text, however it would be better translated spiritual “endowment.” In other words there is a variety of spiritual endowments that come from the one Spirit. Likewise there is a variety of ministries that come from the one Spirit. In addition there is a variety of effects or “powers” but it is the same God who is doing all these things in all the different believers at the same time. Paul calls this work of the Lord the “manifestation” of the Spirit” for the common good. What is the gift that we are given? The gift is the Holy Spirit who dwells within us! The way the Holy

Spirit operates in each one of us is called the “manifestation” of the Spirit.

**1 Cor. 12:8** For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; **9** to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, **10** and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. **11** But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

**The Manifestations of the Spirit** – Here Paul list the different ways that the Holy Spirit works through believers.

1. Word of wisdom through the Spirit
2. Word of knowledge according to the same Spirit
3. Faith by the same Spirit
4. Healing by the one Spirit
5. Effecting of miracles
6. Prophecy
7. Distinguishing of spirits
8. Various kinds of tongues
9. Interpretation of tongues

These are nine ways that the Holy Spirit works through a believer. What is more interesting is that we have no control over which one of these manifestations the Holy Spirit uses in our lives. It is totally up to the will of the Holy Spirit.

### **Confusion Concerning the Manifestations of the Spirit**

A great deal of confusion exists over the meanings and interpretation of these manifestations. Many fancy fabrications have been made to explain each, some hitting on target, some complete heresy. Some try to explain away parts of the list, saying such manifestations do not apply today; they only apply to the Apostles. Some try to pull just the manifestations that they think they understand and apply them out of context to today’s church. All are not without problems. The material present here is based on a thorough understanding of the contexts of the entire Scripture, then coupled with sound research from reliable sources. All the research of words and definitions, as good as they are, mean nothing if the results do not fit the context of the Holy Scripture.

## **The Work of the Holy Spirit**

One main flaw in most interpretation for the manifestations of the Holy Spirit is the lack of understanding as to the purpose and job description of the Spirit Himself.

1. The Holy Spirit's first job is to urge the lost to come to Christ.
2. Second, He indwells as a down payment for the future when we shall be with Christ.
3. Third, He teaches as one reads and studies the Scripture concerning Christ.
4. Fourth, He quickens our spirits when we fall into sin against Christ.
5. Fifth, He guides in our maturing in Christ.
6. Sixth, He guides our speech as we minister to others about Christ.

The entire purpose of the Holy Spirit is directed toward Christ. It is never directed toward Himself, nor is it ever directed toward us as believers. The manifestations of the Holy Spirit is simply how He is working through you as an individual in proclaiming and sharing the gospel story of Christ. The Holy Spirit uses these manifestations only in connection with the sharing of the gospel and should not be connected with any other subject.

## **The Denial of the Manifestations of the Holy Spirit**

To try to explain away one or more of the manifestations is a tragedy. You would never try to explain away the manifestation of faith. Some try to explain away tongues, healing, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, simply because they do not understand the context or meaning. Some hold to all the manifestations with elaborate explanations, which leave little room for the true work of the Holy Spirit. These folks elevate the Holy Spirit to a position never mentioned in God's Word. So where does this author stand in this matter? Either all the manifestations apply, or none of them can apply. You cannot break up a list in God's Word. Continuing, the manifestations of the Holy Spirit should be understood today exactly as they were when this text was written or our definitions are incorrect. Finally, all our understand of the manifestations must be seen in light of the purpose of the Holy Spirit's work, nothing more and nothing less. Therefore, the following work places the manifestations of the Spirit directly in to today's world. They have not changed one inch since the day they were written as directed by the Holy Spirit Himself.

1. **Word of wisdom** - is the wisdom of God spoken in understandable human language. Here it is speech full of God's wisdom as in 1 Cor. 2:7 under the impulse of the Spirit of God.

**1 Cor. 2:7** but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

2. **Word of knowledge** - is insight in God's mystery spoken in understandable human language. Here the speech ties all the theology of God together, in a manner that each fact fits perfectly together like cogs in a wheel.

3. **Faith** - is the moral conviction in the religious truth. Not faith of surrender, but the saving faith, and the wonder-working faith that lets go of all personal desires and beliefs and believes the very word of God for everything. It also incorporates the ability to persuade another, by sharing the gospel, to live in faith in Christ.

4. **Healing** - not physical healing but spiritual healing. No where else in the New Testament is it used. When thinking about healing from physical sickness, a different word is used (therapeia). This manifestation of the Holy Spirit is seen in one who has the ability to dispense the needed words of remedy to lead one out of spiritual sickness and distress or anxiety. Such is the person who bring comfort to the lives of those seeking a word that brings peace from the Lord.

5. **Effecting of miracles** - is the working of force or power. The inherent power of being able or capable of completing a task directed by God.

6. **Prophecy** - is the exercise of telling forth God's Word as stated in Scripture. This is different from the idea of a prophet who foretells the future. Foretelling the future is used in a restricted since in the New Testament, placing it only side by side with the Apostles as part of the foundation of the Church. The manifestation of this gift is simply telling of the truths found in God's Word.

7. **Distinguishing of spirits** - is the ability to separate one from another in differences, disputes, and controversies. It denotes the

elements in man by which one perceives, reflects, feels, and desires. These elements set the standard in purpose and aim for one's attitude and character. The distinguishing of spirits is the gift of discernment of differences, disputes, or controversies in attitude and or character.

**8. Various kinds of tongues** – is the ability to easily learn and speak other languages. The idea of speaking a totally unknown, non-comprehensible, uninterpretable language is not supported in Scripture. The sign of speaking an unlearned foreign language (tongue) was not for future believers (new converts) but for past believers (specifically the apostles that are gathered around him at the speaking of the words. This is born out in the rest of the New Testament as fact.)

**9. Interpretation of tongues** simply means translating and putting the message of God into the language of the common man. This manifestation of the Holy Spirit is seen in the ability to learn a language and translate the Scripture into that language. Wycliffe Bible translators represent one group being used by the Holy Spirit to do this today. It is also the person who "in worship" translates the words of someone who cannot speak the common language in use for the edification of the congregation as a whole.

**1 Cor. 12:12** For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. **13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. **16** And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. **17** If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? **18** But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. **19** And if they were all one member, where would the body be? **20** But now there are many members, but one body. **21** And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." **22** On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; **23** and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor,

and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness, **24**whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, **25**that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. **26**And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

**The Comparison of the Manifestation of the Spirit and the Complex Makeup of the Body** – The point in this long example of how the body needs all its varied parts is to drive home the need for the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself within the Body of the church through the different believers. Each manifestation is important to the health of the church, and the Spirit manifests as He wills.

**1 Cor. 12:27**Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. **28**And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. **29**All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? **30**All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? **31**But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

**The Offices of the Church** – There is an order in which the church was established. In the upper room the first officers of the church were the apostles. Leaving the upper room and going into the streets of Jerusalem, the people heard the prophets, in this case the forth tellers or preachers preaching the gospel. Then came the teachers who answered the questions of the new believers and shared with them all that they had learned at the feet of Jesus and the Apostles. Then there was the counselors who brought the needed words of comfort which healed the sinful soul. The believers began to help one another within the body of believers, selling what they had to care for the needs of others. Deacons were selected to make sure the widows were taken care of forming a formal administration within the church. And finally, missionaries were sent to the ends of the world to learn the languages and share the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. No, not all were apostles, for the Lord Jesus selected them personally and there were only 13. No, not all are

prophets/preachers, but through the foolishness of preaching the gospel is being spread to the world. No, not all are teachers, but the ones who are teachers are training the babes in Christ into strong mature believers. All do not have the power to get the jobs done, but some will through the power of the Holy Spirit. All can not bring words of healing and speak the various languages, or even translate the gospel into another language, but the Holy Spirit is working through some believers to do this work. There is nothing wrong with desiring the greatest manifestations of the Holy Spirit, but however the Holy Spirit is working through you, you are just as important to the body of Christ today as the first Apostles were in 27 - 30 AD.

But wait! Paul wants to show you something more important to focus your life on rather than worrying about how the Holy Spirit is manifesting Himself through your life. That should be the least of our concerns and the least of our worries. There is a more excellent way of fulfilling your role in the church than seeking a manifestation of the Spirit or an office in the organization of the church. What is that more excellent way? You must include love in your life!

**1 Cor. 13:**1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. **4** Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, **5** does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, **6** does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; **7** bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **8** Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. **9** For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; **10** but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. **11** When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. **12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. **13** But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the

greatest of these is love.

**The Greatest of these is Love** – We are not a religion, we are “love” for one another! That’s what Christianity is all about and sadly many Christians have forgotten this fact or never knew it in the first place. Anything we do, if it is not based in love is useless. Our entire lives are to be immersed in love, not in just a moment here or there, but every moment we are to be living a life of love.

**When the Perfect Comes** – In this passage Paul is talking about our arrival into the presence of the Lord. It does not come until this life is over for each of us. While we are not perfect in our human earthly bodies, the Lord wants us to live in love.

[1 Cor. 14:1](#) Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

**Pursue Love Yet Desire Earnestly Spiritual** – Love is what we must pursue while we live in this life. Yet we should earnestly desire the Lord to allow the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself through our lives. Strive to tell forth the gospel! This is the easy one. How do you do this? Simply be ready to share with everyone what the Lord has done for you!