

**The Nine Gifts**

Passages: 1 Cor 12:1–11; other selected texts

*Memory Verse*

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.” (1 Corinthians 12:4–5)

<b>Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]</b>	<b>Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]</b>	<b>Good Works [Behavior]</b>
1. There are nine spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12. 2. All spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit and are for the purpose of building up the church.	God is a God of order and peace.	1. Allow God to fill us first with the power of the Holy Spirit. 2. Be a clean vessel for God’s use.

*Overview*

**Events and Spiritual Teachings**

- A. The Nine Gifts
- B. Gifts of Spiritual Understanding
- C. Gifts Which Manifest God’s Grace and Power
- D. Gifts Which Reveal God’s Will

**Life Application**

- 1. God Wants to Fill You First with His Spirit
- 2. Am I a Clean Vessel, Ready for the Master’s Use?

**Memory Verse**

**Conclusion:** The gifted have the responsibility of helping the church and its members, and in the end, must be able to provide an account of their works when Jesus Christ comes again. We need to remember that spiritual gifts only have one purpose: to build up the church.

## *Spiritual Teachings*

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### **Introduction: The Corinthian Church**

There was a major problem in the church of Corinth: spiritual gifts were dividing the members (1 Cor 12:1). Pride often causes conflict, and each seemed to be proud of his gift. Paul addressed this issue by explaining the nature of spiritual gifts, and their intended uses according to God's will.

### **A. The Nine Gifts (1 Cor 12:8–11)**

The Holy Spirit gives different gifts to believers to advance the kingdom of God. When God entrusts any of these gifts to a person, that person should not feel superior to others (1 Cor 3:5–7) but instead use them to honor and glorify Him. They are not to be used for selfish reasons. Before examining the gifts, let's turn to 1 Corinthians 12:4–7.

What do these verses tell us? While each member may have different gifts to help advance the growth of the church in various ways, everything comes from one God and one Spirit. Therefore, there should be no strife or contradiction. Otherwise, God would be in conflict with Himself.

### **The Purposes of the Nine Gifts**

What are the purposes of the nine gifts that Paul lists?

1. **To edify and build up the members and the church:** The gifts are to advance God's work. For example, these gifts can help the members discern right from wrong. Since Satan has the power to deceive, we need God's power to discern the true from the false.
2. **To exhort and encourage one another:** The gifts can encourage the members' faith, especially in times of sorrow, so that we are able to comfort one another.
3. **To educate:** These gifts can educate even the illiterate, as they are used for God's glory.
4. **To expose:** These gifts will help the members and the church expose false spirits and religions.

From these purposes, we can see that no matter what the gift is, its purpose is to edify and help the members and the church. It is not for self-glorification, power, or personal gain. A key verse to remember is Ephesians 4:16: "[From] whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

There are various manifestations of the Holy Spirit when we are talking about these nine gifts. They may have different functions, but all are needed and equal in value in the eyes of God. But what exactly are these gifts? They can be categorized into three groups (*Doctrine*, 74–75)<sup>1</sup>:

1. Gifts of spiritual understanding (The gift of the word of wisdom; The gift of the word of knowledge; The gift of discerning spirits)
2. Gifts which manifest God's grace and power (The gift of faith; The gift of healing; The gift of working miracles)
3. Gifts which reveal God's will (The gift of prophecy; The gift of tongues; The gift of interpretation of tongues)

Let's examine each of these gifts in greater detail.

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<sup>1</sup> Shun Dao Hsieh, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Taiwan: True Jesus Church, 2014), [http://elibrary.tjc.org/content/cm/EN/pdf/2014/Print\\_tjc\\_holy%20spirit\\_%20nd%20edition%20March2014\\_MC%20edits\\_13531.pdf](http://elibrary.tjc.org/content/cm/EN/pdf/2014/Print_tjc_holy%20spirit_%20nd%20edition%20March2014_MC%20edits_13531.pdf).

## B. Gifts of Spiritual Understanding

### 1. The gift of the word of wisdom (1 Cor 12:8)

In this phrase, “word,” or *logos*, means the “essence of” in Greek, making this gift the *essence of* wisdom. It comes from God alone and refers to the ability to speak words of wisdom to the right people, at the right time. Let’s read 1 Corinthians 2:6–7. We cannot receive this wisdom from books, only from God through the Holy Spirit. Let’s examine one particular example of someone using this gift to edify the members and the church. Let’s read Acts 15:6–22.

After listening to Peter, the Pharisees, and Paul and Barnabas’ report, James then spoke, guiding the leaders to a decision that was in line with God’s will. He spoke words of wisdom at the right time, to the right people, and for the sole purpose of resolving an issue and building up the church. There are many other examples of people who received this same gift, such as Joshua (Deut 34:9), Peter (Acts 2:14, 40), and Stephen (Acts 6:8–10). In all of them, the gift is clearly from God, given for the purpose of leading His people and building up the church.

### 2. The gift of the word of knowledge (1 Cor 12:8)

The gift of “the word of knowledge through the same Spirit” is the gift of speaking God’s knowledge, because He and the Spirit are one. It is the gift of spiritual knowledge, which is different from worldly knowledge (Col 2:8). This gift comes from the Holy Spirit, not human intelligence. The knowledge of God is not gained from experience, nor is it based on one’s skills or abilities, but there are various ways God can give it to us. If it comes by means of a dream or vision, it must always agree with God’s word. The scope of this knowledge includes (*Doctrine*, 75–76):

- a. The richness of spiritual wisdom (Col 3:16)
- b. The ability to discern good from evil (Phil 1:9–10)
- c. The ability to stand firm in the faith
- d. The ability to teach others (Rom 15:14)

Let’s look at a few examples that illustrate this gift:

- a. Peter had knowledge of Ananias and Sapphira’s deception (Acts 5:3, 9).
- b. Ananias received knowledge of Saul’s conversion and future in detail (Acts 9:11–16).
- c. God revealed events of the end times to the apostle John on the island of Patmos (Rev 2; 3).

#### **What is the difference between the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge?**

Often, the gift of the word of knowledge comes before the word of wisdom, but there is no contradiction between them. Rather, they often work side by side, as a Spirit-filled person can have both. Let’s examine the following examples:

- a. Jesus had the word of knowledge regarding the Samaritan woman’s past (Jn 4:17–18). But He also demonstrated the gift of the word of wisdom in the same conversation, guiding her to the understanding that He was the Messiah (Jn 4:21–26).
- b. Joseph had the word of knowledge regarding the impending famine. But he also had the word of wisdom that gave Pharaoh the solution to save his people (Gen 41:25–36).
- c. When the Bible describes Daniel and his three friends, it says, “As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (Dan 1:17).

### 3. The gift of discerning spirits (1 Cor 12:10)

Evil spirits are, like Satan, able to deceive Christians (Mt 24:24; 1 Tim 4:1), for “Satan himself

transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14). To counter such deception, the Bible teaches us not to “believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God” (1 Jn 4:1). The apostles from the early church had the gift of discerning spirits and could tell when Satan was working against God (*Doctrine*, 76). For example:

- a. Paul rebuked a sorcerer who tried to turn away someone who wanted to hear the word of God. Paul had recognized the evil spirit through a revelation from the Holy Spirit. “Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, ‘O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?’ ” (Acts 13:9–10).
- b. A slave girl followed Paul and Silas for many days, announcing that they were workers from God. Although what she was saying was correct, it came from an evil spirit, with which God wanted no association. As a result, Paul cast the spirit out (Acts 16:16–18).

This gift of discernment requires a solid understanding of God’s word. It is not based on human intelligence, experience, or ability, but is directly from God. With it, we can judge and understand the situation, person, or environment to see if Satan is trying to influence our faith. Without members who can distinguish between spirits, the church is open to spiritual attacks.

### C. Gifts Which Manifest God’s Grace and Power

#### 1. The gift of faith (1 Cor 12:9)

Faith is an indispensable part of a Christian’s journey. It is key to receiving the grace of salvation (Eph 2:8), conquering difficulties (Phil 4:11–14), and living a life pleasing to God (Heb 11:6). Jesus Christ once said that if we have faith, we could move mountains (Mk 11:23–24). This gift doesn’t refer to our belief in God’s existence or in Jesus Christ as the Savior. The “gift of faith” is the ability to continue to trust in God at all times, even in impossible situations. Stephen and Barnabas had this gift (Acts 6:5; 11:24)(*Doctrine*, 76–77). The following are some more examples of when God guided His believers through seemingly impossible circumstances, all because of their faith.

- a. Noah, who built the ark despite everyone’s ridicule (Gen 6:14, 22).
- b. Abraham, who followed wherever God led him (Heb 11:8–9).
- c. Rahab, who helped the Israelite spies despite being a Canaanite (Josh 2:8–13; Heb 11:31).
- d. Daniel, who refused to eat the king’s food and wine (Dan 1:12–13) and had no fear in the den of lions (Dan 6:16–17, 19–23; Heb 11:33).
- e. Peter, whose faith enabled the lame man to walk (Acts 3:7–8).

#### 2. The gift of healing (1 Cor 12:9)

This gift refers to the supernatural healing of diseases and infirmities. It is a gift that is beyond natural means, and its effects can be immediate or gradual. The Bible has many examples:

- a. It was believed that even Peter’s shadow could help the sick (Acts 5:15).
- b. Paul’s clothing was used to heal diseases (Acts 19:12).
- c. Jesus went through all Syria, “and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them” (Mt 4:24).
- d. “And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him” (Acts 28:8–9).

Miraculous healings can help convince unbelievers of the message of the gospel (Acts 8:6; 14:3) and also encourage obedience and respect for the Lord. The Bible teaches us that faith is a

necessary condition for receiving God's gift of healing (Mt 9:27–30; Mk 9:21–24; Acts 14:8–10), as are the confession of sins and intercessory prayers on the part of the church (*Doctrine*, 78).

**3. The gift of working miracles (1 Cor 12:10)**

Like the gift of healing, this gift refers to a supernatural intervention. It is the gift to work something extraordinary, an occurrence against the laws of nature, such as the ten plagues (Ex 7–10), and the feeding of the 5,000 (Mt 14:15–21). Jesus performed many miracles during His ministry, and His apostles had this gift. For example, Peter restored Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:40), while Paul struck Elymas blind (Acts 13:11). Today, the signs and miracles that occur within the true church confirm the truth of the gospel she preaches and testify of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit (*Doctrine*, 78–79).

**D. Gifts Which Reveal God's Will**

**1. The gift of prophecy (1 Cor 12:10)**

The Greek word for *prophecy* means “to speak for another.” Prophecy is given by the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:20–21). Prophecies can be used to edify, exhort, and comfort members (1 Cor 14:3), and also to convict unbelievers (1 Cor 14:24–25). In 1 Corinthians 14:1, Paul wrote, “Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy,” implying that he held this gift in particular prominence (*Doctrine*, 79). God gave many prophets the special authority to speak His words. Today, God can similarly raise prophets to reveal the truth and to encourage the believers in the faith (1 Cor 14:30–31; *Doctrine*, 79).

**2. The gift of tongues (1 Cor 12:10)**

The gift of “different kinds of tongues” does not refer to our speaking in tongues when we receive the Holy Spirit. This gift is one of the many gifts of the Holy Spirit, but not everyone has it (*BSG: 1 Corinthians*, 7.4: 12).<sup>2</sup> We need to understand the differences between these two types of tongues so that we do not confuse the two (*Doctrine*, 80).

- a. The first type is the spiritual tongue used by an individual in their prayer (1 Cor 14:2, 14–15). This tongue is primarily for self-edification (1 Cor 14:2, 4). More importantly, it is the evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).
- b. The second is the gift of “different kinds of tongues.” This kind of tongue is used for preaching, to deliver God's message for the edification of the church (1 Cor 14:5–6, 26). It is used in worship only when someone present is able to interpret their words (1 Cor 14:27–28).

**3. The gift of interpretation of tongues (1 Cor 12:10)**

The gift of interpretation of tongues is used to explain the meaning of the message given in tongues so that all may be edified (1 Cor 14:5, 27). The one speaking should pray that there be an interpretation (1 Cor 14:13). While the interpreter may not understand the tongue spoken, the Holy Spirit does; he merely speaks the interpretation by the work of the Spirit.

Paul instructs the Corinthians that if there is no one to interpret, they should keep quiet (1 Cor 14:27–28). He further speaks firmly against disorder, writing that messages in tongues in a public meeting should be limited, for “God is not the author of confusion but of peace” (1 Cor

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<sup>2</sup> TJC Department of Literary Ministry, “Order in Church Gatherings”, *Bible Study Guide: 1 Corinthians* (U.S.A.: True Jesus Church, 2018), [https://bsg.tjc.org/tjc\\_bsg\\_lesson/1-corinthians-12/?guide\\_id=920](https://bsg.tjc.org/tjc_bsg_lesson/1-corinthians-12/?guide_id=920), 7.4:12.

14:33). Additionally, he advises that “all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor 14:40).

We need to remember that spiritual gifts only have one purpose: to build up the church. The gifted have the responsibility of helping the church and its members, and in the end, must be able to provide an account of their works when Jesus Christ comes again. If we have been blessed with a gift, do not boast. Instead, remember that it is a privilege to have, and that with it comes the duty to use it in service to other members to the best of our abilities.

### *Check for Understanding*

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- 1. What are the purposes of the spiritual gifts?** To edify and build up the members and the church; to exhort and encourage one another; to educate; to expose false spirits and religions.
- 2. Name two characters in the Bible who had the gift of the word of wisdom.** James (Acts 15:6–22), Joshua (Deut 34:9), Peter (Acts 2:14, 40), and Stephen (Acts 6:8–10).
- 3. Name two characters in the Bible who had the gift of the word of knowledge.** Jesus (Jn 4:17–18, 21–26), Joseph (Gen 41:25–36), and Daniel and his three friends (Dan 1:17).
- 4. Why it is important to have the gift of discernment?** Without members who can distinguish between spirits, the church is open to spiritual attacks.
- 5. What is the difference between speaking in tongues in Acts 2 and “different kinds of tongues” in 1 Corinthians 12:10?**
  - a. The first type is the spiritual tongue used by an individual in their prayer (1 Cor 14:2, 14–15). This tongue is primarily for self-edification (1 Cor 14:2, 4). More importantly, it is the evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).
  - b. The second is the gift of “different kinds of tongues.” This kind of tongue is used for preaching, to deliver God’s message for the edification of the church (1 Cor 14:5–6, 26). It is used in worship only when someone present is able to interpret their words (1 Cor 14:27–28).

### *Life Application*

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#### **1. God Wants to Fill You First with His Spirit**

Let’s read Exodus 31:1–6. God had a group of gifted people to work with Moses in order to construct the tabernacle. God knew they needed special spiritual gifts, so He filled them with the Spirit of God in wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and skills in all manner of workmanship (Ex 31:1–11; 35:30–35). The same principle applies here. God will help His workers to do His work in order to build up the body of Christ.

You may be skillful in planning or managing your work. Perhaps your skills lie in music, sports, or writing. But church work is not the same as work at home or school. That’s why God wants us to be filled with the power from on high. His work needs members who are empowered with wisdom and understanding from the Holy Spirit. When we let Him fill us with His Spirit and gifts, we will be able to do the work just like the craftsmen in the Old Testament (Ex 36:2), and God’s name will be glorified.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10). We are made for a purpose and God’s workmanship, created for good works. This gives our life great significance! What skills do you have? How can you use them for God’s good works, either now or in the future?

#### **2. Am I a Clean Vessel, Ready for the Master’s Use?**

*“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”*

(2 Tim 2:20–21)

We may feel that some things in life are unattainable or impossible. Many of us could never imagine ourselves becoming a pastor or healing others. But God doesn't need any natural talents from you in order to build up the church. The most important question we should ask is: are we cleaned and sanctified from within so that God can use us? We can be a vessel of wood, clay, gold, or silver in God's eyes. Whatever we may be, we know that God wants to apply our skills and abilities for His good purposes. Our value doesn't lie in our material, but in our submission to God's use.

Rather than assuming we are incapable, we should always pray to understand the will of God and sanctify ourselves so that when He wants to use us, we will be ready! The best vessel for God to use is a clean vessel. God can't use someone who hasn't repented of his wicked ways and is dirty within. We need to deal with our sins and be right with God.

### *Memory Verse*

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*“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.” (1 Corinthians 12:4–5)*

### **Meaning:**

Even though there are nine gifts listed here, all of them are from the same Spirit and the same Lord. They do not come into conflict with each other but are to be used to promote peace and understanding, for the purpose of building up the members and the church towards God's heavenly kingdom.

### *Conclusion*

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Paul highlighted the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit to remind the believers at Corinth of their misuse of the gifts. Every member can be given special abilities by the Spirit, but that doesn't make one person better than another. Rather, the gifted have the responsibility of helping the church and its members, and in the end, must be able to provide an account of their works when Jesus Christ comes again. We need to remember that spiritual gifts only have one purpose: to build up the church.

Lesson 6 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does the memory verse teach us about the different spiritual gifts?  
*They all come from the same Spirit, the same Lord, and thus do not conflict with each other.*
2. “But the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ to each \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.” (1 Corinthians 12:7)  
*manifestation, Spirit, given, one, profit, all*
3. What are the purposes of the nine gifts that Paul lists?  
*To edify and build up the members and the church; to exhort and encourage one another; to educate; and to expose.*
4. Outline a Biblical example that shows both the gifts of the words of wisdom and of knowledge.
  - a. *Jesus had the word of knowledge regarding the Samaritan woman’s past (Jn 4:17–18). But He also demonstrated the gift of the word of wisdom in the same conversation, guiding her to the understanding that He was the Messiah (Jn 4:21–26).*
  - b. *Joseph had the word of knowledge regarding the impending famine. But he also had the word of wisdom that gave Pharaoh the solution to save his people (Gen 41:25–36).*
  - c. *When the Bible describes Daniel and his three friends, it says, “As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (Dan 1:17).*
5. Why do we need to be filled with God’s Spirit in order to serve Him?  
*Church work is not the same as work at home or school. God’s work needs members who are empowered with wisdom and understanding from the Holy Spirit.*
6. What in your life do you need to change in order to become a clean vessel, prepared for His work?  
*Personal answers.*