

More...Where our hunger meets His Promises

Ephesians 5:18 NLT

- Week 9 -

“Everyday Grace - the Practical Spiritual Gifts”

Part 1

There are different flavors of church - as denominations - but, as we read in Scripture, there are a lot of wonderful things that are not talked much about, one of which is actually a Person - the Person of the Holy Spirit. As we read through the book of Acts, we see referenced the Person of the Holy Spirit - in addition to God the Father and God the Son (our Savior and Lord). But who is the Holy Spirit? What does the Word say about him? How do we relate to him, and how do we get to know him?

As we hunger for more of whatever it is that God has for us, we find ourselves in the midst of fertile soil - fertile ground - in a sort of greenhouse where something powerful is happening - and God, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, begins to show up. And we ask the question, *“Is this that which the Bible talks about?”* God enjoys our purity as we seek to discover him - even if we’re making mistakes, he applauds us for our efforts to learn things.

There is Grace for his children who are learning things about the Holy Spirit, but who might “miss it” every once in awhile - or they might run off the rails a little bit - and God is okay with some of that. Sometimes, in our learning and growing, we make mistakes - but, if we’re not failing at something - if we’re not breaking things, we might not *be* growing, or trying to learn more.

There is an element of *risk* in that, but the Holy Spirit is not weird. People are weird. People who are weird with the Holy Spirit were weird before the Holy Spirit came. We’re always going to run the risk as we’re learning new things - and that’s okay. It’s okay not to be okay, or to have a misfire, or to stumble. Any successful person didn’t get it right when they first started, so why do we think we’re going to have this all figured out as we step into it?

As we first acknowledge him - his Presence - starting each day by coloring the palette of our day with him. Now, our filter - our lens - the grid through which we now see our day is the Holy Spirit - the Person, the work, and the *Power* of the Holy Spirit. As we say, *“Good morning, Holy Spirit,”* we can feel his Presence - his smile. Yes, we may witness excesses, but also some amazing things too. Sometimes you have to “eat the fish and spit out the bones” - and say, *“This might be more than I’m accustomed to - maybe I’m uncomfortable with it - but I also see wonderful things happening here!”*

Over three-quarters of the songs we sing in worship at the Bridge every Sunday are birthed out of charismatic, Spirit-filled, and pentecostal churches - churches that are full of the Spirit. But the songs aren't weird - they're wonderful - they're Life-giving - they're *Hope-filled!*

"The Holy Spirit enables and empowers us to live Life out of the overflow of his Person, Presence, and Power," and people can be *"strangely drawn to us"* when our buckets are full. We're here right now getting our buckets filled, and as we are, we then go out into where we live, work, and play - and we carry these full buckets that are leaking out and overflowing and spilling over with the Person of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 13:1-4 NASB

"If I speak with the tongues of mankind and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 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. And if I give away all my possessions to charity, and if I surrender my body so that I may glory, but do not have love, it does me no good. Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant."

1 Corinthians 13:13 NASB

"But now faith, hope, and love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Any time we talk about the things like the gifts of the Holy Spirit - the movement of the Spirit - all of these things must be set in the context of Love. If the foundation is not Love, then it means nothing. There are, sometimes, people who tend to act the most spiritual - people with esoteric knowledge (*they* know something and you *don't*). There's a *pride* in that - a lack of humility - but more than anything, there's a lack of *Love* - not in all, but in some.

These people could bowl you over with their spirituality, to the point where you say, *"Enough's enough! I don't want anything to do with that"* - and that's exactly how the enemy inoculates you to the very thing you need - the Person of the Holy Spirit. We need not be afraid of the Holy Spirit. *Amen?*

Four Categories of Spiritual Gifts

1. Manifestation gifts
2. Ministry gifts

3. Motivation gifts

4. Gifts that Jesus gives - Ephesians 4: gifts or *offices* that Jesus, himself, set in the Church for the building up of the body of Christ - equipping the saints for the work of the ministry.

The Manifestation Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 ESV

“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.”

The word *manifestation* means *expression* - to each is given the *expression* of the Spirit - also *demonstration*. In Corinth, certain types of gifts had been elevated over other gifts. Those who manifested one kind of gift seemed to have more clout and power in the churches there than the ones who didn't. Paul had to write to bring clarity back to this because they were running off the rails, and there was chaos.

So, in that context, he says *“to each one [that means you and me] is given the expression - the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”* He gives us gifts that will benefit all. The benefit *we* get is getting to participate, to co-operate, and co-labor with him to fulfill his purposes in the body of Christ. We *get* to do this - to participate.

There are nine manifestation gifts broken down into three categories. What does it look like when these are being manifested or expressed? As far as the nine manifestation gifts of the Holy Spirit are concerned, any one of us - *each* one of us - can manifest any of these “grace gifts” (Greek - *charisma*, as in *charismatic*), when the Holy Spirit wills you to do so. It's not that you turn it off and on yourself - it's literally when this gift is needed in a particular context, as the Holy Spirit wills, that he gives it to you in that moment.

These are not *our* gifts to hold and/or keep. These are our gifts to express, and are his gifts given to us to *steward* - in that particular moment (which doesn't mean you will necessarily have it in the *next* moment). These are called manifestation gifts, given as the Spirit wills. Sometimes people may get their identity tied up in a particular spiritual gift - *“Well, I have the gift of...”*

1. The Discerning gifts
2. The Declarative gifts
3. The Dynamic gifts, or the Power gifts

The Discerning Gifts

1. The word of knowledge - to know something specific without having learned it by natural means. *Supernatural* - literally means *above and beyond nature*. This is what the Holy Spirit does in our lives - he gives us a gift in a given moment for a given situation, and suddenly we are functioning at a different level - above and beyond *us*. We might, instead, tend to think of Hollywood's idea of supernatural - like something from a horror movie like the Exorcist - and we think *that's* supernatural. But, in fact, when the Holy Spirit comes on us in a given moment, what happens is, you know something specific without having learned it by natural means.

It *comes* to you - like in a conversation, where something came to you, and *you* know you didn't know that before - where the Holy Spirit - *the Helper* - *the Paraklétos* - *the One called alongside to help* - helped you in that moment with something - where he gave you a word of knowledge that you didn't know prior. If that happens, then you are functioning at a supernatural level. *That's exciting!* - when the Holy Spirit reveals something so specific that you don't have any natural knowledge of. ...*Jesus did this.*

In John chapter 4, when he told the woman at the well to go and call her husband - to which the woman replied, "*I don't have a husband,*" Jesus said, "*That's right! You've been married five times, and the man you're with now is not your husband.*" How did he know that? *No*, it's not because "*he was Jesus - he knew everything.*" Actually, he *didn't* when he was on the earth - he was the Son of Man on the earth.

Scripture says in Philippians 2 that he emptied himself of his divinity. He was born and lived his childhood like any normal Jewish kid would. He bled blood just like you and me. He did not have esoteric knowledge - he knew only because he had a relationship with his heavenly Father. He was manifesting or expressing a relationship with his Father that he wants us also to learn to do.

That word of knowledge led to evangelism (the first evangelist was that woman), with people coming to know Jesus - coming to him to hear him teach - and the Bible says he stayed there for many days afterward, teaching them - those *horrible* Samaritans! So, Jesus functioned in a word of knowledge - he knew something he didn't know before, because the Spirit himself gave it to him, and in that moment he functioned - he ministered - in the Power of the Holy Spirit.

After the Holy Spirit came on him “like a dove” at his baptism by John, he functioned and walked - he exemplified what it was like to live a Spirit-filled life. This is what Paul was talking about - *this* is what the Holy Spirit gives you - each one - these opportunities. And the Bible also says that Jesus, after his baptism - after going into the wilderness, being tempted - *came back* in the Power of the Holy Spirit that was imparted to him at his baptism, and then his ministry began to take off.

2. The word of wisdom - doesn't mean that you're just *wise* all the time - but it's that which comes to you in a given moment when you need it. (Like the other manifestation gifts, they show up *as needed, and as the Lord wills.*) Definition - *a divine answer or solution for a particular event, need, or situation.* Where *knowledge* is content or information, *wisdom* is the *application* of that information and content - presenting it in a way that makes total sense. It gives people an “Aha!” moment, and happens when you're in a situation and you *don't know* what to do - when it's not content you need - it's strategy - it's wisdom - it's a way out, or a way through.

Then wisdom comes to you - and you *know* what to do. You apply James 1:5 ESV - “*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*”

Matthew 7:28-29 ESV

“And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.”

He was operating in the word of wisdom - he was not just bringing content and information. He was bringing the *application* of it - principles of how to live a life led by the Spirit of God.

Luke 21:12-15 NRSV

“But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.”

The application of the word of wisdom - if you're led by the Holy Spirit, you don't have to *know* what to say - he'll give you what to say in that moment... *don't worry!*

3. The discerning of spirits - to be made aware of the presence of a demonic spirit. In other words, there is something *driving* a particular behavior, thought, or something stated by a person. The discerning of spirits is given in a moment when you get to see *behind* the facade - behind what's being presented - behind the energy, fear, and angst of the moment - where we get a different perspective and see people *in 3-D*, and the "*something else*" that's going on.

If we just look at someone one-dimensionally, all we see is what's being presented at face value - but it could be that Love pushes us to see beyond - and the Holy Spirit says, "*You're loving them, but I'm going to give you some discernment here. I'm going to give you the ability to distinguish what's driving that behavior.*"

Matthew 16:21-23 ESV

"From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Jesus saw what was driving Peter, by the discerning of spirits - he was distinguishing what was driving Peter in that moment with clarity. When we experience this, it's our signal to intercede on that person's behalf. We're not fighting against flesh and blood, but principalities and powers - things bigger than we are. There is more going on, by the influence of a spirit that is destroying them. *This is real* - where the Holy Spirit will manifest the ability to distinguish what is driving a behavior of another individual.

So, Pray - ask

Just say, "*Holy Spirit, I do want to grow, and I do want to experience the gifts that You have.*" They are gifts. They are "*in addition to*" - they're what help us live this life and find joy and vitality... and Life, *in life*. We don't want to live this life like the walking dead who never sees anything - never *expects* anything - but just keeps hanging on until Jesus comes back - or steps over the line and graduates into his presence. Don't wait to be promoted at the end of your life, but say, "*Lord, what do You have for me here? You've given all of us - each of us - these gifts.*"

And at any given point, you can manifest one of these nine gifts. Sometimes they overlap. Some of us have already operated in these gifts without even realizing it
... *and that's the purest form of all.*

Prayer

Father, in the name of Your Son, Jesus - Oh, Holy Spirit - thank You! Thank You for giving us Life! Thank You for giving us help - because we need lots of help - and so, thank You for being our Helper - even now, in this moment. Holy Spirit, teach us - give us clarity and understanding and a heart to receive Your gifts as You give them, so that we may employ them and minister them for the benefit and good of others.

As we go from this place, lead us - teach us - we want to be students and disciples at the feet of Jesus this week. We ask as we go out with our buckets full, Lord, would You have people "strangely drawn to us" because of the Hope? - because of the Life that's inside of us? and as we do, we'll leak out that Life and share It freely. We love You and honor You! In Jesus' name. Amen