

# SPIRITUAL GIFTS

S E M I N A R

VOLUME 1

BY JOHN WIMBER

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# **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

## **VOLUME 1**

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## PROGRAM

# 1

## PART 1

# AN INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH & GIFTS

### INTRODUCTION

Why another seminar on Spiritual gifts? The Evangelical Church for years has recognized the priesthood of all believers. We have seen the necessity for each member of the Body to be equipped and to function in his area of talent and gifting. So why address the issue again?

First, because I have developed a fresh theological approach to the gifts and their function in the body. I believe and teach that the believer can move in all Spiritual gifts in accordance with God's timing and purpose. Previously we have limited ourselves to one or more of the gifts and have shied away from the rest.

Second, to date, the materials written on Spiritual gifts fall generally into one of two categories. Some, who don't embrace the gifts or their practice, have written books to prove that the gifts are not for the Church today. At the other end of the spectrum are those who fully embrace the gifts but have little or no theological basis for their beliefs and practice. They have primarily written narratives about their own experience and the group they have been a part of. I desire to express both a theological and an experiential basis for the gifts and their practice.

Third, I feel that the bottom line of Jesus' teaching is not only to learn *about* what Jesus did, but to learn to *do* the works of Jesus. To this date there is very little written on "how" to minister in the Spiritual gifts as Jesus did. My desire is to be pragmatic and to train you to function effectively in the gifts.

My prayer is that you will find this new view refreshing and enlightening. I desire to encourage my Evangelical brethren to find a place of balance between solid theology and Spirit-led experience. I hope to give you the keys that will open the functioning of the gifts in your life.

John Wimber  
Vineyard Ministries International

### I. Three kinds of people in Corinthians 14:22-25

- A. Those who believe and practice gifts.
- B. Those who do not believe
- C. Those who are believers but do not understand gifts (uncleaned)

## II. Three Common Errors

- A. Confusing the gift with the package
  - 1. The unlearned observing the immaturity of the gifted.
  - 2. The immature, gifted believer mistaking his giftedness for maturity.
- B. Assuming that Spiritual Gifts are awards given to the mature Christian. "If these gifts were today, they would have come to us first." John MacArthur.
- C. Believing that Spiritual Gifts are under the control of the "gifted."
  - 1. "Discover *YOUR* spiritual gift and *YOU* can *USE* it" is an erroneous concept. Gifts are not discovered, they are imparted (II Timothy 1:6).
  - 2. While spirit-filled believers possess the gifts, they cannot produce spiritual results at will. By faithfully exercising their gifts, individuals increase in faith and enhance the likelihood that there will be a positive result. If a person does not obediently exercise his spiritual gifts, it would be predictable that he would observe no results of his giftedness. That is to say, a gifted person cannot create results by exercising his gifts. However, a person can limit the effects of his giftedness by not exercising his gifts.

## PROGRAM

# 2

## PART 2

# AN INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH & GIFTS

## III. The Process of Growth

- A. Babes — *brepbos*, "briefs"
  - 1. I John 2:12 — The assurance of forgiven sin.
  - 2. II Timothy 3:15 — Timothy was taught the Word all his life.
  - 3. I Peter 2:2 — The raising of children with the proper foods.
- B. Toddlers — *nepios*, learning speech
  - 1. Hebrews 5:11-14 — The moving toward recognizing good and evil.
  - 2. Ephesians 4:14-15 — Learning to speak the truth in love.
  - 3. Matthew 11:25 — Jesus does reveal things to babes.
  - 4. Romans 2:20 — The immature need to be taught.
  - 5. I Corinthians 3:1 — Immaturity is an ongoing problem.
- C. Children — *teknion*
  - 1. I Peter 1:14 — God has called us to a life of holiness.
  - 2. I John 2:1, 12, 28 — The restoration of innocence.
  - 3. I John 3:7, 18 — We have been provided righteousness and the ability to live it.
  - 4. I John 5:21 — You have overcome the spirit of anti-Christ.
- D. Little child — *paidios*, little child
  - 1. I Corinthians 14:20 — The learning to think and be mature.
  - 2. I John 2:13, 18 — You know the Father. You have an anointing from the Holy One.

## PROGRAM

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## PART 3

**AN INTRODUCTION  
TO SPIRITUAL  
GROWTH & GIFTS****III. The Process of Growth**

- E. Young people — *neoteros*, young people  
Titus 2:6 — Urged to be sensible!
- F. Young people — *neaniskos*
  - 1. I John 2:13, 14 — We have overcome the evil one. Be strong! The Word abides in us.
  - 2. Acts 2:17 — We can see visions.
  - 3. I Timothy 5:1 — How to handle relationships within the Body.
- G. Young women, *neos*
  - 1. Titus 2:4 — Love your husbands, children and homes. Be kind, sensible, pure and subject to their husbands.
  - 2. I Timothy 5:2 — Communicate with young women as sisters.
  - 3. I Timothy 5:14 — Get married, raise children, give the enemy no occasion for reproach. Living life in balance.
- H. Men/Women/Mankind: male and female
  - 1. Matthew 4:4 — Live on the Word of God.
  - 2. Matthew 12:33-37 — Good and bad people show what is inside of them by what they speak!
  - 3. Matthew 19:6 — Mankind does not have dominion over the work of God!
  - 4. I Corinthians 2:5 — Your faith must rest on the power of God.
  - 5. I Corinthians 3:3 — You must learn how to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.
  - 6. Galatians 1:11 — Do not listen to man's gospel.

## PROGRAM

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## PART 1

**AN INTRODUCTION  
TO THE HOLY  
SPIRIT: "THE  
SPIRIT'S PERSON  
AND WORK"****INTRODUCTION**

The person and work of the Holy Spirit are spread throughout the pages of Scripture. With the exception of 2nd and 3rd John, every book in the New Testament contains material about the Holy Spirit. For some, this is where He should remain: for them, the Bible is the safest place for the Spirit (Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, p. 12). In reality, the Bible reveals for us who the Spirit is (His person) and what the Spirit does (His work). Because He is God, He remains who He is as the Scripture shares. Because He is God, He still does what He did. He has not changed.

Our task here is to look at a brief overview of what Scripture teaches us about the Holy Spirit. Knowing what the Bible says will allow us to deal more adequately with the specific subject of His gifts. The Gifts of the Spirit are only a part of His overall work. We need the big picture in order to properly "view" the little picture.

**I. The Spirit's Person**

- A. Traits of personality
  - 1. He can be blasphemed — Mark 3:29
  - 2. He teaches — John 14:26
  - 3. He bears witness — John 15:26
  - 4. He can be lied to — Acts 5:3
  - 5. He intercedes — Romans 8:26
  - 6. He has a mind — Romans 8:27
  - 7. He has a will — 1 Corinthians 12:11
  - 8. He has feelings — Ephesians 4:30
  - 9. He speaks — Revelation 2:7
- B. The Symbols of personality
  - 1. FIRE — Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16 — The Spirit is seen as One who judges.
  - 2. WATER — John 4:14 — The Spirit is seen as the "spiritual thirst quencher".
  - 3. SEAL — Ephesians 1:13 — The Spirit's impregnation of our lives shows to the world that we are owned by God.
  - 4. DOVE — Luke 3:22 — The Spirit is seen as gentle, tender and pure.
  - 5. WIND — John 3:8 — The Spirit is seen as moving where and when He desires.



PROGRAM

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PART 1

## AN INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS: THE SPIRIT'S GRACELETS

### INTRODUCTION

The gifts (*charismata*) of gracelets (a term coined by Dr. Russ Spittler, Fuller Seminary) of the Holy Spirit are the transrational manifestations of God. They are given by God for the purpose of ministry taking place for the good of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:7).

SOURCE: The Holy Spirit — 1 Corinthians 12; Hebrews 2:4

RECIPIENTS: The Community of the Spirit: the People of God; the Body of Christ — 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12; Ephesians 4; 1 Peter 4

ESSENCE: They are manifestations of grace — 1 Peter 4:10-11.

PURPOSE: To edify, to glorify God, to equip the saints.

MOTIVE: Love — 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (Mel Robeck, Fuller Seminary)

Ever since the beginning, the Spirit has desired to find those through whom He could manifest Himself.

In CREATION — He "hovered" like a hen over her baby chicks (Genesis 1:2).

In NUMBERS 11:26-30 — Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp of Israel. When this event was reported to Moses, he replied, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (vs. 29)

In JOEL 2:28-29 — Joel is prophesying that there is coming a day when the prayer of Moses will be answered.

In ACTS 2:14-21, Peter says the day which was prophesied by Joel had arrived. We now live in that "day" and God is ministering upon those who "desire" the gracelets.

### I. The Language of Gifts (Gracelets)

- A. ROLE: The doing of the acts which you see occurring in Scripture by means of your natural ability to the degree that you are able (rational).
- B. GRACELETS/ANOINTINGS (Gifts): The occasional manifestation of a gift as ordained by God (transrational).

- C. MINISTRIES: The increase of the occasions, use and dimensions of the gracelets.
- D. OFFICES: The appointments made by God and given to and recognized by the Church. God takes a person that He is using and gives him a further function.
- E. ILLUSTRATION: JOEL
  1. ROLE: Joel was a man living in the period of the divided kingdom in the Old Testament. He probably lived in Jerusalem. Not much is really known about him. He saw what was happening during one period of Judah's agricultural life: a large army of grasshoppers had invaded the land. (rational)
  2. GRACELET: The prophecy of Joel was the anointing of God coming to Joel (1:1) and the speaking of that word by Joel to Judah. He, through God's anointing, saw this calamity the way God wanted him to see it. He spoke about it with the words God gave him. The invasion of the grasshoppers was the judgment of God (1:1, 2:17). In 2:18-3:21 Joel proceeds to call Judah to repentance, reports the victorious outcome, and speaks of the coming of the Spirit.
  3. MINISTRIES: We don't know how often Joel was used by God to prophesy. If the occasions became frequent, this would have become his ministry. It most likely did.
  4. OFFICE: God at some time released Joel to the office of Prophet (Acts 2:16).
- F. THE RATIONAL/TRANSRATIONAL: There is a sense in which both the person and God's Spirit are involved in the giving/receiving of gracelets. *Rational* in the sense that the person must be aware of what is surrounding him, e.g. observing. *Transrational* in the sense that God at His own discretion "anoints" the person for an effect which He wishes produced (Mel Robeck).

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PART 2

## AN INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS: THE SPIRIT'S GRACELETS

### II. Possessions or Anointing

There is a difference between possession of gracelets, and being used by God at a special time and occasion. Many teaching today on spiritual gifts suggest that each person has a gift and it is his/her possession. They are dispensed to us and become our property.

In 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 we find that there are varieties (*diairesis*) or assignments of gracelets.

- A. THE SOURCE: The Spirit gives the gracelets.
- B. THE SERVICE: The root word here gives us our English word "deacon/servant". Jesus is both the One ultimately served by the use of the gracelet, and the One who directs to whom the service will be given.
- C. THE EFFECT: The root word is "energy." It is not here active, but resultive. God sees that the effect of the gracelet being used is accomplished.
- D. THE MANIFESTATION (*phanerosis*): The English word "manifestation" comes from two Latin words which mean "the festive hand" or "the dancing hand" (Mel Robeck). So the manifestations of the Spirit in verse 7 are "the dancing hand of God" which can be seen by all who observe. The word "given" in verse 7 is present (which points to the idea of continuous action. It could be translated "to each one 'He' (God) is giving and keeps on giving. . ."), and passive (which means that the subject, "each one" receives the giving from an outside source, i.e. the Spirit. This is not something which is worked up by themselves).

As God sees fit, His "dancing hand" anoints (gives a gracelet to) a believer. It is a festive occasion for all to witness. The gracelets are GIVEN by the Spirit. As they are used, SERVICE is produced by Jesus. The EFFECTS are brought forth and about by God.

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PART 3

## AN INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS: THE SPIRIT'S GRACELETS

### III. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Let's examine this subject by asking a few questions.

#### A. HOW DID THE CONCEPT ORIGINATE?

1. The concept of "baptism in the Spirit" (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33-34). This phrase is also found in Acts 1:5; 11:16). The first time it comes from the mouth of Jesus; the second time it comes from Peter who is quoting Jesus.
2. The phrase "the baptism with the Holy Spirit" never appears in the New Testament using a noun.
3. Clark Pinnock writes " 'Baptism' is a flexible metaphor, not a technical term. Luke seems to regard it as synonymous with 'wholeness' (Acts 2:4 cf. 11:16). Therefore, so long as we recognize conversion as truly a baptism in the Spirit, there is no reason why we cannot use 'baptism' to refer to subsequent fillings of the Spirit as well. This major experience or experiences ought not to be tied down in a tight 'second blessing' schema, but should be seen as an *actualization* of what we have already received in the initial charismatic experience which is conversion." (Spittler, (Ed.), *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, p. 186.)
  - a. Comparison—Kingdom of God
  - b. Comparison—Jesus
4. The argument concerning "baptism in the Spirit" usually comes down to a question of labels. "The Church often faces the problem of the medicine bottle and its label. It is possible for a person's experience of God to be better than his doctrinal explanation of it. Unfortunately, the reverse can be true. Orthodox theology is often affirmed with little Christian character and service. Good medicine may be incorrectly labeled, while an accurate label can adorn an empty bottle." (Hummel, *Fire in the Fireplace*, p. 185.)
 

Whatever one decides to call it (i.e., baptism, infilling, empowerment, touch, zapped, etc.), one thing appears to be clear: we simply need to actualize what we already have. "One baptism, many fillings" appears to be an adequate way to understand both Luke and Paul.
5. The language of Acts 2:4 and 4:31 is identical in Greek.
6. The wrappings in which we have received this "baptism" have come basically from three sources:

- a. The language of Luke-Acts has been interpreted from a presupposition of "subsequence".
  - b. In our own personal history it appeared to be "subsequent".
  - c. The "second work" teachings from the Wesley Revival served as the basic framework for interpretation of this phenomenon.
- B. WHAT DOES "TO BE BAPTIZED IN THE SPIRIT" MEAN?  
A synonym which may be useful to use is "overwhelm" (Spittler, NT 576 -Spiritual Gifts - Spring '82, Fuller Seminary; *Vine Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 97).
- C. WHEN DOES BAPTISM OCCUR?
1. It is both initiatory and repeatable.
  2. In the book of Acts, no single event will provide the model for the sequence of an individual's repentance, faith, water baptism and the actualization of the Spirit. The pattern, if there is one, is that the Spirit blows where He wills. "Completeness and not subsequence strikes me as a better category by which to understand the arrival of the Spirit in Acts (Spittler, *Reflections*, p. 5)."
- D. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM? — To Be Empowered

## PROGRAM

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## PART 4

# AN INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS: THE SPIRIT'S GRACELETS

## IV. IMPARTATION

Impartation is the passing on of ministry which occurs either as a sovereign act of God or as an act of God through man. The gracelets are received by impartation, in the following three ways:

- A. SOVEREIGN: God can move to give gracelets, ministries and offices as He desires (Acts 2:1-4; 4:31; 10:44).
- B. LAYING ON OF HANDS: This can be seen in the following cases:
  1. Moses to Joshua — Deuteronomy 34:9
  2. The Seven (Stephen, Philip, etc.) — Acts 6:6
  3. Ananias/Paul — Acts 9:17
  4. The Church at Antioch to Barnabas/Paul — Acts 13:3
  5. Elders to Timothy — 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6
  6. "Do not be hasty . . ." — 1 Timothy 5:22
- C. MANTLE:
  1. Elijah to Elisha — 1 Kings 19:19ff
  2. Jesus and the Twelve — Luke 9:1; 10
  3. Some illustrations today
    - a. Alexander Dowie to John G. Lake
    - b. William Branham to T.L. Osborn
    - c. Agnes Sanford to Francis MacNutt

## V. Gracelets to Others

The gracelets are given through us to others only as we operate in obedience in doing the things we have been taught to do. The gracelets do not come in an academic setting. They are not a cerebral exercise. They are not DISCOVERED but are sovereignly given by God's grace through us to others. (Example: "Gifts of Healings" is what the person who is being healed receives.)

## VI. Risk Taking

The gracelets are best developed in a climate of risk taking and willingness to fail. The best way to teach someone is to have them exposed to a model. They can "see it", "hear it", and then "try it". They can "think about it", have it "reinforced" and "try it again". Finally, they will "be it" and "do it" for the rest of their lives.

## VII. Job Description

- A. The gracelets plus ministry equals job description.
- B. If the Body of Christ were functioning in this realm, what would occur?

## PROGRAM

# 10

PART 1

## CESSATION OR CONTINUATION OF GOD'S GRACELETS

There are four different attitudes concerning the cessation or continuation of the gifts within the Church. In summary, they are:

**I. SIGNS AND WONDERS** ceased with the end of the Apostolic age. Anything which appears to be such is either spurious or *not* occurring by divine means.

**II. SIGNS AND WONDERS** ceased because they belonged only to the *earliest* centuries. They ceased because they were no longer needed as "divine credentials" since the Church had been widely established and officially sanctioned, and the Canon was completed.

**III. SIGNS AND WONDERS** faded out *gradually* as the condition of the organized church deteriorated.

**IV. SIGNS AND WONDERS** *have never ceased* among true Christian believers, but have occurred from the Apostolic age until now. (Baxter, *Divine Healing*, p. 52).

### LET'S TAKE EACH ONE AND DISCUSS THEM

**I. SIGNS AND WONDERS** ceased with the end of the Apostolic age. Anything which appears to be such is either spurious or *not* occurring by divine means.

This is the view posited by B.B. Warfield in his book *Counterfeit Miracles*. In that book he writes the following:

Everywhere, the Apostolic Church was marked out as itself a gift from God, by showing forth the possession of the Spirit in appropriate works of the Spirit — miracles of HEALING and miracles of power, miracles of knowledge, whether in the form of prophecy or of the discerning of spirits, miracles of speech, whether of the gift of tongues or of their interpretation. The Apostolic Church was characteristically a miracle-working church.

How long did this state of things continue? It was the characterizing peculiarity of specifically the Apostolic Church, and it belonged therefore exclusively to the Apostolic age. . . . These gifts were not the possession of the primitive Church as such . . . they were distinctively the authentication of the Apostles. They were part of the credentials of the Apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the Church. Their function (i.e., healing and other miracles) thus confined them to distinctively the Apostolic Church, and they necessarily passed away with it. . . .

The possession of the charismata (i.e., the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit

in the early church) was confined to the Apostolic age. . . .

They (the miracle workings) were confined to the Apostolic age, and to a very narrow circle then.

(Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles*, pp. 5-6, 236)

Here are some of the reasons that lead me to disagree with this position:

A. This theory finds no warrant in Scripture. Nowhere in his book does Warfield use any Scripture to support his contention that divine miracles ceased upon the death of the Apostles and their generation. There are no Scriptures either stating or implying such a position.

B. The theory rejects the history of the Church Fathers.

Warfield denotes that these early Church Fathers were men who were "outstanding scholars, theologians, and preachers. . ." (Warfield, p. 37-38), but rejects their testimony concerning the continuation of miracles as mistaken. If all miracles ceased with the death of the Apostles and their generation, as Warfield insists, then not one of the miracles recorded by Justine Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Gregory, Ambrose, Athanasius, Jerome, Augustine and others were really genuine divine miracles. (See a brief sketch of *Signs and Wonders Through the Church Age*, an attached reader).

## PROGRAM

# 11

## PART 2

# CESSATION OR CONTINUATION OF GOD'S GRACELETS

There are four different attitudes concerning the cessation or continuation of the gifts within the Church. In summary, they are:

**I. SIGNS AND WONDERS** ceased with the end of the Apostolic age. Anything which appears to be such is either spurious or *not* occurring by divine means.

**II. SIGNS AND WONDERS** ceased because they belonged only to the *earliest* centuries. They ceased because they were no longer needed as "divine credentials" since the Church had been widely established and officially sanctioned, and the Canon was completed.

**III. SIGNS AND WONDERS** faded out *gradually* as the condition of the organized church deteriorated.

**IV. SIGNS AND WONDERS** *have never ceased* among true Christian believers, but have occurred from the Apostolic age until now. (Baxter, *Divine Healing*, p. 52).

### LET'S TAKE EACH ONE AND DISCUSS THEM

**II. SIGNS AND WONDERS** ceased because they belonged only to the *earliest* centuries. They ceased because they were no longer needed as "divine credentials" since the Church had been widely established and officially sanctioned, and the Canon was completed.

This is the position that John MacArthur takes in his book, *The Charismatics*. There he states the following:

"As we study the Scripture, we find three categories of spiritual gifts. In Ephesians 4 there is the category of *gifted men*: Apostles, prophets, evangelists, teaching pastors and teachers. These gifted men are called to be leaders in the church. Secondly, there are the *permanent edifying gifts*, which would include knowledge, wisdom, prophecy, teaching, exhortation, faith (or prayer), discernment, showing mercy, giving, administration and helps (see Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28).

Thirdly, there were the *temporary sign gifts*. These were certain enablements given to certain believers for the purpose of authenticating or confirming God's word when it was proclaimed in the early Church before the Scriptures were penned. These sign gifts were temporary. Their purpose was not primarily to edify, although sometimes edification did occur. The four temporary sign gifts were miracles, healings, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. These four sign gifts had a unique purpose — to give the apostles credentials, to let the people know that these men all spoke the truth of God. But once the Word of God was inscriptured, the sign gifts were no longer needed and they ceased.

The gift of miracles and the gift of healing were both special sign gifts given for the single purpose of confirming God's revelation." (p. 131)

"The gift of healing was one of four miraculous sign gifts that were given to help the apostolic community to confirm their preaching of the gospel message in the early years of the Church. Once the Word of God was completed, the signs ceased. Miraculous signs were no longer needed." (p. 149).

This whole argument is based on a reading of 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 which says, "... when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part is done away with". The phrase, "... that which is perfect. ..." is interpreted to be the completed Canon of Scripture (that is the New Testament). This brings us down to approximately 400 A.D. The words, "... that which is in part will be done away with ...", refer to the Spiritual Gifts (miracles, healing, etc.). This is a widely held position by both Reformed and Dispensationalist scholars. The ARGUMENT follows these lines: 1) the word "perfect" is a neuter noun and refers to a thing and not a person. Since Scripture is a thing and is neuter in gender, it must be the "perfect" to which Paul is referring. 2) This concept fits well with Paul's illustration in verses 11-12. Scripture and knowledge. These gifts were "childish" while Scripture is "mature". These gifts give "dim" images and "partial" knowledge contrasted with Scripture which reflects perfectly and conveys full on knowledge. Some of the WEAKNESSES of this position are: 1) While "perfect" is neuter, it should not necessarily be equated with another neuter noun. A neuter noun or pronoun can be used to describe masculine and/or feminine things or even persons. One example is the word "begotten" (John 3:6) which is neuter as a reference to Jesus, which is masculine. The word "Spirit" is also neuter, but it is clear from Scripture that even though neuter, He is not an "it" but a "He". 2) The interpretation calls for a leaving of the immediate context to determine the identity of "perfect". The proponents look to 2 Timothy 3:15-16 when "Scripture" is neuter to file their case. Certainly the Corinthians did not have 2 Timothy at their disposal to help them interpret the text.

There are at least three other weaknesses which time does not permit us to discuss.

If not "Scripture", then what is "the perfect"? A British scholar, F.F. Bruce, says that "perfect" is the second coming of Christ. (Bruce, F.F., *1 & 2 Corinthians*, p. 122). This certainly fits well within the context of the overall book. 1 Corinthians 1:7 gives that very impression.

**III. SIGNS AND WONDERS** faded out *gradually* as the condition of the organized church deteriorated.

There appear to be two flaws in this position: a) Even though the church deteriorated, the gifts did not vanish. b) There is an assumption in this position that if miracles did wane away, that this meant their final extinction.

**IV. SIGNS AND WONDERS** *have never ceased* among true Christian believers, but have occurred from the Apostolic age until now.

**THE POSITION WHICH WE FIRMLY MAINTAIN IS THIS LAST ONE.** God has never ceased to work signs and wonders in His Church. There were occasions, it appears, when those in authority may have not endorsed the "work" of God, and during those times these "acts" of God were less obvious. When anything outside of the norm began to occur, the institution would often move to banish it (e.g. the Inquisition, and the French persecution of the Hugenots). When the age of enlightenment dawned and worldview changed, these works of God were often discarded as not being scientifically proved.

It appears today that resistance to God's work still comes in those packages, but tied with different ribbons. Our contention is that God has always worked signs and wonders and continues to do so NOW, and will continue to do so until Jesus returns. (\*Read attached reacer, *A Brief Sketch of Signs and Wonders in Church History*.)

## PROGRAM

# 12

## PART 1

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERPRETIVE KEY "BODY" OR "WHEN THE BODY MEETS"

## INTRODUCTION

There are two points that I am going to discuss in this section. The first has to do with the whole "key" for understanding Spiritual Gifts as I have come to understand them. The "key" is found in 1 Corinthians 11:17-14:40. The second point deals with the assumption that there should be a hierarchal structure within the church. An understanding of both of these will help us to better understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit and His Gifts.

### I. The Interpretive Key – 1 Corinthians 11:17-14:40

- A. The three main problems
  1. Divisions (vs. 19, cp/w 1:10)
  2. The Lord's Supper (vs. 20ff)
  3. Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40).
- B. The context of the Body metaphor
  1. He wishes them to be informed (12:1-3).
  2. The complete Godhead is involved with the gifts (12:4-6).
  3. The gifts are the manifestations of the Holy Spirit (12:7).
  4. The gifts are many (12:8-11).
  5. The gifts may be many but we are members of one Body (12:12-13).
- C. The Body metaphor: A comparison — 12:14-26
  1. Each one is an organism of many parts.
  2. Each Body is complete only when the various parts perform their diverse functions.
  3. Discord destroys and decays the reality of the Body.
- D. "The metaphor of the body illustrates Paul's theology; it must not be allowed to dictate it." (Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 430, footnote 27).

### II. The Traditional View

- A. View of 1 Corinthians 12:14-26
  1. Many parts
  2. Specific function
  3. Dependent
  4. Form the Body of Christ
  5. Member = gift
  6. Each has a function.

- B. View of 1 Corinthians 12:28-29
1. God has appointed in the church these gifts (apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healings, etc.)
  2. Each person (Body member — hand, eye, etc.) does not do the same thing.
    - a. Are all apostles?
    - b. Are all prophets?
    - c. Are all teachers?
    - d. Do all work miracles, heal, speak in tongues, interpret?
- C. This view concludes
1. You already have gifts.
  2. You need to discover and develop these.
  3. You are to be content and not seek any others.

## PROGRAM

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 PART 2

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERPRETIVE KEY “BODY” OR “WHEN THE BODY MEETS”

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### III. The Problem with This View

- A. 1 Corinthians 12:31 — “. . . eagerly desire the greater gifts.” If Body member = Gift, and we are what we are because God made us that way, then why the imperative to “desire”?
- B. 1 Corinthians 14:1 — “. . . eagerly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” In 12:29. Paul asks “Are all prophets?” The answer the text expects is “No!” If God has already given me what I have, then would I not be questioning Him to “desire” some other gift?
- C. 1 Corinthians 14:5 — “I wish you could all speak in tongues.” At 12:27, Paul also asks “Do all speak with tongues?” Again the answer is “No!” The word “wish” here is the same as in 7:7 where Paul wishes that all were celibate. He realizes that all will not be that. The word simply means “wish”. The same would apply here at 14:5; Paul ‘wishes’ that all could speak in tongues, but he knows that all shouldn’t because it would not be orderly (14:40).
- D. 1 Corinthians 14:12b “. . . strive to excel in building up the church.” The intent of this is to strive for the “manifestations” (gifts). This appears to say that the person has some openness as to which gifts could come through him. But how can that be if the “gifts” are already given?
- E. 1 Corinthians 14:13 “Therefore [because you should build up the Body], he who speaks in tongues should pray for the power to interpret.” Paul also asks at 12:29 “Do all interpret?” “No!” Why would Paul tell the readers to pray for something they will not get since the “gifts” are already given?

#### IV. The Interpretive "Key"

- A. There are 12 places in 11:17-14:40 in which Paul keeps before the readers his "key" (i.e., when the Body meets together) to help them (and us) to understand what he means.
1. 11:17 "...when you come together"
  2. 11:18 "...when you assemble as a church..."
  3. 11:20 "When you meet together..."
  4. 11:33 "...when you come together"
  5. 11:34 "...you come together"
  6. 14:4 "...edifies the church..."
  7. 14:5 "...that the church may be edified..."
  8. 14:19 "...in church..."
  9. 14:23 "...the whole church assembles..."
  10. 14:26 "...when you come together"
  11. 14:28 "...keep silence in the church..."
  12. 14:34 "...keep silence in the churches..."
- B. This key helps remove the following contradictions.
1. The listings at 1 Corinthians 12:8-10
  2. The actual "charismatic" service — 1 Corinthians 14:26
  3. 1 Corinthians 12:29 — seen as a statement about what happens in the believer's meetings
    - a. Does everyone work a miracle? (Certainly not!)
    - b. Does everyone heal? (No!)
    - c. Does everyone speak in tongues and give an interpretation? (No!)
    - d. Note that in 14:26, "...each one has...", not "all have".

#### SUMMARY

When we understand Paul's key (the Body meeting), then the whole passage of 11:17-14:40 opens up to us. We then can begin to see how the Spirit moves spontaneously through those He chooses, when He chooses to do so.

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# The Man Behind the Ministry

John Wimber has been a pioneer in both the Church Growth movement and the Church Renewal movement for the past several years. In 1975 he left the pastorate to become Director of Church Growth at



the Fuller Evangelistic Association. In 1978 God called John to leave the FEA and come home to pastor a small fellowship in Yorba Linda. This small church, called Vineyard Christian Fellowship, has grown to well over 4,000 active participants. VCF has also mothered a whole group of Vineyard Fellowships throughout the United States. John has spent the past several years pastoring the church, planting new Vineyards, speaking at conferences on Church Growth, the ministry of the Holy Spirit and his gifts, and lecturing at Fuller Seminary in the School of World Missions.

John's supreme desire is to bless and love the whole Body of Christ, and to see them equipped to extend the Kingdom of God.

