

**Earnestly Desire the Gifts of the Spirit
1 Corinthians 14:26-40**

Intro

Francis Schaeffer was a brilliant 20th century theologian, philosopher, author, and pastor perhaps best known for establishing the L'Abri community in Switzerland - a place that attracted thousands of young people as a hub of Christian thought.

Edith, I wonder what would happen to most churches and Christian work if we awakened tomorrow, and everything concerning the reality and work of the Holy Spirit, and everything concerning prayer, were removed from the Bible. I don't mean just ignored, but actually cut out - disappeared. I wonder how much difference it would make?' We concluded it would not make much difference in many board meetings, committee meetings, decisions and activities.

Edith Schaeffer, The Tapestry (Waco, 1981), page 356

We might ask the same question of this church - how much difference would it make if everything concerning the reality and work of the Holy Spirit, and everything concerning prayer, were removed from the Bible and so, removed from the life of Living Hope. GOD FORBID.

I'm grateful because I'm confident that it would make a discernible difference in the life of this church. We are eager to be people of prayer, we are eager to be people who rely upon the activity of the Holy Spirit

(Difference between the promised presence of God - active presence of God)

Let's pray and pursue the active presence of God until we receive every blessing we can from our good and gracious God.

Spiritual gifts are to be:

I. Commonly Used

- A. Verse 26 "what then" - bringing this section of teaching to a close with appropriate application and considerations about this important area of spiritual gifts
 - 1. What shall we do in response to the teaching of 12-14? We shall apply by preparing ourselves to practice
- B. Essentially - when the church gathers, all sorts of gifts can be in play

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:7)

- 1. Hymn, lesson, a revelation, tongue, interpretation - not a comprehensive list - a sample of the kinds of gifts that God gives to his church
 - a) We provide a mic up front and seek to make space for contributions
- 2. Whatever gift is used though - v. 26 it must be used with the intent and desire to build up - to encourage the church - to edify the church
 - a) The most important thing in all of this is love (Chapter 13)

3. We have an order of service - careful planning - but we make space
 - a) Spontaneity is not automatically spiritual, careful planning is not automatically unspiritual
 - b) A more robust practice can be pursued in a smaller group - in your CG
4. Remember Ch. 12 - body of Christ - different functions - different gifts - commonly used v. 26

C. Application

1. How can we pursue these sorts of things functioning on Sundays or in CGs?
 - a) Prepare with prayer
 - (1) God doesn't typically pour out gifts on those who aren't pursuing - revivals have small group in prayer - his hands aren't tied though
 - (2) For God to distribute gifts in Living Hope and include yourself
 - (a) "Father is there anything you want me to say?"
 - i) Don't fake it - no anxiety here
 - (b) Pray on Saturday evening before meeting, Sunday @ breakfast with family, on the way to CG
2. "Is what I am doing going to build up" question - essential in all of life
 - a) EX. Social Media, conversations - encouragement (gossip), Husbands leading wives - with kids

II. Biblically Constrained (this is a longer point)

- A. So Paul explains that gifts should be commonly used and expected in our meetings but this isn't a free-for-all - he provides us with specific instructions about how this works - spontaneity does not equal anything goes
- B. Instructions:
 1. Tongues v. 27-28 - worship language - Corinth was elevating
 - a) Only 2 at most 3
 - b) Don't do it without interpretation - best if you come with both

Illustration: Angie Harper at Youth Camp

2. Prophecy v. 29-32
 - a) Again, 2 or 3 - apparently more does not equal better (we may be inclined to think so)
 - b) One at a time - the church weighs what is said

[19] Do not quench the Spirit. [20] Do not despise prophecies, [21] but test everything; hold fast what is good. (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21)

- c) The result is learning and encouragement (building up)
- 3. This is all to be done in an orderly fashion
 - a) Speaking in tongues or prophecy doesn't look like uncontrollable babbling
 - b) It can be controlled
 - (1) The tongues speaker can keep silent (28)
 - (2) The one with a prophecy can control v. 30 - be silent - v. 32 - the gifting is under the will of the prophet

Christian inspiration, including both tongues and prophecy, is not “out of control.” The Spirit does not “possess” or “overpower” the speaker; he is subject to the prophet or tongues-speaker, in the sense that what the Spirit has to say will be said in an orderly and intelligible way. (Gordon Fee, *NICNT: 1 Corinthians*, p. 692)

- (3) Don't be scared if I open myself up
- 4. Verses 34-35 - what's going on here? Perhaps best to say what we know for sure:
 - a) Paul can't be saying that women aren't allowed to prophesy in a public meeting - 1 Corinthians 11

[17] “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; [18] even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. (Acts 2:17-18)

- b) Lots of ideas - we don't know the cultural context well enough to know exactly.
ST AUGUSTINE
- c) what he appears to be getting at is that as prophesy is brought before the church, public weighing of that prophesy in terms of a spoken response is within the purview of the elders/pastors of the church who are specifically called to be those in authority and those who instruct.
- d) What is clear for us is this biblical idea of headship (complementarianism) - different roles
 - (1) Wives submit to husbands in all areas - Husbands take the lead in helping their wife to gain understanding - husbands you are free to get as much help as you need.
 - (2) Does not mean this isn't for singles - single women submit to the male leadership of the church in appropriate ways
 - (3) In all of this - it is the desire of your pastors that every woman here would be released into all of the gifting that God has for you in the church - for the good of this church
 - (a) Tired working moms, weary homeschool moms, busy college students, hard-working singles - may God's Spirit be poured out on you!
- C. In all of this call to orderliness - the reason why is v. 33 - theological foundation - the character of God - the God of peace.

1. Know the Father's heart of peace towards you - procured through the cross of his Son
 - a) Jesus suffered confusion, chaos, judgment that was ours so that we can live in the peace of our God
 - (1) In these crazy days we need to know the God of peace - if you arrived here feeling chaotic, confused - peace

[23:1] The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. [2] He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. [3] He restores my soul...(Psalm 23)

- b) Our God of peace intends that his church be a place of peace
2. Application
3. We recognize the all of the Bible as from the Lord - submit accordingly
 - a) Prophecy does not supersede Scripture (v. 37)
 - b) We have pastor at the mic to help navigate - no worries - there may be a mess sometimes but we are willing to wade into that so the church can be built up and experience the blessing of these precious gifts.

III. Earnestly Desired

- A. Verse 39 - so my brothers (and sisters) - earnestly desire to prophesy
 1. Verse 37 - command of the Lord - harkens back to chapter 12 - greatest evidence of the Spirit
 2. This isn't optional - it's also not a burden to those who want to build up the church - it is our privilege!
 3. Scripture keeps coming back to this:

But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.(1 Corinthians 12:3)

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. (1 Corinthians 14:1)

[39] So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. (1 Corinthians 14:39)

- B. Why is this necessary? - So that the church can be encouraged, blessed, built up - this is God's idea - this is his grace to us

Illustration: My experience with prophecy at Evangelism Conference - what a blessing to know God's hear to me! I want us all to experience this! We earnestly desire, cultivate, pursue.

Illustration: It can be simple - walking and seeing Jesus loves you - don't despise

- C. Earnestly desiring is not optional but the results are up to God – liberating
 - 1. We take care of cultivating desire to build up the church (also by his Spirit through his Word) – God gives the gifts he sees as best for us.
 - 2. Different seasons in the life of a church – God is sovereign – we continue to earnestly desire. In every season we long for good gifts from our God of peace.
- D. Application
 - 1. Study these chapters
 - 2. Not earnest? Pray for earnestness!
 - 3. Step out in faith
 - a) Start in CG
 - b) Come to the mic – we’ll help you – no walk of shame

Close

Let’s pray and pursue until we receive every blessing we can from our good and gracious God.

We pray and pursue the active presence of the Holy Spirit – rest in his love – his heart for us – trust him – let’s go all the way with Jesus – that’s where blessing is

**Father for Thy, promised blessing,
Still we plead before Thy throne
For the times of, sweet refreshing,
Which can come from Thee alone
Blessed earnest, Thou hast given,
But in these we would not rest
Blessings still with, Thee are hidden,
Pour them forth and make us blest! (Albert Midlane - Give Reviving)**

How we need him – how eager he is to reveal his grace and goodness and blessing for us his children

Let’s press in – keep pressing in – take this down into our bones – make it a conviction – see God move actively among us for our joy, encouragement – his glory

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