

## “Spiritual Gifts from God: Part One”

God provides all we need to know Him, and to grow in our relationship with Him, and with each other, as we seek to tell others about Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior.

How does a person come into an intimate and eternal relationship with the God of the universe?

When Jesus began His ministry He said (**Mark 1:15**), “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

**Ephesians 1:1-12**, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.”

**Ephesians 1:13-14**, “In Him [Christ], you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

Paul says when you hear [understand] the truth of the gospel [salvation through Jesus Christ], and you believe it; at that moment you receive forgiveness for all your sins [past, present, future], and you are granted eternal life from God; this is confirmed by the presence of God’s Spirit [the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Christ] in you, for God’s Spirit marks you as God’s own possession, causing you to be born again into the family of God.

**John 1:12-13**, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

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Just as you were conceived in your mother’s womb and biologically born, in order to enter this world, you must be born-again, spiritually born into God’s family by the Spirit of God, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The greatest gift from God is that everyone who confesses Christ, those who believe in His name are given the right to become children of God, children born of God’s Spirit, children born from above.

In **John 3:3**, Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

**John 3:6-8**, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

And so, the new birth, spiritual birth, being born again, is likened to the wind. Although it cannot be seen, the effects are clearly visible: kites flying high in the sky, windmills turning, ships driven by sails full of wind, destruction caused by hurricanes and tornadoes. This new birth is spiritual, it cannot be seen, but the change in behavior it causes can and should be seen.

**See Acts 2:1-11...** When those 120 believers were filled with God’s Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they began to speak languages they did not know, so that Jews who were in Jerusalem from different countries and cultures were able to hear the message of God in their own language.

Those who hear and believe the message are saved, having repented of their sins and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation.

Peter proclaimed (**Acts 2:36-38**), “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.’ Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent [and believe], and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins;’”.

**James 1:17-18**, “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights... ..In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.”

**2Corinthians 5:17**, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

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It is the sovereign act of God, by His own authority, plan, purpose, and provision, that we receive birth into His family, forgiveness for sins, and eternal life. **1John 1:1-9**, “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

God’s Word tells us (**Romans 3:10-12**) no-one is good (by human works, attributes, or will), not one; but we are justified, made righteous (**Romans 3:23-24**), by believing in God’s Son to save us.

**Romans 6:23**, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

**Romans 5:8**, “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

**Romans 8:1-2**, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”

**2Corinthians 5:21**, “He [God the Father] made Him [God the Son] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

**Romans 10:9-10**, “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” **13**, “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [for the forgiveness of sin] will be saved.”

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If it were not for the gift of God’s Grace, through God’s Spirit, we would have nothing, we would be nothing, and we could do nothing pleasing to God.

**Ephesians 2:8-10**, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

God gives spiritual gifts to all of His children, so that we might serve together in the family of God, in God’s church, for the glory of God the Father and God the Son.

**1Peter 4:10-11**, “As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**1Corinthians 12:1**, “Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.” **4-7**, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

**11**, “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”

Spiritual gifts are given by God for the “common good,” to every believer, for the purpose of serving one another, as we serve the Lord.

Just as there are MANY different organs and parts in a physical body, there are also many diverse gifts and functions among the members of Christ’s body.

**1Corinthians 12:12-13**, “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. 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.

**14**, “For the body is not one member, but many.”

**18**, “But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.” **27**, “Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.”

Some of our physical body parts are more exposed and perhaps considered more important to the function of the body (eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet); but there are hidden organs and parts of our body (brain, heart, muscles, blood vessels), that we may not give as much attention to, that is, not until the less noticeable parts begin to fail or are not functioning properly.

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Just as our physical body parts work together and are contained in one body, connected together and created to work in unity; so it is with the spiritual body of Christ, the church, where our spiritual gifts are used to honor God and to edify the body of believers (**1Corinthians 12:7**), “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good,” **Ephesians 5:1**, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.”

The unique giftedness God grants to every believer is similar to an artist who takes a pallet, with small amounts of many different colors on it, dips a brush into one of the colors, and then another, and perhaps another, creating a unique color, different from all the others. Each member of the body of Christ is a unique gift to the other members, with various talents, attributes, experiences, weaknesses and strengths.

Every believer is meant to be a unique gift in the body of Christ, the Church of God, living in harmony with other believers, single-minded and unified in the purpose of glorifying God, as we individually, yet corporately, serve the Lord as the people of God.

**1Corinthians 12:11**, “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.” **27**, “Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.”

Next week we will study, in **Romans 12**, the spiritual gifts which have been given to all those who belong to Christ, for the common good, i.e., for the mutual benefit and edification of the whole Body of Christ, every member of God’s Family is specially gifted to serve in God’s Church; and this is done by God’s Power, through God’s Spirit, according to God’s Grace, for God’s Glory.

**2Corinthians 13:14**, “[May] the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God [the Father] and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all [now and forever, Amen].”

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