

The 'Discipleship Check List' Transcript

A GV247.TV Programme presented by Stewart Menelaws

DCL No8: Gifts of the Holy Spirit & laying on of hands

This series is for any Christian believer who is either at the very beginning of their journey with Jesus Christ or has been a believer for some years but lacks a sound understanding of the Christian faith. It should also prove to be a helpful aid which interlinks with all our resources for Shepherds, Overseers and Believers reaching out to others.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Prevailing views: (Romans 12:1-21 and 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14)

Last week we looked at the baptism of The Holy Spirit and we clearly understood from God's Word that 'He', The Holy Spirit, will indwell those who turn to Christ and seek to follow Him. In Ephesians 1:13-14 we learn that we are sealed, The Spirit is a deposit that guarantees our inheritance - and in the gospel of John chapter 16 we understand why we need The Holy Spirit operating in our lives - yet we must fully understand that our prayers and petitions are always to The Father (Matt 6:9) through Christ Jesus (John 16:23).

There are Christian denominations that shy away from this subject either because of a lack of understanding or perhaps in a bid to keep spiritual abuses far from the flock as they are tragically prevalent today and indeed are an end-time sign (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). There are others who would say that the spiritual gifts ended once the original apostles went to be with The Lord.

Before we look at this subject, it's important to understand that the bible teaches us that we have to be alert because we have a spiritual adversary (Satan) and he is actively seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:8), and in Ephesians chapter 6 verses 10-20 we are told that our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm.

What about signs and wonders?

Now, while we must fully understand that signs and wonders are not something we are to actively seek, Jesus Christ warns of those who actively prophesied, cast out demons and did many miracles in His name but on the Day of Judgement will be rejected (Matthew 7:22-23). The apostle Paul gives us a little more understanding on this when he writes regarding those who preach the gospel for false motives (Philippians 1:15).

While there are many more scriptures we could look at, we should ask ourselves, would God allow His people to be so ill-equipped - in particular those who have been charged to go forth and take the gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth? Whatever the reason proposed, nothing must take the place of scripture and sound doctrine. So with opinions and traditions put to one side let us look to see what the Bible says.

What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are quite simply – The Lord Himself working through the believer in Christ in accordance with His determination (Hebrews 2:4) for the equipping of the church and they are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11. Should we make the error of thinking that we ourselves possess any special skills we must remind ourselves that Christ Jesus made it clear that without Him we can do nothing. (John 15:5). Gifts that are listed are -

1. The message (or word) of Wisdom
2. The message (or word) of Knowledge
3. Faith
4. Healing
5. Miraculous powers
6. Prophecy (*This is listed as one of particular note in 1 Corinthians 14:1*)
7. The distinguishing (discerning) of spirits
8. Tongues (both earthly languages and a heavenly language)
9. Interpretation of tongues

In the letter to the Romans we see another list (Romans 12:6-8)

1. Prophesying
2. Serving
3. Teaching
4. Encouraging
5. Contributing generously
6. Diligent leadership
7. Showing mercy

It is very clear from the text that these spiritual gifts are given by God as He determines (Rom 12:6 and 1 Cor 12:11). The gifts are given for service and for the edification of the church. Under no circumstances should an individual seek spiritual powers for selfish reasons. We must never delude ourselves like Simon the sorcerer who was a popular figure among the people (Acts 8:9-24) and who desired power to further his reputation – even by offering money to receive these gifts.

Spiritual gifting without love: (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

Without love for one another – all such spiritual powers are meaningless. We are indeed to eagerly desire spiritual gifts to be of service within the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:1). However, Isaiah 66:2 should be at the heart of motivation – Humility, Contrition and the Fear of God and seeking only the will of The Father for our service to Him and His Church.

The Greater Gift – Love: (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

If you are unsure of the purpose of receiving spiritual gifts, it is when we read further in the letter to the Corinthians that we read about the greater gift which is Love: (1 Cor 13:1-13 & Romans 12:9-18) Love is:-

1. Patience, Kindness, does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, not self-seeking, not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs, does not delight in evil, rejoices with truth, always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres, never fails, the greatest gift is love.
2. Love must be sincere, hate evil, cling to what is good, devotion to disciples, honour one another, never lack zeal, keep your spiritual fervour serving The Lord, be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer, share with God's people who are in need, practice hospitality, bless those that persecute you – bless and do not curse, rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn, live in harmony with one another, do not be proud, willing to associate with people of low position, do not be conceited, do not repay evil for evil, be careful to do what is right in the sight of everyone, if it is possible – live at peace with all.

We see that love is the greatest gift and it is the first command in Deuteronomy 6:5-9. God Himself is love (1 John 4:8) and Jesus said that we know His disciples because they love one another (John 13:35).

God 'appoints' individuals within the body of Christ: (1 Corinthians 12:27-31)

1. Apostles
2. Prophets
3. Teachers
 - Workers of miracles
 - Gifts of healing
 - Those able to help others
 - Gifts of administration
 - Different kinds of tongues

Do you eagerly desire spiritual gifts? (1 Corinthians 14:1)

Do you eagerly desire the spiritual gifts so that you are equipped for service and to serve the Body of Christ wherever The Lord has placed you? Sitting in a pew or in a comfortable chair - letting others seek God so that they end up doing all the work - is not an act of Love! Jesus is looking for disciples – not spectators.

Laying on of Hands: (Hebrews 6:1-3)

As with all aspects of the supernatural we come to a subject that raises concerns for many believers. In 1 Timothy 5:22 we see that he is instructed not to be quick to lay hands on any man - for we must be prayerful and measured whenever we seek to move forward in The Lord's service.

Laying on of Hands - What is it?

We read that Jesus Christ healed the sick both by touch (Matt 8:3) **and** where he was nowhere near the person (Matt 8:13). In James 5:14 we read about the sick being anointed with oil by the elders of the church but no actual laying on of hands is mentioned. We read about the laying on of hands in regard to the sending out of disciples, set-apart for service (Acts 13:3 & 2 Timothy 1:6). In chapter 13 of Acts we must also take note that they had all been worshipping The Lord and fasting, and it was the Holy Spirit who told them to set-apart Barnabus and Saul (later to be called Paul) for church planting.

The baptism of The Holy Spirit came upon people without any help from humans (Acts 2:4) but was *also* imparted by the laying on of hands from the apostles (Acts 8:17).

Note: In regard to those demon possessed, Jesus did not touch them but simply commanded/rebuked the spirit(s) to leave (Matt 17:17-18). So we see from a careful reading of the examples given that we should always be focused on the Father and look to Him for leading and guidance within a given situation.

Spiritual Warnings:

Deceiving spirits (1 Tim 4:1) are a specific problem in the last days. This warning is from the Holy Spirit Himself and not just an exhortation by Paul in his letter to train Timothy. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 warns the Body of Christ that there are people who claim to be workers of Christ but they are deceitful workers.

Conclusion:

Do not allow just anyone to lay hands on you or even pray for you!

Seeking the Lord for guidance and direction is biblical as we can see with Paul and Barnabas, where the leadership placed hands on them. However, spending time earnestly in prayer before your Heavenly Father every day and reading His Word carefully are the foundation of your relationship.

Next week (DCL No9) we look at:

Do you understand prayer and bible study?

The 'Discipleship Check List' series has been produced with the sole aim of encouraging the hearer / reader to study the Holy Bible so that faith in Jesus Christ will be built on Him alone. Every human work is fallible and whilst every effort has been made to represent the truths of God Almighty's Holy Words, this series is but an aid to help encourage study so that the Christian disciple of Jesus Christ will go onto maturity in the most Holy faith.

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