

## What are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are tools and instruments that the Holy Spirit gives to the body of believers, both on a personal and corporate level. There are two main references to these gifts that the apostle Paul gives us to explain the workings of these gifts. The first is found in Ephesians 4:11-13 NLT: *Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.*

The five-fold ministry is a group of key spiritual operations that are designed to bring the body of believers in full maturity in their faith in Jesus. Maturity is an important element of our faith walk. Paul goes on to describe the necessity for maturity, Ephesians 4:14-16 NLT: *Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*

The goal of maturity is to be healthy in our faith, to be growing in the knowledge of the Father, and to be walking in love to others. The chief hindrances to reaching our goals are the deceptions that the enemy will throw at us to side-track us from the truth. It takes all parts of the five-fold ministry working together for us to keep on track and receiving strength in our faith.

The Holy Spirit gives the body of believers special gifts in order to help each other grow in our faith. The apostle Paul describes these gifts in the twelfth chapter of the book of 1 Corinthians, verses 4-11 NLT: *There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.*

The goal of the Holy Spirit is for each individual grow in the exercise of their gifts so that they can help the other members of the body to grow unto maturity. It is important to realize that in God's views all of the gifts as essential, so we should not give honor to one gift over another gift. We must listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit in order for us to learn what our gifts are and how we are to use them within the body of believers.