

## Living a Life in the Spirit

Today we are talking about living a life in the Spirit.

There is more to the Christian life than following Jesus. Saying yes to Jesus' call and starting to follow him is just the beginning.

Look at what Jesus says to Peter and his brother Andrew as he calls them as recorded in Matthew 4:19

(19) "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."

Starting our journey following Jesus is just the starting point of our life. We follow him, and then he teaches us and he equips us. We must start following him to receive what he has for us. Jesus has more for us than salvation, though. He has a mission for us, each and every one of us.

We've talked about the great commission many times; to go into all the world and preach the gospel, and to go and make disciples. That is what Jesus commissioned us all to do, each in our own unique way. To do that we must be prepared and equipped.

When we first start to follow Jesus, our preparation begins. Part of it is understanding Jesus' teachings and his interactions with people. The other part is taking what we learn from Jesus, and applying it to our lives and ministry with the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives us.

When we completely and unashamedly give our lives to Jesus and allow Him to baptize us with the Holy Spirit, we receive special abilities, supernatural abilities to carry out the mission we have here on earth.

Let's look at the gifts the Holy Spirit gives. Let's read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

(4) There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. (5) There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. (6) There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. (7) Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (8) To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, (9) to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, (10) to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. (11) All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

When the Holy Spirit is working through you, you are able to use the gifts he has given you. These gifts can change over time. The important thing to realize is the Holy Spirit gives us what we need at the time we need it.

Each of these gifts is supernatural. That is good. This is so no one can boast that it is in their own ability but only by the power of God through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives these gifts to each believer as he sees fit for the believer to carry out the mission and purpose that God created them for. No one receives all of the gifts. In fact, many only receive one of these gifts.



Each of these gifts is given not for the glory of the individual, but for the glory of God. Each of these gifts is given to bring glory to God, not the individual. We are merely the tool.

Imagine a shovel boasting how it turned over all of the ground in a garden to plant vegetables. The shovel didn't do it, the gardener did, using the shovel as a tool. The gardener did the work, the shovel was just a tool.

We too are a tool for God to use in order to share the lifesaving gospel of Jesus Christ with others. He gives us these gifts through the Holy Spirit so we can carry out the great commission.

The word of knowledge and the word of wisdom are great gifts. These gifts give someone knowledge of something that they did not know or a perspective of an event or situation they could not see naturally. In sharing these with others, God is glorified and people can be introduced to God.

Often it is these gifts that are used by church leaders in counseling people and by evangelists and missionaries to gain acceptance so they can share the gospel of Jesus Christ with someone.

The gift of great faith is another. We all have faith. You must have faith to believe in Jesus and follow him. It is by grace through faith that we are saved. But some people have been given the gift of great faith.

This great faith can stand as a testimony of the greatness and goodness of God in the face of insurmountable uncertainty.

There is the gift of healing. What a practical gift! Unfortunately, too many have used this gift to bring glory to themselves instead of God. This gift is often given to those with great compassion already and is used to bring hope and faith to people who have no hope of being well or whole.

If you have this gift, use it to bring hope to people and share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them. It is by your faith and obedience to Jesus that the Holy Spirit has given you this gift.

Miraculous powers are similar to healing. This is not for us to show off, or take care of our own wants and desires. It is to serve all of creation in the name of Jesus Christ. If you have this gift, again, use it to give God glory and share Jesus Christ with people.

There is the gift of prophecy which gives you foresight into people's lives. It doesn't negate people's free choice, but we must remember God is not bound by time and can give someone prophetic words to share to bring people closer to him.

The gift of discerning spirits is a wonderful gift. This gift helps you see through people who may not be completely honest, or see if some circumstances are from God or not. This is an important gift, especially for leadership teams.

The devil uses many schemes and this gift helps us see through his schemes and move forward in Christ.

Then there is the gift of tongues and the gift to interpret tongues. The gift of tongues is twofold. First, it is a personal gift for the believer to pray in, thus allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through us for what we do not see or know.



There are times we do not know what to pray, but we know we need to pray. Praying in tongues at that time is great!

There is also the message in tongues, like what we read in Acts 2. This is when the Holy Spirit anoints someone to speak a message, typically encouragement or evangelistic, to a group of people, and another person interprets the message.

This is a great gift and it is practiced around the world.

It is easy to receive your gift from the Holy Spirit. It only requires complete submission to the Holy Spirit and willingness to give complete control of your life over to God, no matter what.

Do not worry if you do not receive your gift right away. Whether the gift God has for you is one of healing or speaking in tongues, words of knowledge or discerning spirits, or any of the other gifts, you will receive it at the perfect time when you are ready and willing to use it as God desires you to.

Living life in the Spirit is exciting and anything can happen. God never disappoints. When you completely give him your life, you will be amazed at what he uses you for.

