

# A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE NATURE AND WORKING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*Be sure to view the files linked at the end of this article*

The nature and role of the Holy Spirit (and the gifts of the Spirit) are both mysterious and wonderful. Good

Christians have parted ways because of variant views on these subjects. I believe this weighs heavy on the heart of God.



On one end of the spectrum are those who believe virtually all spiritual gifts are dead. They believe the Spirit will save and “seal” you, but that all *signs* or *manifestations* of the gifts (such as prophecy, healing, speaking in tongues, etc.) died out with the Apostles. They interpret 1 Cor. 13:13 (“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love”) to mean that all manifestations (signs) of the Spirit are gone, and **ONLY** “these three remain: **faith, hope and love.**”

On the other end of the spectrum are those who believe that evidence of TRUE salvation and maturity in Christ is evidenced by speaking in tongues and, optimally, the exercise of additional profound spiritual gifts such as prophecy or healing. Those who hold this view will not let someone serve as a ministry leader unless they speak in tongues, and will not let someone serve as a pastor unless they speak in tongues and evidence at least one other profound spiritual gift.

I believe both camps are in error.

Noted below is a summary of what I believe is a balanced, biblical summary of spiritual gifts and the nature and role of the Holy Spirit. *Note: The two videos on this subject are embedded at the end of this article.*

## **ATTRIBUTES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity. This means, The Spirit is one in essence with God**

*“Now the **Lord is the Spirit**, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” (2 Cor. 3:17-18)*

According to Scripture, the Holy Spirit shares the attributes of God (see the verses below)

- *The Spirit is called Eternal (Heb. 9:14)*
- *The Spirit is called Omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10-11)*
- *The Spirit is called Omnipresent (Psa. 139:7)*
- *The Spirit is called Savior (Rom. 8:1-27)*

*The attributes noted above are divine attributes, unique to God, Jesus, and the Spirit—all of Whom are God—three yet One.*

The triune nature of God (the Father, Son, and Spirit are one, yet they have different roles to play. Though Scripture presents the three members of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Spirit) as interchangeable (for example, Jesus is called Savior, Redeemer, and Creator, and the Father is called the Savior, Redeemer, and Creator), each play a distinct role. The Spirit...

- *Imparts wisdom and knowledge (Isa. 11:2, Neh. 9:20)*
- *Facilitates victory (Zech. 4:6)*
- *Is a ‘helper’ (John 14:16)*
- *Imparts grace and comfort to the saints (Acts 9:31)*
- *Guides (John 16:13)*
- *Helps in prayer (Rom. 8:26)*
- *Imparts hope (Rom. 15:13; Gal. 5:5)*
- *Intercedes for the saints (Rom 8:26)*
- *Regenerates and renews (Titus 3:5)*
- *Imparts the love of God (Ro 5:3-5)*
- *Sanctifies (Rom 15:16) and seals (2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5)*
- *Empowers to walk in the new life (Rom. 8:13-16)*

And the Spirit graces believers with particular, powerful gifts to aid them in their service for the Lord. A brief profile of the spiritual gifts follows:

**ALL believers in Christ have received *the* Gift and *a* gift**

- ***THE*** gift is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit “*Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive **the gift** of the Holy Spirit.’*” (Acts 2:38). Paul also wrote, “*God’s Spirit has His home **in you**.*” 1 Cor. 3:16b (NCT)
- The ***A*** gift is an anointing—an ability—a talent—given by God to help believers accomplish the work God calls them to do.
- “*As each one has received **a special gift**, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*” (1 Pet. 4:10)

**The Spirit equips and enables**

- “*There are varieties of gifts...each one is given...of the Spirit.*” (1 Cor. 1:4,7)
- “*All were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak [and do] **as the Spirit enabled them.***” (Acts 2:4)

All believers receive ***THE*** gift of the Holy Spirit (the indwelling presence of the Spirit). In addition, each believer receives at least one of the gifts noted below.

**UNDERSTANDING THE GIFTS <<Three Categories>>**

There are **three categories** of spiritual gifts in the New Testament. These gifts are known by different names in the original (Greek) text. The first category of gifts is identified by the term ***phanerosis***. The term references the ‘manifestation’ or ‘sign’ gifts. This category of gifting is noted in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10

The primary purpose of the SIGN or MANIFESTATIONAL gifts seems to be to confirm God’s blessing on **the New Testament Church**. According to 1 Cor. 12:7-10, the *phanerosis* gifts include:

- A word of wisdom (special insight regarding what to do or say)
- Word of knowledge (a special revelation of information)
- Faith (a wonder-working faith that can ‘move mountains’)
- Healing (generally physical)
- The working of miracles
- A word of prophecy
- Special discernment of spirits (good and bad)
- Speaking in tongues
- The interpretation of tongues

The second category of spiritual gifts in the New Testament is ‘ministry gifts.’ They are referenced in Ephesians 4:11 and identified by the Greek term *doma*. These gifts are akin to callings, positions, or offices, given by God through the Holy Spirit to establish and strengthen His Church. These gifts are:

- The apostle (1 Cor. 12:28; Mk. 10:2; Rom. 16:7; Gal. 2:7-9)
- The prophet (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10; Acts 13:1f; Acts. 11:28)
- The evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5; Matt. 28:18-20)
- The pastor (1 Peter 5:2-5; Acts 20:28)
- The teacher (Acts 2:42, 4:2, 5:42, 11:26, 13:1, 15:35, 18:11)

The third category of gifts in the New Testament is referenced in Romans 12:6-8 and identified in Greek by the term *charisma*. **This is the category of gifts referenced in 1 Peter 4:10.**

*“As each one has received **a special gift**, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Pet. 4:10)*

NOT every believer receives a gift from the **first two categories** noted above. That is, not everyone is called/anointed to be a healer, preacher, or speak in tongues. However, as 1 Peter 4:10 indicates, **ALL** believers receive at least one of the CHARISMA gifts noted below. These gifts are given to build up the body of Christ and to aid in our witness to the world. These gifts include:

- Prophecy/perceiver (Cf. 1 Cor. 14:1)
- Service/ministering (Cf. Gal. 5:13)
- Teacher (Cf. 1 Cor. 4:17)
- Exhorter (Cf. Heb. 3:12-13)
- Giver (Cf. Luke 6:38)
- Leadership/administration (Cf. 1 Tim. 3:4)
- Mercy/compassion (Col. 3:12)

## **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

The gifts of the Spirit are given as an expression of divine grace. As such, all gifts are wonderful, beautiful, and equal in glory. The one with the gift of giving is of equal preciousness to God as the one who has the gift of preaching. As 1 Corinthians 12 notes, there is *one body* (in Christ) with *many members* parts) but all parts have *equal value*. Note that...

- *The list of gifts in 1 Cor. 12:28-30 represents a composite listing of gifts (not a comprehensive listing)*
- *Spiritual gifts are designed to help believers work together and be effective in the work assigned to us by the Father (1 Cor. 12:12-27).*
- *Each gift is of equal value.*

Note also, that due to the free will, the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives...

- *Can be resisted (Acts 7:51)*
- *Can be grieved (Eph. 4:43)*
- *Can be quenched (1 Thess. 5:19)*

We are, therefore, not to fear the gifts and working of the Spirit, but rather, we should seek the Lord and ask for His anointing and gifting by the Spirit to make us more effective witnesses, servants, and Watchmen for Him.

- Click [HERE](#) to download this article
- Click [HERE](#) to download an article titled “The Deity of the Holy Spirit” (Randi, this file is in the Nature and Role of the Spirit folder).