

# Spiritual Gifts

## Part 2

*Sept. 4, 1994*

- **1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

Last week we looked at the nature of the giver of the gifts in order to determine how they are given and the purpose for which they are given. To review:

- The presence of Spiritual gifts does not imply the presence of spirituality.
- The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts according to His will and purpose.
- We should not seek to all have the same gifts.
- All Spiritual gifts are for the edification of the body, *not* the individual believer.
- The revelatory gifts were used to testify to the validity of something said.

- **Spiritual Gifts Are Worthless Without Love**

*1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.*

*2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

*3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.*

- Paul teaches that having the ability to speak numerous languages of men and even of angels is of no value if done so without love. Paul is not teaching us that speaking like an angel is a Spiritual gift rather he is speaking in hyperbole for the purpose of emphasis. Someone who exercises this gift of tongues without love is like a cacophony (an unpleasant irritating noise).
- Again, even if you understood incredible mysteries (as Paul did) and demonstrated tremendous faith (this is not a faith that saves as in Rom 5:1 or Eph 2:8 but rather a faith which accomplishes miraculous things) yet without love, then you have nothing of value
- Even if you were the most generous person by giving away all that you had or even died as a martyr the lack of love nullifies anything good in these things.

*4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;*

*5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;*

*6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;*

*7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

- This love that Paul requires is not the warm feelings that we frequently mistake for true love. I am not exercising my Spiritual gifts in love because I have this pleasant feeling for someone. Love is not how we feel. Although good feelings do result from true love, the feelings are not love. Love is how you treat someone or how you act toward them. Just as Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15) when you say I love you to someone you are making a statement about how you have treated them in the past and how you intend to treat them in the future. As love is the fulfillment of the law, treating someone with love is treating them lawfully.

- **Spiritual Gifts Are Temporary**

*8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.*

*9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.*

*10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.*

*11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

*12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

*13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

- Paul gives an insight into the nature of the Spiritual gifts; they serve a temporary purpose. At some point when perfection comes they will be unnecessary. These gifts are not eternal however, love is. As we see in other sections of scripture, not only is love an attribute of God, God is described as love. God is *not* tongues or prophecy. These gifts are a shadow of something better to come, something perfect. By implication Paul teaches that these gifts are imperfect and temporary.
- Most of the controversy that exists on the subject of revelatory gifts does not pertain to whether the gifts are temporary or not but rather when the time of perfection is to come. Here is a list of some of the suggested possibilities:
  - The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 a.d.
  - The end of the Apostolic age (close of the canon) in approximately 100 a.d.
  - The second coming of Christ