

Sabbath School Lesson #6 – Spiritual Gifts – 1-7 August 2026

Christ would have us desire spiritual gifts. Thus, Paul says, “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy” (1 Corinthians 14:1). Nothing can establish God’s people like prophecy. Tongues are for a sign to them that believe not; miracles serve likewise, showing the power of God; but prophecy instructs and warns. “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (verses 2-3). The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 19:10). It was the Spirit of Christ that was in the ancient prophets (1 Peter 1:10-11), and that same Spirit is to be with His people even unto the end. Consequently we find that “the testimony of Jesus Christ,” which is the spirit of prophecy, is to be in the remnant church (Revelation 12:17). Paul wrote: “Despise not prophesyings” (1 Thessalonians 5:20). Peter, after relating the view that he had of “the power and coming of Christ,” on the mount of transfiguration, wrote: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19).

Sunday: Varieties of Gifts – Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-6; what is the emphasis of this passage? The emphasis here is that all in the church will have the spirit of prophecy. John the Baptist was the greatest prophet that ever lived, yet he did not foretell any future event. He simply, quoted the Scriptures, and warned men to repent of their sins. He did no miracle (John 10:41), but preached the truth as it was recorded in the Bible. This is the characteristic of all the faithful who, living in the last days, are prepared for the coming of the Lord, and who give others knowledge in order that they may be prepared. Moses said, “would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them” (see Numbers 11:24-29). Now that such a state of things as Moses desired is possible, and the right thing to exist in the church, is seen from the words of Paul (see 1 Corinthians 14:1-5, 24-25, 31). As John on Patmos was about to worship the angel who showed him wonderful things, the angel said: “See thou do it not; I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 14:10). Now read this Revelation 12:17: “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” It is evident from this that the very same people who keep the commandments of God have also the Spirit of prophecy; and it is certain that all the people of God will keep the commandments of God; therefore it is also certain that every one of the people who are ready to receive the Lord when He comes, having finished the work that He gave them to do, will have the Spirit of prophecy.

Monday: Unity Through Diversity – Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; why is the analogy of a body with its many parts appropriate to represent the church and its members? Writing to the Ephesians, Paul admonishes, saying, “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:3-5). This is unity of Christ’s life, not a mere outward connection. In Christ’s prayer to the Father for His disciples, He said, “And the glory that Thou gavest Me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one” (John 17:22-23).

Now, the human body is the most perfect example of unity, and it is the example that the Bible gives us. Christ is the Head of the body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many” (1 Corinthians 12:12-14). In the human body there are many members, and each member has a different office from the rest; there is not uniformity of action among the members, but there is the most perfect unity. All work together in perfect harmony for one object. So it is in the body of Christ. “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”

Tuesday: “A More Excellent Way” – Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 4:8-11; what is the role of love as far as spiritual gifts are concerned? It is all about the motives. Not all motives that prompt the performance of religious deeds are acceptable in the sight of God. “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6). Faith which worketh by love is that which avails in the service of God. All effort which proceeds from any other motive is thrown away. Without love it is equally “impossible to please God,” for love is greater than faith. “Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Corinthians 13:13). And charity and love by which faith works, are one and the same thing. In the opening words of this thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the effect of trying to serve God without charity (or love) and the possibility of deception upon this point, are strikingly set forth. “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” (see verse 1-3). Can a man, then, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and give his body to be burned, and yet not have charity? Evidently, he can; or Paul would not have stated it as he did. The misguided fanatic or the deluded enthusiastic may outwardly go to the very extreme of self-denying labour for God, and yet be without that motive of love which would render his service acceptable. That love is the love of God, the love that comes from and has its origin in Him, and contains no human element in its composition. It is a love in which self is lost.

Wednesday: The Gift of Tongues –The knowledge that the Holy Spirit gives is of such a kind that even the world acknowledges its reality. This is seen in the immediate results of the reception of the Spirit on Pentecost. The disciples began to speak with other tongues. The reason why this phase of knowledge was imparted at that time was that there were thousands of people present from every nation under heaven, all of whom needed to hear the Gospel. Whatever one needs to do the work of the Lord, that the Spirit gives as soon as one is ready to receive it, and will make the right use of it. But this does not mean that the Spirit relieves one of the necessities for study; far from it. God has no sympathy with laziness, and He does not give His Spirit for the purpose of pandering to us. Be sure that God will not impart the gift of tongues to a man who has not enough interest in the work of giving the Gospel as a witness to all nations, to impel him to use all the means in his power to fit himself by study to engage in that work. Everything is a gift from God, and all is by His power, but we must nevertheless be willing to work, and must expect that the reception of the Spirit will bring more active service and more difficult work than ever before. God helps those who cannot help themselves; “for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” He gives us every faculty we possess; but He increases the gift only to those who develop and put to the best use the talents entrusted to them. The gifts of the Spirit are not for encouraging laziness. No one need think that God will ever impart to him the gift of tongues, if he has not enough interest and energy to use the ability that God has already given him in that direction. God gives wisdom, but not to discourage study. If we do not make use of the little that we already have, how can we expect God to give us more?

Thursday: The Gift of Prophecy – Read Ephesians 4:11-13 and 1 Corinthians 14:3-4; what do these passages say about the purpose of spiritual gifts in general and the gift of prophecy in particular? All spiritual gifts are for our unity. Paul says, “And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12), and the next verse goes to the heart of what unifies us, “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (verse 13). Before the end, is “the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” The knowledge of the Son of God is the eschatological culmination of the church! It is by the Sonship of Christ that we are united into the household of God, for God accepts us only through His Son; we are “accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6). Satan knows that it is the Sonship of Christ that unites us and he seeks to destroy our knowledge of the Son of God. This warfare, Satan started in heaven and continues to the end. The fallen angels would obscure the fact that Christ is the Son of God: “Angels were expelled from heaven ... This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God...” {Ellen White, TDG 128.2}.