

Power Tools of the Apostolic Church

“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).

When a contractor was working on the construction of the Ghana Bible School facility he used electric saws, sanders, and other building equipment. This made the work progress quickly and the entire facility was built in record time. Without these powerful tools the building would have been slower. We would have had to depend on manual labor. That is, men using their own power to accomplish the work. Would you sew with your hands if an electric sewing machine was in your house? Would you walk if a powerful car was in your compound?

Eastwood Anaba, in *Operating Spiritual Gifts* relates, “A brand new automobile in perfect condition and filled with gas, cannot serve the purpose of transporting people, unless someone gets into it, turns on the ignition and begins to manipulate the clutch, gears, accelerator and brakes....Having established that physical gifts must be operated or manipulated before their usefulness become evident, let me state here that in the spiritual realm the same logic applies...Physical gifts received by people, were not created by the recipient but he is expected to operate the gift for his benefit. Likewise, spiritual gifts are not created by men, but men who receive such heavenly blessing, must know how to yield to the operation of these gifts by the Holy Ghost in them.”

The spiritual work of building the house of God, the body of Christ needs powerful tools. The

tools involved in reaching a world will take not only our power, but the power of the Spirit. One of the ways we see a manifestation of the power is through the operation of Spiritual Gifts. Before God can use us in Spiritual Gifts we must first receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This gives us dynamic power to be witnesses in all the world (Acts 1:8).

In Acts 3 the Gifts of the Spirit are in operation in the lives of men of God. Once Peter received power (through the baptism of the Holy Spirit); he also received faith. Immediately he was being used in the Gifts of the Spirit. In fact, in Acts 3, a variety of spiritual gifts are in operation. The healing of the lame man surpassed the capability of Peter and John and entered into the realm of the Spirit. These gifts were for the building of the Church.

We see a more in depth study of the Gifts of the Spirit in the story of the Corinthian Church. This Church was having problems understanding the Gifts of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12-14, gave teaching on the subject. We should be thankful for the Corinthian Church having trouble because we could be left without instruction over something we should understand by the Holy Spirit. Every church needs teaching on the Gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are to be used by the Church throughout all time until Jesus comes back. Every man of God should be used in the Gifts of the Spirit. When we begin to love the world enough to realize we need the operation of the Gifts of the Spirit then we will see a supernatural move of God.

For many years the Gifts of the Spirit have been greatly misused (teachers should give some examples of misuses they have encountered in their own experiences). When we see something misused, what should be our response? Should we avoid usage? The answer for misuse is

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proper use. We cannot stop allowing the Gifts of the Spirit to operate in our churches just because someone misuses them, misunderstands them, or pretends he is being used of God when he is not. The Apostle Paul did not want us to be ignorant of Spiritual Gifts.

Therefore he directed his teaching to the brethren. God is still wanting to communicate with the Church but sometimes the Church does not always want to listen.

“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches” (Revelation 2:7). Why not begin to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church? He does not need a group of people who cannot listen. He does not want us to be ignorant but understanding. God wants us to have the best!

If we are ignorant of the Gifts of the Spirit it is for one of the following three reasons:

1. We were never taught.
2. We didn't want to learn.
3. We did not understand.

We need to relax and say,
“Have your way, Lord. Teach me your way!”

The Apostle Paul tells us to, “covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31). We must, “follow after charity (love) and desire spiritual gifts” (1 Corinthians 14:1). We do not receive the gifts to exalt ourselves; to make a name for ourselves; or to be lifted up in pride. The only way to use the gifts is with love. Love is the powerful force that causes us to want to be used in the Gifts of the Spirit. Love must come first and then we will desire the gifts to serve God better. Putting Spiritual Gifts ahead of love would be a serious mistake. Love is the

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universal language understood by all classes of people.

“Gifts of the Spirit” is the term used to specify its own nature. It refers to the supernatural manifestation that comes to us as gifts from the Holy Spirit. They are manifested through believers to profit everyone. They are for the upbuilding of the Church.

If the Church does not have the operation and manifestation of the Gifts of the Spirit it is deprived of the upbuilding and edifying that comes from the gifts and presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church. We must believe the Word of God and its promises in order to have power and authority that will be noticed by the world.

George Shalm, in his book, *Spiritual Gifts for the Dynamic Church* states that, “The Gifts of the Spirit were designed to be the very heartbeat of the living, vibrant Body of Christ. If we accept the concept that evangelism is the basic ministry of the church, then we must realize that we are doomed for failure if we do not avail ourselves to the equipment God has provided....The early apostles were quickly taught that the most effective manner of presenting the gospel was one of power.”

It is time for us to awaken to the needs of the spiritual gifts and ask:

***“Why can't I have it?
Why can't I have it now?”***

Paul proclaimed, “But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Corinthians 12:7). This means everyone can be used in the Gifts of the Spirit.

Robert Kennedy once said,
Some people ask, “Why?”
Others of us ask “Why not?”

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But I ask, "Why not, now?"
I ask you,
"Why not use God's power tools now?"

Study Questions

1. What is meant by, Gifts of the Spirit? _____

2. Where do we find teaching on the Gifts of the Spirit? _____

3. What should happen when we find the Gifts of the Spirit are misused? _____

4. What is the powerful force that causes us to want to be used in the Gifts of the Spirit? _____

5. What happens when the church does not have the operation of the Gifts of the Spirit? _____

6. What is the most effective way of presenting the Gospel (according to George Shalm)? _____

7. If people are ignorant of the Spiritual Gifts, it is because of what three reasons? _____

8. Who can be used in the Gifts of the Spirit? Give a Scripture for this. _____

9. What did Robert Kennedy say? _____

10. Eastwood Anaba tells us we cannot create the Spiritual Gifts but we must _____ to them. (Fill in the blank.)

Additional Notes