

The Gifts of the Spirit

Chapter 22

The Gifts of the Spirit

- What spiritual gifts does the Lord give us?

Following baptism, each of us had hands laid on our heads to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. If we are faithful, we can have His influence continually with us. Through Him, each of us can be blessed with certain spiritual powers called gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are given to those who are faithful to Christ. “All these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God” (D&C 46:26). They help us know and teach the truths of the gospel. They will help us bless others. They will guide us back to our Heavenly Father. To use our gifts wisely, we need to know what they are, how we can develop them, and how to recognize Satan’s imitations of them.

The scriptures mention many gifts of the Spirit. These gifts have been given to members of the true Church whenever it has been on the earth (see Mark 16:16–18). The gifts of the Spirit include the following:

The Gift of Tongues (D&C 46:24)

Sometimes it is necessary to communicate the gospel in a language that is unfamiliar to us. When this happens, the Lord can bless us with the ability to speak that language. Many missionaries have received the gift of tongues (see the picture in this chapter). For example, Elder Alonzo A. Hinckley was a missionary in Holland who understood and spoke very little Dutch even though he had prayed and studied hard. When he returned to a home he had visited before,

For teachers: Consider asking each class member or family member to review the list of spiritual gifts in this chapter and choose two that they would like to learn more about. As part of the lesson, give them time on their own to study the paragraphs and scripture passages about the gifts they have chosen. When they have had time to study, ask them to share what they have learned.



a lady opened the door and spoke to him very angrily in Dutch. To his amazement he could understand every word. He felt a strong desire to bear his testimony to her in Dutch. He began to speak, and the words came out very clearly in Dutch. But when he returned to show his mission president that he could speak Dutch, the ability had left him. Many faithful members have been blessed with the gift of tongues. (See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 2:32–33.)

The Gift of Interpretation of Tongues (D&C 46:25)

This gift is sometimes given to us when we do not understand a language and we need to receive an important message from God. For example, President David O. McKay had a great desire to speak to the Saints in New Zealand without an interpreter. He told them that he hoped that the Lord would bless them that they could understand him. He spoke in English. His message lasted about 40 minutes. As he spoke, he could tell by the expression on many of their faces and the tears in their eyes that they were receiving his message. (See *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 2:30–31.)

The Gift of Translation (D&C 5:4)

If we have been called by the leaders of the Church to translate the word of the Lord, we can receive a gift to translate beyond our natural ability. As with all gifts, we must live righteously, study hard, and pray to receive it. When we do these things, the Lord causes us to feel a burning inside concerning the correctness of the translation (see D&C 9:8–9). Joseph Smith had the gift of translation when he translated the Book of Mormon. This gift came to him only when he was in tune with the Spirit.

The Gift of Wisdom (D&C 46:17)

Some of us have been blessed with the ability to understand people and the principles of the gospel as they apply in our lives. We are told:

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

“For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord” (James 1:5–7).

The Lord said, “Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you” (D&C 6:7).

The Gift of Knowledge (D&C 46:18)

Everyone who becomes like Heavenly Father eventually knows all things. The knowledge of God and His laws is revealed by the Holy Ghost (see D&C 121:26). We cannot be saved if we are ignorant of these laws (see D&C 131:6).

The Lord revealed, “If a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130:19). The Lord has commanded us to learn as much as we can about His work. He wants us to learn about the heavens, the earth, things that have happened or will happen, things at home and in foreign lands (see D&C 88:78–79). However, there are those who try to gain knowledge by their own study alone. They do not ask for the help of the Holy Ghost. They are those who are always learning but never arrive at the truth (see 2 Timothy 3:7). When we receive knowledge by revelation from the Holy Ghost, His Spirit speaks to our minds and our hearts (see D&C 6:15, 22–24; 8:2; 9:7–9).

The Gift of Teaching Wisdom and Knowledge (Moroni 10:9–10)

Some people are given a special ability to explain and testify of the truths of the gospel. This gift can be used when we teach a class. It can be used by parents to teach their children. This gift also helps us instruct others so they can understand the gospel.

The Gift of Knowing That Jesus Christ Is the Son of God (D&C 46:13)

This has been the gift of prophets and apostles who have been called as special witnesses of Jesus Christ. However, others are also given this gift. Every person can have a testimony through the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. President David O. McKay taught:

“It is given unto some, says the Lord in the Doctrine and Covenants, to know by the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Son of God and that He was crucified for the sins of the world [see D&C 46:13]. It is to these I refer who stand firm upon the rock of revelation in the testimony that they bear to the world” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* [2003], 166).

The Gift of Believing the Testimony of Others (D&C 46:14)

By the power of the Holy Ghost we may know the truth of all things. If we want to know whether someone else is speaking the truth, we must ask God in faith. If the thing we are praying about is true, the Lord will speak peace to our minds (see D&C 6:22–23). In this way we can know when someone else, even the prophet, has received revelation. Nephi asked the Lord to let him see, feel, and know that his father’s dream was true (see 1 Nephi 10:17–19).

The Gift of Prophecy (D&C 46:22)

Those who receive true revelations about the past, present, or future have the gift of prophecy. Prophets have this gift, but we too can have it to help us govern our own lives (see 1 Corinthians 14:39). We may receive revelations from God for ourselves and our own callings, but never for the Church or its leaders. It is contrary to the order of heaven for a person to receive revelation for someone over whom he or she does not preside. If we truly have the gift of prophecy, we will not receive any revelation that does not agree with what the Lord has said in the scriptures.

The Gift of Healing (D&C 46:19–20)

Some have the faith to heal, and others have the faith to be healed. We can all exercise the faith to be healed when we are ill (see D&C 42:48). Many who hold the priesthood have the gift of healing the sick. Others may be given a knowledge of how to cure illness.

The Gift of Working Miracles (D&C 46:21)

The Lord has blessed His people many times in miraculous ways. When the Utah pioneers planted their first crops, a plague of locusts nearly destroyed them. The pioneers prayed that the Lord would

save their crops, and He sent seagulls to devour the locusts. When we need help and ask in faith, if it is for our good the Lord will work miracles for us (see Matthew 17:20; D&C 24:13–14).

The Gift of Faith (Moroni 10:11)

The brother of Jared had great faith. Because of his faith, he received other gifts. His faith was so great that the Savior appeared to him (see Ether 3:9–15). Without faith, no other gift can be given. Moroni promises, “Whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ it shall be granted him” (Mormon 9:21). We should seek to increase our faith, find out our gifts, and use them.

Some people lack faith and deny that these gifts of the Spirit actually exist. Moroni says to them:

“And again I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God, and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts, nor healings, nor speaking with tongues, and the interpretation of tongues;

“Behold I say unto you, he that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ; yea, he has not read the scriptures; if so, he does not understand them” (Mormon 9:7–8).

- Why does the Lord give us spiritual gifts?

We Can Develop Our Gifts

- How can we “seek . . . earnestly the best gifts”? (D&C 46:8).

The Lord has said: “For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby” (D&C 46:11–12).

To develop our gifts, we must find out which gifts we have. We do this by praying and fasting. We should seek after the best gifts (see D&C 46:8). Sometimes patriarchal blessings will help us know which gifts we have been given.

We must be obedient and faithful to be given our gifts. We then should use these gifts to do the work of the Lord. They are not given to satisfy our curiosity or to prove anything to us because we lack faith. Of spiritual gifts, the Lord said, “They are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do” (D&C 46:9).

- Think about some spiritual gifts that would strengthen you personally or help you serve the Lord and others. What will you do to seek these gifts?

Satan Imitates the Gifts of the Spirit

- How can we discern between the true gifts of the Spirit and Satan’s imitations?

Satan can imitate the gifts of tongues, prophecy, visions, healings, and other miracles. Moses had to compete with Satan’s imitations in Pharaoh’s court (see Exodus 7:8–22). Satan wants us to believe in his false prophets, false healers, and false miracle workers. They may appear to be so real to us that the only way to know is to ask God for the gift of discernment. The devil himself can appear as an angel of light (see 2 Nephi 9:9).

Satan wants to blind us to the truth and keep us from seeking the true gifts of the Spirit. Mediums, astrologers, fortune tellers, and sorcerers are inspired by Satan even if they claim to follow God. Their works are abominable to the Lord (see Isaiah 47:12–14; Deuteronomy 18:9–10). We should avoid all associations with the powers of Satan.

We Must Be Careful with Our Gifts of the Spirit

- How can we respect the sacredness of spiritual gifts?

The Lord said, “A commandment I give unto them, that they shall not boast themselves of these things, neither speak them before the world; for these things are given unto you for your profit and for salvation” (D&C 84:73). We must remember that spiritual gifts are sacred (see D&C 6:10).

In return for giving us these gifts, the Lord asks that we “give thanks unto God in the Spirit for whatsoever blessing [we] are blessed with” (D&C 46:32).

Additional Scriptures

- 3 Nephi 29:6–7 (fate of those who deny gifts)
- Moroni 10:7–19 (gifts depend on faith)
- 3 Nephi 26:17; 27:20; D&C 84:64 (a gift given at baptism)
- 1 Corinthians 12 (gifts of the Spirit in the ancient Church of Jesus Christ)
- D&C 46:9–26 (gifts of the Spirit in the Church today)