

FLYING CLOSER TO THE FLAME

STUDY THIRTEEN

Is That All There Is to the Spirit's Ministry?

Selected Scriptures

Since the miracles don't flow as they once did during the apostolic era, does that mean the Spirit's ministry is over? No, not over—just different.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THE goal of our *Searching the Scriptures* series has been to get to know the Holy Spirit intimately as our closest companion. We learned that the Spirit's presence within us is permanent. "He will never leave you," Jesus promised His disciples (John 14:16). The Holy Spirit identifies us "as His own" (Ephesians 1:13). He knows what we need better than we do, and He never stops praying for us (Romans 8:26–27). The Spirit ministers with such a personal touch!

In addition, as we are filled with the Spirit, His inner dynamic:

- Emboldens us with unshakable confidence
- Reveals the depths of God's wisdom
- Draws us close to our Abba Father
- Guides us in the truth and leads us in God's path

In all these ways, we experience intimacy with the Spirit. But there's more! We have yet to consider the gifts of the Spirit—which we'll examine in this *Searching the Scriptures* study.



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INSIGHT FOR LIVING
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S13
1

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you open your Bible, invite the Holy Spirit to minister to you personally. Receive the Scripture as a message from God to your heart, and let His truths deepen your trust in Him.

Father, I seek Your peace through the message You have for me today. I long to rest more securely in the care You've provided through the Spirit. I invite Your Spirit to guide me into the truth and usher me into Your presence today. In Jesus' name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Read *1 Corinthians 12:7* and write down the purpose for the gifts of the Spirit.

Paul listed the spiritual gifts in his letters to the Corinthians and Romans and stated that we all possess at least one of these gifts. What are they, and how do they benefit the body of Christ? Let's find out.



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 **Observation: Gifts of the Spirit**

We observe a passage of Scripture by simply noting what it says without trying to interpret it. Overview the lists of spiritual gifts in *1 Corinthians 12:8–10, 28* and *Romans 12:4–8*, and then, in the chart below, write down what you observe.

The Gifts of the Spirit <i>“A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.” (1 Corinthians 12:7)</i>	
1 Corinthians 12:8–10, 28	Romans 12:4–8

The gifts in these two passages combine to form a master list. Did you note specific roles such as apostle, prophet, and teacher? Paul mentions these roles and others in *Ephesians 4:11*. Write down what you observe in this verse.

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Selected Scriptures

Like members of a physical body, we perform a different function in the body of Christ, yet we all work together in unity for the benefit of the whole. The goal is that “we will be mature in the Lord” (Ephesians 4:13).

In *Ephesians 2:19–22*, Paul explained the unique purpose of the apostles and prophets in the formation of the church. What was that, and why was it so important?

Once the apostles and prophets laid the foundation, their work was done. Let's take a closer look at the special functions of the apostles and prophets in the formative years of the church.



Interpretation: The Gifts That Served Their Purpose

Before the completion of the New Testament, the apostles and prophets received God's messages and communicated them to believers. Their Spirit-inspired teaching formed the doctrines and practices on which the church was built and which became the Scriptures we hold today.

Why do you think the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to perform signs and wonders, miracles and healings during the formation of the early church, according to *Acts 5:12–13*?



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Selected Scriptures

What did Paul mean when he wrote that certain gifts “will become useless” (*1 Corinthians 13:8–10*)?

What point was Paul making about putting “away childish things,” (*13:11*), as the church grew from infancy to a worldwide movement?

What conclusion can you draw regarding the need for apostles and prophets today? What about the need for the supernatural sign gifts, such as miracles, healing, and speaking in tongues today?

It was necessary before there was a Bible and while the foundation of the church was being laid for there to be gifts like tongues, interpretation of tongues, apostleship, miracles, and healing. These were essential for authenticating the messengers, establishing the church, and propagating the gospel rapidly through the various languages. But through the progress of revelation and the passing of time, some ministries ceased. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Selected Scriptures



Correlation: Restraining and Regenerating Ministries of the Spirit

Some ministries of the Spirit change over time, but two ministries will last until the end of the age. According to [2 Thessalonians 2:7–8](#), what is the Holy Spirit doing in the world today, and why is this ministry so vitally important?

Also, according to [John 3:6–8](#) and [Titus 3:5](#), what else does the Holy Spirit do in the souls of people when they are converted?

While the Holy Spirit restrains the tide of evil with one hand, He rescues sinners with the other. Can you imagine what our world will be like without the restraining and rescuing power of the Holy Spirit? We shudder to think of the darkness that will descend on our planet when His influence is taken away. Until then, we relish His work in our lives.

The Spirit is still at work, touching people's lives and using people like us. My hope in this series is that the Spirit will become your daily helper as you realize His power and the necessity of His presence in your life. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Application: Final Thoughts about the Helper

Every time you use your spiritual gift, you bear witness to the Spirit's power and presence in the body of Christ. What do you think your spiritual gift might be?

How has the Helper helped others through your gift?

What does it feel like for the Holy Spirit to do things through you that you could never accomplish on your own?



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Selected Scriptures

Reflecting on all the ongoing ministries of the Spirit that we've studied in our series, which ministry is the most personal for you right now?

Who knows how the Spirit might manifest Himself in your life today! Perhaps He may bring to mind a truth of Scripture when you need it most. Or open or close a door to confirm God's will for you. Or help you discern danger. Or give you peace that settles on your soul when you know God is with you. Or use the spiritual gift He gave you to build up another believer. There are *so many* blessings in our intimate walk with the Spirit! Don't let today pass without thanking Him for His ministry in your life.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, my heart overflows with gratitude! Thank You for Your Spirit, who lifts my heavy heart and fills me with strength when I feel like giving up. My future is secure because Your Spirit has placed His seal upon my soul, marking me for eternity. I have new life because of Him, and I am so thankful for the indwelling, empowering ministry of the Spirit in my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

