

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

One of the most misunderstood parts of Scripture in theology that I have ever encountered has to do with spiritual gifts. I want to lay out for you how the spiritual gifts link together, and we will go to the actual Scriptures so that you can see clearly what spiritual gifts are all about. God wants you to understand this part, and He says so in one of these Scriptures.

The Holy Spirit gives enablements to you, and they will enable you to do ministry. Those enablements feed into ministry (see Gifts 1 chart, next page). Ministry is what you are going to do. Enablements are tools that are given to you for you to do ministry with. Following that ministry are the results that come from that ministry.

God has one of the Trinity in charge of each of the three facets of spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit does the *enablement* part. The Lord Jesus says, “Follow me,” which is the *ministry* part. Thus the Holy Spirit endows you with enablements, and Jesus says, “Follow me into ministry,” and then God the Father, Himself, gives the *results* of ministry.

In these three categories on the chart, you have delineations of enablements, of ministries, and of results. In order to prevent confusion, you need to turn to 1 Corinthians 12:1. God says,

12:1 Now concerning spiritual [gifts], brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

Right off the bat, God says, “Look I am going to give you all this teaching; I do not want you to be ignorant.” You can choose to be ignorant, but it is not going to be God’s fault because He has given you the explanation and instructions in His Word. We will skip past where He talks about how you used to be “ignorant,” but now you are wise.

The Spirit’s Gifts Are Enablements (Ministry Tools)

1 Corinthians

12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

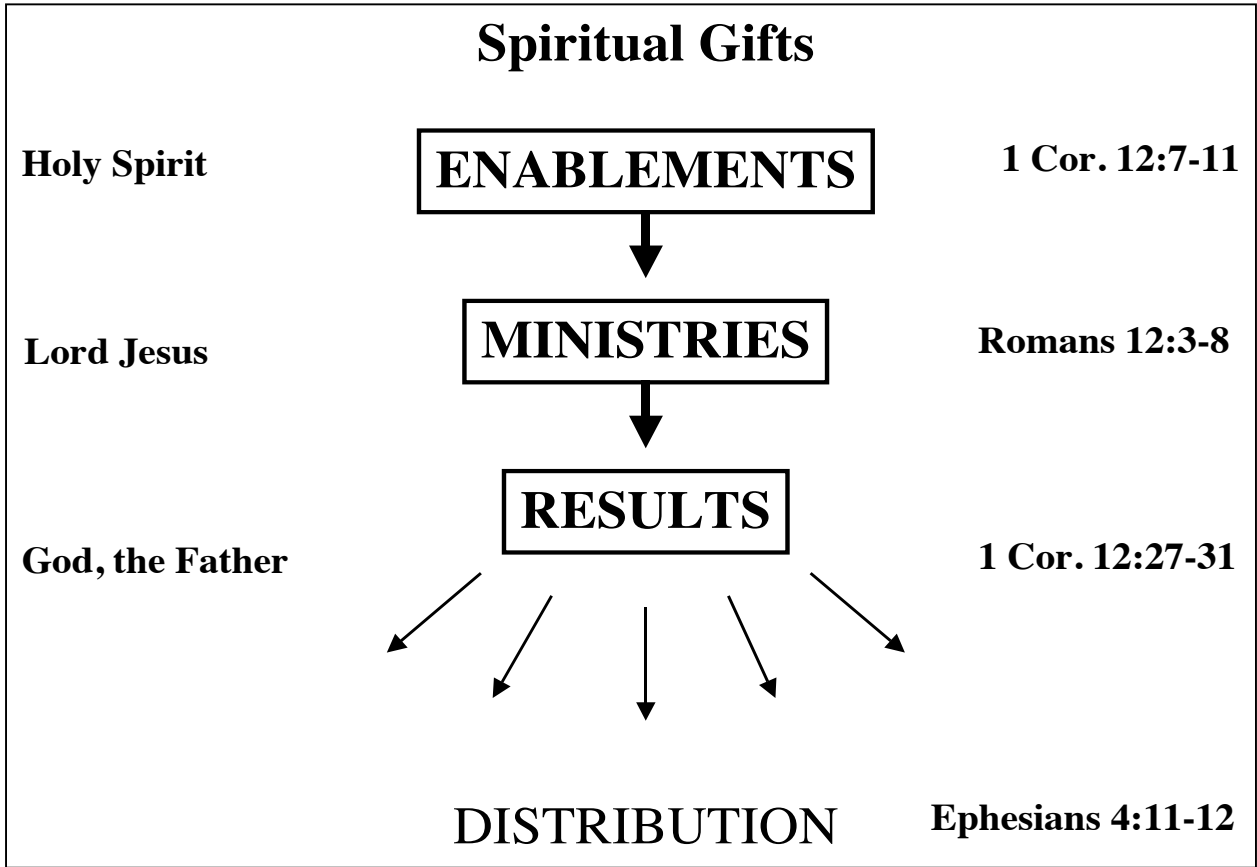
That is saying that there are diversities of enablements. The word for “gifts” in that verse is *charisma*, which means spiritual endowments of miraculous faculties, i.e. spiritual enablements. The Holy Spirit is the Person of the Trinity who is in charge of this category of gifts. There are many kinds of enabling gifts from the Spirit. He says, “But they are all given by the same Spirit.”

Administrations Are Ministries

1 Corinthians

12:5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

The word for “administrations” is *diakonia*, which means Christian service, i.e. ministries. Now God says that there are many kinds of ministry, but they are all under the lordship of Jesus, another person of the Trinity. So you have the Holy Spirit in charge of the enablements, but you have Jesus in charge of their use in His ministries. There are many different kinds of ministries, and the Lord is in charge of all of them.



Gifts 1

Operations Are Results

1 Corinthians

12:6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

The word for “operations” is *energema*, which means the energy to produce the desired effects, i.e. results. All right, He says there are many results or effects, and they are under God, another person of the Trinity. God the Father produces every one of the results from your ministry. The results are not the only part that the Father produces. He also distributes the gifted saints to their places of service.

Now there is no schism in God. The Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus, and God the Father are the same God. There is no schism or double-mindedness in God. So the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and God all work together in perfect harmony for the one Kingdom of God. They do not work at cross-purposes. They work together as a team to produce a growing Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is being produced through the *Missio Dei* (God’s Mission).

Every one of us is gifted with enablements. Enablements are ministry gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to you when you are born again. The new birth is similar to your natural birth. When you were physically born, you were given certain hair, certain eyes, certain human characteristics and natural talents. That is the natural version of who you

are. But when you were born again, the Holy Spirit gave supernatural and spiritual characteristics and spiritual enablements of who you are. You did not pick your spiritual gifts out.

The same way that you got your hair when you were born, you get these other kinds of spiritual things in the new birth. You did not go to a store to get them. They were just given to you, and that is who you are. And God Himself decided just who you are going to be, just how He is going to equip you. He has it in His mind just how He is going to use you. If you let Him use you with all the equipment He has given you, He is going to produce wonderful and supernatural effects for the Kingdom of God for the glory of Jesus. And that glory is given because God is in charge of it all. All we have to do is be submissive to our calling and following of Jesus by denying ourselves, taking up our crosses, and following Jesus.

So first, there are all these enablements that we are going to look at. But I want you to see that God the Holy Spirit is in charge of the enablement area, and every one of us has enablements.

When it comes to ministry or the application of the enablements, Jesus is our Boss. You will follow Him, and He chooses your ministries. The Holy Spirit is in cooperation, and has endowed you with gifts that are just suited for your ministries that Jesus has chosen for you. If you will now follow Jesus into ministry, you will have the complete fulfillment in your life because God the Father will produce the supernatural results of your ministries.

So when God the Father produces wonderful results from your ministry, the cycle is completed. Holy Spirit's *enablements* are to be used in Jesus' *ministries*, and then Father God will produce the *results*. The three persons of the Trinity are doing it all. We provide only the willingness.

Now these are the three categories of spiritual gifts that are delineated, you see, in verses 4, 5, and 6. God says through Paul, "Now Brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant, [*and so I am going to link each of these categories to a person of the Trinity so that you will not confuse them*]." And so He lays them out. There are many different enablements, but one Spirit. There are many different ministries, but one Lord. There are many different results, but only one God.

With God's plan, we cannot get them confused. Now, what do we do? First of all we get confused by tearing the linkage apart so that they are no longer linked to the three persons of the Godhead.

We just want to talk about spiritual gifts without distinctions. And so, many saints try to do an enablement. Friends, you cannot do an enablement. But we have people running around trying to do enablements as if they were ministries. Then they say, "Okay, let us do some of these results as if they were ministries." You cannot do a result either. The only thing you can do is ministries. When you start trying to do enablements and/or results you get things out of whack to the point where people are confused and think, "This is messed up. This cannot be right. These people are foolish."

So, what we have to do is "deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Jesus." (Matthew 8:34) And that is what I want for you in this evaluation of your gifts.

I want you to begin to see what your enablements are, but I do not want you to do your enablements. I want you to do ministry. You must analyze your spiritual gifts and try to locate your area of ministry on the five-fold ministry of the church model, i.e. the *Missio Dei*.” Then I want you to get specific within the ministry category into a special ministry that Jesus is calling you to. That ministry would then be just tailor-made for who you are within the five ministry categories.

This plan will be very fulfilling if you will do it. God will plug you into His *Missio Dei* and allow others to plug in also where they belong because you are not trying to interfere with or intrude into their callings when you are gifted to be elsewhere. You then can all work together more like a team. That is what God is talking about when He says, “You are a body. Some are eyes, some are hands, some are feet,” in the body analogy.¹

Delineation of Spiritual Gifts

Let us go on down to delineate the lists of gifts (see Gifts 2).

SPIRITUAL GIFTS		
1 CORINTHIANS. 12:4 Enablements	1 CORINTHIANS 12:5 Ministries	1 CORINTHIANS 12:6 Results
Wisdom Knowledge Faith Healing Miracles Prophecy Discernment Tongues Interpretation of tongues	Prophecy Ministry Teaching Exhorting Giving Ruling Mercy	Apostles Prophets Teachers Miracles Healings Helps Governments Tongues
1 Corinthians 12:8-10 HOLY SPIRIT	Romans 12:6-8 SON	1 Corinthians 12:28 FATHER

GIFTS 2

We are going to look at the enablements. Those begin in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. But first let us look at verse 7.

1 Corinthians

12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

I want you to see that God is giving the manifestation of the Spirit to every person. Everybody gets the manifestation of the Spirit, and there is a purpose there. That purpose is to profit the whole church. The gifts of the Spirit are not just to profit the individual, but to profit the whole.

1 Corinthians

12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

¹ 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another [divers] kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Now if you are trying to do an enablement, you are out of step. He spends two chapters dealing with people who are trying to do an enablement. Tongues are an enablement. And so if you try to do tongues, it has the same absurd nature as trying to do wisdom. Imagine this absurdity: you say that you have the gift of tongues, and I say that I have the gift of wisdom. Imagine your trying to do tongues and my trying to do wisdom. The strange results are: you get this babbling going on by the tongues person and this standing around with this studious look by the wisdom person. How do you do wisdom? What good are the babbling and looking studious? Tongues and wisdom are both enablements.

You can **USE enablements**, such as tongues and wisdom, **in ministries** like teaching or prophesying. *Using* enablements is when they come alive. Wisdom, used in the ministry of teaching, is very valuable, and the Bible tells us that tongues, being used in the ministry of prophecy, is very valuable.

It is fair to say that we get in on the action only there in the ministries that Jesus assigns to us. We do not perform enablements or results. We minister in yoke with Jesus. So, the work that we do is not actually done by us, but by Jesus through us. We provide the will and He provides the plan and the power to work the plan. In summary, the Spirit provides the enablements required for the Lord's plan of ministry. Jesus provides the plan and power to work it. The Father provides the results of our ministry. We provide our wills.

Each of you has enablements to do the ministry that Jesus has for you. You must *deny* yourself, *take up* your cross, and *follow* the Lord in His ministry for you. If you **will** do those three things, then God will produce miraculous results from your ministry.

When we try to do enablements, we are tied up in self-centeredness (edifying self) and not selflessly ministering to others. The enablements that are given here may not be an exhaustive list. There could be additional enablements, e.g. Samson's strength and Daniels understanding of dreams, that are needed for doing the Lord's ministries.

Results are found in verse 28 (see Gifts 2):

1 Corinthians

12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Again, I do not believe that this is an exhaustive list of results either. All of these lists seem to be for the express purpose of reducing the confusion and giving us understanding of just how the three categories of spiritual gifts link together to make a whole.

God distributes the officers in the churches, and He distributes the gifted people in the churches. God also produces the effects of the ministries, e.g. salvation, healings, and miracles. Then God asks a series of rhetorical questions to help our understanding.

1 Corinthians

12:29 [Are] all apostles? [are] all prophets? [are] all teachers? [are] all workers of miracles?

12:30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

12:31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Love Is the Linkage of Ministry to Enablements

God uses love to show the motivation behind the application of enablements in ministry. Love is sacrificial service for the benefit of another. In other words, the service or ministry is at your own expense. If you try to do enablements, you do not love the people; you love yourself.

Some results are the same as some of the enablements because God is going to cycle us, who are the results or who receive the results, back around into ministry again. Within the results, you have people receiving new enablements, ministries, and offices within the church (see Gifts 1 page 2). We who receive the enablements, ministries, and offices are also going to follow the Lord in His ministry as an application of our gifts. Then there is going to be another round of new results that are produced by God through our ministries that are also going to cycle back around again. Thus you can see that God's plan is to keep the cycle going. That is what we are trying to show here. The spiritual gift cycle is something that is going to propagate and expand and continue to produce more results for God's Kingdom.

In verse 28, the word "Operations" means results or effects (see Gifts 1 & 2). Again, I do not believe that this is an exhaustive list.

Now we will move to Romans 12:6-8. Notice that in verse 5 he is talking about the body of Christ, and so we are connecting up as parts of a body. Some are hands, some are toes, and some are eyes² All the parts together make up the whole body.

Then, each part of the body has a function that is related to it. Ministries correlate to enablements as seen in the following:

1 Corinthians

12:6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith

12:7 Or ministry, [let us wait] on [our] ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

12:8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

The seven ministry gifts (see "Administrations in Gifts 1 & 2) are not an exhaustive list of all of the ministry gifts, but what God is saying here is that if you are called to follow Jesus, and he says, "I want you to teach." Then, teach! Do not omit ministry or do the wrong ministry. When you are following the Lord, and He says, "I

² 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

want you to give,” then give! If you are following the Lord, and He says “I want you to prophesy,” then prophesy.

Please hear what God is saying? Every one of us is gifted to follow the Lord in His ministry. That life’s application of ministry should connect with your giftedness.

A caution is in order at this point. If you are gifted to do prophecy, and you are out here all alone on the street, and you encounter a starving man, then ***you must minister outside of your gifted area when there is a special need to do so***. You are not to stand there and prophesy to that man whose primal need is food.

When you are alone, you are to minister as how the whole body should do it because you are the whole body of Christ in that location. If there is a group of you together, one will stand out and be called in his heart to do the specific ministry to that person because he is gifted for that ministry. The form of that ministry could vary. He could take up an offering in order to make it a team effort, or he could give individually right there on the spot from his own pocket, or he could take that person by the hand and lead him to where he can get the food or clothing or whatever the need may be.

What I want you to see here is that you are the representative of Jesus Christ wherever you are. When you are in the corporate body, ministering in the corporate body, then be and do who you are. If you are a finger, be a finger. If you are a nose, be a nose. If you are an eye, be an eye.

But when you are out alone, you must be all things to meet the needs where you find them because you represent the whole body of Jesus Christ. But when you are in a group, the group represents the whole body of Jesus Christ.

When you are in the group you must fitly join together so that the *whole body does the Missio Dei*, and so that nobody is left out of the ministry call. If somebody gets left out, the pastor, or leader of the group, is going to give an account for that omission.

The body concept is an analogy for teaching teamwork, not determining who are eyes, fingers, etc. We are not to correlate enablements to body parts. Instead, we are going to focus on relating the enablements to the five-fold ministry model (the Missio Dei).

Okay, back to the categories. So now we have three columns: One column represents enablements, one column from Romans represents ministries, the third column represents results. Please refer back to Gifts 2.

Distribution of Ministry Results

Now, I want you to go to Ephesians 4. The distribution of gifted people is what I want you to see here. And if you looked all the way back to verse 4 you would see the body-parts concept once again. There is one body . . . , but now when we get down to verse 11, we find these five offices of equippers that God gives to the churches.

Ephesians

4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

What are the equippers to do? They are to equip the saints, so that the saints can do the ministry. So these people in Ephesians 4 are ministers being distributed by God. We saw in 1 Corinthians 12:28 the results of ministry which included some of the equipper officers being produced.

Now I am a product of this process, and I teach you. Then some of you are going to become apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and some of you are going to discover gifts you did not know you had, and some of you are going to become, through all that is happening in this very class, equippers in your own right duplicating and going on beyond what I do. You will go out into the church with your enablements to minister, and all of a sudden there will be some new equippers coming out of your faithful ministry. Members in your church will discover new gifts. If you will do your ministry, I promise you as God's Word is my witness, that God will give the results. All He needs is for you to obey with a **willing** heart.

God has already given you this teaching, and He has given you the Lord, and He says, "Deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow my Son, just go follow Him."³ He will tell you what to do. If **you will** do that, **I will** produce these kinds of results. And these people receiving these gifts will, in turn, cycle back around to do what you are doing and even more."

It is exciting to be following the Lord and see Him use you in ministry that is producing a blossoming church. Yes! Hallelujah! And you have God's Word on it. It is not a formula in which you are going to do some magic hocus-pocus and make your church grow. What you are going to do is recognize that God has invested in you certain spiritual enablements. Those gifts are an investment that God has put in you. Boom! But then He wants a return on His investment. You ask: "Okay, Lord, what do you want me to do to give you back a return." His answer is simple: "Deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow my Son! Okay?"⁴ The Son may say, "I want you to teach, I want you to evangelize, I want you to prophesy, I want you to. . . . Whatever it is I want you to do, just do it." And when you do it, bang! here is the profit on His investment in you, and He did all this production through a **willing** you.

Pure discipleship is how Christianity is supposed to work, and when you do your discipleship, there will be a bringing forth of profit for God's Kingdom from God's investment in you by merely submitting to Him. Your submission to God is how you lay up rewards in heaven. These people who get saved because of your part in the *Missio Dei*, seeking to save that which is lost, are going to be your reward, the stars in your crown. When you are in heaven, those people will run up to you and say, "Thank you for giving me the Gospel or thank you for giving me that tract or thank you for your part in a team effort to get me saved." And they will hug your neck, and they will want to hug you for eternity. You can hardly get loose from them. They are all over the place. Man! That is heaven!

In Ephesians 4:11, you have then the distribution of ministers. God takes these results of your ministry and sends one to be an apostle, one to be a teacher, one to be a prophet, one to be a pastor. He distributes those results because He is God, and He puts

³ Matthew 16:24

⁴ Matthew 16:24

them in this church and that church or in that mission field, and you whom He distributes are going to find yourself going here and there. You never dreamed that you would be wherever you end up. You are going to say, “Man! God is wonderful. It is amazing how I could end up being here.” Some of you reading this right here right now are saying, “How did I get here?” But this is how it works.

Misplaced Comma

Now I want you to see the misplaced comma in Ephesians 4:12.

Ephesians

4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

You see this comma after the word saints in “for the perfecting of the saints,” in the King James Version? The KJV is the version that has the misplaced comma. There may be other translations that also have it, but I have not seen any. I know how it got into the KJV, but it is not supposed to be there. That comma after the word, saints, means in the minds of these people who wrote this translation that they are thinking that these professionals (apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers) do the ministry, not the saints. If you put a comma after saints, then these professionals perfect the saints and also do the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ. But when you take the comma out, then the professionals equip the saints, and the saints do the work of the ministry. That is the way it is supposed to be because God said that He gives enablement and ministry gifts to every person. God also produces supernatural results from every saint who denies himself, takes up his cross, and follows Jesus, i.e. from His true disciples.

Modern-Day Gnosticism

Some people think that all a church is supposed to do is mature the saints in their knowledge. This thinking then produces a knowledge-based system. These people do not teach the saints to “go” and “do” ministry. They just teach the saints to “come” and “know.” This kind of Christianity becomes a modern-day Gnosticism in which knowledge is thought to be salvific. So a Christian runs to this Bible study and that Bible study. He just soaks up more and more knowledge until he becomes so fat with Bible study that he can no longer move and do.

Ministry as the Private Possession of the Professionals

If you take that comma out, then the saints do the work of the ministry. With the comma in, then the equippers not only perfect the saints but also they alone do the work of the ministry. And the reason for the comma’s inclusion is that for these Anglicans who did this translation purposed to protect their turf. They were paid ministers on the king’s payroll, and they did not want to have any of these saints running up here doing their ministry. If the saints did the ministry then the paid ministers might be at risk of losing their payroll. Their position was: “We are the professional ministers, we have the appointment and the collar, we are going to do the ministry, and the saints get it done ‘to’ them.” You see how that concept of ministry has carried over to the present time? You have the professional ministers who do the ministry, and you have all the saints who get it done to them.

We are still trying to figure it out. However, some saints do not want to figure it out because they want to do their own thing while calling themselves disciples and hiring someone else to do their ministry for them.

Empowering for Ministry

Now I want you to see that we believers need an empowering experience. We looked at what the Spirit does. He gives us gifts, and then we looked at the gifts to get some clarification. Now we need to see that we believers need an empowering experience. The passage is Luke 24:49.

Luke

24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The Lord is speaking, and He says, “I am going to send the power to you.” And He gives a command along with the promise. That command is to tarry where you are until the power comes in the form of the Holy Spirit. If the disciples had not tarried there, there would have been no power. They would not have had a Pentecost. Their obedience, then, put them in place for that empowering experience. What you need to see, then, is this empowering experience is what each of us needs. You have the Holy Spirit within you if you have been born again. But is the *power* of the Holy Spirit in you? That is the next issue.

All of the divine power that you will ever need is inside you in the form of “*potential power*.” However, that potential power is realized only by obedience. No matter how far-fetched the command from God might sound, strict obedience is essential. You must not say, “I will do the ministry when I get the power.” No, no, God wants you to obey every detail of His commands. The power is actualized in the obedience, rather than the obedience being actualized in the power.

When it comes to power, God demands obedience no matter how foolish the command may seem. God comes into your heart with power to change you into a new creature at the sinner’s prayer because you have obeyed by calling on the name of Jesus Christ. That prayer is an act of obedience. When you obey, you are receiving the Holy Spirit “with power.” So you are empowered the day you were born again. You were empowered with all the power of God. Now you were still an infant, but you had the power in **potential** form.

What happened to you since that day? Disobedience! With disobedience comes stopping the actualization of your potential power. How do you get it back? Obedience! If you will repent and follow Jesus in His ministry, in submissive obedience to Him, you will walk in the power of God. Now do not come to God like this: “I want some power; give me the power to heal,” then wave your wand around and start healing and showing off who you are. That is not obedience, and you will not have the power of God.

Here is where the power of God is: it is in *following Jesus*, and that requires the prerequisites of self-denial and picking up your cross. The power does not actualize in just talking about following Him. It actualizes in actually following Him. When He says go out here and do something, and you look at that task and the associated discomfort and sacrifice and say, “Oooh, I cannot do that, that is too awesome for someone like me.”

That is right, you cannot do that. It takes the power of God to do God's tasks. But, **if** you will step out there following Jesus, you will see miracles all around you. Those miracles are the manifestations of the power of God.

God promises the power, and He gives the power to accomplish every task that He calls you to do, but He will not get you off of your rear end. You have to do that by mastering your own self-will! ***If you will*** get up and step out, ***then God will*** do the rest. Being filled with the Spirit is when the Spirit is doing the ministry through you when you are willing to step out to follow Jesus.

Power does not come via somebody laying hands on you. Power comes only in your submitted will. You are going to encounter many gimmicks, and you are going to come against a lot of false teaching in this area, but do not be fooled. You follow Jesus! In your weakness follow Him. Let it be His power that is manifested in your weakness. Just like the Apostle Paul said, "In my weakness His power is made manifest."⁵ And no one would ever say that Paul did not have power. Look what he did in his weakness.

If you are not following Jesus in ministry, then that means you are following somebody else or your own ideas in the *missio hetero*, and your power resides in your own carnal abilities. I will tell you one thing: It is terrible to try to preach out of your own power. I have been there, and I do not want ever to go back. On the other hand, being in the pulpit while being Spirit filled, the Lord speaks through me with great power. That is what you want when you are preaching, witnessing, and ministering—God's Power!

The power steering in a car is a potential power. You actualize that power by willfully turning the steering wheel. The power of the engine then goes into action to turn the front wheels. If you refuse to turn the steering wheel, then the engine's power remains latent, and the front wheels do not turn with power. The driver relies on the engine's power to turn the wheels, but he must first make the essential step of willfully turning the steering wheel. If the driver waits until the engine starts turning the wheels before he starts turning the wheel, then he will never get the car to turn. If a Christian waits for the Lord to start demonstrating the power to do a task before he begins to do a ministry requiring that empowering, then the ministry will never get done. This analogy shows what being filled with the Spirit and walking by faith is.

⁵ Romans 1:16