

The Powers of The Kingdom: Spiritual Gifts and Prayer

The 14 Purposes of Spiritual Power

1. To glorify God and to exalt the Name of Jesus (John 11:4, 14:13)
2. To be an expression of Christ through the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:19, 1 Corinthians 2:4)
3. To demonstrate a covenant relationship between God and His saints whereby He responds to their requests in real, tangible and positive ways. (Matthew 7:7, 21:22, John 16:24)
4. To attest to the validity of the Gospel (Matthew 4:23, 9:35, 11:15)
5. To cause repentance and faith (Matthew 4:17-25, 11:20-23)
6. To distinguish between the occult power of idols and the power of the Living God (Elijah - 1 King 18:21-39)
7. To build up and to unify the Church (1 Corinthians 14:3,5,26; Ephesians 4:11-13)
8. To demonstrate God's mercy (Matthew 9:27, 15:22, 17:15, Mark 5:19)
9. To distinguish between the righteous and the wicked (Exodus 9:27, 2 Chronicles 6:23, Psalm 37:17,
10. To distinguish between God's people and those not of God's people (Exodus 8:22, 9:26)
11. To establish justice in the earth (Isaiah 11:3,4; Jeremiah 23:5,6)
12. To satisfy the desires of every living thing and to bring about Shalom (Psalm 145:13-20, Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:6-9)
13. To change "impossible" situations (Matthew 17:20, 19:26, Mark 9:23, Luke 1:37, 18:27)
14. To actualize the Sovereignty and Providence of God and to distinguish them from the achievements of mere human power and wisdom. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 4:20, 2 Corinthians 4:7)

Intercessory Prayer

There is a vast change in intercessory prayer between the Old Testament and the New Testament because of the work of the Cross which results in a new power and authority for the Christian (*see previous studies*). The prayer promises of the New Testament are not found in the Old Testament.

The Promise of New Testament Prayer

Read: Mark 11:21-25, Matthew 18:19, John 14:13, 15:7, 16:23-27, James 5:15-18, 1 John 3:22, 5:14,15

The Practice of New Testament Intercessory Prayer

Read: Acts 3:1-8, 12-16; 8:6-8; 9:32-42; 13:8-12, 14:7-18, 19:11-20

The promise of prayer becomes the practice of prayer when:

- a) There is the presence of faith in the Name of Jesus and
- b) There is the issue of a spiritual command consistent with God's will (such as "rise up and walk")

e.g. the lame man at Lystra had faith but did not walk until Paul gave the command, on the other hand the seven sons of Sceva gave a command but had no faith, so they were overcome by the demon. All demonstrations of spiritual power in the New Testament involve the use of spiritual commands e.g. Lazarus come forth, peace be still, be cleansed, go your way, pick up your mat and walk, little girl arise, ear be opened, rebuking a fever, telling demons to leave, and so on and so forth. Even the Lord's Prayer is a series of imperatives (commands) in the original Greek. The only exception is when the prayer is not a power prayer but a spiritual growth prayer such as being filled with the Spirit or receiving wisdom.

Scenario Question: Someone strongly asserts that prayer is: *Just a conversation with God, that expecting answers to prayer is only for the selfish and immature, that real saints don't see answers to prayer, and that the use of spiritual power is occultist and shamanistic.*

How would you show them that their point of view is totally unbiblical?

Spiritual Gifts

1. Spiritual gifts are the Holy Spirit “upon us” to give us power to be witnesses (Acts 1:8, 2:3, 2:16-19)
2. 1Corinthians 12:1-11 – How is the Holy Spirit involved with spiritual gifts?
3. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 – How is Christ and His body relevant to spiritual gifts?
4. 1 Corinthians 12:28-31 – What is the order among spiritual gifts?
5. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 – What is the difference between tongues and prophecy?
6. 1Corinthians 14:6-19 – Why is it better to use a known language rather than tongues, in public worship?
7. 1Corinthians 14:20-25 – What effect does prophesy have on those who hear it?
8. 1Corinthians 14:26-33 – How are gifts to be used by each Christian?

Note 1: There are three kinds of tongues in the Bible:

- a) Human tongues as known languages (Acts 2)
- b) Angelic tongues that can be interpreted by someone for prophetic purposes (1 Corinthians 13:1, 14:5)
- c) Tongues known only to God and man which are for self-edification (1 Cor. 14:2, 4)

Note 2: Prophecy in the New Testament (prophetes) is very different from prophesy in the Old Testament (nabi). In OT prophesy: Infallible, special office, very few prophets, they wrote large portions of the Bible, pointed back to the Mosaic Covenant and Law and ahead to Jesus as the Messiah. In NT prophesy: congregational, many prophets, did not write Scripture, did not point back to Moses or ahead to the Messiah, not infallible, for encouragement, exhortation and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). In OT “thus says the Lord...” in the NT “I sense that the Holy Spirit is indicating..”

Note 3: 1 Corinthians 13 (the Love Chapter) is between the two gifts chapters because the gifts are to be used in love and are “nothing without love” (1 Corinthians 13:1-4).

Scenario Question: Imagine that you have been sent as a missionary to a completely unreached tribe:

- a) How would spiritual gifts help to explain both the gospel and the nature and character of God?
- b) How would spiritual gifts demonstrate the difference between Jesus and the tribal gods?
- c) How would spiritual gifts help the new church to have faith and to function in love?