



"Any gift - whether it is a role, skill, ability or something else - if it is employed in faith for the purposes of strengthening someone else's faith, then it is a spiritual gift."

—Stephen Kneale

12-Jun-26

Gifts We Have Been Given (Part Two)

The apostle Peter, in [Acts 2:38-39](#), identifies a very special gift [God](#) has given us:

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you [be baptized](#) in the name of [Jesus Christ](#) for the remission of sins; and *you shall receive the gift of the [Holy Spirit](#)* . For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (See also [Acts 10:45](#). Emphasis ours.)

In [Acts 8:20](#), Peter castigates Simon, a sorcerer in Samaria, who had seen the Holy Spirit being given to those who had repented, been baptized, and had hands laid on them, and sought to purchase that power for himself ([Acts 8:18-19](#)). Peter soundly rebukes him, stating, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!"

Earlier, Simon had believed Philip's teachings and was baptized, but he did not have hands laid on him to receive God's Spirit. When the opportunity came with the arrival of Peter and John, however, he was not content with

God's free gift of the Holy Spirit. Instead, he wanted to be like the apostles, able to lay hands on people and give them the Holy Spirit.

He attempted to buy a position of power for which he was neither ordained nor qualified. Even today, this act is called "simony." Besides, if one can purchase something, it is technically not a gift. A gift is freely given, not purchased, bartered for, or exchanged for.

What gift have we received that has changed our lives? Perhaps it was something that solved a seemingly insurmountable problem. Maybe it was just the right thing at the right time. It might have been an act of [kindness](#) or even a service that made a real difference.

But was it *really* the gift that changed our lives the most? Those whom God has called, who repented of [sin](#), were baptized, and had hands laid on them, have been given the priceless gift of God's Holy Spirit. In fact, it is the purpose of the Holy Spirit to change a person's life radically!

Even though God gives us His Spirit freely, Jesus Christ paid for it through arduous sacrifice: by coming to earth to live as a man, to live a righteous life, to overcome [Satan](#) and [this world](#), and to die sinlessly to pay for sin. Paul writes in [I Corinthians 6:20](#) that we were "bought at a price." Similarly, Peter, in [I Peter 1:18-21](#), reminds us that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot or blemish.

Indeed, what has been freely given to those whom God has called through Christ is invaluable. Our Savior did so much for us, even while we were still enemies of God ([Romans 5:10](#)), that we might have this tremendous opportunity to possess His Holy Spirit. The elect must have God's Spirit to fellowship with God and worship in spirit and truth ([John 4:23-24](#)), which He provides.

What does a gift typically do? Most often, it is something that provides for a need, something we would not normally buy for ourselves, or a gesture of appreciation. A gift is also something we tend to remember. How many times have we noticed something around the house, and it immediately brought to mind the person who gave it to us? We rarely forget a gift and the

details surrounding it. Do we remember what God has done for us and the wonderful gift He has given?

The Israelites, like all carnal humans, had a memory issue. Through [Moses](#) and Aaron, God revealed who He was and what He would do with and for them. God then did what He told them He would do, freeing them from their Egyptian slavery. It was not long before He heard complaints from His newly redeemed people that bondage under the Egyptians was better than what they were experiencing as they traveled through the desert. We do not want to follow their example.

In Luke 7, Jesus offers an interesting perspective on how we appreciate the gifts God has given us. Simon the Pharisee had invited Jesus to his house for a meal, and during dinner, Jesus tells His host the [Parable of the Two Debtors](#) :

"There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will [love](#) him more?"

Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more."

And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." ([Luke 7: 41-47](#))

One must ask, "Which person am I in this story? Am I the weeping sinner who is humbled and thankful for the tremendous debt that has been forgiven, or am I Simon who thinks that he has little or no debt at all?"

Everyone needs to ponder this question, especially given the various generations that comprise God's church today. A small number are brand new to the [faith](#), whom God has recently called and given His Holy Spirit. They are usually excited and appreciative about what God has done.

Then, we have others that are second-, third-, and even fourth-generation followers of Christ. These people from long-time church of God families have been on this path a long time. Are we from one of these families? Do we still appreciate the awesome gift God has given? Do we have the same zeal and desire to use this gift to help us overcome, humble ourselves before the Lord, and seek Him in everything?

Or, as a multi-generational Christian, do we perhaps have a sense of entitlement? When God calls someone, He is inviting them to join the wealthiest Family in the universe. Children and grandchildren of ultra-rich families have a reputation for feeling and acting entitled. If our parents and grandparents have been part of this Family for many decades, are we treating what God has freely given as inherited spiritual wealth? Do we still have a deep appreciation for this gift from God, or like a spoiled rich kid, have we become complacent about what He has given us?

Whether we have sinned a little or a lot might determine how much we love Him who forgave us or how much we appreciate His gifts, as Jesus teaches in the Parable of the Two Debtors. However, we should also remember [Romans 6:23](#), where Paul reminds us, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Whether we think we have done a good job at living or not, no matter how sinful we were, without God's gifts—His calling, faith, [repentance](#), forgiveness, and, of course, His Holy Spirit—we would end up dying in our own sins.

Like Israel, God has pulled us out of spiritual Egypt and revealed what He will accomplish in us. Do we recognize and appreciate the tremendous gift He has given to us? Or are we fighting Him tooth and nail, complaining that the slavery of sin was easier, safer, better?

We must remember what this gift cost our Savior and what He did on our behalf. We cannot allow ourselves to forget how in debt we were when He

wiped the slate clean. We must truly appreciate the special gift of God's Holy Spirit, which enables a relationship with the sovereign God of the universe. What could be more valuable?

- Ryan McClure

New Transcripts

[1863bs: The Jerusalem Council's Conclusion](#)

Given by Richard T. Ritenbaugh on 14-Mar-26

[606Bs: Is the Cross an Acceptable Symbol?](#)

Given by Mike Ford on 17-Apr-03

[BS-AM08: Amos \(Part Eight\)](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 03-May-88

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

['I Will Pour Out My Spirit!'](#)

by Martin G. Collins

The outpouring of God's Holy Spirit in AD 31 represented a pivotal event in biblical prophecy and church history, marking the initial fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32) where God's Spirit (at one time reserved only for a select few) was now poured out on all believers, regardless of age, gender, or social class. This event which began the church age merely set the stage for greater future spiritual empowerment. The function of the Holy Spirit equips individuals for service, not by overriding their free will, but instead enabling them to perform with wisdom, courage, and humility. Both Saul and David illustrate not only the gift but the sobering responsibility of Spirit-led leadership. Saul's fall and David's rise reveal how obedience and humility must be coupled to enable Spirit-led leadership. Within God's church, leadership is not determined by hierarchy or dominance, but by servanthood, emulating Christ's example of a servant and a shepherd. Individuals like

Diotrephes, who desired pre-eminence, clashed with the apostle Paul's qualifications for church leaders (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-13)—integrity, self-control, and faithful leadership, traits representing the aspiration standards for all God's chosen saints, members of God's royal priesthood, empowered to bring light to a hopelessly darkened world.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Is Obedience Required Before Receiving God's Holy Spirit?](#)

by Earl L. Henn

Acts 5:32 says very clearly that God gives His Spirit to those who obey Him, yet some argue that keeping God's law is not necessary. What is the truth? Earl Henn clarifies this contentious point.

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study (Friday 12-Jun-26) will be **Isaac**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh**. The Bible Study will be featured on the [CGG homepage](#) from **6:00 pm Friday (EST)** and all day Saturday.

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