



## Desiring The Gifts Of The Spirit

*"The walls of the heart are elastic, and desire expands them."*

That gets my vote for the most eye-opening sentence I've read this year.

A few weeks ago, I was on my back on my bedroom floor, trying to catch my breath after a dreaded cardio workout, and trying to hear from God. I knew I only had a few minutes until my kid's internal roosters cock-a-doodle-do'd and sent them down the long hall way from their bedrooms to mine. I held my phone in the air above my face while I read through a familiar chapter in Romans. A certain verse seemed to stand out from the rest. I swiped over to a commentary and that's when I read those eye-opening words, *"The walls of the heart are elastic, and desire expands them."* That got me off my back. I sat up, and the Holy Spirit started to unpack mountains of truth in the blink of an eye. His message was loud and clear:

*Expand Your heart, daughter. Desire more.*

The Holy Spirit is an extravagant gift giver. The focus of I Corinthians 12 is all about spiritual gifts. The word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, the gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

**Each of these gifts has a two-fold purpose--one: to glorify Jesus, and two: to strengthen and encourage other people.**

We are told more than once in scripture to **earnestly desire** these gifts. In the words of Dwight K. Schrute, “Question...” *How are you doing with that?* Be completely honest with yourself. **When was the last time you were craving, desiring, or aching to unwrap one of those gifts?**

Some do not desire the gifts of the Spirit because they simply don't understand them or have never heard that they should desire them. Maybe you've assumed these gifts are reserved for special people on a ministry staff. Others don't desire the gifts because of selfishness. Most Christians spend more time working on a better “me” instead of looking to build others up.

Think about the purpose of the gifts again: *to glorify Jesus and to strengthen and encourage other people*. These gifts have little to do with the one who is told to desire them and much to do with others. **I wonder if we would crave spiritual gifts in a greater way if they were for our personal gain.** #ThingsThatMakeYouGoHmmm

**The call of this devotional is to expand the walls of our hearts with a desire for spiritual gifts, because when we make room in our elastic-lined hearts for the gifts of the Spirit, we will begin to operate in them.** Our actions will begin to glorify Jesus and encourage others.

Let's quickly look at each of the gifts mentioned in I Corinthians 12 in order to create a deeper hunger in ourselves for them.

- Gift of Wisdom: The Holy Spirit working through us so we can hear and speak wise counsel, especially in an important situation.
- Gift of Knowledge: The unique ability to share knowledge that could only be revealed supernaturally and to *know* what is true.
- Gift of Faith: The ability to fully trust God in any situation.
- Gift of Healing: The Spirit working through us to pray for the sick and see them healed.
- Miraculous Powers: The Holy Spirit working through us to “override” the laws of nature and divinely intervene in situations.
- Gift of Prophecy: The Holy Spirit working through us to build up, encourage, comfort, and strengthen others in a *naturally supernatural way*.
- Distinguishing Between the Spirits: The Holy Spirit working through us to recognize what is influencing people and to decipher what is of the Spirit and what is not.
- Gift of Tongues: A personal language of prayer given by God, so a believer can communicate with Him beyond the limits of their own knowledge and understanding.
- Gift of Interpretation: Allows tongues to benefit those, other than the one speaking in tongues, by interpreting the heavenly language into an earthly language.

Now, some of you may already be wondering which gifts you have or you're trying to decide which gifts you want. I know they are in list form, but don't look at this list like a sandwich bag at Which Wich where you get to decide which gifts sound good to you. That's the Holy Spirit's call. **More important than knowing the name of the gift that's at work through you, or choosing the one which suits you best, is the desire to be used by God however He sees fit.**

Make your prayer be, *"Lord I want to bring glory to Jesus today, and I want to strengthen and encourage others."* Let your desire for the gifts grow and expand the walls of your heart, and as you do that, you can expect that God will give you the desires of your heart. **He will begin to use you, and you'll begin to discover, pinpoint, and appreciate the gifts in operation in your life.**

One gift we are told to *especially* desire is the gift of prophecy (I Corinthians 14:1). Let's make that our focus this month.

**Prophecy is simply allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us to build up, encourage, comfort, and strengthen others in a naturally supernatural way.**

That's one of my favorite phrases ever: **naturally supernatural**. We often see the Holy Spirit as spooky, but He's not. **He wants to work supernaturally through what's natural to you.**

If it's natural for you to text a friend, the Holy Spirit can supernaturally work through a text message. I get supernatural texts quite often. This morning a friend texted me to let me know she was praying for me and that God wanted me to know I was covered and loved. I had no idea, and my friend had no idea, that my afternoon would bring some very stressful things my way. The words in that text came back to my heart and comforted me. The Holy Spirit prophesied to me, through her, via text.

Ladies, let's desire the gifts. Let's desire to glorify Jesus and encourage and strengthen others: our spouses, children, friends, our small group, co-workers, people we serve with at church, whoever the Lord brings to our attention. **Let's not make this a "part" of our everyday lives, segregated and compartmentalized, rather, let this be who we are: glorifying Jesus and encouraging others**



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. We are told more than once in scripture to **earnestly desire** spiritual gifts. *How are you doing with that?* When was the last time you were craving, desiring, or aching to unwrap one of those gifts? If it's been a while, why do you think that is?
2. When looking at the "list" of gifts from I Corinthians 12, which gifts have you seen in operation in your life--either being the one whom the gifts were operating through or the one on the receiving end. Share some stories.
3. Naturally supernatural is a great way to describe how the Holy Spirit works through us. Have you ever been afraid to desire the gifts because you thought something unnatural may take place? Share about the most common, natural way that the Spirit tends to work through you.
4. **\*\*Make sure each girl has a pencil and a slip of paper before this question.\*\*** I Corinthians 14 says that we should *especially* desire the gift of prophecy which is when we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us to build up, encourage, comfort, and strengthen others in a naturally supernatural way. Let's take a moment here to practice using this gift. We are going to take two minutes and ask the Lord to give us an encouraging word or phrase for the person on our left. "Lord, we desire the gift of prophecy. We want to be used by You to encourage each other tonight. Use us in a supernatural way, and speak to the secrets of our hearts, in Jesus' name, amen." (Have everyone wait on the Lord, listen, and write down any word, verse, picture, or phrase that drops into their heart. Have everyone share what they received. Explain that some words may not seem relevant right in the moment, but to hang on to it, because it may mean something very special tomorrow or a month from now. God is in the future.)



## HIS HEART WORK

**Study:** Read I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14 this month for a more in-depth look at the gifts of the Spirit.

**Act:** Spend time each day expanding the walls of your heart by desiring the gifts of the Spirit through prayer. Ask God to use you to bring glory to Jesus and to encourage and build up others.



## PRAYER NEEDS

Write down the prayer requests of your group members, and pray fervently for them! Let your group members know when you are praying for them, if you have any scriptures or encouraging words for them, etc.