

The Spirit Working in Me

Introduction

God has chosen us to be followers of Christ: this means, living lives of purity and goodness, being in this world but not of it, acting as salt and light, witnessing to the resurrection of Christ, loving God and our neighbours, and bearing much fruit.

He does not expect us to do this alone, but has given all believers his Holy Spirit to enable us to live such lives. This is exciting and wonderful news because with God all things are possible. Here are some ways the Holy Spirit enables us:

- i. Opens our eyes to **truth**
- ii. Gives us **Assurance** that we are children of God
- iii. Transforms us so our **characters** show the Fruit of the Spirit
- iv. **Guides** our conscience in holiness
- v. **Leads** us in what we do and say
- vi. Empowers us with **Spiritual Gifts**
- vii. Intercedes for us in our **prayers**
- viii. Gives us boldness in our **witness**
- ix. Gives **faith** to people to believe as we witness to them

Think through each of the above areas – when were you last conscious that the Holy Spirit was working in you and through you in these ways?

The next two pages are to help us think in more detail where the Spirit is at work in us in terms of His Fruit and His Gifts.

1) The Fruit of the Spirit

The Fruit of the Spirit is singular. In other words it is our whole character that matters. Every letter in the New Testament refers in some way to aspects of godly character, but the table below is based on the characteristics in Galatians 5v22-23. By nature, we are better at some than others, but the Spirit brings the fullness of all these characteristics to us.

Use the table below to reflect on the extent to which the Fruit of the Spirit is already shown in your life and the areas which need **further growth**. You may like to discuss this in your pair/triplet as it is often easier for others to see our strengths and weaknesses in these things.

Fruit	Where/when has this been displayed in my life? (think in terms of church, home, work, social life)	Where / when do I need more the Spirit in this? (think in terms of church, home, work, social life)
Love		
Joy		
Peace		
Patience		
Kindness		
Goodness		
Faithfulness		
Gentleness		
Self-control		

Give thanks to God for what he has already done in you. *Highlight* the fruit you want to most pursue in your life. Our greatest deficiency is probably the best place to start as it is where we are most exposed. *Ask God* to give you more of the Holy Spirit that this would be effective. Then spot opportunities where these characteristics are being challenged – these are opportunities to grow. You have the victory in Christ – go for it!

2) The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The table on the next page may help us consider, for each area of our lives, the extent to which the gifts of the Holy Spirit are active in and through us. In every case, these are for the good of the church as a whole.

It would be wise to read 1 Corinthians 12-14 and Romans 12 before proceeding further.

There is a need to develop gifts. A natural gift is found by experiment, is usually recognized by others, and needs personal development, so it is with spiritual gifts. The following indicates a sequence for this, though this does not always apply.

- i. **Eagerly desire** and ask for them (1 Corinthians 14v1)
- ii. **Try them out** to see if you have them (1 Corinthians 14v12)
- iii. **Develop them** and be trained in them (1 Timothy 1v6-7)
- iv. Exercise and **Excel** in them (1 Corinthians 14v12)

God has given you both your natural talents and your spiritual gifts in order to **serve others** and **bring glory to Him**. It is possible to misuse both our natural talents and spiritual gifts. The absolute importance of exercising the gifts in love for others takes up the whole of 1 Corinthians 13! The chapter details what it means to only use gifts with the consideration of others in mind. Spiritual gifts will only be fruitful when they are exercised in love. The gifts are not just an individual thing, but are **always**:

- i. for the **whole body** of Christ (1 Corinthians 12v12-30),
- ii. to be exercised out of **love** for others (1 Corinthians 13v1-13)
- iii. for the **building up** of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4v11-13)
- iv. **not** for our pride (Romans 12v3)
- v. **subject to** control (1 Corinthians 14v32)

The table on the next page is based on the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12v1-11, 27-31 and Romans 12v4-8. These are not exclusive lists.

3) What Spiritual Gifts do I have or should I pursue?

Gifts (based on 1 Corinthians 12 & Romans 12)	Description	When/Where has this been displayed in my life? (think church, home, work, & social life)	Which gifts is God calling me to pursue or develop? (think church, home, work, & social life)
Tongues (spiritual)	Speaking to God in an unknown language.		
Tongues (international)	Speaking a message from God in a language known by someone else.		
Interpretation of Tongues	Interpreting a spiritual tongue for people to understand.		
Prophecy	A relevant word of truth for someone or a group of people.		
Service	Helping and supporting others.		
Teaching	Explaining the truths in the Bible in a way that builds spiritual life.		
Encouragement	Bringing words or actions which encourage others.		
Providing for others	Giving generously for the benefit of others.		
Leadership	Taking steps forward with others following.		
Mercy	Treating people far better than they naturally deserve.		
Messages of wisdom	Bringing an insightful word to a person or situation.		
Messages of knowledge	Speaking a fact which was not known by natural means.		
Faith for miracles	Working or praying on the basis of God acting supernaturally.		
healing	Bringing supernatural healing to people ..		
Discernment of spirits	Knowing whether it is an evil spirit or the Holy Spirit at work.		