

Supernatural Gifts - The Word of Knowledge

by Bayless Conley

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Good morning, everyone. Hello, out on the plaza. And to people who are watching anywhere in the world right now online, welcome. We pray that God will touch your heart and speak directly to you. I feel like there has been a shift because a whole lot more people have actually begun to pray. Even if it's just a little, it's made a difference. Perhaps you've had an alarming experience when you've begun to pray. Maybe you haven't felt anything. Listen, it's made a difference. Don't stop. Continue to pray. I believe we're going to see a mighty harvest of souls come into the kingdom of God, and see the greatness of our Lord displayed in a lot of different arenas on a lot of different levels. We have, as far as the teaching part goes, been on this series on prayer. We finished that last weekend. As I earnestly prayed about what to bring today, my heart landed very solidly on a particular subject. I'd like you to open your Bibles, please, to 1 Corinthians 12. I'm going to be sharing with you from that. First Corinthians 12. I'm going to talk to you a little bit about the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we give You our undivided attention, and we pray that You would just shut us in with Yourself and teach us. Cause these eyes of our heart to see and these ears of our heart to hear. Give us understanding, we pray. Lord, it is our intention to not merely be listeners and hearers of Your Word, but to be doers of Your Word to the glory of Jesus Christ. Amen.

First Corinthians 12:1 NKJV,

¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant.

It goes on in this chapter and lists nine different gifts of the Spirit. I want you to notice, "I don't want you to be ignorant." Another translation says, "It's not right for you to be without teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit." This is a call for deep study and reflection to all believers. God doesn't want any of His children to be ignorant on this subject. There are very few things in Scripture that God has said, "Hey, you need to pay attention to this." All of His Word is important, but when He specifically points something out and says, "Don't be ignorant," you need to give it extra attention. I remember as a new believer, I had moved down to Mexico for a season. I was living in Baja, California, helping with some crusade work. Someone handed me a syllabus on the gifts of the Spirit that a Bible teacher had done, and I devoured it. I read it, and I reread it, and then I read it again. I looked at every verse they had in there in my Bible. I read those verses in their context, and I cross-referenced them. I went back, and I read the syllabus again.

It was life-giving to me, and I prayed earnestly to experience these gifts. One of the reasons that my appetite was so voracious, other than the fact that God said, "Don't be ignorant about it," is because before I was saved, I had experienced the counterfeit. I knew that if there was a counterfeit supernatural with the wrong spirits, there had to be a genuine supernatural with God's Spirit. They don't counterfeit \$13 bills, do they? Why? Well, there is no such thing as a \$13 bill, but they counterfeit 20s, 50s, and 100s. God wants all of His children to know the true, genuine supernatural. Before we go on in the next few verses, I just want you to listen or look

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with me at something that Paul wrote to these believers in Corinth, just before he launched into this teaching on the gifts of the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 10:19–20 NKJV, he said,

¹⁹ What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? ²⁰ Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

So, Paul is saying, “Hey, those who are involved in idol worship are literally having interaction with evil spirits, with demon spirits in Corinth, with a city that was filled with idols from north to south, from east to west.” These believers, these new converts that Paul is writing to, had had such experiences. Hence, we read back in 1 Corinthians 12, almost the next thing he says in verses 2–3 NKJV,

² You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. ³ Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

Now, Paul had just told them before that people were involved in idolatry. They're having fellowship and interaction with demons. He says, “You were Gentiles,” notice the language, “carried away to these idols, even as you were led.” Words used to describe influence. The same kind of words that Paul used elsewhere when he talked about people carried about by every wind of doctrine. Literally, the influence of evil spirits. In another place, writing to Timothy, he spoke of people who gave heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. So, these believers, now that he's writing to, had experienced the demonic counterfeit. Paul opens up by saying, “Okay, here's a test. When it's the genuine, when it's the real, it will always make Jesus Lord. It will always lift up Jesus if it is the genuine.” He goes on in 1 Corinthians 12:4–7 NKJV. He said,

⁴ There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all . . .

Notice these manifestations, these gifts of the Spirit are given for the profit of all. When they are genuine, they will bring good. They help people move forward and upward. They do not divide. They do not tear down. They do not scatter. In fact, one of the main definitions of this word, translated as profit in our English Bible, that the manifestations of the Spirit are given for the profit of all, the word literally means to “gather together or to bring together.” Now, it is true that some men and women who have been more denominationally brainwashed as opposed to being scripturally taught have brought and caused divisions in connection with this subject. But the gifts themselves are given by God to profit and to bring unity in the body of Christ. When they are genuine and when they are functioning in the right attitude, that is exactly what they will do. They won't scatter. They won't divide. They will gather. They will help, and they will glorify Jesus. So let's read about these nine gifts. We go to verses 8–11 NKJV.

⁸ . . . for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, (or some translations say special faith) to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ But

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one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

So that they operate as the Spirit wills, not as you or I will, in other words, I can't flip them on and off like a light switch. However, there are things that we can do to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and to bring ourselves into a place where we can see these things come into manifestation. I personally am convinced that the Holy Spirit wants to move much more than we see Him moving now, but it's because God's people are not in a position to receive these things and to operate in these things. I'll talk about that a little more as we go on. But for the purpose of study, let's look at these nine gifts, and we'll put them in three categories. The first category is three gifts of revelation, three gifts that reveal something: the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, and the discerning of spirits. Then, there are three gifts of power, or three gifts that do something: the working of miracles, the gifts of healing, and special faith. Then, there are three vocal gifts, three gifts that say something. There are different kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues, and then there is prophecy.

They are all supernatural in nature. They don't come through education or through study. They are imparted supernaturally by the Holy Spirit. We'll only have time today to talk about one of them, which is what I want to do. I want to talk about the word of knowledge, one of those revelation gifts. The word of knowledge is a supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit of certain facts in the mind of God. Supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit of certain facts in the mind of God dealing with the past or present, and almost always having to do with people, places, or things. Now, God is omniscient. He has all knowledge, but He doesn't tell you everything He knows. He just tells you what you need to know. It's a word of knowledge. A word is a fragmentary part of a sentence. A word of knowledge is a fragmentary part of God's knowledge. He shares with us what we need to know. Again, this is not a knowledge that comes through study or natural means. It is completely supernatural in nature, and it is given as a gift by the Holy Spirit. It can come through a vision, it can come through a dream, or just come by the Holy Spirit speaking to the heart of one of God's children. Let me give you some examples. Joseph and Mary have taken Jesus into Egypt because King Herod is trying to kill the young child. We read this in Matthew 2:19–20 NKJV.

¹⁹ Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰ saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."

It was a supernatural revelation. Herod is dead. Those who were trying to kill the young child, Jesus, are dead. It came through a dream to Joseph. John, on the Isle of Patmos, was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. God gave him a vision and showed him the seven churches of Asia Minor and the spiritual state of those churches. Those churches all existed at that time. I've actually been to the sites of the seven churches in Revelation. They are all in modern-day Turkey. But through a gift of the Spirit, a word of knowledge, the Lord showed John the spiritual state of the churches and what was going on in those churches. We look at Acts 9:10 NKJV. It says,

¹⁰ Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

I want to stop right there for a moment. There was a certain disciple named Ananias. He was not a pastor. He was not a prophet. He was not a teacher. He was not an evangelist. He was

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just an all-in Jesus follower. My friend, you will find that these gifts are for anybody who is all-in following Jesus. So Ananias has this vision. We read in verses 11–12. It says,

¹¹ So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. ¹² And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.”

So, the Spirit showed him supernaturally the street, the house, and told him whose house it was and said, “This guy named Saul is there, and he's praying right now. He has seen a vision of you coming in and putting your hands on him.” The same Saul is the one on the road to Damascus. We know him as the Apostle Paul. He lost his vision when he had his encounter with Jesus. Ananias, after arguing a bit, obeyed the Lord. But he got this information through this gift of the Spirit called the Word of Knowledge. We go right into the next chapter. Peter is on the housetop, and he's been praying. He has a vision. The vision ends, and he's thinking about what it means. As he's pondering this vision, look what happens. Acts 10:19–20 NKJV.

¹⁹ While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, (Now, this is just the Holy Spirit speaking) “Behold, three men are seeking you. ²⁰ Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.”

At that very moment, three men had arrived. They're standing at the gate of the house. Cornelius had sent them, the centurion. How did Peter know they were there? The Spirit told him. It was a supernatural revelation. “There are three guys. They're here. They're waiting at the gate, and you need to go with them. I have sent them.” What are some of the reasons that this word of knowledge might come into manifestation? Number one, to glorify Jesus and to bring people to Him. To glorify Jesus and to bring people to Him. Do you remember what it said there in the first couple of verses of 1 Corinthians 12? Anybody speaking by the Spirit of God, when there is a gift and manifestation, it's going to make Jesus Lord. Look at what Jesus said in John 16:13–14 NKJV.

¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

First of all, Jesus said, “When the Holy Spirit comes, He is going to speak to you.” It is not abnormal for a Christian to hear the Holy Spirit speak to them. Jesus said, “When He comes, He is going to speak.” “But when the Holy Spirit speaks,” Jesus said, “He will glorify Me.” It's always going to bring glory to Jesus. The Lord Himself operated in these gifts of the Spirit. In John 4, He is at the well of Sychar. The disciples have gone to buy food. There is a woman there drawing water from the well. Jesus said, “Go call your husband.” She said, “I don't have a husband.” He said, “That's right. You've had five husbands, and the guy you're with right now is not your husband.” It was a word of knowledge. He supernaturally knew that by the Holy Spirit. The result is she believed in Him, ran off into the town, and told everybody. It ended up with the people wholesale coming to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. But what sparked it all was a word of knowledge.

Some of you will remember it was in Fountain Valley, not too far from where we are now. There used to be a place called the Malibu Grand Prix there. They had little race cars. You'd race around the track. They had batting cages and a miniature golf course. I think

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indoors, there was like Pac-Man video games for the kids. A friend of mine was there one night. There are teenagers everywhere. There were a couple of teenage girls sitting on a retaining wall, and I think there was a planter behind it. God gave him a word of knowledge for one of the teenage girls. So he walks up to them, and he addresses the other girl. He says, "Do you mind if I talk to your girlfriend for five minutes alone?" The girls looked at each other, puzzled, and the girl he wanted to talk to said, "Okay." So, the other one went and stood at a distance. He said, "I looked at you, and God told me you're planning to go home and kill yourself tonight." Her eyes got big. He said, "Don't do it. God loves you, and He sees you. He doesn't want you to commit suicide." She begins to sob and confesses that she had planned on going home that night, and she was going to take her own life. He shared the gospel with her, took her hand, and led her to Christ. She got saved sitting on that little retaining wall.

Some of you may recall me telling the story. I'm just a new convert, a couple of months in the Lord. A friend of mine says, "Bayless, my little brother is coming to live with me for a while." I think her brother was 25. She said, "He is agnostic. He is not warm toward the gospel at all, and he will not listen to what I have to say. Would you mind getting together with him when he comes? He's going to come stay with me for a few months." I said, "I'd be happy to." So, I came over one morning. He and I have breakfast together, and he is indeed quite cold toward the gospel. So, I'm talking to this guy. We're sitting at the breakfast table, and just internally I'm saying, "Lord, please give me something to win this guy." The Holy Spirit spoke to me. The Spirit said to my heart, "He's an artist." I interrupted him. I said, "You're an artist, aren't you?" He said, "Yeah, I am." He had a puzzled look on his face. He said, "Do you want to see some of my paintings?" I said, "Sure."

We go in his sister's garage, and he's brought all his artwork with him. So, there are all these canvases, and he takes the towels off them. He has a couple of easels set up. I remember thinking, "God, You see something in him I don't see, because this is crappy stuff. But if You say he's an artist, I guess so." So he's really proud, and he shows me like four or five paintings. He says, "So my sister told you I was an artist, huh?" I said, "No, actually she didn't." He said, "How did you know?" I said, "When we were sitting at the table, God told me that you're an artist." He said, "Get out of here." I said, "It's true. Talk to your sister." He went and talked to his sister. She said, "No, I never mentioned anything to him." It so shook him. It opened his heart, and within about three or four days, he'd given his life to Jesus and got filled with the Spirit. The next time I saw him, a week later, he was on fire for God. The key that opened that, and that brought him to Jesus, was a gift of the Spirit, the Word of Knowledge. They can also be used to encourage someone who is struggling. Elijah has just had this showdown with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. There has been a bit of a national awakening, and he's killed these false prophets. Then, Queen Jezebel swears that she's going to murder Elijah. So he takes off. We read this in 1 Kings 19:4 NKJV.

⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

I would say the man is a bit discouraged. I'd say Elijah is struggling here. "God, take my life. Just take me home. I'm done. I can't handle this anymore." I know there are people here, and you've prayed, "I just want to go home. It'd be easier for me to just be through with this and to leave." We read, and this is what he says to the Lord in 1 Kings 19:14 NKJV,

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¹⁴ And he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

"God, there is no one else. I'm the only one serving You. I'm all by myself." Here is God's response in 1 Kings 19:18 NKJV. The Lord says,

¹⁸ Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

The supernatural word of knowledge. "Elijah, you're not the only one. I have 7,000 more. They have spines of iron, and they have not bowed down to what's currently acceptable. They haven't bowed down to serve Baal, and they haven't kissed that idol. You're not the only one, buddy. I have 7,000 more who are faithful to Me in Israel." It so lifted Elijah and so encouraged him. He left that place and went on. He had quite a bit more fruitful ministry before his time was done. He went from praying to die to stepping into some of the most fruitful ministry of his life because of a word of knowledge that came to him. I have a dear friend whose life suddenly began to unravel due to circumstances beyond his control. Let me just tell you, it was about as bad as it gets. He was so discouraged and so despondent. He felt like God had lost his address and that God just didn't even see him anymore. Things were getting worse and worse. The way he told me was, "Bayless, I guess it was just sort of an unconscious manifestation outwardly of what was going on in my heart."

He said, "I started wearing dark glasses all the time. All day long, I wore dark glasses. If I was out at night, I wore dark glasses. When I was in my home by myself, I wore dark glasses in the home day and night." He said, "I was so distraught." He said, "A man came to me one day to meet with me, and he said, 'You think things are so dark and that God doesn't see you. But He sees you even wearing those dark glasses when you're alone in your home. In fact, He sees the stone that you keep in your right front pocket. You need to put your trust in Him. He'll get you through.'" My friend said, "Bayless, nobody in the world knew this, but I had this little polished stone that I used to keep in my right front pocket. I just liked the way it felt in my hand, and I'd pull it out every once in a while. Nobody else on planet Earth knew about that. And that man said that God sees me with my dark glasses in the house, and He even sees the stone in my pocket." It so encouraged him. I'd like to tell you that his troubles ended immediately. He went through a protracted season of trial, but he came out a better man on the other side because he learned how to trust God in the midst of the worst of storms. But a word of knowledge brought divine encouragement to one of God's children who was struggling.

Then thirdly, they can be used to help avoid or escape the enemy's traps. This story is told in 2 Kings. A man of God came to the king of Israel, and he said, "Look, don't send the troops down here because the Syrian king has deployed his troops there and set an ambush." Then, a little later, he said, "Don't go over here. The king of Syria has deployed troops and is setting an ambush there." He did it time and time again and saved the lives of countless soldiers of Israel. It got to the point where the Syrian king got his inner circle around and said, "Okay, one of you is a spy. Who is it? Every time we set an ambush, the king of Israel knows ahead of time. He knows where we are. He knows where we're going. He knows where the troops are. Who is the spy?" One of the men pipes up and says, "Your majesty, none of us. There is not a spy here, but there is a man of God in Israel. He hears the very words you whisper in your bedroom." Word of knowledge.

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I had a friend come to me, and again, I'm just brand new in Christianity. I had a couple friends, husband and wife. They were some of my heroes. I mean, they'd been saved, I think, ten years, which just seemed like eternity to me at the time. I'd been saved for a couple of months. I just loved this couple. A friend came to me one day and said, "Bayless, I had a dream about so-and-so's wife." I said, "Really?" She said, "Yeah, she's having an affair." I said, "Get out of here. It's not possible." She said, "Well, it gets worse. She's having an affair with another married woman." I said, "There is no way. It's not true." She mentioned the other woman. I knew the other woman as well. I didn't know her husband well, but I'd met her husband. I said, "It's just not true. I don't accept that." Anyway, a few days later, I'm going over to visit my friend. I'm knocking on the door. He doesn't answer. I think maybe he is in the garage because he used to tinker around and build stuff in the garage all the time. I open the garage door, and there is his wife and this other woman engaged in some extremely intimate behavior. I went out. They didn't know I saw them. I went, "Oh, my!"

I got in touch with my friend. I said, "You know that dream you had?" She said, "Yeah." I said, "It was from God." She said, "How did you know?" I said, "I walked in on them. I saw." She said, "Well, are you going to talk to her?" I said, "Heck no. You had the dream. It's your dream. You talk to her. God didn't give me a dream. God gave you a dream, and it'd be better coming from a woman anyway." I said, "No, I'm not touching that. No way." But she did, and the marriage was saved. I actually ran into that couple 25 years later, and they're still solidly married and serving the Lord together. Now, that word of knowledge was not given to sit in judgment over her and to condemn her. It was given to help recover her out of the snare of the devil. Not everyone has a repentant heart when those kinds of things happen.

There is another story told about Elisha, the prophet. There is a general in the nation of Syria. He has leprosy. He is a war hero. He's famous. He's wealthy. But he has leprosy. He has a little maidservant that they captured from the land of Israel who served him and his wife. She says, well, "If you were in Israel, there is a man there who could get you fixed up. He could get you healed." So, Naaman gets permission from his king, and takes a whole bunch of money, a whole bunch of expensive clothes, and goes into Israel and finds Elisha. Elisha doesn't even come out and meet him. He says, "Look, just go dip in the Jordan River seven times." He does. On the seventh time he comes up, his skin is totally restored. The leprosy is gone. He is so elated. He comes to Elisha and says, "Look, I want you to take the silver." Elisha says, "No, you can't pay for the gifts of God. I'm not taking a penny from you, not a penny."

Naaman pressed him, and he said, "I'm not doing it. I'm not taking anything." So, from that day, Naaman decided he was only going to serve the Lord. Meanwhile, Naaman takes off in his chariot. Elisha's servant Gehazi says, "Oh, what a fool. What an opportunity we missed." He said, "My master might not take anything, but I'm not that dumb." So, he goes running after the chariot. Naaman sees him coming, stops, and gets out of his chariot. Gehazi says, "Hey, my master wouldn't take anything from you, but two young preachers just came to him. It'd be okay to take some silver and some changes of raiment for them." Naaman was so excited. Actually, Gehazi asked for 75 pounds of silver. Naaman says, "Hey, take 150 pounds." He gives him double, and gives him double of this expensive clothing. Gehazi goes and hides all the stuff. Then, he comes and stands before Elisha. That's where we pick the story up in 2 Kings 5:25–26 NKJV.

²⁵ Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where did you go, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere." ²⁶ Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you?"

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Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?"

That's what he was going to do with that fortune. He was going to buy olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen, et cetera. Verse 27,

²⁷ "Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever." And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow.

I was praying one time, many years ago, in the church. I don't know how else to say it, except I just suddenly was in the Spirit. I saw one of our leaders, actually a paid staff member, who was over a particular area in the church. I saw that they were stealing. The Holy Spirit showed me them, and I saw them stealing money from the church. There was a particular ongoing fundraiser that they were in charge of. So, I went to them privately. I said, "Are you stealing money from the church?" They said, "No way, of course not." They were so offended that I would ask. I said, "Well, the Holy Spirit showed me that you're stealing." They backpedaled and said, "Well, I've been borrowing, but I plan on paying everything back." I said, "Okay, well, you need to do it." I gave them time, and there was never the slightest effort made to pay even one dollar back, never an apology, no remorse, and no repentance. So, we let them go. To my knowledge, to this day, that person has never regained the influence that they had.

Now, the idea was to restore them. That was God's highest and His best, but there was no repentance, and so it never happened. In the process, God protected the church as well. Now, how do these gifts operate? The primary need is instruction. That's why he began by saying, "Concerning spiritual gifts, I don't want you to be ignorant." That is the greatest challenge right there. So many of God's children just don't know about the gifts of the Spirit. They've never made it a matter of study. They've never pondered it. They've never reflected on it. They've never searched it out in the Scriptures. That is the number one greatest challenge, just a lack of instruction and a lack of understanding. You will not operate in something that you don't even know exists. The second thing is desire. Instruction is necessary, and desire is necessary. Listen to this verse in 1 Corinthians 12:31 NKJV,

³¹ But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

"Earnestly desire the best gifts." Somebody says, "What is the best gift?" It's the one that you need at the moment. If you're sick, you probably don't need a prophecy. You need the gifts of healing. When He said, "I show to you a more excellent way," that goes right into the 13th chapter, which shows the more excellent way to operate in the gifts of the Spirit, that's in a spirit of love. The 12th chapter is about the gifts. The 13th chapter is about the gifts, and the 14th chapter is about the gifts of the Spirit. You'd be hard-pressed to find any other subject in the Bible that has three entire chapters devoted to it. Through the inspiration of the Spirit, Paul said, "I don't want you to be ignorant." Here, he said, "Earnestly desire the best gifts." First Corinthians 14:1 NKJV,

¹ Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

Now, the Lord is not going to tell us to desire something that is not available to us. First Corinthians 14:12 NKJV,

¹² Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

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Then, 1 Corinthians 14:39 NKJV,

³⁹ Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.

Listen to the language. “Earnestly desire the best gifts. Desire spiritual gifts. Be zealous for spiritual gifts. Seek to excel when it comes to the gifts. Desire earnestly.” I’ve shared this story before. Some of you may recall it, but I was an assistant pastor for two years in a church out in the Inland Empire. My pastor’s name was Dan. His wife’s name was Nancy. They had a little boy, about three years old. His name was Benjamin. I was teaching on a Sunday night on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I got to this, one of these verses where it says, “Desire spiritual gifts,” and I just got stuck on it. I kept saying it over and over. I had a little bitty platform. The church may be seated 150. I just walked back and forth for two or three minutes, and I just said over and over, “You have to desire the gifts. You have to desire the gifts of the Spirit.” I just felt the hand of God on me as I did it. I got really bold. I said, “You have to desire the gifts. You have to desire the gifts. Desire the gifts of the Spirit. You have to desire the gifts.” For two or three minutes, I don’t know, I bet I said it 30 times. Then, it just lifted. I just went back to teaching. Well, the very next night, Pastor Dan and his wife were with some church members having dinner at their house.

They had a nice dinner, and then all the kids went upstairs to play. Some of the older kids got one of the screens off of an upstairs window, and they went out through the open window onto the roof. Little Benjamin, the three-year-old, followed him. He lost his balance and fell off the roof. Nancy, the pastor’s wife, was actually washing dishes in the big bay window, and he fell right in front of her. She screamed. Dan runs out. He told me, “My boy was there, not moving. His arm was wrenched behind him in an unnatural way. I scooped him up in my arms. He didn’t even appear to be breathing.” Dan looked at me and said, “Bayless, I heard your voice. ‘You have to desire the gifts of the Spirit. You have to desire the gifts.’ From the core of my being, I cried out, ‘God, I desire the gifts of the Spirit. I desire the gifts.’” The way he described it was, “Bayless, something suddenly came out of heaven, hit me on the top of the head, went down through my body, out through my feet, came back up, and went out of my arms. I felt something flowing out of my arms into my son. He suddenly opened his eyes and said, ‘Hi, Dad.’ He jumped out of my arms, ran into the house, and played with the kids. Not even a bruise on him.”

Desire, pursuit, and prayer concerning these things are up to you. I’ve been saved for almost 50 years, and I still regularly pray about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I honestly believe that we will see a great end-time global harvest before Jesus comes. But we won’t see it without the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I believe the Spirit of God wants to manifest these things. I think they’re going to be a big part of this end-time revival and awakening. We have to desire the gifts. Then, I just want to encourage you to go after them, to pray and earnestly desire them. I’ve been praying not just that they would operate in my life. I’ve been praying that they’d operate in your life and that we’d see them in the body of Christ at large. Interestingly enough, if you read through the book of Acts, every time a gift of the Holy Spirit was in manifestation, the vast majority of the time, it happened out on the street. Now, those things, certainly, can operate as we gather together, but the lion’s share, according to the scriptural pattern, happened out there. When you’re standing next to that other soccer mom, and she’s screaming because her little girl has just kicked a goal. God might give you a word for that woman or for the checkout person in the store or for your next door neighbor. In fact, one of my neighbors, just yesterday, I was talking to him. I felt like God gave me a word for him. I shared it with him. He’s not a believer. I can tell

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immediately that it had an impact on him. I think that's the main place that God wants these things to happen.

We read how Elijah, because of everything that kind of had gone wrong and the death threat that was hanging over him, he just prayed to die. I know there are some people here today, and you've prayed to die. You've said, "God, just take me home. I'm done." There are people who have experienced pain so constantly, and you're so worn down it's just like, "God, it would just be easier if you took me home." I think if you've never experienced that kind of chronic, constant pain, you certainly shouldn't judge someone. You just don't know what that can be like. I felt as I was praying that there are some people here where that's you. It's just like, "I don't know if I can bear another day of this. It just never goes away." Then, there are some people here who just have been so crushed by the calamities of life. It may have to do with addiction or whatever. You're just like, "I want to die." There are some people here who are saying, "God, something is broken inside of me, and I don't know how to fix it. I don't know what to do. I'm broken inside." They just want to die.

Listen, friend. God has some fruitful things for you up ahead. Yeah, when we die, we are to live as Christ, to die as gain, to depart and be with Christ is far better, but you have a purpose for being here. There is more tread left on the tire for you. We don't want you to go when God doesn't want you to go. He wants you to fulfill that purpose. Listen, you may not be able to fix what is broken. He can fix what is broken in you. Someone listening to me right now is saying, "Man, that's me. I'm broken inside, and I don't know how to fix it." God sees you. He can fix what is broken in you. I want to pray for you. In fact, I think the only ones, and you don't even have to if you don't want to, but specifically those who have had that constant pain in their life. It's just like it's worn you down. If you would like to stand up, I would encourage you to do it. Other people, I'd like you to just not stand up unless you really feel like you want to, but there may be people who are just inwardly crushed. We want to pray. Will you guys pray with me and agree?

Father, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, our healer, our captain, and our Shepherd. Lord Jesus, we pray right now that You would stretch Your hands, bring healing to those in this building, outside on the plaza, and to those who are watching, Father. We pray that the power of the Holy Spirit would touch them and heal them from the top of their head to the soles of their feet. Jesus, surely You have borne our sicknesses and carried our pains, and by Your stripes we are healed. Lord, we pray for those, our friends, our brothers and sisters, who are broken and crushed inside. Right now, Lord, I pray that Your hands would touch them and they'd be lifted and set free. I speak to the spirit of oppression to go in Jesus Christ's name. We have a reason to live. We have a cause to live for. Lord, we thank You for it. We pray that grace would be ministered to our brothers and sisters today. Oh Jesus, may Your name be lifted high. May Your glory radiate throughout the earth and may Your gospel be preached from coast to coast, from border to border, from country to country in the precious name of Jesus. Lord, we just want You to know we desire the gifts of the Spirit. We don't want business as usual. Lord, we desire the supernatural. We want in our lives and in our midsts what we read in the book of Acts. We beseech You, God, for these gifts of the Holy Spirit, for the revelation gifts, and for the power gifts. Oh God, for the vocal gifts, we thank You. Moving by Your Spirit in and among Your people for the glory of the name of Jesus Christ. Thank You, Lord.