

## Spiritual Gifts and Healings

Our doctrinal statement says this about *The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts*,

- a. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts (*1 Corinthians 12:11*) and, that the gifts of evangelists, pastors and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today (*Ephesians 4:7-11*); and, that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established (*1 Corinthians 13; Romans 12:1-8*).
  - b. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and afflicted. (*John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15; James 5:14-16*).

*Reading these two points, about what issues do you think the founders were concerned?*

*Use this chart to compare the spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4.*

*What do you observe about these lists as you compare them?*

The original from which this statement was developed, the IFCA Doctrinal Statement, was written to address teachings of the Pentecostal movement with its emphasis upon *speaking in tongues* as the sign of a baptism with the Holy Spirit after one is saved, and in the prevalence of *faith healers*.

The Pentecostal movement was a development from the Holiness movement in Methodism. There was a real desire for holy living, in particular a removal of sin from one's life. It was realized that this would have to be a working of the Holy Spirit. This intense desire, combined with faulty Bible study led to the following conclusions:

- One is saved by faith in Christ, but does not become immediately holy, *therefore*,
- There must be a second work of grace, subsequent to salvation whereby one is made completely holy, entirely sanctified, and perfect.
- The early church believed Jesus, but did not receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit until later, *therefore*,
- The Baptism *of* (*or with*) the Holy Spirit must be this second work of grace that makes one entirely sanctified.
- The sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was *speaking in tongues*. Any person who speaks in tongues has received this second work and is now sinless.

The problem, of course, is that neither they nor anyone else in the early church was sinless (*Acts 5:1-11; Galatians 2:11-13*). The entire teaching of the New Testament is that growth in holiness comes as we are submitted to the Holy Spirit and follow His leading (*Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 4:30*). Ignoring this, they went on seeking an experience which would confirm their arrival at *entire sanctification*, namely, *speaking in tongues* as at Pentecost.

At the time, 1901, it was believed that *tongues* meant *languages*. This was based upon the clear teaching of Scripture (*Isaiah 28:11-12; Acts 2:1-4, 7-11; 1 Corinthians 14:21*). When a group of holiness people began speaking in tongues, they thought they were speaking perhaps in Chinese, Japanese, or some other language.

Later, when they discovered they were not speaking any *real* languages of this earth, but had what they believed to be a *real* experience, they came up with the interpretation that they were speaking the language of the angels. This was based upon a misunderstanding of *1 Corinthians 13:1*. Rather than letting the Scripture govern their experience, they sought a text which supported their erroneous supposition that the sign of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit was speaking in tongues, even though this was contradicted in *1 Corinthians 12:30*.

Our statement was written with that background in mind. Unfortunately, the Pentecostal error is still with us, and growing in numbers as people around the world seek *power*, but not the *process* which leads to holy living.

*Why do you think it is important to recognize that God is sovereign in spiritual things (1 Corinthians 12:11)?*

*What did the Apostle Paul teach about speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 12-14)?*

*Why do you think he mentions ‘tongues’ in 1 Corinthians and nowhere else when talking about the spiritual life?*

*Who or what is your authority on spiritual things?*

*Why do we need evangelists and pastor-teachers today and not the apostles (Ephesians 4:11-16)?*

*Must God heal every believer who is sick? Why or why not?*

*Looking again at our doctrinal statement on this, how would you re-write it to make it clearer to people today?*