

"Hearing" From God to Serve and Heal

by Moshe Schwab

When praying for others we need to ask God for information, rely on the working of the Holy Spirit, and rely on the power of God. So, this is a good time to talk about the gifts or manifestations of the Holy Spirit and how we receive information from God.

All the gifts are important, but prophesy is especially important. Shaul (Paul) says it is **for edification**. 1 Corinthians 14:1,3 NKJV says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. But he who prophesies speaks **edification and exhortation and comfort** to men." Often people think that the prophetic is all about foretelling, but that is not what the Bible says. It says that it is for edification, exhortation, and comfort.

Edification – to build up or establish (gives us confidence and helps us to follow God).

Exhortation – to urge strongly or to make an appeal (encouragement, an urging to follow God).

Comfort – to give strength or to console (gives us hope and peace).

Prophesy may be either forthtelling or foretelling.

Forthtelling – speaking forth (in this case it is a speaking forth to edify, exhort, and comfort)

Foretelling – speaking of future events

The Bible says that prophecy is mostly to edify, to exhort, or to give comfort. Although God may give people warnings at times, that is not the primary purpose of prophecy. **It is the pagan occult that is mostly concerned with fortune telling** or foretelling. God uses the prophetic to build us up, to encourage us, to give us hope and peace. God wants us to be concerned with living the way He wants us to live and to follow His commandments. The prophetic is to help us do that. Occasionally, there may be a reason for someone to foretell.

God's gifts are for everyone.

Acts 2:38-39 NKJV

"Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name Jesus Christ' [Yeshua the Messiah] '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.'" As many a God will call; that includes us. Shaul lists a few of the ways the Holy Spirit works in us in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. Remember, Jewish lists are partial lists. That is why Shaul lists other ways the Holy Spirit works; in Romans 12:4-8, Ephesians 4:11, and Galatians 5:22-23 (the fruit of the Holy Spirit are also obvious ways the Holy Spirit works in us). 1 Corinthians 12:5-7 CJB says, "There are different ways of serving, but it is the same Lord being served. And there are different modes of working, but it is the same God working them all in everyone. Moreover, **to each person** is given the particular manifestation of the Spirit

that will be for the common good." It says that God is at work through the Holy Spirit and that "each person" can participate. Shaul refers to them as gifts from God in Ephesians 4:8 CJB, "He gave gifts to mankind."

Since these come from God, **they are not natural abilities**. In other words when it talks about wisdom, it is direction given by God. Shaul lists wisdom (wisdom is action), knowledge (information), faith, gifts of healing, miracles (which are supernatural events), prophecy, discerning spirits, speaking in tongues, and interpretation of tongues. We do them, but it is wisdom, knowledge, healing, tongues, etcetera from God, not from us. 1 Corinthians 12:11 CJB says, "One and the same Spirit is at work in all these things, distributing to **each person** as he chooses." It says that Holy Spirit is at work and notice again that God gives these gifts or manifestations of the Holy Spirit to each person. Shaul describes the believers as a body where each of us can take part. It says in Ephesians 4:16 CJB, "The whole body is being fitted and held together by the support of every joint, with each part working to fulfill its function; this is how the body grows and builds itself up in love."

The Spiritual Gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.

There are more gifts, but we will just talk about the ones in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 for now.

Prophecy and interpretation of tongues are mostly for encouragement. 1 Corinthians 14:3 CJB says, "Prophesying is speaking to people, edifying, encouraging and comforting them." Shaul says that the supernatural interpretation of speaking in tongues is, "So that the congregation can be edified;" 1 Corinthians 14:5 CJB. Speaking in tongues and Interpretation is for edifying so the gift of interpretation is much like the edifying, encouragement, and comforting of Prophecy.

Speaking in tongues is for prayer, praise, and thanksgiving the Bible says. Shaul talking about speaking in tongues, "I will pray with my spirit;" 1 Corinthians 14:15 CJB. The context is about speaking in tongues although praying in the Spirit can also come from inspiration and prophecy. Speaking in tongues can be prayer and Shaul says that it is not understood and not appropriate when believers come together unless it is interpreted supernaturally for the edification of others. A person can speak in tongues quietly while praying for others.

A good general rule when praying for others is not to do things that are distracting or for show. Speaking in tongues out loud when praying for someone can be distracting because the Bible says that is not usually understood. Shaul says to speak in our own language in 1 Corinthians 14:16. On the other hand, Shaul says, "Do not forbid speaking in tongues," in 1 Corinthians 14:39 CJB. Also, the Bible says that speaking in tongues can be praise to God and I should note that since it is prayer given by God, it is perfect prayer. Shaul quotes Isaiah and says that speaking in tongues gives us rest, probably meaning a quietness. Don't we all need that!

Also, we should understand that the Holy Spirit (the Ruach HaKodesh) and God's gifts are good. Who wouldn't want gifts from the God of the universe?

Luke 11:10-13 NKJV:

For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Supernatural knowledge (information), wisdom (action), and the discerning of spirits is the impartation of God given information or how to act (what to do). The discerning of spirits tells us whether the Holy Spirit is present, or a devil spirit is present. It also tests the source of the information. Did it come from the Holy Spirit or just godly thinking? Is a devil spirit present or is someone having sinful thoughts? These three gifts of the Holy Spirit are sometimes called revelation gifts.

Inspiration is a form of these and is a moment-by-moment impartation of these three spiritual gifts. Revelation can even include a personal encounter with Yeshua as was the case for Shaul on the way to Damascus (Galatians 1).

Faith is the impartation of God given faith.

Miracles are extraordinary works of God.

Gifts of healing are imparted healings by God. Even though healings are called gifts, it has been my experience that God imparts healing liberally, but the healing is still up to God. We are to keep praying with expectation. Sometimes God will answer our prayers. We discussed this at length in other sections of our teaching on praying for others and divine healing.

How I believe the Holy Spirit may work (primary references, Assemblies of God, the Vineyard Movement)

The prophets in the Old Testament heard from God. Exodus 12:6 NKJV says, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him **in a vision**; I speak to him **in a dream**." Genesis 15:1 NKJV says, "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.'"

There were even schools of prophets. Perhaps we are having our own mini-series on hearing from God.

2 Kings 4:38-40 NKJV:

And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets." So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, though they did not know what they were. Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, "Man of God, there is death in the pot!" And they could not eat it.

It says that when they tasted it, that is when God told them it was no good to eat. God uses our inner senses to speak to us, in this case taste.

Shaul tells us that we are threefold people yet one. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 NKJV says, "May your whole **spirit, soul, and body** be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah." In the Hebrew, soul refers to life, what makes us alive. Referring to soul as some unembodied essence is a pagan concept. When Yeshua tells the story about the man gaining the world, but losing his soul, Yeshua is talking about the man's life. If you have lots of stuff, but die, it doesn't do you any good. There is a double meaning to this though. If you focus on worldly things and neglect spiritual things, you may be in for a rude awakening when God judges the world.

Shaul talks of the inner man. This is probably where the Holy Spirit works, in the spirit of man. The spirit of man is simply what makes a person a person. It's our inside person. Ephesians 3:16 NKJV says, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man."

Perhaps the reason Shaul refers to our inner man being strengthened by the Holy Spirit is because that is how the Holy Spirit works. **We see examples of this in the Bible by God revealing things to us through visions and our other senses; we could say that it is through the "inner person."** These visions are in our mind, or we hear God speak in our mind etcetera.

We know from the scriptures that we receive words from God (revelation) through:

Seeing or visions – Genesis 15:1; there are lots of examples in the Bible.

Hearing – 1 Samuel 3:10; there are lots of examples in Bible.

Smelling – during worship at times I’ve smelled a sweet floral smell. I think God is telling me that He’s pleased—it’s encouraging. There are good smells and bad smells. In Matthew 10:1, the reference to unclean spirits (devil spirits) possibly has to do with a bad smell.

Tasting – Years ago I think I made some bad wine. As soon as I put the glass to my mouth, I experienced a bad taste, and I felt a paralysis. I thought God was telling me not to drink it; in Mark 16:17-18 it talks about food not poisoning us. Before we eat or drink something bad, God can tell us if it is bad. In 2 Kings 4:40 NKJV, the prophets said, “There is death in the pot!” God was informing them by tasting.

Touch – Sometimes I’ve felt the pain of the other person; ask the person if they are having pain somewhere and then pray appropriately. I've learned to identify a general area of the body to test whether I'm hearing from God right (Are you experiencing some pain? Is your shoulder sore?). If you get too specific, you risk having the person's faith drop if you are a little off.

Feeling – God can tell us how another person is feeling emotionally; do not confuse this with empathy. Don’t manufacture empathy either and think it is a word from God. **We don’t know what other people are thinking.**

Knowing – God often gives us a knowing so that we understand a vision or word; often God will give us the same visions over and over and it builds our spiritual vocabulary. For example, when I see a vision of a flower, I often associate that with praying for the other person to glorify God, namely, the keep God's commandments.

If God gives us a vision or a word, we should believe God for the understanding. If we don't understand, ask God for more revelation to help you understand.

Understanding – God gives the person receiving the word or vision the internal understanding. Also, God can help us understand situations; He will tell us what to do and even give us understanding in the moment. Luke 12:11-12 NKJV says, “Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

Physical phenomena may accompany words. For example, the hand writing on the wall in Daniel.

Inspiration – God tells us something in the moment and we speak it or do it without thought. For example, an inspirational prayer, or when Kefa (Peter) lifted up the lame man by the hand by inspiration in Acts. Miryam (Mary) and Elizabeth both had inspirational prophecy when they met each other.

Prayer can be inspirational words from God sometimes. Some people have learned to give inspired prayers that are from God. This is like some forms of inspired prophecy. They speak the thought that God gives them in the form of a prayer.

*This knowledge and wisdom that we receive from God we call words from God because

they are God given information.

***They are not gut feelings or personal insight.**

*We don't give people good advice and say it was from God – that is **wrong**.

*We are to test what is said. People can make mistakes in their understanding. 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21 NKJV says, "Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good."

*Often, God first expects us to use our heads first, gather information, and make good decisions.

*After we pray for someone, don't start giving them advice unless it is absolutely necessary.

*Pray for what they asked for prayer first, then you can ask God if there is anything else that should be prayed for.

Some gifts are occasional. We can all operate in any of the gifts/manifestations at various times.

Some gifts are constitutional. We may have a specific gift that is with us all the time. **Yeshua had all the gifts in operation any time He wanted.**

Revelation (knowledge, etcetera) often takes place internally when we are awake. Kefa became hungry (taste). I think God was telling Him that God wanted the Gentiles to receive the Messiah. At least that is what he came to understand. These were Gentile believers and not idolators. Also, he had a vision, and he heard God talk to him (see Acts 10:10-20).

God was not telling Kefa (Peter) that it is okay to eat just anything. There were people who were making up inappropriate laws from the Torah that kept the Gentiles outside the circle of believers. God was using Kefa to correct the problem. In Exodus 34 it is warning Israel not to form close relationships with idolaters. The Gentiles in Acts 10 were not idolaters and God wanted Gentiles to also believe in the Messiah. That was the issue. Exodus 34:16 CJB says, "Do not make a covenant with the people living in the land. It will cause you to go astray after their gods and sacrifice to their gods." Some in Kefa's time were inappropriately saying they were not to associate with Gentiles at all.

The revelation gifts can also take place in dreams.

Joseph, the wife of Mary had dreams (see Matthew 1:20) and the Magi had dreams (see Matthew 2:12). Acts 2:17 NKJV says, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see **visions**, your old men shall dream **dreams**."

The revelation gifts occur in the inner man, but occasionally may occur physically in an outward vision or voice.

The heavens were opened to Yeshua (see Matthew 3:16-17). Philip saw Yeshua standing at the right hand of God (see Acts 7:56). The people around Yeshua also heard an audible voice (see John 12:28). Elisha prayed for the young man's eyes to be opened and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots (see 2 Kings 6:17). The writing on the wall in Daniel remained there because the king asked people to interpret what was written (see Daniel 5:5).

It says the ten commandments were written by the hand of God in Deuteronomy 33:2.

God leads us and will use us if we are willing to take the risk. **The gifts are not automatic. We must pursue them.** Sometimes God will have something for us and at other times not. You will not receive anything if you don't ask. You can ask God for a word and God chooses whether to give you a word of revelation or not. 1 Corinthians 14:1 CJB says, "Pursue love! However, **keep on eagerly seeking the things of the Spirit; and especially seek to be able to prophesy.**"

Also, what we receive from God will not contradict the Bible. That is also important to understand. Are you hearing from God, are they your own thoughts, or is the devil tempting you?

What we receive for others should be given in a caring considerate way. Help others to save face so they don't fall into condemnation. Galatians 6:1 CJB says, "Brothers, suppose someone is caught doing something wrong. You who have the Spirit should set him right, but in a spirit of humility, keeping an eye on yourselves so that you won't be tempted too."

Sometimes even the mention of a fault will help a person to self-correct. For example, "Are you having trouble with feeling down at times?" They many say no, but they may

realize that they need to start resisting the devil and not keep going over and over those thoughts that are troubling them. **Also, Don't be harsh or accusative.** "

When we pray for someone, we should first ask them what they want prayer for and then pray for that. We can also ask God what to pray for. God can use us to bring about life changing moments and much needed encouragement. God can use us to heal others by the power of God. Remember, it is God that does the healing; we cannot heal anyone supernaturally; it is God that it is at work. God's gifts are not natural abilities.

The typical model that Yeshua used was to lay your hand respectfully on the person that needs prayer. Laying your hand on their head (usually a hand is laid on the head) associates you with who you are praying for, but it is not our hand or us that is imparting the power. It is the power of God. Acts 4:29-30 NKJV says, "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal." As we lay hands on others, God uses us to impart His power.