

## **The Gifts of the Spirit: Meeting Our Need for Spiritual Experience**

Rich Nathan

October 12-13, 2002

Spiritual Gifts: God's Way of Building Community

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Not too long ago, a local realtor posted an ad in the newspaper that asked the following questions:

- *Does your property have an unsettled feeling to it?*
- *Are you trying to purchase property or a home you know has potential, but something isn't quite right?*
- *Do you need peace restored to a house with a house blessing?*

*Let me be the realtor to help you find the land and home where your heart and soul are most at ease. I can restore peace to your home.*

The realtor was, she claimed, an expert in feng shui and she was going to use her expertise to create balance and harmony in the home. Apparently, homebuyers used to be content with having 3-4 bedrooms and 2½ baths and might have been looking for a working fireplace or a deck out back. But now they also want their realtors to be experts in the flow of energy around their home.

Last year I was looking at the children's books that were displayed for Christmas at one of our local bookstores. On the stand that was advertised "Children's Gifts for the Holidays" they had a book titled "I am God's Partner: A Spiritual Awareness Activity Book." Inside the child was asked to draw his or her own pictures on a page and these words were written across the top of the coloring book page in big block letters: "I am the Creator because together my God partner and I create everything that is good." On another page the child is asked to draw his or her God partner, who the coloring book describes as a "gentle spirit who welcomes you to this coloring book."

This weekend, Vet's Memorial is hosting the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Universal Light Expo, which was designed to honor the living light. It was heralded in the paper as the "Midwest's largest metaphysical event, boasting lectures on angels, sacred sites, crystals, art, music, Sufi's and animals, healing aura, DNA, color analysis, Native American wisdom, toltecs, spirituality and much, much more." There were over 210 display booths and 120 lectures given in this 2-day event.

Just to round it out, there was a local travel agency that recently advertised a "Women's Journey to Ireland" with the following advertisement, "Join us for an unforgettable journey into the wild and beautiful, serene and sacred heart of Celtic Ireland. Discover what modern women can learn from the ancient tradition that honored the goddess in women, the feminine in nature. Off the beaten path,

join a dynamic traveling community of women exploring megalithic altars, healing wells, energy centers—a celebration of womanspirit.” Traditional travel agents only needed to learn about ticket prices and the availability of room service at hotels. Now consumers want information about healing wells and energy centers.

There are lots of reasons why the new spirituality is so popular these days. Certainly, there is a consumer appeal to it. New spirituality offers spiritual experience without Christian ethical demands like self-denial. That’s the one that hurts, isn’t it? Self-denial. “If anyone would come after me,” Jesus said, “He must deny himself.” To be a follower of Christ, we constantly have to say “no” to ourselves, no to our lusts, no to our desire to get even, no to more accumulation, no to feeding to our appetites more. Wouldn’t it be nice to have a spirituality that allowed you to say “yes” all the time to all of your desires and never have to deal with a guilty conscience?

In fact, wouldn’t it be nice to have a spirituality that helped you to redefine conscience, so that instead of being the part of you that internally indicated whether your actions were right or wrong, we simply said that conscience was the voice of a repressive society that was attempting to restrict my full humanity and my spiritual being.

Wouldn’t you like a spiritual experience where you feel peaceful, you feel whole, you feel fully alive, you feel loved, you are in touch with nature, you are in touch with other people and you feel connected with the universe, but there is never a demand upon you to ever acknowledge your own sin or wrongdoing? You never have to repent, never limit yourself. I mean, you can have your cake and eat it too. What a deal!

And I’m not overstating the case when I say that the new spirituality appeals to consumer demand. A man I know in his mid-50’s recently divorced his wife after nearly 30 years of marriage and married a 24-year old. A decade ago we used to have conversations about Christianity. He was not only extremely open to Christianity, but he professed faith in Christ. But now he says he no longer believes in Christ or the Bible or the notion of judgment or any kind of absolutes in ethics at all. He says that he believes in a gentler spirituality, one of course, that doesn’t require anything like repentance, or acknowledgement of wrongdoing. And of course, he denies if you ask him that there is any link at all between his trading in of his old wife for a newer, younger, fresher model, the shattering of the lives of three people he was supposed to love, protect and sacrifice for and his newfound spiritual belief. Oh no, no, no, no, no...this is merely coincidental. His spirituality has been made to conform to what he wanted to do.

I might add that we can look at ourselves and ask whether our spiritual viewpoints have been recreated and molded for us to serve what we really want

to do anyway. I can't imagine that God would ever judge anyone. Certainly, there is a reason the new spirituality is so popular. It is spirituality without any ethical demand.

The second reason, and the one I want to pursue today, is that there has been a massive failure on the part of the Christian church to respond to real spiritual hunger, and particularly the spiritual hunger of the young. There's a massive failure on the part of the Christian church in the United States to offer healthy spiritual experiences. People, when they come to church, need more than church rituals and church rules. We need more than stained glass and familiar hymns. We need more than religion, at least the religion that is practiced in America. We need more than potlucks in the Fellowship Hall and church fundraisers, bake sales, and messages. We need an encounter with God. People are hungry for genuine spiritual encounters.

And if the church won't feed people's hunger, if the church won't meet our thirst for God and spirituality, or if the church doesn't believe in spiritual experience and adopts what I call a "Sadducean Christianity" – the Sadducees were those people in Jesus' day who didn't believe in the resurrection, angels, or demons; they were the anti-supernaturalists of religion. They didn't believe in the supernatural realm - if the church offers that kind of Sadducean Christianity, well, into that vacuum will naturally come a new form of spirituality. Only one that isn't so healthy.

George Gallup, the pollster, recently observed that Americans are seeking something more meaningful, deeper and healthier. It stems in part from what they see to be a failure of materialism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the fact that there are so many problems that surround us without apparent solutions. That's why the seeking has intensified at this point in time. This surge in desire for spiritual experience, George Gallup says, is one of the most dramatic and measurable movements of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and, he would say, of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We are more than bodies. Science cannot provide us with all of the answers to life's toughest questions. It can provide us with explanations of mechanism, but it can't answer ultimate questions, purpose questions, and meaning questions. Science can't tell you what your purpose is, here on earth. How you can find meaning in your life. How you deal with your guilt and past failures. How you can have a healthy relationship with another human being. Science can't tell you the meaning of love or how you love. People around us are spiritually hungry.

And what is the church's response? I recently was listening to a tape by some Christian thinkers on the new spirituality, the spirituality found in books like "Conversations with God," Deepak Chopra's writings, Oprah Winfrey, and the Celestine Prophecy. I was on the stair stepper at the gym and this seminary professor said, "The difference between the new spirituality and Christian

spirituality is that Christian spirituality is the spirituality of Jesus in the desert. It is the spirituality of Jesus in the wilderness being tempted by Satan. Only after we die will we have experiences of spiritual power and mystical love.”

I wanted to take my tape player and throw it against the nearest wall. But I love my tape player. I thought, “That’s the best you can do in the face of the sweeping power of the new spirituality? You offer Jesus in the wilderness as the Christian alternative, period. Nothing more? What about what the New Testament says about us being able to experience joy unspeakable, full of glory. Why do we pray the Lord’s Prayer, ‘Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?’ if the best that we can hope for is the desert and the wilderness.” In what sense will God’s kingdom come on earth? Is there no kingdom now?

What about that verse in Romans 5 that tells us that God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit? Yes, I know this world is hard, but is that it? Just grit your teeth and wait until you die for the spirituality of the wilderness? What about all the stories in the Bible about miracles, healing, and the Holy Spirit? What about all the stories of deliverance from the demonic and the promise of God’s power?

Here’s my bottom line, friends, I believe that the church’s failure to offer a compelling spirituality, the church’s failure to offer a powerful answer to the spiritual hunger of our culture, is the major reason so many have turned away from the church towards something else. What God offers to us today is not just pain and desert and wilderness and emptiness and then we die. There is pain in this world. There is desert, and wilderness and confusion. But we also are offered by God his presence, the being of God living with his people. As Gordon Fee, the great New Testament scholar says, the Holy Spirit is the experienced presence of God. We are offered the power of the Holy Spirit. The way that we experience the Holy Spirit is chiefly through the biblical gifts of the Holy Spirit.

What I want to do today in continuing my series on spiritual gifts is talk about The Gifts of the Spirit: Meeting Our Need for Spiritual Experience. Let’s pray.

*1 Corinthians 12:4-7 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

Remember from last week that not all spiritual experience is good. Paul told the Corinthians that when they were pagans, before they came to Christ, they liked spiritual experience. They felt things, they prophesied, they experienced things. Not all spiritual experience is healthy. And one of the things that people need to keep in mind as they explore the new spirituality is that not all spiritual

experience is healthy. They are quite dangerous. Some spiritual experience will bring you into bondage and decrease your freedom.

We found last week that the measuring stick of all true spirituality is the Lordship of Christ. Is Jesus Lord from this experience? Is he the dispenser, the giver of this experience? Is he being acknowledged as Lord? Does this experience lead me to honor him more ethically, morally, in my relationships? Does this experience lead me to honor Jesus more?

And Paul gives us the Christian response to spirituality of the ancient Mediterranean world. The Christian response remains the same to the spirituality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are the vehicle through which we experience the Holy Spirit's presence.

Now I know there is a lot of confusion around spiritual gifts. There are some of you coming from different church backgrounds that have communicated to you that many of the gifts that we read about here in 1 Corinthians 12 are no longer in operation today. I want to tell you that I'm assuming the application of all of 1 Corinthians 12 and all of 1 Corinthians 14 to the church today. And you need to know that here at the Vineyard we don't tear pages out of our bibles. We don't say, "Well, this page was for the church just in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, but it's not for us. And this page is only for the church after the church is raptured. We think the whole New Testament is relevant now. It is not just about history in the past or heaven in the future.

If you were raised in a church that, by and large, ripped 1 Corinthians 12 out of your Bible and said that the gifts were for then, but not for now, I just want to quickly mention two books you might want to read. One is my own book that I coauthored a number of years ago with Ken Wilson called "Empowered Evangelicals." It might assist you to think through your beliefs about spiritual gifts. A second very helpful book is one by Jack Deere called "Surprised by the Power of the Spirit." Both of those books are available in our bookstore.

What was Paul's response to the need for genuine spiritual experience? Not the desert experience of Jesus, but spiritual gifts. He says, *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

Often when we talk about spiritual gifts and spiritual experience, immediately that taps into a sense of inadequacy for many of us. Yes, I read about healings in the Bible and I read about prophecies and these wonderful spiritual experiences that people in the New Testament had, but I am not a spiritual giant. I mean, who do you think you are, the apostle Paul? You don't pray six hours a day. You don't fast Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. You still lose your cool when someone cuts you off on the highway. You get in fights with your spouse right before church. You still struggle in different areas of your life. How can we begin to talk

about spiritual gifts for people like you and me who are spiritual midgets, not spiritual giants?

The Greek word for spiritual gift is “charisma.” The reason why churches are sometimes labeled “charismatic” is because they believe and practice the charisma, the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In modern Greek, the word “charisma” literally means birthday present, and the root word, “charis,” means grace.

Now grace, of course, is God’s love and favor that he showers upon undeserving sinners like you and me. The apostle Paul wants us to understand that spiritual gifts are unmerited acts of God’s grace, not personal achievements. They are gifts, not merit badges. They are tokens of grace.

I like the fact that in modern Greek the word charisma means birthday present. Parents, why do you give your children birthday presents, or Christmas presents? Is it because they’ve had a good year? Because they scored well on the child obedience achievement test that you give them each year on their birthday? You give your children birthday presents because you love them. It is a gift. It is an act of grace.

The only thing we need to do is be willing to receive God’s gifts, to be open to believing that God wants to gift and use people like you and me. You don’t have to be a spiritual giant. In fact, the people that the apostle Paul was writing to about these miraculous gifts of the Spirit were hardly spiritual giants at all. Paul says in verse 1:26, *Brothers [and sisters], think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.*

God is not looking for a few good men, or a few good women, with whom he can trust with spiritual gifts. He doesn’t want anyone to boast before him. He takes the quarrelsome people, people working ordinary jobs, completely unsophisticated people, professors and plumbers, home builders, homemakers, doctors and dock workers and he gives us charisma, spiritual gifts, as an act of grace just because you ask, because you seek, because you are open, just because he loves you.

Now, it is easy to swing in the other direction and say, “But, I don’t want to be weird. You talk about spiritual gifts and I think of the Holy Rollers, as my uncle or grandfather used to call them.” You might say, “Well, I’ve seen the televangelists on TV who turn every one syllable word into two syllables.” You know what I’m talking about, turning one-syllable words into two syllables? See-

ah, in the name-ah of Je-sus. Hear-ah in the name-ah of Je-sus. You say, “I don’t want to be like that.”

Vineyard has a little phrase that we like to use around here. We call it being naturally supernatural. It is not necessary in order to practice spiritual gifts for you to be weird or take on some Holy Roller persona. You don’t have to scream or shout or roll around. In fact, you don’t have to change your personality one iota in order to practice spiritual gifts. You don’t have to become an emotional person, if you aren’t terribly emotional. And you don’t have to become unemotional, if you are emotional. You don’t have to change your temperament. If you are a feeler, you don’t have to become a thinker. If you are a thinker, you don’t have to become a feeler. You just have to be available to God. You just need to be the kind of person who says, “Use me, Lord, in this situation.” Let me ask you a question. Do you regularly say to God, “I’m available to you. Use me to give a prophecy. Use me to share the gospel. Use me to heal. Here I am! Send me!”

Being naturally supernatural. You know, I can’t imagine Jesus changing his intonation, or his syllable patterns when he told people to see, or hear. The thing that you notice about Jesus, in contrast to Christians who are interested in spiritual gifts today, is Jesus is so not weird. He is so down to earth. He wasn’t invited to all the parties of sinners because he was weird, because he made everyone around him feel uncomfortable. He was invited because everyone felt so welcome around Jesus. They could just be themselves.

Have you ever been around someone who makes you feel accepted just the way you are? They seem to be delighted being with you and you find yourself feeling more delightful. You come away from their presence feeling good about yourself. You feel like, “WOW, I’m really a rather delightful human being.” They love your sense of humor, your quirkiness, the way you speak, the way you move your hands, the way you look. You feel better in their presence about yourself – not just better about them, but better about yourself.

Spiritual gifts are not given to make you weird, to make you talk funny. They are the means through which you get to experience God’s presence. They are signs of God’s love to you and signs of God’s love to others through you. They are gifts.

Paul goes on and says, *There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.* I’ve heard people struggle with spiritual gifts because they say, “I knew a lot of wonderful Christians in my former church or in my college fellowship group that didn’t believe in prophecy or healing or tongues. This is certainly not the way I was raised. You are calling into question the spirituality of my old church, of my fellowship group, or my parents by suggesting that they should have practiced these spiritual gifts which they don’t practice or believe in.”

Now listen, again, spiritual gifts are not the measure of a person's maturity or Christian character. There are many wonderful, godly, fruitful Christians who don't exercise spiritual gifts because of teaching they've received, or the church systems they are in. The fruit of the spirit is different than the gifts of the spirit. There are many mature people who don't operate in gifts.

At the same time, spiritual gifts can be exercised by immature, badly formed believers with very bad character. The Corinthians are a great example of that. They are suing each other. Some of them are immoral. They are fighting around the communion table.

The only requirement for exercising the spiritual gifts is faith. You have to believe that they exist and that God wants to give these things to you. You have to ask. You have to be open and receptive.

Now, regarding people you have met in your past who rejected these things – your former pastor, your campus fellowship group leader, your parents – let me share with you what I've observed about the way that we Christians grow spiritually. I've noticed three stages of growth that people go through as they get exposed to new truths. Spiritual growth is very similar to that of children as they mature. Stage one is when people come into a church or Christian fellowship group and typically buy whatever is said to them without question.

"My fellowship group leader is always right."

"My pastor is always right."

"What I learn in my church is always right."

It's like a little child who looks up at their daddy and says, "My daddy is the strongest person in the world. My daddy can beat up your daddy. My daddy is smarter than your daddy. My daddy is nicer. My mommy is prettier than your mommy. My mommy is the best mommy in the world."

In stage 2 we hit adolescence. And you know what happens in adolescence. "My daddy is an idiot. My daddy doesn't know anything. My daddy is out of touch. He just doesn't get it. My mommy doesn't know anything. My mommy is completely out of touch. She embarrasses me. The way she talks embarrasses me. The way she dresses embarrasses me. The way she drives embarrasses me. Mom walking near me in the mall embarrasses me." And you see people in spiritual adolescence when they react to everything the church has taught.

"My old church is completely wrong."

"The campus fellowship group I was in was a total rip-off, completely unspiritual."

The third stage that people reach when they get into their 20's is to begin to appreciate and integrate the things that their parents have said to them and taught them over the years. They combine those things with new insights and



fresh experiences. And I see that in the third stage of spiritual maturity. You know you are spiritually mature when you can look back at your old church, your old fellowship group, assuming it was Christian, your family assuming they were followers of Christ, and say, "You know, I appreciate a lot of my spiritual heritage now. I don't necessarily agree with every single thing that was taught, or was said, but I see a lot of good there and a lot of God there. And I'm able to add to that new insights, fresh teachings, an open approach to truth. I realize now that I haven't arrived. And even the people I deeply respected from the past, they haven't arrived. And the church I'm going to now hasn't arrived. But I am learning to be open to revise my opinions, to be flexible, to admit even if I've taught on some of these things in the past, I may have been wrong."

The openness to practice spiritual gifts doesn't make someone a godly person or call into question the spirituality of folks you knew in the past who didn't believe these things. But spiritual gifts are there so that we might serve each other better. Paul says, *There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.* The word for service is "diakonai." This word suggests the purpose of spiritual gifts. Gifts are given to serve others and to serve God. It's the word where the word deacon is derived from. They were servants in the early church.

And we ask for spiritual gifts. We are not simply saying, "God bless me. That's as far as I can see." Or as we used to joke back in the 70's, "Us four Lord, no more." Acts 2:4. When we say to God, "God will you grant me this particular spiritual gift, the gift of prophecy, or gifts of healing, knowledge or wisdom, what we are really saying is "God I want to be used by you to serve others better."

You know, the ministry of Jesus Christ was the ministry of servanthood. Jesus said the gentiles like to lord it over you, your Roman leaders like to lord it over you, but I come among you as one who serves. The servant ministry of Jesus Christ in the world today is carried on by the church, which is his body. The Spirit of Jesus fills the church, and through the church Jesus continues to serve people today. When someone is sick, Jesus continues to serve a sick person by healing them through the spiritual gift of healing. When someone is discouraged, Jesus continues to serve discouraged people through the spiritual gift of prophecy, which is designed to bring encouragement.

Jesus serves people who are struggling to understand his word by giving the spiritual gift of knowledge. He serves people who are struggling to understand the meaning of his death on the cross by giving the spiritual gift of wisdom.

There is nothing me-centered about desiring spiritual gifts. The desire, in fact, shows other-centeredness. I've gotten beyond just focusing on my needs and my kids, and my issues. I'm other-centered enough now to want to see people encouraged, and counseled, and healed. I want to see people's addictions broken. I want to see people come to know Jesus the way he's shown himself to me. Friend, the more you desire to help and serve other people, the more you

are going to be asking God to give you spiritual gifts. Do you want to help other people? Do you want to see people do well? Ask God to give you spiritual gifts.

You say, "I know my spiritual gift. My spiritual gift is music. My spiritual gift is quilt-making, or painting, or writing, or mechanics." These are talents given to you by God in his creation of you. But they aren't what Paul is talking about by spiritual gifts. He says in verse 6, *There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.* We need to restrict his "all men" contextually into all men and women who are part of the body of Christ. The key word here is working. It is the Greek word "energemata" from which we get the word energy.

Paul is not talking about natural talents, plus a little bit. He is talking about the supernatural energy, the supernatural power of God. The same word is used of the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. It is not our natural talent plus a little bit. Spiritual gifts reveal the power of God. That's why I love thinking about spiritual gifts as God's power tools. A few months ago my garage door was falling. The angle irons that originally attached the garage door were just hanging from the dry wall in the garage ceiling. The angle irons weren't screwed into any of the wood studs that framed in the garage. They were just hanging from the dry wall and so they pulled loose and my garage door was hanging at a weird angle.

So I took my little portable drill and drilled some holes into the dry wall. I tried to take those tiny hangers, and screw a little screw up into the angle irons into the hangers to pull the whole thing up into the ceiling. After putting 6 or 7 of these little hangers up there and only adjusting the garage door by an eighth of an inch, I called the garage door service man.

Well, he came over with a drill, but it wasn't like my little portable drill that I ought to put a lacy doll's dress on. This thing was a power drill, which literally weighed about 10 pounds. He had a drill bit on it that was like the length of my forearm. He drilled three holes into the ceiling of my garage and then put in these bolts that must have been 4 or 5 inches long, and half an inch in diameter. And that door just leveled right up. God's power tools.

Now, God does want to employ your talents for his service. But in addition, he wants to put in your toolbox power tools to serve others and to serve himself. Power tools go beyond your musical ability or the fact that you can help in accounting in the church or ushering.

The bottom line for many of us, if we were honest, is that spiritual gifts and the discussion of spiritual experience make us uncomfortable. There are lots of reasons why we are uncomfortable. We are uncomfortable with change, with exploring things that are outside our prior experience. We want to feel that we know a lot and have experienced a lot when it comes to God, especially if you've

been in church for a while. No one here has experienced all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We get uncomfortable. This discussion points out to us how spiritually inadequate we really are and our church really is, how little of God's presence we've really experienced. We don't like our spirituality called into question.

We are uncomfortable because spiritual gifts and spiritual experience put God in the driver's seat instead of us. The apostle Paul says God gives as he wills: "Each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." Spiritual gifts are not something you can work up on your own. If you are a person who likes to be in control - to organize and plan everything you are going to do to the last detail - spiritual gifts throw you into an entirely new universe. A universe in which you are allowing God to be in control and to work through you. A universe in which you are making yourself available to do the bidding of Almighty God, to serve his purposes. Some of you have never surrendered control to God. This is the issue holding you up. See, we're not put on earth to do something great and present it to God. "Look, God, at the great thing I've done!" We're not put on earth to figure out something hugely impressive to do. God has prepared things for you to do to fulfill his purpose. He doesn't want great things from you; he just wants your availability to him.

You know, by this word "manifestation" we mean something that makes the invisible God visible. Let me illustrate. You can't see a flow of electrons with the naked eye. What makes the flow of electrons manifest electricity is you can hear a radio that you plug into a wall socket. Or you can see heat from the hairdryer. Or you can see light come from a light bulb.

God is invisible. People ask, "Is God alive? Where do I get to experience God? I can explore the new spirituality in a search for the experience of God." Paul says, "Here's where the invisible God makes himself visible. Here's where the unknown God makes himself known – through spiritual gifts."

How are people today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century going to know that God is real? Well, we can give them our best apologetics arguments – discuss, debate and persuade. Better, we can show them God is real by our good works. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine for men, that they might see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Every time you do a job with integrity because you are a follower of Christ – you are honest, you give fair service, you are a mechanic working on someone's car and you do an excellent job, when you are done with the job you say to the person, "You know, when I got into this I thought it was this problem, but it was a problem more easily corrected. The problem didn't take nearly the time I estimated. I'm going to knock some money off the estimate" – you are manifesting the reality of God.

And friend, every time you practice a spiritual gift, you are showing people that God is alive today. Spiritual gifts are the vehicles God uses to give us spiritual

experience. People today can have real spiritual experience, spiritual experience under the lordship of Christ, spiritual experience that manifests the Triune God – Father, Son and Spirit; spiritual experience that sets us free, that brings us health, that brings us wholeness, that connects us with God and each other.

Here is the Christian response to the new spirituality – the practice of spiritual gifts. Let's pray.

## **The Gifts of the Spirit: Meeting Our Need for Spiritual Experience**

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**Rich Nathan**

**October 12-13, 2002**

**Spiritual Gifts: God's Way of Building Community**

**1 Corinthians 12:4-7**

- I. The Popularity of the New Spirituality
  - A. Consumer Appeal
  
  - B. Church Failure
  
- II. The Response to the New Spirituality
  - A. "There are Different Kinds of Gifts, but the Same Spirit." (1 Cor. 12:4)
    - 1. I Am Not a Spiritual Giant.
    - 2. I Don't Want To Be Weird.
  
  - B. "There are Different Kinds of Service, but the Same Spirit." (1 Cor. 12:5)
    - 1. I Know Many Wonderful Christians Who Don't Practice Spiritual Gifts.
    - 2. I Don't Want To Be Me-Centered.
  
  - C. "There are Different Kinds of Working, but the Same God Works All of Them in All Men." (1 Cor. 12:6)
    - 1. My Spiritual Gift is \_\_\_\_\_.
  
  - D. "Now To Each One the Manifestation of the Spirit is Given for the Common Good." (1 Cor. 12:7)

1. I Am Uncomfortable With Spiritual Gifts or Spiritual Experience.