

# (Spiritual Gifts): Spiritual Gifts 2

by A.W. Tozer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding spiritual gifts and living in relation to God's word in order to navigate perilous times.*

**Duration:** 38:35

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 4:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Gifts"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preaching the word of God and staying true to sound doctrine. He warns that there will come a time when people will not endure sound doctrine and will instead seek out teachers who will tell them what they want to hear. This leads to the preaching of the gospel through fables and fiction, with religious leaders profiting from it. The preacher also mentions the strange developments that have occurred in the Church after World War II, including the rise of fame and pleasure-seeking in religion.

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## Transcript

Now, uh, let me read again, from 1 Corinthians 12. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Remember that ignorance is an ugly word.

It's almost a swear word in our day. But all it meant was not in form. Everybody's ignorant on something.

The most learned man is ignorant on something. Einstein couldn't keep his own bank account balanced and turned his checkbook over to his wife. That's a well-known fact.

He couldn't run a motorboat. He was running an outboard motor, grounded it on a sandbar on the bank. Instead, I guess I was thinking of something else.

So it isn't disgraceful to be ignorant, but it could be dangerous to be ignorant of certain things. We've all got to admit we're ignorant, well, of most things. We specialize in certain things.

But he said about spiritual gifts, it could be dangerous to be ignorant. For ye know that once you were Gentiles, pagans, carried away under these dumb idols. And Paul wasn't using slang.

Dumb to Paul was an idol that couldn't speak. God spoke. Idols couldn't.

Even as you were led. Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus a curses. And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

Now, in order that you might not be ignorant, but know, I'll explain, says the Apostle. There are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit. There are differences of administrations but the same Lord.

There are diversities of operations but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit, the outworking of that indwelling Spirit, is given to every man to profit withal. For to one that is for the profit of all.

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom. And to another the word of knowledge for the same Spirit. To another faith for the same Spirit.

To another gifts of the healing by the same Spirit. To another the working of miracles. To another prophecy.

To another discerning of spirits. To another divers kinds of tongues. To another interpretation of tongues.

But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. Now, that's the general text for the last Sunday sermon and several to come. Clear up for the time Brother Paris Reathead comes.

But I want to point out to you that we cannot live our Christianity in a vacuum. That it is a total impossibility that we should become Christians and then enter into a glass ball and be suspended and have everything exhausted from it and thus suspended in a vacuum live our lives. We must live our lives in relation to something we call our time.

And everybody did it including Paul and Christ and John and James and Peter and Luther and Wesley and Knox and all of them. No Christian ever tried to live if he knew the word of God and was not ignorant of it to live in disassociation from the times in which he lived. Now the word our times or times the word is used by Christ and it's also used by his apostles.

The word times, t-i-m-e-s means conditions prevalent at any given period. We familiarly talk about hard times. People are balancing whether they'll vote for one or another hoping that by voting for one they can stall off hard times.

Then we talk about evil times and the Bible talks about perilous times. And then the political parties all promises good times. So we have hard times, good times, perilous times, evil times and just plain wonderful times.

But the word times always means condition. Could be financial, could be religious, could be political, could be social but conditions prevalent at any given period with particular emphasis upon the relation of these conditions to God and to the scriptures. Now Christ Jesus our Lord excoriated the religious leaders of his times because they did not know the times in which they lived.

Let us look here. In Matthew 16, the Pharisees also with the Sadducees came and tempting him desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening you say it will be fair weather for the sky is red and in the morning you say it will be foul weather today for the sky is red and lowering.

Oh you hypocrites. You can discern the face of the sky but you cannot discern the signs of the times. The wicked and the adulterous generation seeketh after a sign but there shall no sign be given unto it the sign of the prophet Jonas.

And he left them and departed. It's quite significant that he turned his back on these sign seekers. And these Pharisees and scribes who were the religious leaders of their days they wanted miraculous proof that Jesus Christ was who he claimed to be.

And our Lord rebuked them not only sharply, I would say almost brutally by saying you read the sky and your good weather prophets but you're wiser in weather than you are in religion. The signs are all around you. Moral signs of the times and religious signs of the times and political signs of the times and yet you demand that I perform some miracle as a proof that I am who I claim to be that I'm the son of God.

Now there's an apostolic warning for sometimes that I want to read to you. I don't like it. I wish you didn't have to be here.

And I think you will bear me record that I have preached on this very rarely maybe not frequently enough. But the old man of God, Paul was about to die. Not to lie down calmly and surrounded by newspaper men and doctors issuing bulletins and friends.

Not to die that way but to be led with his hands tied behind his back and to kneel down and have a Roman soldier knock his head off with a sword. That's how he died. He was about to die and he knew it and said the time of his departure had come.

But before he went he wrote his young Timothy a letter. And in it he said this. This know also that in the latter days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy without natural affection, truce breakers false accusers, incontinent, fierce despisers of those that are good traitors, heady, high-minded lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof for all from such turn away for of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women. Now Paul didn't say that all women were silly so don't any of you women suddenly develop a phobia against the holy apostle. He said silly women but of course there are silly men too.

But he said that the way they would work would be to lead captive silly women. He didn't say they'd lead captive wise women and there are many wise women. But these silly women are not only silly they're laden with sins.

Led away with divers lusts ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Then in the fourth chapter he said I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead that is appearing in his kingdom preach the word the instant in season and out of season reprove and rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears that is they shall they having itching ears shall heap to themselves teachers you'll notice the punctuation that's actually what it says they having itching ears will heap to themselves teachers teachers don't have itching ears they may too but that's not what the apostle said and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables now in these days when we preachers are told that we

should hurt nobody's feelings and that we should remember to be cultured and aesthetic at all times I just want to point out that the illustration that Paul used here is taken from no more fragrant a place than the swine pen for they had a disease in those days which pigs got that made their ears itchy and the only way they could get any relief was going to rock piles and rubbing their ears vigorously against the rocks and Paul, this learned man this man who is said to be one of the six great mentalities of all time said so by the scholars to be and who is a cultured man if ever one lived actually said about the last times that things should be in a position that the only proper illustration would be the pigs who have the disease that makes their ears itch and he says they shall heap to themselves teachers because they have itching ears now that's what Paul said and he gave us a preview of some times I wonder if they could be these times he said for instance that they should be lovers of their own selves I ask you to notice whether these are times of selfless service or of self love you answer that yourself I ask you whether these are times of boasting for there verse 2 says there shall be boasters that is he's talking about the church now he's not talking about the world Paul was mucking with the world this is a church, it's a religious world he says there are boasters these days would be boasters in those days and if those days are these days I'll leave it to you boasters then he said there should be disobedience to parents verse 2 and there isn't anybody from J.

Edgar Hoover down to the corner policeman or the school teacher but what would say that's the day in which we live then lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God I ask you my brethren who gets paid the most the president of the United States or the pleasure givers you know who the president of the United States is a piker compared with the clowns that give pleasure to the world and to God's dear saints who expect to wave a harp a fan in heaven forever having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof you decide that ever learning but never seeming somehow to come to a knowledge of the truth printing more Bibles than ever have been printed in the history of the world editing more religious magazines than were ever heard of having more Bible schools and seminaries and Christian

colleges than were ever known ever learning and yet somehow never seeming to come to a knowledge of the truth they will not endure sound doctrine that is doctrine that is grave and sensible and they want it spiced up itching ears with religious leaders to scratch them and turning unto fables four of four that's what it says turning unto fables that is the gospel is now preached by means of fables we call it fiction and men are getting rich and buying outboard or rather crab and cruisers and homes in Florida writing religious fables for the feeble minded and today these conditions are upon us my brethren and strange voices are being heard and strange directions are being taken by the church of Christ after the second world war that is about 1946 I would take it or five I risked a little

prediction and told the congregation that we were in for a strange development a series of strange developments my only error was that I misjudged the distance they would go and the multiplicity of them now specifically there's the voice of the boaster heard in religion and the voice of pleasure and the voice of the ear scratcher and the voice of the fable and the voice of family rebellion now if this was out in the world among what's called juvenile delinquents I wouldn't have much to say about it but if you think this is an extreme statement you come to me after the service and tell me so and I'll appreciate it there won't be any hard feelings at all I could be over I could be extreme in this statement but I'm ready to be corrected but am I reasonably near to telling the truth when I

say that so completely have we parents lost control of our children that if you find an obedient teenager these days he is a paragon and a wonder and is looked upon as being something unusual instead of being the most normal thing in the world even in religious circles we have made jokes of it men have made money drawing cartoons about little bald headed fathers who were kicked around by their children but it is

a long way from being a joke the crime of the middle aged and the elderly began in their teenage or younger still and the rebellions and the opposition to law and morality and righteousness which is found everywhere began in the home now conditions will become worse they used to say during the war you remember they had a phrase they used I thought it was rather a quaint one it

said they used to call them communiqués communiqués from MacArthur communiqués from Eisenhower communiqués from somebody in charge said this we have done this and we have suffered this setback and we have made this advance and we believe that conditions will worsen before they get better remember that phrase conditions will worsen before they get better they expected them to get better but they figured honestly the only proper honest thing they could say was that they were in a tight spot and they expected they had to do some more running before they finally could get to a place where they could stand and make a successful defense that's what they meant but they called it worsening well now let me tell you Christians you Christians that conditions are going to worsen before they get

better Christians are deceiving themselves and each other by intensified activity by increased publicity for religion and this is moving and growing and increasing like a cattle stampede and it grows by imitation and by the intoxication of success old was it Lord Bacon yes I think it was Lord Bacon who said that there be some things which the more skillful you can do them the worse man you are and the intoxication of success is the intoxication of the imitation of men who point to success as a proof that they are right when success in a wrong thing only proves that the man is more wrong than if he failed in it cause he's skillfully able to do wrong and then the encouragement of crowds there isn't anything that can make a little man big quicker than crowds take a tiny little man surround

him by a crowd and he manages by that peculiar psychological osmosis the power of the crowd leaks through the thin hide of the little henpecked brother and for a moment he's a big man because he's surrounded by people and he's safe it is the same psychology as the little fellow with the thick glasses and no chin who gets in the big car that his dad bought him takes the muffler off and roars around the corner on two wheels he somehow manages to gather from those eight great roaring beautiful cylinders something of its power what he doesn't have in himself he gets from his engine now I pity such a fellow as that and I can only hope the day will come when he'll be able to stand on his own two feet and not have to borrow power from a machine I didn't intend to say this and I'll make some of

you furious but you'll get over it probably and I hope it won't be serious enough to bring on a heart attack but it is my conviction that the reason the secret society used a big long sesquipedalian rumbling two ton words to name some little fellow a butcher maybe or a teller in a bank who has become for the time grand exalted high potentate ruler of the local unit the reason they do that is that there are so many of their members that can't open their mouth at home and they can't call their soul their own and between the tax collector and the auditor and their wife and their teenage children they haven't got anybody they can talk back to except the goldfish but they become members of this or that society and strut about in the doorman's uniform and calling themselves the high grand

exalted potentate and you let mama talk to the potentate and you'll see him take that uniform off and put on a bib and do the dishes like any good boy well I think that's the psychology back of it I don't know but that's the psychology back of a great deal of religious activity the intoxication of crowds and the intoxication of success and the power of suggestion did you ever notice how the suggestion has a power if they sing about it and talk about it enough Mrs.

Housewife goes right out and buys it they know that and so they do it it's mostly harmless I suppose because all the advertised products are good they're never as good as they say they are but they're as good as the average so you don't go wrong in buying advertised goods that's just a little lesson on the side but the point is brethren that the power of suggestion is still a tremendous thing and if a successful happy group is doing something then we all want to imitate it now brethren we're in these times and we as a church and I as a pastor and these brethren with me and you as a congregation we can do one of two possible things we can be opportunists and take our cue from the leaders and sacrifice eternal values for temporal success and I've been around long enough that I don't even

have to end that paragraph you know what I'm going to do God helping me or we can do a second thing we can go into the mount and get our pattern and come down from the mount and recognize ourselves as and maintain the character of a called out assembly a disinherited minority that because of our beliefs and our lives and our moral lives we're disinherited and rejected that we can maintain our characters and art on the water floating on it in relation to it but not down in it what relation then should we take to the world the same relation that Noah's ark took to the flood water Noah's ark could not escape its time it floated on the boiling seething brackish waters of judgment but it never splashed a single drop into that earth and it never became a part of that seething judgment beneath

it floated clean and always there was the thickness of the hull between the people of God inside and the brackish waters below and so we can think of ourselves in that way and we can think of ourselves as a royal priesthood in a holy nation I believe in ministers and I believe in ordination of ministers I'm on the ordaining council in this district and I've been helped to examine many a young man I was ordained myself Spurgeon said no man ever laid his empty hands on his empty head but that was Spurgeon I believe in ministers and I'm not against them but I'm saying this to you my brethren that we are not the ordained minister is not only a priest he is one but he's not the only one all of the people of God are priests and this is a royal priesthood and the simplest and humblest one of

you listening to me now that would think this the least applicable to you if you're a true Christian you're a priest of the most high God as surely as the minister or the bishop and we can think of ourselves as a company of priests a company of priests we need not go to a priest to get entree into the presence of God we are priests and we can enter into the presence of God without the mediatorship of an earthly priest God gives certain gifts and the church has traditionally taken those gifts and has recognized them and has called men out laid their hands on them and said here we believe this man is so gifted of God that we want him to preach to us and help lead us that's been traditional in all the denominations and I'm for it and I believe in it let us not pick this one man out and say

this gifted brother whom we now ordain to the ministry is the priest the rest of us are just followers not by a long shot my friends every one of you has as much entree into the presence of God as the most famous preacher that lives in the world today and you have just as much right in there and you can come just as certainly let's suppose a man has a family of twelve children once in a while they do yet have them suppose you had the family of twelve children let's suppose the oldest boy now reaches 25, 27 years of age and he's been to college and he has made good somewhere in the political world or somewhere in one of the very many worlds within worlds and he becomes famous and he's named in pictures from the paper and he's known and he's a big fellow and when he comes back home as Yogi

Berra went back home to California to see his mother or as Joe DiMaggio used to two well known fellows all right they've made good in their field and now let's suppose that there's a whole string of other ones on

down 27, 25, 23, 21 on down the line to the little guys now when it comes to entree to the father's heart or place on the father's lap or food to eat or clothing to wear a roof over the head or a kindly blessing does this famous fellow who's known over the world does he get it all? no he gets his share and he gets no more than his share but all those little steps down to the littlest tiniest one that can climb up on their lap and go to sleep they all have entree into the presence of the most high God and so you and I my dear friends are all priests of God and we must recognize

ourselves as being such not alliance people, oh no no not Presbyterians, not Methodists, not Lutherans not any denomination but anybody within any denomination that is a true child of God now our position closing very quickly there's some things we must stand against and not in the name of false charity smile at the altars of Baal for any of you who thinks that I'm against too many things let me give you that text in Exodus which God gave to me nearly 30 years ago it said that thou shalt not bow down to their images nor do after their works nor follow their gods but thou shalt destroy their images and idols and quite break down their images now that is the root etymological meaning of the word iconoclast somebody that breaks idols some fellow who's been down on his knees to an idol for 40

years doesn't take kindly to the fellow that comes around kicks the idol over and breaks it and he said you disillusion me well you poor fellow shouldn't you be disillusioned now while you have time to do something about it instead of waiting to be disillusioned when Gabriel blows his horn but brethren the things we're against do not constitute our creed our glory does not lie in breaking idols our glory does not lie in opposing things the scripture says ye shall receive power when the spirit comes upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me and power means ability to do not ability to destroy it's a positive and not a negative word and when Jesus and the apostles promised his church power he meant of course they were to have power to stand against evil but that wasn't the primary meaning

of the word it was that they should have power to do good the man who tells truth has to stand against the lie but he's not conscious of standing against lies he's conscious of telling truth the man who's honest in his business has to stand against dishonesty but he's not conscious of standing against dishonesty he's conscious of being honest and the man who is decent must stand against indecency that he doesn't congratulate himself always and stand that he's standing against indecency he stands for decency and that's his power and so the bible gives us power to do and witness we are to tell what we have seen and heard and felt and experienced that all centers around the person of Christ ye shall be witnesses unto me a witness is somebody that was there and saw it a witness is somebody

that tells it a witness is called to the bar, to the court and he's put in the witness chair and they say what did you see? he says I didn't see anything but my mother-in-law told me they'd dismiss him in three seconds they don't want to know what his mother-in-law told him there what did you see? they say did you hear what did you hear that night? well I'm stone deaf I didn't hear a thing they write it on a pad I'm stone deaf well you can't talk to a witness like that so the Christian that hasn't seen anything and hasn't heard anything he has no right to break anybody else's idols I'd rather worship Baal than to break down Baal's idols and never worship Jehovah at least they had something wrong and false but the prophet who did not know Jehovah had no right to call anybody to Mount

Carmel he had to be able to give them something better and you'll remember that when the 400 prophets of Baal were put to confusion everybody cried Jehovah he is God Jehovah he is God they cried not against the destruction of the Baalites but against somebody they'd found they'd found God and they said now we know we've found Jehovah the emphasis was not upon the destruction of Baal but upon the

discovery of Jehovah and so my brethren no man has a right to break an idol unless he has a true God no man has any right to stand against something bad unless he has something good to put in its place no man has any right to criticize someone who's going the wrong way unless he has the right way himself now we must not sit on our hands and react somebody said and pastor said to Mr.

Moody Mr.

Moody I don't like the way you evangelize Moody said how do you do it he said I don't well Moody says I like my way better now we must not sit on our hands brethren that's our trouble we're in a place where there's we're so pressed in on the inside from all directions we're pressed all directions almost anywhere you go we are running to old Baal somewhere and so the result is that a lot of us we sit on our hands and react brethren I won't do it by God almighty he'll help me I won't do it I believe that we have a message that's the biggest thing in the world and I have no apology for it I believe that we have a Christ that can meet any need anywhere and we need not kneel before the learned nor before the communists nor before the Catholics nor before the one worlder nor before the great

pahai religionist which takes all religions and makes them one we need not kneel before the psychologist who's supposed to be able to know all that goes on inside us we need not kneel before anybody we kneel only before one and that one has been raised from the dead and sat at the right hand of God the Father almighty and he wears the only triple crown there is I repeat for he is Lord of heaven, earth and hell he is Jesus Christ our Lord so you and I have got to demonstrate something there's no possible use for us to talk how wildly astray evangelicalism is if we don't have something to put in its place say well all right you don't like what I'm doing you don't like what I believe what do you got have you got something to give them listen to this being let go they went to their own

company and they reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them and when they heard that they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and they said Lord thou art God which has made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is they weren't listening to seminars on whether Christ was virgin born or not or on the deity of Christ they simply said Lord Jesus thou art God which has made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is who by the mouth of thy servant David has said why do the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things the kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ for by a truth of a truth against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with

the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before it is done and now Lord said Lord we're just about through now about ready for the amen now Lord they said behold their threatening and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word by stretching forth thine hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of the holy child Jesus and when they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spake the word of God with boldness they went out against anybody they were out in favor of somebody and that somebody who had been raised from the dead and they were out preaching him and the multitude of them that

believed were of one heart and one soul neither said any of them that ought the things they possessed were their own but they had all things common and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all the church that has great grace upon it can break idols because they've got something to show to put in their place and brethren for us to take the

stand we do and have no great grace on us and no great power on us is to put ourselves in the position of the seven sons of Siva who told the devil to come out of a man and the devil turned around and said we know Jesus and we know Paul but who are you? and they tore his clothes off his back so may God help us we're for something not against something we're against something only

because we're for something and what we're for is so infinitely greater than anything that we can possibly be against that 95% of our message and thought and prayer should have to do with what we are for

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