



LESSON 6

Gifts and Fruits

1 Share how you experienced the Holy Spirit acting in your life since the last lesson.

Introduction

Docility allows the Holy Spirit to take an even more active role in our lives. When he does, his presence is evident within us.

Today, we will look at some special ways we can recognize the Holy Spirit's work in us. These telltale signs are the gifts and fruits of the Spirit. They are accessible and freely given to all through Baptism and Confirmation. These gifts and fruits are both a support to our ongoing docility and a wonderful blessing in our spiritual lives; through them, our relationship with God matures and we grow in holiness. By using the gifts of the Holy Spirit and manifesting his fruit, we become authentic witnesses of God's love to others.

We will begin this lesson by looking at the seven gifts we receive at Confirmation.

The Seven Gifts of the Spirit

“ The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations. ”

CCC 1830-1831

2 What does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tell us about the purpose of these gifts?

3 The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are listed below, followed by three situations in which they could be used. Discuss which gifts apply to each situation, and how they enable us to be more open to the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom: Our hearts desire and long for spiritual and eternal things, instead of the things the world has to offer.

Understanding: We can understand the meaning and deeper truths of Scripture and Church teachings.

Counsel (also called right judgement): We are able to decide the right thing to do, particularly in difficult situations. It is a kind of supernatural intuition. Acting as Jesus would (asking ourselves “What Would Jesus Do?”) demonstrates counsel.

Knowledge: That which informs our consciences with specific knowledge of morality, so that we know what to do to please God, follow his will and avoid moral danger.

Strength (also called fortitude): We are given supernatural courage to act decisively in the face of difficulty or obstacles and to patiently endure trials or persecution.

Piety (also called reverence): We respect and love God so much that our love overflows into a life of prayer and obedience.

Wonder and Awe (also called holy fear): We are filled with a healthy respect for the majesty and sovereign power of God; it makes us dread, above all things, offending him. This is not a fear of being punished by God; it is a kind of love.

Situation 1—Discerning God’s plan for your future.

Situation 2—Choosing to go to Mass every Sunday.

Situation 3—Sharing with your friends what God has done in your life.

A Variety of Gifts

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are a rich blessing that each of us receives at Baptism and Confirmation. But there are more! Scripture mentions a wide variety of other gifts or charisms that the Spirit can give us. These charisms are not all given to every person—rather, the Spirit distributes unique gifts to each of us. The Church encourages us to desire these gifts and to be open to receiving them.

“ Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well. ”
CCC 800

“ Upon all of you I invoke an outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit, so that in our time too, we may have the experience of a renewed Pentecost. Amen! ”
Homily given by Pope Benedict XVI, June 3, 2006

Let us learn more about these gifts.

4 Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 1 Corinthians 12:28-31, Romans 12:4-8, and Ephesians 4:11-13. Before we list them off, what is the overarching purpose of all these gifts?

5 List the variety of gifts you found.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:28-31

And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

ROMANS 12:4-8

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

EPHESIANS 4:11-13

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

The Fruits of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to help us grow in holiness and more effectively perceive and serve the needs of others. We can ask the Holy Spirit to activate these gifts within us daily so we can love God and others better.

Another sign of the Holy Spirit's activity in our lives is the presence of spiritual fruit. We will now identify these fruits and look at how to foster their growth in our lives.

6 Read Galatians 5:22-23a. What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

7 Read John 15:1-17. What does the fruit indicate?

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

8 What does Jesus say is necessary in order for us to bear fruit?

“ By this power of the Spirit, God’s children can bear much fruit. He who has grafted us onto the true vine will make us bear “the fruit of the Spirit . . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” “We live by the Spirit”; the more we renounce ourselves, the more we “walk by the Spirit.” ”

CCC 736

“ He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ”

John 15:2

9 Why does being pruned and renouncing ourselves enable us to bear more fruit?

10 Which of the gifts or fruits would you like to ask the Holy Spirit to make more noticeable in your life?

Summary

As we allow the Holy Spirit to move in our hearts, we will see his influence bring about positive changes and growth. His supernatural gifts and fruits will be made manifest in our attitudes, behaviours and interactions with others.

Living It Out

CHALLENGE

Pray in faith for God to stir up the gifts and fruits of the Spirit in your life. Be confident that the Spirit is working in you and continues to strengthen you with his gifts.

MEMORIZE JOHN 15:4

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

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