

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS & CHURCH HISTORY GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

* GREEN MOUNTAIN 1ST WARD * LAKEWOOD, COLORADO * 04/26/09 * PAGE 1 *

Lesson 15: “Seek Ye Earnestly the Best Gifts” (D&C 46; Articles of Faith 1:7; 1 Corinthians 12–13; Moroni 10:8–18; *Our Heritage*, pp. 42–43, 47–48, 63)

Introduction

Imagine that you are planning a garden. What is your vision for this garden? What is your general plan? Are you interested in planting vegetables? Flowers? Decoratives?

Each of us will probably have a different vision and focus for our garden. While the gardens would be different, all of them could be beautiful and useful. After planting seeds, consider what you would need to have a successful garden.

This lesson is about gifts of the Spirit. People may have different plants in their gardens yet still have equally beautiful and useful gardens. Similarly, members of the Church may receive different gifts of the Spirit, but all of these gifts are useful for building up the kingdom of God. And like seeds and plants, gifts of the Spirit must be cultivated and nourished to become fully developed and useful.



Illustration by Johannah Bluedorn

All faithful members of the Church can receive gifts of the Spirit.

Gifts of the Spirit are spiritual blessings or abilities that are given through the Holy Ghost. These gifts were taken from the earth during the Great Apostasy, but God restored them in the early days of this dispensation. The exercise of these gifts can bless, edify, and unify us.

Such gifts have been part of the Church throughout this dispensation from the earliest times. Examples from stories in *Our Heritage* include:

- **D&C 46:13.** Knowledge “given by the Holy Ghost ... that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.”
- **D&C 46:14.** Belief in others’ testimonies of the Savior.
- **D&C 46:15.** Knowledge of “the differences of administration.” **Bruce R. McConkie** said that this gift is “used in administering and regulating the church” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 278).

- **D&C 46:16.** Discernment “to know the diversities of operations, whether they be of God.” This gift helps us discern whether a teaching or influence comes from God or from some other source.
- **D&C 46:17–18.** Wisdom and knowledge.
- **D&C 46:19.** Faith to be healed.
- **D&C 46:20.** Faith to heal.
- **D&C 46:21.** The working of miracles.
- **D&C 46:22.** Prophecy.
- **D&C 46:23.** Discerning of spirits.
- **D&C 46:24.** Speaking in tongues.
- **D&C 46:25.** Interpretation of tongues.

These gifts are also identified in **1 Corinthians 12:4–12; 13:1–13; Moroni 10: 8–18.**

Each member of the Church who has received the gift of the Holy Ghost has been given at least one of these gifts. People who have not received the gift of the Holy Ghost may still be blessed with unique abilities to lift and strengthen others.

Lesson Highlights

- All faithful members of the Church can receive gifts of the Spirit.
- God gives gifts of the Spirit for the benefit of His children.
- We should seek and cultivate gifts of the Spirit.

A study of this lesson will help us help us identify gifts of the Spirit, seek to obtain them, and use them to serve others.

Next Week

#16 “Thou Shalt ... Offer Up Thy Sacraments upon My Holy Day”
(D&C 59; Bible Dictionary, “Sabbath,” pp. 764–65)



God gives gifts of the Spirit for the benefit of His children.

The purposes of the gifts of the Spirit are revealed in **D&C 46**. They include:

To strengthen and bless us individually

D&C 46:9. Dallin H. Oaks taught that gifts of the Spirit “*can lead us to God. They can shield us from the power of the adversary. They can compensate for our inadequacies and repair our imperfections*” (*Ensign*, Sept. 1986, 72)

To help us serve others

D&C 46:11-12, 26. Elder Orson Pratt said, “*Spiritual gifts are distributed among the members of the Church, according to their faithfulness, circumstances, natural abilities, duties, and callings; that the whole may be properly instructed, confirmed, perfected, and saved.*” (*Masterful Discourses and Writings of Orson Pratt*, comp. N Lundwall [1953], 571)

We should seek and cultivate gifts of the Spirit.

D&C 46:8. The Lord has told us, “*Seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given*”.

We can discover the spiritual gift(s) that we have been given individually through pondering, prayer, fasting, reading our patriarchal blessing, obeying the commandments, and serving others.

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught that many gifts of the Spirit, such as wisdom or the gift to heal, are not evident until they are needed. He said that “*it would require time and circumstances to call these gifts into operation*” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 246).

Ways in which we can seek the gifts of the Spirit include:

- **D&C 46:7, 30.** Ask of God and follow the Spirit’s guidance.
- **D&C 46:9.** Seek gifts for the benefit of others, not for selfish reasons.
- **D&C 46:31.** Do all things in the name of Christ.
- **D&C 46:32.** Thank God for the gifts He has given us.
- **D&C 46:33.** Practice virtue and holiness continually.

Conclusion

We should seek gifts of the Spirit and use the gifts we have been given to serve others.

Determine which of the gifts in **D&C 46:13-25** would be helpful in the following situations:

- A home teacher is called to the home of one of his families to give a blessing
- A missionary presides over a small branch of Church members
- A young woman is assigned to teach a lesson to her class
- An Aaronic priesthood adviser is responsible for a group of deacons on an overnight camping trip that encounters difficulty
- A Relief Society President assigns visiting teachers to the sisters in the ward

To help us avoid being deceived

Consider how gifts of the Spirit help us avoid evil influences or deception.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- What are your spiritual gifts?
- What gifts have been of special value to you?
- How have you been blessed through the spiritual gifts of others?
- How have you cultivated and developed your spiritual gifts?

