

DO THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT DISTRACT FROM THE GLORY OF CHRIST? I have only *one point* to develop in this teaching, so there is really no structured outline to follow. I want to string together a list of texts and have you tell me what word or concept I'm seeking to emphasize. Then I'm going to develop *why* this idea is so important in looking at John MacArthur's book, "*Strange Fire*." Note these verses carefully:

John 14:20-21 - "In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. [21] Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

1 Corinthians 3:12-13 - "Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— [13] each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done."

1 Peter 1:20-21 - "He [Jesus] was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you [21] who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

1 John 1:1-2 - "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— [2] the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us...."

1 John 4:9 - "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him."

And now, one more reference to our teaching point today: **1 Corinthians 12:4-7** - "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; [5] and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; [6] and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. [7] To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." Just to be very clear, Paul isn't just writing of the *giving* of the Spirit. He's not just writing about the *presence* of the Spirit. And he's not writing here about the *indwelling* of the Spirit. All of these ideas, of course, are important and true. They're simply not the subject at hand. Paul is writing of the *manifestation* of the Spirit.

That word, in *all* of these references is the very same word. The Greek word "*manifestation*" is the word "*fan-er-o-sis*." It means to "*put on display or exhibition*." And the reason I took the time to look at the *context* of the use of that word in all of these references was to show that in *these* Scriptures that meaning of *putting on display* stands up. That is *in fact* what the term was describing in each of these cases. In each case something that was real but not *obvious* was *made* obvious. Something that was less visible became a focus of attention. In each case something was, just as the word implies, *put on display - put on exhibition*.

I want to deal with one of the most common *biases* in cessationist theology. It runs rampant in MacArthur's book. Almost all cessationists (those who argue that many of the gifts of the Spirit were only for the first apostolic age and have *ceased* in the church today) - almost all cessationists argue that pentecostals (or *continuationists* - those who believe the Biblical usefulness of the gifts of the Spirit *continues* into the present church age) - they argue pentecostals are wrong to *place attention* on the gifts of the Spirit because the whole purpose of the Holy Spirit is to *place attention on Jesus Christ*. The Holy Spirit, so cessationists say, never draws attention to Himself.

And I am arguing that there is a way of applying this Biblical truth that is a *foundational* error. By that I mean it's one of those theological *assumptions* that shapes all the other points of the cessationist argument. And MacArthur, like most cessationists, states and restates an idea that is *close* to the truth if properly understood but which is a total *distortion* of New Testament teaching if abused. There is no legitimate *textual* way to get around Paul's point in **1 Corinthians 12:7** that the gifts of the Spirit are given *by* the Spirit to put something on *display*. That's the exact meaning of that word "*manifestation*" - "*To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good*."

1) **THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ALWAYS TO EXALT AND MANIFEST JESUS CHRIST AS MESSIAH, REDEEMER, AND GOD THE SON - John 14:25-26** - "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. [26] But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

See also **John 15:24-27** - "If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. [25] But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.' [26] "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. [27] And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning."

John 16:12-15 - "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. [13] When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. [14] He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. [15] All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

The Apostle John is clear that the Holy Spirit isn't an *independent worker*. He "*will not speak on his own authority*"(16:13). Jesus says the Spirit "*will glorify me*", and "*take what is mine and declare it to you*"(16:14). Jesus said the Holy Spirit will "*bear witness about me*"(15:26). Jesus also said the Holy Spirit would "*bring to remembrance all that I have said to you*"(14:26).

2) **IT IS AN UNSCRIPTURAL LEAP TO MOVE FROM SAYING THE HOLY SPIRIT EXISTS TO EXALT JESUS CHRIST TO SAYING THE HOLY SPIRIT NEVER DESIRES TO MANIFEST HIMSELF** - This false reasoning is done *repeatedly* by almost all cessationists. MacArthur piles up impressive endorsing quotations in his book:

J. I. Packer - "The Spirit's message to us is never, 'Look at me; listen to me; come to me; get to know me,' but always, 'Look at him, and see his glory; listen to him, and hear his words; go to him and have life....'"

Martyn Lloyd-Jones - "The Spirit does not glorify himself; He glorifies the Son....The Holy Spirit seems to hide Himself and conceal Himself...."

Chuck Swindoll - "Mark it down: the Spirit glorifies Christ. I'll go one step further: if the Holy Spirit Himself is being emphasized and magnified, He isn't in it....He does His work behind the scenes, never in the limelight."

John MacArthur - "While claiming to honor the Holy Spirit, charismatics generally ignore the very purpose of the Spirit's ministry - which is to draw all attention to the Lord Jesus."

My concern here is the false conclusion drawn from a good Biblical truth. And the false conclusion that is commonly arrived at is because the Holy Spirit's role is to *exalt Christ*. His work should always be *invisible*. In other words, I'm arguing *Jesus Christ is not belittled just because the Holy Spirit manifests His gifts and power*.

In fact, quite the opposite. The Apostle Luke makes it clear that all of the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit that took place in the book of Acts were nothing other than the **continuing work of Jesus Christ Himself - Acts 1:1-2** - "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with **all that Jesus began to do and teach, [2] until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.**" So Luke's gospel dealt with what Jesus **began** to do and teach and his second historic manuscripts dealt with what Jesus **continued** to do and teach through the work of the Holy Spirit in His Apostles. Jesus was **continuing** to work through the Holy Spirit whom He Himself gave. This shouldn't surprise us because the Holy Spirit is actually **called** the Spirit of Christ in the New Testament:

Romans 8:9 - "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the **Spirit of Christ** does not belong to him."

Philippians 1:19 - "...for I know that through your prayers and the help of the **Spirit of Jesus Christ** this will turn out for my deliverance...."

I believe it is cessationists who create a foolish, unscriptural competition between the triune members of the one single God. The Holy Spirit who dwells in me is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. They are forever the **same one God**. The Creed says they both proceed from the same Father.

Here is my understanding. The Holy Spirit **does** exist to exalt the Son. That is His mission. But that doesn't mean the Spirit doesn't seek to **manifest Himself - 1 Corinthians 12:7** - "To each is given the **manifestation of the Spirit** for the common good." But **why** is it "**good**" for the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself? It is **good** because authentic, Scripturally ordered manifestations of the Spirit are the ministry of Jesus Christ in His church. And Jesus is always good for His church.

Behind all of this is the nature of the way the Trinity always works. The Holy Spirit's role is to **reveal** the Son in all His greatness. This is what MacArthur wants to desperately to emphasize. And I agree. But the Spirit points to the Son in exactly the same way the **Son** came to **manifest the Father**. The theology of the Trinity can't be shunted aside.

The Bible calls the Son the "**express image**" of the Father. He revealed the Father as the Father has never been revealed before. He is the **door** to the Father. Jesus labored to make clear that He only came and said and did what the Father gave Him - **John 5:19** - "So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise." So Jesus revealed the Father. And the Spirit reveals Jesus, the Son in exactly same way. Jesus never came saying, "**Don't look at me. Don't listen to me. I'm just the Son. I just put the spotlight on the Father. Don't pay any attention to me.**" No. He said over and over, "**Look at me! Watch me! Listen to me! Look at the works I'm doing! That's what Father God is like!**" And so it is with the "**manifestation of the Spirit.**" When Scripturally practiced and order in humility, they show us what the living, current, ongoing work of Jesus is in His church.