

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE
FROM GOD FOR THE
COMMON GOOD OF THE
BODY**

1 CORINTHIANS 12

ANCIENT CORINTH



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INTRODUCTION

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- Paul draws the line between Christian spirituality and paganism, this time as it relates to spiritual gifts.
- True spirituality is about exalting God and sharing gifts for the sake of others, not exalting self and hoarding gifts for status among others.
- While the spiritual gifts are important, this section's primary emphasis is on glorifying God, edifying others, and maintaining unity in the church.

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE
SOURCED BY GOD,
REFLECT HIM, AND
SERVE OTHERS**

1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Uninformed - shows Paul is using irony.
- Corinthian believers assume they have much knowledge regarding “spiritual things.”
- By stating that he does not want them to be “uninformed” in verse 1, Paul exposes just how ignorant they truly are.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Verses 2–3 reveal that these believers have asked to know more about spiritual things.
- To start his response, Paul counters their pagan view of spirituality and replaces it with a Christian one.
- In the Corinthian culture at the time, using the name of one's god to invoke a curse on others was common.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- In becoming Christians, these Corinthians assumed they could summon the name of Jesus to bring curses on other people.
- Paul turns this view upside down by saying, in essence, “No one speaking in the Spirit asks Jesus to bring a curse on others!”
- To call Jesus “Lord” is to accept suffering, not cause it. Being a Christian requires willingness to love in return for hate and to bless in return for curse.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Elsewhere in 1 Corinthians, Paul exposes these believers for once again having imported popular pagan practice into Christianity.
- According to Paul, no one who is truly spiritual seeks to disadvantage another, and no one can truly confess Jesus as Lord without the Spirit's empowerment.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Now that Paul has stated what God's purpose in spiritual things is not about, verses 4–11 clarify what God's purpose in spiritual things is about.
- Verses 4–10 focus on the source of spiritual gifts as God, not man.
- While spiritual gifts come in many varieties, they are all empowered by the “same Spirit ... same Lord ... same God” (vv. 4–6).

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- The Godhead alone sources our spiritual gifting; we cannot earn it or produce it on our own.
- These verses show that God is a great giver, and spiritual abilities are gifts, not rewards, that must be received humbly.
- In a culture obsessed with achievement, this would be a difficult word for the Corinthians to hear from the apostle.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Paul also makes a clever parallel in this section. Verses 4–7 reveal that each person of the triune godhead executes different roles in the giving of spiritual gifts.
- Each of the assignments within the Trinity is diverse, yet at the same time, the gifts are completely unified in purpose to build up the saints.
- Paul calls the believers to mimic the Trinity in that way—to be diverse in gifting, but unified in purpose.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- In sum, these believers are to imitate their diversity, giving God by using their varied gifts to build up the “common good” of the body (v. 7).
- As it relates to the spiritual gifts themselves, two things stand out in this section:
 - every Christian possesses a spiritual gift
 - the spiritual gifts are varied

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Paul's goal is not to list all of the spiritual gifts available or even to define those he lists.
- These speech gifts would have been in exact opposition to the "wisdom of the world" in 1 Corinthians 1:17.
- The wisdom and knowledge that Paul mentions here are gifts given to particular believers that are sourced from the Spirit for the good of the body.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- The next grouping of gifts, following speech gifts, are faith, gifts of healing, and miracles.
- The faith mentioned in verse 9 is distinct from the faith that all believers possess.
- This kind of faith most likely believes God for extraordinary things or helps to prod the church forward during exceptional times.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Of the remaining gifts, Paul will spend the majority of chapter 14 on the subject of tongues and the interpretation of tongues in connection to prophecy.
- Paul asserts that truly spiritual people seek to do four things with their spiritual gifting: receive it humbly as a gift instead of a reward, view it as sourced by God and not self, reflect the diverse and unified nature of the Trinity, and serve others for the common good of the body.

**THE CHURCH IS ONE
UNIFIED BODY WITH
DIVERSE MEMBERS**

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31

CHURCH BODY

- In verses 12–31, Paul expounds on the theme of unity and diversity found within verses 4–11.
- To communicate how unity and diversity can simultaneously be practiced, Paul uses his body analogy.
- A human body works seamlessly and organically as one unit, yet it also exhibits great diversity in its members.

CHURCH BODY

- While all the members have specific and separate functions, they are also integrally dependent on one another for health.
- Paul desires these Corinthian believers to operate the same way in their local church.
- His fourfold motif of “the one and the many” drives home his desire for these believers to operate as one unit with diverse gifts (verses 12, 14, 20, 27).

CHURCH BODY

- As it relates to operating as a body, Paul makes some assertions in verses 15–20.
- The first is that each member is considered part of the body. This means that there is no such thing as an insignificant gift or person in the body of Christ.
- The second assertion is that each member of the body has a unique function. Paul's logical questions are self-explanatory; there would be no actual body if every member were the same.

CHURCH BODY

- In verses 21–27, Paul narrows his focus to the weaker members of the church.
- The treatment of the poor at the Lord's Supper we discussed in chapter 11 is Paul is highlighting here.
- The “head and the eye” in verse 21 are obvious references to those who believed they had higher status than their peers within the Corinthian church.

CHURCH BODY

- To combat this hierarchical attitude, Paul reminds them that the members of the body need one another equally (v. 21), weaker members are indispensable (vv. 22–23; cf. 1:25, 27), God gives greater honor to members who lack it (v. 24), and what affects one member affects all members (v. 26).
- His central concern in all of these assertions is clear: “that there be no division in the body” so that it can healthily care for itself (v. 25).

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CHURCH BODY

- Verses 27–31 have essentially the same message as verses 1–4, yet with some additional elements.
- Paul lists a variety of gifts here, but makes an important distinction between offices and gifts.
- Apostles, prophets and teachers are offices while the rest are gifts. His point in these verses mirrors his previous assertion: offices and gifts are appointed by God, and are purposefully varied.

CHURCH BODY

- In keeping with the context of the entire chapter, Paul ends by exhorting these believers to seek the most “useful” or “beneficial” gift in their church.
- The believers in Corinth are to act as one unified body with many diverse parts, all seeking to edify one another in the power of the Spirit under God’s sovereign appointment and design.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- What is a spiritual gift?
- A spiritual gift is a divine empowerment bestowed on each believer by the Holy Spirit to accomplish a ministry within the body of Christ.
- Ephesians 4:16 - "From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Numerous passages show the purpose of spiritual gifts for the Body of Christ:
- 1 Corinthians 12:7 - “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”
- Ephesians 4:12 - “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- 1 Peter 4:10 - “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others.”
- Spiritual gifts are not for personal benefit or selfish gain. They are for the body of Christ.
- When properly exercised, spiritual gifts will contribute to the overall health and growth of the church.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- 1 Corinthians 12 - administration, apostle, discernment, faith, healing, helps, knowledge, miracles, prophecy, teaching, tongues, wisdom.
- Romans 12 - exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy, prophecy, service, teaching.
- Ephesians 4 - apostle, evangelism, pastor, prophecy, teaching.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- One way to discover a spiritual gift is to take one of these gifts tests:
 - Ministry Tools (www.mintools.com)
 - Church Growth (www.churchgrowth.org)
 - Christian Net (www.christianet.com)
 - Spiritual Gifts Test (www.spiritualgiftstest.com)