

Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12: 1 – 31

Introduction (vs. 1 – 3)

The Corinthian church considered themselves to be a spiritual church and had various spiritual manifestations happening in their meetings. These probably caused confusion and division in the Corinthian church. It seems that some there were a few issues concerning spiritual gifts that needed dealing with:

- Are the spiritual gifts from God or not?
- How many spirits are there? Is each gift a different spirit?
- What is the purpose of the spiritual gifts?
- Some have more prominent gifts than others. Does that mean that some are better or more privileged in the church than others?
- Is everyone in the church supposed to have all the gifts?

To answer the first question Paul refers to the believers' pre-Christian days when they were led astray to worship idols. He is basically saying that it was easy to be led astray when you didn't know the Lord and didn't have the Holy Spirit but now that you have the Holy Spirit there is a basic test: "no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit." (v.3)

- Do not put out the Spirit's fire; ²⁰ do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹ Test everything. Hold on to the good. ²² Avoid every kind of evil. (1 Thess. 5: 19 – 22)
- Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God (1 John 4: 1 – 3)

1) A Variety of Gifts (vs. 4 – 11)

- There is only one Holy Spirit not many spirits.
 - There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. (vs. 4 – 6)
 - The Trinity is mentioned here but one God manifesting Himself in various ways.
- The purpose of the spiritual gifts is shown in verse 7 "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."
- The nine gifts mentioned:
 - The message of wisdom
 - The message of knowledge
 - Faith
 - Gift of healing
 - Miraculous powers
 - Prophecy
 - Distinguishing between spirits
 - Speaking in different kinds of tongues
 - Interpretation of tongues
- The gifts mentioned in Romans 12:
 - Prophecy
 - Serving
 - Teaching

- Encouraging
- Giving generously to the needs of others
- Leadership
- Showing mercy
- The gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4: 11:
 - Apostles
 - Prophets
 - Evangelists
 - Pastors
 - Teachers
- We may have gifts that aren't mentioned in the Bible, e.g.:
 - Music
 - Working with children, youth, women, etc.
 - Administration, organizing
- All the gifts are the work or manifestation of the one Holy Spirit and he gives to each one just as he determines.
 - We should be grateful for the gifts that God has given us and not be jealous or envious that he has given someone else something better.
- Our gifts can be nurtured or neglected.
 - Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Timothy 4: 14)
 - For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands (2 Timothy 1: 6)
- If we do not use the gifts that God gives us then we will not fulfill God's purpose for us in the body of Christ.
- He gives us gifts to equip us to accomplish His will and we are under obligation, not to the church but to God, to use the gifts that he has given us. We cannot say that we are under His Lordship and not do His will.
- Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4: 10 – 11)
- **IF WE DO NOT USE OUR GIFTS THEN WE ARE DEPRIVING SOMEONE ELSE FROM BEING MINISTERED TO BY GOD THROUGH US.**

2) Many Parts of One Body (vs. 12 – 26)

- Paul uses the analogy of a body with many parts to describe the church.
- There is one body but many parts
- Every part is equally part of the body and equally necessary and equally important whether seen or unseen.
- God has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it. If one part is honoured every part rejoices with it.
- Some parts have prominent gifts others have unseen gifts, but noticeable if not used e.g. person doing housekeeping if doesn't put toilet paper in the toilets. People might not return to church because of a small practicality.
- There should be not division in the body but have equal concern for each other.

3) Everyone does not have all the gifts (vs. 27 – 31)

- To answer the last question whether everyone who has the Holy Spirit has all the gifts
- Paul uses rhetorical questions making it clear that not everyone has all the gifts.

- We should not concentrate on having gifts that we don't have but we should concentrate on using the gifts that we do have in building up the body of Christ so that in all things God may be praised in Christ Jesus.
- How do I know what gifts I have:
 - What are you naturally good at?
 - What is your passion? What do you really enjoy doing?
 - Where do you see the needs in the church or in the world? God often shows people needs that he doesn't show others and gives grace to meet those needs.