

What Spiritual Gifts Can I Use?
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Can I get three volunteers who are willing to read our scripture in a few minutes? I'll tell you what to read as we get to it.

So far in the book of 1 Corinthians Paul has encouraged and admonished this early church to:

- Be Unified
- Encourage their Church Leaders
- Practice Christian Morality
- Be Wise about Marriage and to...
- Be Wise in the Behavior they Choose (missed this last week)

- Today in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul addresses questions they had about SPIRITUAL GIFTS
- It appears that they had become divided about the NATURE and USE of SPIRITUAL GIFTS, especially the GIFT OF TONGUES
- Apparently some church members viewed the type of gift a believer possessed as a measuring stick for that believer's SPIRITUALITY.

- The first point we need to understand CLEARLY is: WE ALL HAVE GIFTS

- Illustration: Hope Quest social
 - Suzi – Gifts of administration and hospitality
 - Lori – Gift of music
 - Cristi and David – Gifts of fun and hospitality
 - Jason – Gifts of exhortation and evangelism
 - Chas – Gift of leadership and administration
 - Several of you – Gift of hospitality (GOOD COOKIN')
 - Several of you – Gifts of helps and service
 - Several of you – Gifts of giving
 - It was a great picture of MANY GIFTS but one BODY of Christ using them.

Bill Gothard uses this illustration:

Individuals react to given situations in the light of their gifts. If a waitress spills someone's meal all over the restaurant floor and a group of Christians are sitting nearby, each individual will react in accordance with their spiritual gift.

The GIFT OF MERCY responds by concentrating on cleaning up the mess,

The GIFT OF GIVING offers to pay for another meal,

The GIFT OF EXHORTATION seeks to cheer up the waitress.

The GIFT OF ADMINISTRATION delegates and organizes the whole matter to avoid confusion.

The GIFT OF TEACHING suggests some ways to avoid a recurrence of the problem.

- WE ALL HAVE GIFTS!
- WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT GIFTS
- All these gifts are from THE SAME GOD

1 Corinthians 12:4-10

4There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

7Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.[b]

- Look at Verses 4 through 6. Other than GIFTS what TWO WORDS seem to come up REPEATEDLY in these verses (DEPENDS ON TRANSLATION)? DIFFERENT & SAME.
- There are TWO CONCEPTS at work here: DIVERSITY & UNITY
- We all have been given different GIFTS but all from ONE GOD and all for ONE BODY...His Church
- The Greek word "GIFTS" in 1 Corinthians 12:4 translates "GRACES."
- The Holy Spirit GIVES these gifts as a MATTER OF GRACE and not based on who works harder; is smarter; or is more deserving.
- In fact, sometimes God gifts SPIRITUAL GIFTS that are SURPRISING

R. A. Torrey said:

"Not infrequently the Holy Spirit takes the one who seems to give the least natural promise and uses him far beyond those who give the greatest natural promise. Christian life is not to be lived in the realm of natural temperament, and Christian work is not to be done in the power of natural endowment, but Christian life is to be lived in the realm of the Spirit, and Christian work is to be done on the power of the Spirit."

- Question: Can you think of any examples of someone we'd all know who God GIFTED in ways that probably surprised everyone who knew them?: Billy Graham and Johnny Hunt were painfully shy about speaking in public.

The various gifts are named in (WRITE ON BOARD) 1 Corinthians 12:8–10 and 28, and also in Ephesians 4:11 and Romans 12:6–8 (NOT EXHAUSTIVE). When you combine the lists, you end up with nineteen different gifts and offices. Since the listing in Romans is not identical with the listing in 1 Corinthians, we may assume that Paul was not attempting to exhaust the subject in either passage. While the gifts named are adequate

for the ministry of the church, God is not limited to these lists. He may give other gifts as He pleases. (Wiersbe NT Commentary P.485)

Howard Hendricks said:

"If you don't know what your gift is, and if you are not using it to serve the body of Christ, you are crippling your spiritual life"

- So HOW DO I FIND OUT what my SPIRITUAL GIFT or GIFTS are?
- There are a number of tools available including one on the church website: <http://www.fbcw.org/servegod/gifts.html>
- In a few minutes: An exercise about USING OUR GIFTS within our class

- Look at verses 8-10. As we said earlier, here Paul lists SOME SPIRITUAL GIFTS
- Let's look at these verses and see what they are
- Verse 8: What are the two gifts he mentions? WORD of WISDOM – Some people have DISCERNMENT; WORD of KNOWLEDGE – Some people have the ability to apply KNOWLEDGE to promote CORRECTION and UNITY in the church.
- Verse 9: He mentions two gifts. What is the first? Gift of FAITH – NOT SAVING FAITH but the ability to TRUST GOD BOLDLY and to encourage the whole church to MOVE FORWARD in ministry.
- Also in verse 9: The Gift of HEALING.
- Then in Verse 10: The Gift of MIRACLES; PROPHECY; DISCERNING OF SPIRITS; and INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES.
- Now we're getting into the more CONTROVERSIAL Gifts: Healing; Miracles; Tongues.
- Some argue that these gifts were for given in the early church to CONFIRM the ministry of Christ and early Christians and then they "phased out" by the end of scripture.

John MacArthur writes:

The last recorded miracles in the New Testament occurred around A.D. 58, with the healings on the island of Malta (Acts 28:7-10). From A.D. 58 to 96, when John finished the book of Revelation, no miracle is recorded. Miracle gifts like tongues and healing are mentioned only in 1 Corinthians, an early epistle. Two later epistles, Ephesians and Romans, both discuss gifts of the Spirit at length—but no mention is made of the miraculous gifts. By that time miracles were already looked on as something in the past (Heb. 2:3-4). For more on the Gift of Tongues from John MacArthur:

http://www.gty.org/media/pdf/Gift_of_Tongues.pdf

- Others argue that these gifts continue today.
- The debate about those gifts could get us WAY OFF TRACK in what this lesson is trying to teach us, so I'll leave that to your own research.
- Look back at verse 7: Gifts are given to EACH PERSON to produce what is BENEFICIAL

- What's the GOOD NEWS for you and me?
- God has given every believer AT LEAST one, and perhaps SEVERAL, SPIRITUAL GIFTS. It's the RESPONSIBILITY of each believer to DISCOVER and USE these gifts to the glory of God!
- Not only do WE ALL HAVE GIFTS. We are ALL important to the Church

1 Corinthians 12:11-19

11All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

12The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13For we were all baptized by[a] one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

14Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19If they were all one part, where would the body be?

- Paul uses the HUMAN BODY as an illustration
- Earlier we said we're dealing with two concepts: UNITY and DIVERSITY
- That's what verse 12 is all about! One body...many parts.
- Question: What do YOU get out of this METAPHOR of the CHURCH being like the HUMAN BODY? How does it help explain how the CHURCH is supposed to work?
- Question: Based on how Paul wrote this about the role each part of the body plays what do you think the Corinthian believers had been fighting about? Whose gift is MORE IMPORTANT!
- UNITY and DIVERSITY
- We each play a UNIQUE role but it's all for A COMMON MISSION

Based on this passage, M R De Haan II wrote that we should: Be Like A Bee
The honeybee has one of the most highly developed social structures in the animal kingdom. At the heart of the hive, which may house as many as 80,000 bees, is the queen. Without her, the colony has no future. But the 80,000 don't just sit around watching their queen. Each bee has a specialized duty to fulfill.

*The **forager** bees encounter the perils of the outside world to collect food. The **guard** bees protect the hive entrance from intruders. The **undertakers** are responsible for removing dead bodies from the hive. **The water collectors** bring in moisture to regulate humidity. The **plasterers** make a kind of cement to repair the hive. And **the fanners** station themselves at the entrance and fan the scent outward to signal the location of the colony to lost or disoriented bees. The **scout bees** keep the hive alerted to opportunities and dangers of the outside world. The variety and specialization of the worker bees seem endless.*

In a similar way, the Lord has given special, spiritual gifts and tasks to all the people in His church. No one has been called merely to sit around. Everyone can do something. The work of the church will not get done unless all of us do what God has called us to do.

- Verses 18 and 19 sum it up: God placed all the parts of the “just as He wanted”. If they were all the same... “where would the body be?”
- We’re ALL important to the church!
- Not only do WE ALL HAVE GIFTS and are ALL IMPORTANT...THOSE GIFTS ARE TO BE USED FOR THE CHURCH.

1 Corinthians 12:27-30

27Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. 29Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues[a]? Do all interpret?

- Verse 27 says “Now you are the body of Christ”
- It reminds me of one of my favorite Casting Crowns songs...do you know it?

CHORUS

But if we are the Body
Why aren't His arms reaching?
Why aren't His hands healing ?
Why aren't His words teaching?
And if we are the Body
Why aren't His feet going ?
Why is His love not showing them there is a way?
There is a way
(Written by Mark Hall)

- Now in verse 28 we might think Paul is contradicting what we said earlier
- Earlier we said EVERYONE HAS A GIFT; EVERYONE IS IMPORTANT

- Question: What does Paul do in verse 28 that might appear that Paul is contradicting that?
- He's putting three of the gifts in the church in PRIORITY ORDER
- He's not saying some gifts are more IMPORTANT than others

Warren Wiersbe writes:

In this paragraph, Paul pointed out that there is a "priority list" for the gifts, that some have more significance than others. But this fact does not contradict the lesson already shared—that each gift is important and each individual believer is important. Even in the human body, there are some parts that we can do without, even though their absence might handicap us a bit. (Wiersbe NT Commentary P.487)

- I don't want to lose any of my fingers or toes...but I CAN live without them
- But when it comes to my heart or brain...that's a different matter
- Paul wasn't contradicting the IMPORTANCE of each BELIEVER's gifts
- He was pointing out that your church won't function if you don't give some PRIORITY to certain gifts
- Apostles – Men personally designated by Jesus as His official representatives
- (Another point of controversy much debated: Are there "Apostles" today or was that office restricted to the First Century? Most conservative theologians believe that there are no "new" apostles today.)
- Prophets – Some think Paul meant "foretelling" the future. Others, "powerful preaching"
- Teachers – Those who explain the scriptures so believers can apply the text to their lives
- It appears he was making a priority list for another reason
- Question: Look again at verse 28. Which gifts did he put LAST on the list?
- The most SPECTACULAR and CONTROVERSIAL gifts were listed last to make a point
- Chapter 14 of this book is dedicated to addressing the fact that the Corinthian believers had elevated speaking in tongues in such a way that the church was DIVIDED over it
- Paul is clearly using this list to make the point that there are some other gifts that are essential if the church is to function
- No person or gift is more important than another. But for the church to function, some gifts have a higher priority in how we operate.
- Finally, look at verse 31:

1 Corinthians 12:31

31But eagerly desire[a] the greater gifts.

And now I will show you the most excellent way.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says this about verse 31:

...the first three gifts (apostles; prophets; teachers) may have been “greater” because of their extensive value to the whole body of Christ. This may be why he listed them first and then said that the church should ‘eagerly desire’ the exercise of those gifts.

(Bible Knowledge Commentary NT pg. 534)

- In other words, if those gifts are used effectively, it will promote UNITY in the church
- We all have gifts
- Every believer and their gifts are IMPORTANT
- We are to DISCOVER and USE our gifts for the benefit of the CHURCH
- Let’s spend a few minutes exploring how you can use your gifts in this class
- You will recall a sheet I handed out a few months ago
- I got one or two back...but that was it
- Today I want us to take a few minutes to do this exercise together and turn in the sheets TODAY while we are here

(Do exercise)

The Takeaway:

- The Holy Spirit gives gifts to every believer (at least one maybe more)
- We are all a part of Christ’s body, the church, and each of us is essential for it to function as intended
- All Christians are to DISCOVER and USE our gifts to BENEFIT the church
- Whatever our spiritual gift or gifts, we are to use them to build up the church as a whole
- Bottom line: You are SPECIAL and YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO GOD’S WORK...He designed a SPECIAL job JUST FOR YOU!!!! That’s GOOD NEWS!!!