

**Message #41**

**I Corinthians 12:1-3**

It has been called a monster; it has been called a curse of God; it has been called the greatest of all infirmities; it has been called the chief of all follies; it has been called a great darkness; it has been called the key to prejudice and error; it has been called fallen man's best friend; it is ignorance. There is nothing Satan uses more to accomplish his purposes than to keep people ignorant of God's Word.

One particular area that Paul was really intent upon this church gaining God's knowledge was in the area of the work of the Spirit of God.

Paul did not want the believers to be "unaware" of truth pertaining to God's Spirit; but Satan does and he has kept most churches in ignorance. If ever there is a subject that has caused controversy and theological war, it is the subject of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts.

**GOD WANTS HIS CHURCH TO CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD CONCERNING SALVATION AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS.**

You will note that in these first three verses we find the word "unaware" (v. 1), "know" (v. 2) and "make known" (v. 3). Collectively these words inform us that God wants us to have a deep, perceptive knowledge and understanding of things that pertain to His Spirit. God DOES NOT want us ignorant of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, especially as it relates to our salvation and spiritual gifts.

There are still many believers who don't even know how they got saved.

There are still many believers who don't know which spiritual gifts are for today and which aren't.

There are still many who don't know their own spiritual gifts.

There are still many who are in total ignorance, contrary to the Word and will of God.

**INTRODUCTORY MATTER #1 – God DOES NOT want the believer to be ignorant of spiritual things. 12:1**

The word "unaware" is a word that means to be ignorant of something in the sense of being without knowledge and understanding. The tense of the infinitive "aware" is present, indicating it is possible to be in a continual state of ignorance when it comes to things that pertain to the Spirit of God.

Many translations supply the word "gift" because a great deal of the following context will deal with the subject of spiritual gifts.

The specific spiritual things that God does not want His people ignorant of are things that pertain to the Spirit of God, which of course will include spiritual gifts.

- 1) It is clear that God desires His church to have a true Biblical understanding of the things that pertain to God's Spirit.
- 2) It is clear that many churches do not have a true Biblical understanding of the things that pertain to the Spirit of God, because they have NEVER studied them.
- 3) If we are content with being ignorant of God's Word and doctrines, we are not in accordance with the Word or will of God.

**INTRODUCTORY MATTER #2** – God DOES want the believer to know his previous spiritual status. **12:2**

The word “pagan” refers to one without Christ, particularly a non-Jew without Christ. The word “dumb” does not refer to something stupid, but to something speechless and lifeless.

The word “led astray” is a word that pictures one being carried away to prison or death. The word “led” pictures being guided or impelled to do something.

Both of these words are passive, meaning prior to salvation, some outside agency was carrying or leading these people away from the truth of God. This was not a self-induced leading; this was a leading of some other force, carrying people toward death. Paul would later inform these Corinthians that the outside force that was leading people to death was none other than Satan (i.e. II Cor. 4:3-4; 11:13-15).

Prior to salvation we were blinded by Satan and hopelessly lost. Satan loves to lead God's people away from an intense devotion to God.

**INTRODUCTORY MATTER #3** – God DOES want the believer to know how a person is spiritually saved. **12:3**

Notice very carefully that twice in the verse Paul emphasizes “no one.” This eliminates everyone. When it comes to having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, man is taken completely out of the picture and the Spirit of God is given complete credit. God wants His church to realize that the ONLY way ANY person gets saved is by the work of the Holy Spirit.

**Fact #1** - No one can have an improper perspective of Jesus Christ by means of the Spirit of God. **12:3a**

Any person who has a distorted perspective of Jesus Christ and what He accomplished on the cross is one who is not in touch with the Spirit of God.

**Fact #2** - No one can have a proper perspective of Jesus Christ except by means of the Holy Spirit. **12:3b**

No person, man, woman or child can ever come to terms with Jesus Christ on their own. An awareness of the fact that Jesus Christ is God and He alone can save one from sin and that He is Lord is a work completely accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

It is no wonder that people are so confused on the subject of spiritual gifts; they are confused on the subject of their own salvation. Many actually think they brought themselves to Jesus Christ.

We were ALL blinded and lost and it was God's Holy Spirit who worked in our lives and brought us to faith in Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus Christ Himself taught exactly the same thing about the Spirit of God that Paul taught (John 16:7-13).

The Corinthians loved to applaud themselves. Paul loved to give the glory to God.

A powerful, God-honoring, God-glorifying existence comes through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and an intense pursuit of the Word of God.

When that is happening, God's Spirit is working!