

I Corinthians Lesson # 27
Gifts of The Spirit Introduction
Pentwater Bible Church
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We are entering a section of Scripture, which discusses how and why the Holy Spirit works through believers in this world. The Holy Spirit is the divine third Person of the Holy Trinity. He manifests His power in the body of Christ, which is the true Church. The Lord Jesus accomplished redemption for all who will believe. They/we are ransomed, cleansed by His blood and united with Him as His body the instant we truly believe without doubt and commit to Him. The moment of salvation the Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in us. The Spirit is in His essence God but in His function carries out God's work in several distinct areas. The section of Scripture we are entering addresses one of His roles, that of provider of Spiritual Gifts. The New Testament which, was originally written in Koine (common) Greek, calls the Spirit *pneuma* in that language. We get our word pneumatic from this meaning relating to air. The Greek word for gift is *charisma* from which we get charismatic or gifted in English. So *pneuma charisma* is Spiritual Gift in the original Greek language in which the New Testament was written

This section of Scripture encompasses three chapters in I Corinthians, twelve, thirteen and fourteen. It is a major doctrine in the Bible and by developing a firm understanding of Spiritual Gifts we will be able to quickly see how believers who are operating under the power of the Spirit will have different motivations within Christianity. Conversely when we are operating outside of the Spirit's control in our own fleshly desires our Spiritual Gifts become corrupt and produce some very undesirable results, which tear down the body of believers instead of building it up. For example if we are not cognizant of the existence of the Spirit's work within the body we will constantly project our gift on others in the form of typical questions such as; Why don't they? Or can't they see? Or if only they would?

It is through the Spirit that communion with the Godhead is realized and maintained. In His gifts the presence of the Spirit of God is therefore manifested in each member of the body.

Finally the organization of this section of Scripture has the gifts introduced in chapter twelve and applied in chapter fourteen. Chapter thirteen demonstrates that the gifts are to be exercised with the soothing lubricant of love. It is not happenstance that god put the love chapter in between the two chapters describing and applying Spiritual Gifts.

I Corinthians 12: 1 Now concerning spiritual (gifts), brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

As Paul introduces the concept of Spiritual gifts he shows the relevance and importance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life on individual believers as well as the entire body of the Church. Remembering from chapter 7:1 the Corinthians were writing to Paul asking for clarification of many concepts from which he developed

Church doctrine. This chapter continues with Paul still answering questions. We don't have the text of the questions but we do have the answers. Here it is about "Spirituals" or in the Greek *pneumatikon*. The word "gifts" is inserted in our English Bibles, as it was not in this verse in the original Greek. It will first appear in verse four. The name *pneumatikon* means "things of the Spirit." So starts Paul's exposition of a very important doctrine for the Church. The phrase "I would not have you ignorant" is very important to understand. Without a firm understanding of Bible doctrine we are left to error. Christ frequently began a condemnation of the religious leaders of His day with the expression, "You error because you don't know the Scriptures" (Matthew 22:29; Mark 12: 24; 27; Hebrews 3:10). He had His strongest condemnation for the religious leaders while showing compassion to the people caught under the false teaching of them.

I Corinthians 12: 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

The issue of idols in the pagan Corinthian culture was an outstanding problem. Many people were saved out of severe idol worship and some were slipping back to it. Some could not understand clearly that the idols had a strong occultic presence behind them and had to be avoided. Paul clearly knew the Old Testament well and was reflecting of the concept given to us in the book of Habakkuk.

Habakkuk 2: 19 Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it [is] laid over with gold and silver, and [there is] no breath at all in the midst of it.

God teaches us through Habakkuk that idols will not provide any truth. Prior to salvation the Corinthians were led about into all forms of superstition and blind impulse which if followed can be deadly. Idol worship involved sexual immorality and a pagan exercise of tongues. It was a practice of "ecstatic utterances." This was common in the mystery cults and the worship of various Greek gods and goddesses. The insinuation that they *were* led captures Paul's rhetoric of couching the real issue which is they were *still being led* by these spirits which they could not resist and were experienced an addiction to them. In the Corinthians' vaunted wisdom of themselves they were actually showing themselves to be unusually gullible.

I Corinthians 12: 3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Paul therefore laid down a simple test related to the person of Christ. The false teachers obviously claimed that their visions, revelations, and messages (II Corinthians. 12:1) were from God, but they denied the humanity of Christ, as expressed by the words Jesus be cursed. It is interesting to realize that the earliest Christological heresy (Docetism) denied Jesus' humanity, not His deity. John had to deal with the same problem years later (1 John 4:1-3).

CAN ANY PERSON SPEAKING AGAINST CHRIST BE A GENUINE BELIEVER? THE ANSWER IS OBVIOUSLY AN EMPHATIC NO.

When Spiritual gifts are legitimately exercised Christ will not be blasphemed or dishonored by them. In saying, “speaking by the Spirit of God” Paul is clearly referencing speaking in tongues (*glossalia*). We will develop this issue in a later section of these three chapters. For now Paul is explaining that just like the “meat sacrificed to idols” concept they were corrupting the fellowship of the body by falsely using the first century gift of tongues by introducing pagan tongue practice into the Church. The use of tongues here do not contradict the tongues in Acts 2 on the first day of Pentecost after the ascension where men spoke in known languages other than their native languages. This section speaks to a different issue than the one in Acts 2.

I Corinthians 12: 4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

Paul had referred to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit in verse three. Now in reverse order he stressed the unity of the Godhead in relation to the different spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit gives a diversity of gifts (cf. “Spirit” in vv. 7-9, 11) so that individuals can serve the Lord and His body, the church, in various ways (cf. vv. 7, 27), all empowered by God and exercised under His administration (cf. vv. 18, 24). Though there are different kinds of gifts in service, and working, the same Spirit and the same Lord (Christ), and the same God are involved in all of them.

WHO GIVES THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER THE SUPERNATURAL ABILITY TO SPEAK FOR CHRIST? WHO GIVES SPIRITUAL GIFTS? THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES.

Since tongues had been introduced earlier in verse two Paul continues with some discussion of that concept by saying that they had their place in the first century Church. God’s people all receive Spiritual gifts at the point of salvation and no one gift is better than another. They all work together to build up the body with energizing coming from God. It is important to remember that these are “gifts” and as such can’t be earned. They are not doled out as a request to God for particular ones. God is not some cosmic Santa Clause giving requested gifts to His children who ask for them. Each believer is responsible for seeking his or her gifts through God’s guidance in the discovery process. We are then to use them to serve the body of believers. We will be judged at the Bema Seat judgment on the quality, not quantity, of the exercise of our gifts to build up the body (I Corinthians 3:13).

I Corinthians 12: 7-10 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

The gifts had a unity in source (vv. 4-6), and they also had a unity in purpose. They were given to all believers, not for personal enrichment (cf. 14:4; 1 Peter 4:10), but for the common good of the body of Christ, the building up of others (1 Corinthians 10:24; 14:12).

DO ALL BELIEVERS GET SPIRITUAL GIFTS? DO ALL GET THE SAME GIFTS? ALL GET GIFTS BUT ALL GET A VARIETY OF THEM.

It is a misconception to think that these gifts can be cultivated. They are supernatural enablement's not talents to be developed. The exercise of the gifts honors God by keeping His New Testament commandments related to the unity of the body. Paul listed some of the gifts here. Others, along with some of these, are given in Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:28-31; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:10-11.

The list here includes nine gifts. (1) Knowledge refers to insight and understanding into doctrinal truth. Paul exercised and expressed this gift in this letter (e.g., 2:6). (2) Wisdom refers to the ability to apply doctrinal truth to life with understanding. Paul also exercised and expressed this gift in this letter (e.g., 12:1-3; 11:3). (Cf. the recurrence of the phrase "Do you not know" in 3:16; 5:6; 6:2-3, 9, 15-16, 19; 9:13, 24; also cf. 8:1-3, 10-11). (3) Faith as a spiritual gift is probably an unusual measure of trust in God beyond that exercised by most Christians (e.g., 13:2). This gift enabled some Christians to readily accept immanent martyrdom. (4) Healing is the ability to restore health (e.g., Acts 3:7; 19:12) and also to hold off death itself temporarily (Acts 9:40; 20:9-10). (5) Miraculous powers may refer to exorcising demons (Acts 19:12) or inducing physical disability (Acts 13:11) or even death (Acts 5:5, 9). (6) Prophecy is the ability, like that of the Old Testament prophets, to declare a message of God for His people (1 Corinthians 14:3). For today this is forth telling not foretelling. It is important to realize that we must not neglect to teach the whole council of God instead of the normal drivel that emanates from most pulpits today. (7) Ability to distinguish between spirits is the gift to differentiate the Word of God proclaimed by a true prophet from that of a satanic deceiver (cf. 2 Cor. 11:14-15; 1 John 4:1). If the Corinthians possessed this gift (cf. 1 Cor. 1:7), it was not being put to good use (cf. 12:1-3). (8) Tongues refer to the ability to speak an unknown language. (9) Interpretation was the ability to translate an unlearned language expressed in the assembly (1 Corinthians 14:27).

Some these gifts seem to have been confirmatory and foundational gifts for the establishment of the church and were therefore temporary.

1 Corinthians 12: 11-12 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

The gifts were not meant to be selected by individuals or personally solicited by them, but were instead given by the Spirit solely as He determined. There is no place for rivalry, pride or jealousy in the body. "The Spirit" is referred to six times in verses 7-11. This verse forms an excellent three-part summary of the rest of the chapter as well as

transitioning to next week's lesson. (a) The human body is a unit (cf. v. 13 on the unity of the body of Christ). (b) The human body has many parts, with a necessary diversity in its members (cf. vv. 14-20). (c) The parts of the human body work together as one, with a dependent mutuality as each part fulfills an important function (cf. vv. 21-26). Likewise the body of Christ has a diversity of parts functioning together (vv. 27-30).

WHAT ARE THE TWO MEANINGS OF THE BODY? THE BODY OF BELIEVERS KNOWN, AS THE CHURCH IS ONE AND OUR PHYSICAL BODIES IS THE OTHER.

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