

1 Cor. 12:4-11 "Something for Everyone"

For the Children: When you receive birthday presents at home, your parents probably try to make sure that no one child receives special treatment above the others. The presents may all be different, but they all show the love of your parents equally. However, those gifts are usually things that can be enjoyed by the person who receives them. Perhaps you receive something that only you will use – like a nice pair of socks. In the life of the church, God gives gifts to each of His children. He shows by this that He loves each one. But He gives gifts that are designed to be used to help others in the church. We are not to be selfish in using these gifts just for ourselves. **Questions:** List some of the gifts God gives to His people. How could you use these gifts to help others? How might some people try to use these gifts selfishly?

Introduction:

First Point: The Gifts

- 1) So Many Gifts!: To show that no one has a basis for feeling superior because of their gifts, the apostle shows how many there are. Even so, the list is not exhaustive: see 1 Cor. 12:28, Rom. 12:6-8 and Eph. 4:11. They are spread among all of God's people, so that we all depend on each other, in the Lord.
- 2) An Actual World-Language: The apostle also shows that speaking in tongues, a legitimate gift at that time, involved an actual world-language – though unknown to the speaker. See Acts 2:4, 1 Cor. 14:10-11 and 1 Cor. 12:10. The last refers to the various kinds of human languages/tongues.
- 3) Unity of Character: All of these are "gifts," implying they are all of grace (vss. 4-6). All are "ministries" to help others. All are "effects" of God's power. All are "manifestations" of the Spirit's presence (v. 7).

Second Point: Their Source

- 1) The Trinitarian Source: The same Spirit, Lord and God works all these gifts in God's people. The diversity of gifts no more implies disunity than the 3 persons in the Trinity cause disunity in the Godhead. The God who is one and three creates unity-in-diversity in the church.
- 2) Mediated by the Spirit: The various gifts are "through," "according to" and "in" the Spirit – He mediates them and sets the norms for their use. He is the sphere in which they are used. This leaves no reason for us to boast in our own particular gifts.

Third Point: Their Purpose

- 1) Just as He wills: The gifts are distributed just as the Spirit wills. There is a Sovereign purpose behind this distribution. The overarching purpose is the glory of God.
- 2) For the Common Good: The gifts are also distributed for the benefit of the church – for her "common good" (v. 7). The term "ministries" (v. 5) also implies that the purpose is *service* of others. The gifts are not for personal hoarding, self-entertainment or for self-glorification. The benefit of the church must always be seen in connection with pointing to Christ and glorifying His Name.

Conclusion:

