

1195s
SPIRITUAL GIFTS-PART ONE
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1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11

As we look back over the distance we have come on our royal route to heaven, we see some of the pitfalls from which we have been delivered. Then we look at what lies ahead, and ask ourselves whether or not we really have the equipment that will see us through to the end of the road.

I WOULD NOT HAVE YOU IGNORANT ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS (12:1)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1.

The church at Corinth seemed to be plagued with about every problem known to any church. The question of spiritual gifts was no exception..

This chapter is important because there are many in our day who seem to be as confused as the Corinthians were in regard to the gifts of the Spirit.

Paul said, "I don't want you to be ignorant I don't want you to be agnostics. I want you to understand this subject."

Why?

1. The church can't mature or function without the operation of spiritual gifts.

- (1) Strengthen the local church fellowship (1 Cor 12:25-26)
- (2) Extend the church's witness and ministry (1 Cor 14:20-25; Eph 4)

2. In addition, Satan is counterfeiting it- to confuse, cause chaos, and split the church.

In addition, Satan has people afraid of gifts. One lady this week called totell me of her prayers because she was so afraid of this subject. Another related that she couldn't come to church and hear the sermons because she was so nervous about all this subject.

3. And Christians today are fighting over the gifts. Instead of unifying the Body, they were splitting the Body.

SPIRITUAL COUNTERFIETS ABOUND: TRUE BELEIVERS ARE SPIRIT INDWELT AND PROVE IT BY THEIR LIFESTYLES (12:2-3)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:2-3.

Let me tell you what was happening in their worship service.

Verse 2: Recently saved out of the pagan Greek mystery religions. Modeled their worship accordingly.

This is perhaps how the scene would look: Everyone would be doing something at the same time - someone singing, someone speaking ecstatic speech, someone giving a prophecy, someone shouting out a word of wisdom, and someone in the middle of it all shouting "Jesus is *anathema*."

Verse 3: The Tests

The negative (v. 3a): "No man speaking buy the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed."

They had heard the term "Jesus be cursed" before.

- 1. Jesus was cursed in the synagogue: "Cursed be anyone who hangs on a tree."
- 2. Christian proselytes to Judiasm were required to curse Jesus.
- 3. Roman persecution required obedience to the emperor: "Caesar is Lord." Christians were already beginning to have dificulty with that.

Now, in that hysterical atmosphere anything might happen and might be claimed to be the work of the Spirit.

Paul lays it down that no man can say a word against Christ and attribute that word to the influence of the Spirit.

The positive (v 3b): "And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit."

Here is the Christian battle cry, "Jesus is Lord."

In so far as the early church had a creed at all, that simple phrase was its creed.

When a man could say "Jesus is Lord" it means that he gave to Jesus the supreme loyalty of his life and the supreme worship of his heart.

The man who speaks by the Spirit will put the Lord Jesus in His rightful place, on the throne. I can speak the words, "Jesus is Lord," and so can you. Anybody can say it, because no one can check our vocabulary. But no man can say with authority and absolute certainty that Jesus Christ is Lord, and back it up by the evidence of his life, but by the Holy Spirit.

The true believer indwelt by the Holy Spirit will never speak disrespectfully or disparagingly of Christ. Speaking of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus said, "He shall glorify Me" (John 16:14).

This provides a clear-cut test for faith. Does one truly believe in Christ? If he does, his life will prove it. The indwelling Spirit will glorify Christ in a holy life. It is blasphemy for one to say he believes while continuing on in a life of sin.

A well-known Scottish university professor was once asked to give a religious address at a fashionable and select club in the west end of London.

This is how he began: "Gentlemen, the entrance fee into the kingdom of Heaven is *nothing*; the yearly subscription is *everything*."

The test of anyone's gift or of the use of that gift is an accurate doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit always leads men to ascribe deity, lordship, and all-sufficiency to Christ.

The Thrust of verses 4-11 is unity.

UNITY DOESN'T MEAN UNIFORMITY; THEREFORE THE CHURCH HAS DIFFERING GIFTS AND FUNCTIONS (12:4-6)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-5.

Unity in the Trinity. Holy Spirit gives the gifts, Jesus assigns the place of service, God the father turns on the power.

In the midst of all the diversity, there is unity - different gifts, services or workings, but the same God in all. GOD NEVER DESIGNED US ALL TO BE ALIKE!

DESCRIBE CASAS WIDE UMBRELLA

UNFORTUNATELY MANY CHRISTIANS ACT JUST LIKE CHILDREN. THEY ARE FIGHTING OVER THE PRESENTS.

STORY OF CHILDREN FIGHTING at Christmas over the presents

Some Christians are arguing over who has what gift.

No one has all the gifts. Because you have one of them, you are not entitled to become a spiritual aristocrat because somebody else does not have your gift. Don't demand that, in order for another person to be spiritual, he must heal, or he must speak in an unknown tongue. Be careful when you criticize those who may not have your gift - he has his own. God gives to each of His children one or more, not that we may have spiritual pride, but for the benefit of others.

Some Christians want to take the presents away so no one can have them.

THE BRIDE

It is no surprise to me that there is a fight in America over Spiritual gifts.

A quick survey of the major times of spiritual renewal in church history indicates that with each of these great movements there was a proliferation of small groups, and a high degree of participation of lay individuals utilizing their basic talents, abilities, or gifts. By recognizing and using our gifts we may see a great spiritual renewal in our day.

THE STUDY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS CAN BE CONTROVERSIAL.

Two Extremes Should Be Avoided.

1. Neglect of the whole subject because of problems and disagreements.
2. Overemphasis on spiritual gifts as a cure-all for the church.

Four Problems To Recognize.

1. Disagreement - there's disagreement as to the definitions of the gifts and even the existence of certain gifts.
2. Neglect and Ignorance-(Dr. Lott used to read this passage and skip over tongues).
3. Confusion between supernatural and natural - there's confusion concerning the relationship between spiritual gifts and natural abilities.
4. Abuse of gifts - certain spiritual gifts are emphasized by some as signs of a necessary work of the Holy Spirit. This emphasis at best causes spiritual pride and at worst can be divisive.

Six Principles To Remember.

1. Disagreements usually indicate the lack of conclusive Biblical evidence upon which to resolve the question. Hence be tolerant and allow others their views without dogmatically insiting upon your particular view.
2. Go slowly. Model the gifts. (Four intercessor groups provide natural check and balance) (electrical banance, sin among the leaders. Ineed all the help I can get.)
3. Don't worry about distinction between gifts and natural abilities. God will clarify the distinctions if it will make your ministry more effective.
4. Beware of stressing one gift above another
5. Encourage the exercise of gifts. I want you to know your gift and to use it well.
6. Trust the Holy Spirit to give whatever clarity is needed concerning gifts in order to make our church more functional as a New Testament church and bring glory to God through Jesus Christ.

We are each different in temperament, personality, race,, culture and social background.

What a very precious thing it makes of Christian fellowship when we recognize that whatever we contribute to the service of the King of kings, we must all get from the same source!

We are not alone on the road; there are many other travelers - in fact, all who have been washed in His precious blood, and all who are sharing the gift of life in Jesus Christ.

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE FOR THE COMMON GOOD.
VICTORY COMES IN A GROUP AND NOT IN ISOLATION (12:7).**

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7.

Unity of purpose - Purpose of spiritual gifts is to edify the church. "The common good" (see 12:25). They are to edify the church - for body ministry - not self-edification.

Observe closely that victory is in the group and not in isolation. One of the most damaging things done today is to grieve the Holy Spirit and divide the body.

For victory, the body must work together in harmony and fellowship and love, under the Authority of the Holy Spirit.

I need your gift to see me through and you need mine: all of us need each of us, for we have mutual dependence as a body. God forbid that any of us should do one thing, or say one thing, that would harm the Lord's body, the church, by ruining another's gift or destroying the fellowship.

By the way this speaks forever to the person who wants to go out on the hillside all alone and worship God all by himself as the basis for his religion.

THE NINE SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE REPRESENTATIVE (12:8-10).

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:8-10.

There is a diversity of existing gifts. Paul just lists a cross-section here. These are not all the gifts.

At least three different lists in the Bible.

1. Here
2. 1 Corinthians 12:28-30
3. Romans 12:4-8

I cannot help but be impressed by the significance of the order in which Paul lists some of these gifts of the Spirit. The one that comes first is wisdom, and the last is the gift of tongues.

Spiritual gifts have a spiritual dimension. They are not easily explained in human terms. If they can be easily explained in human terms, there is not much spiritual about them.

Are spiritual gifts for today?

**THE HOLY SPIRIT DISTRIBUTES GIFTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE CHURCH AS HE SEES FIT (12:11).
EVERYBODY GETS A GIFT.**

READ REVELATION 12:11.

What a precious thing is Christian fellowship in the body of Christ! If you are walking today in the company of God's people, you find strength and comfort from gifts they have that you do not possess. The secret of reality is a blessed submission all along the road to the authority of the Holy Spirit, who will give you all you need to be a blessing to others.

10% do all of work. Say at CABC, 25% do all work. Most of us don't notice. But how many would notice if your 8-cylinder car ran on only 2!

CASAS PEOPLE USING THEIR GIFTS

Two people dying.

Jerry DeLeeu

Jim Conrad

We have absolutely nothing for the road except we receive it from Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In other words, we are saved by grace, and by grace alone, and we are kept and equipped for the rest of the journey by grace alone. It is not man's natural gifts that God uses, but the gifts of the Spirit which He imparts.

SALVATION IS BY GRACE AS WELL.