

Spiritual Gifts...The Holy Spirit gives...and We Are Expected to Use Them Appropriately!

What is your spiritual gift?

Do you desire to know what your spiritual gift(s) is/are?

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul taught the church that “to each one (member) the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” (12:7)

- **No believer is overlooked when it comes to receiving a spiritual gift.**
- **Gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to individual members for the good of the entire congregation**
- **We are to use them appropriately and with thanksgiving (not prideful).**

Paul wrote letters to the Corinthian Church to help them mature and to let them know that being a Christian is a privilege and an honor that the Lord God has made available to those that desire a better way of life.

1 Corinthians 12-14, gives us a picture of the Corinthian church by showing worldly thinking of who they are in Christ...

In previous chapters, we see immaturity in that:

- **Some of their women were overthrowing customs of dress,**
- **Their observances of the common meal had disgraced the Lord’s Supper.**
Instead of communion (common union) between church members and our Lord...There was confusion, dysfunctional relationships, lack of true humility in the use of the gifts of the Spirit God had given them, and the disregard for common courtesy.

Other problems... is what we want to center in on?

One was.....Because of the attention they received and of the honor they hoped to secure, certain members of the Church at Corinth were making a parade of their ability to speak in tongues AND FLAUNT THEIR GIFT(S).

Remember...this was Corinth...this was a city, a community where excellence in oratory was cherished. Therefore....the ability to speak ecstatically under the influence of the Holy Spirit would have been highly prized.

The problem...Selfish motives had corrupted a sacred blessing.

Having begun in the Spirit, they were continuing in the flesh (Galatians 3:3).

Paul urges his errant INFANT church toward the unity characteristic of the body of Christ.

There are words that carry an emphasis on what is suggested or recommended ...and...another on what is imperative, demanded, or commanded (mandatory).

For instance...In Dept. of Transportation Regulations, the word "should" and the word "may" are words that are suggested and recommended.

The word "shall"... "will" ... and "must" are words that demand change or carry with it no room for adjustments or slack. It is mandatory...and not doing it places the party in jeopardy of fines, confinement, or discipline when party is non-compliant.

The Bible does the same...Paul, in his own way...states that the church MUST renounce selfishness...and replace it with the most enduring gift of all....LOVE (1 Corinthians 13).

We must remember...that Paul emphasized that each gift has the same divine source and operation. (12:11)

The Holy Spirit gives the gifts to each one as He wills.

(Sovereignty of the Spirit). Someone using his gifts unwisely or begs to have the gift given to someone else is out of line...and is the dysfunctional part of the body of Christ.

This means that the body of Christ spends a lot of time trying to take care of the dysfunctional member because it causes the whole body to get out of sync.

Paul names a representative list of nine (9) charismatic gifts (12:8 – 11)

LISTING OF GIFTS IN 1 CORINTHIANS 12:8 – 11

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|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Wisdom | 6. Prophecy |
| 2. Knowledge | 7. The Ability to Distinguish Between Spirits |
| 3. Faith | 8. Tongues |
| 4. Gifts of Healing | 9. Interpretation of Tongues |
| 5. Working of Miracles | |

Other gifts mentioned in the Word of God...example, Romans 12:5-8

"...according to the grace given us"

- *Prophesying* - *Serving* - *Teaching* - *Encouraging* - *Giving*
- *Leadership* - *Showing mercy.*

In 1 Corinthians 12:12 – 31, the most famous picture of the unity of the Church was written.

Men have always been fascinated by the way in which the different parts of the body co-operate.

Plato (the great Greek philosopher) pointed out that we do not say, "my finger has a pain," we say, "I have a pain."

There is an "I"...a personality, which gives unity to the many and varying parts of the body.

**WHAT THE "I" IS TO THE BODY, CHRIST IS TO THE Church.
IT IS IN HIM THAT ALL THE DIVERSE PARTS FIND THEIR UNITY.**

Paul goes on to look at this in another way.

"YOU," HE SAYS, "ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST."

Christ is no longer in this world in the body; therefore, if He wants a task done within the world He has to find a person to do it.

- If He wants a child taught, He has to find a teacher to teach him;
- If He wants a sick person cured, He has to find a physician, surgeon, the person with the gift of healing, and a great crowd of prayer warriors to do His work.
- If He wants His story told, he has to find a person to tell it.

Literally, we have to be the body of Christ, hands to do His work, feet to run upon his errands, a voice to speak for Him.

"He has no hands but our hands
To do His work today;
He has no feet but our feet
To lead men in His way;
He has no voice but our voice
To tell men how He died;
He has no help but our help
To lead them to His side."

A body is healthy and efficient only when each part is functioning perfectly. This is the unity that should exist inside the Church if it is to fulfill its proper function.

There are certain things that ought to exist in the Church, the body of Christ.

(1) We Ought to Realize That We Need Each Other.

There can be no isolation in the Church.

If the Church is to be a healthy body, we need the work that everyone can do.

(2) We Ought to Serve Each Other.

In the body there is no question of relative importances. If any limb or any organ ceases to function, the whole body is thrown out of gear.

It is so with the Church. "All service ranks the same with God."

Whenever we begin to think about our own importance in the Christian Church, the possibility of really Christian work is gone.

(3) We Ought to Sympathize With Each Other.

The Church is the whole. The person who cannot see beyond his or her own organization, the person who cannot see beyond his or her congregation,

worse still, the person who cannot see beyond his or her own family circle, has not even begun to grasp the real unity of the Church.

Where are you in the midst of these gifts....this service function of the body of Christ?

Find your place....you belong....you are important!

One of the gifts that so many churches need is encouragement or Word of Knowledge (Encouragement)...

If a Christian has the gift of encouragement (Romans 12:8)...then he/she should be the one that provides the needed spark that helps those that are discouraged, disheartened, down due to circumstances.

Paul was one of those encouragers (Acts 27:21-26).

When all hope was gone for the men on board ship, Paul told them to not lose courage.

Set an example for others...use your gift for the glory of God...by helping others understand that God has always the best interest at heart for His children.

Will we face trials? Will we face difficult times in our lives? Will we die eventually?

God has something better for us no matter where we are in life!

