

God's Wisdom in an Age of Confusion
1 Corinthians 12
One Lord, Many Gifts

Introduction

Good morning! Welcome to EBC, please open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 12.

Spiritual Gifts: Still for Today?

Let's pray...

Background to Corinth: Review

Where we have been so far...

Paul's call to fellowship and union with Christ (1:9)

Understand Identity

Paul addresses the issues of eating meat sacrificed to idols, both in the Temple and the market

The sum of it all is this:

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:2

Last week we explored Paul's instructions regarding communion. This week we will begin his teaching on the exercise of spiritual gifts.

Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12

The Spirit says: "Jesus is Lord!"

1 Cor. 12:1-3

The pagan background they had caused confusion and consternation. But the main thing the Spirit confirms is the fact that "Jesus is the Lord" (earliest Christian confession and the heart of what it means to be a follower of Christ).

Spiritual gifts are given for the common good of the church.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

The purpose of spiritual gifts are for the building up of the body of Christ; not the building up of the self!

Many gifts, but all originate from the same Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:8-11

The Spirit distributes gifts as He will, all for the building up of the body. Let's put some definition on these gifts:

Wisdom – *Ability to discern God's guidance in light of specific pastoral situations.*

Utterance of knowledge – *Ability to understand God's revealed truth in light of specific pastoral situations.*

Faith – *Ability to display and help others to radically trust in and depend on God.*

Healing – *Ability to be used as a channel for God's healing power on behalf of others.*

Miracles – *Ability to be used as a channel for God's miraculous power.*

Prophecy – *Ability to speak forth God's revealed truth and apply it to specific pastoral situations.*

Distinguishing spirits – *Ability to discern the accuracy and authenticity of spiritual/prophetic messages.*

Tongues – *Ability to speak unlearned (and/or possibly angelic languages).*

Interpretation of Tongues – *Ability to interpret messages given in "tongues" (unlearned and/or angelic languages).*

Every member has a place within the Body.

1 Cor. 12:12-26

But which gifts are the best ones to have?

1 Cor. 12:27-31

Notice the order here...Paul puts tongues last, probably on purpose because that seems to have been the one that everyone was desiring. Again, this is likely because of their pagan backgrounds.

Main Idea:

Through the Spirit, every member of Christ's body has been uniquely designed and equipped to contribute to the edification and growth of God's church

Application:

If you read our vision, mission, and values statement, you will notice that one of our core values read like this:

- **People:** *we value every person as made in the image of God and every Christ-follower as an essential part of his body.*

Our character needs to match our (spiritual) gifting.

God will use our suffering (trials/tribulation) to shape and enhances our (spiritual) gifting.

God often uses His (humanly) less gifted yet highly devoted servants for tasks that they otherwise could never do on their own strength/power/wisdom.

(i.e. devotion is more important and more valued in God's eyes than gifting)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?
- 2) What are some ways God helps us identify and grow into our gifts?
- 3) Why is developing godly character so important in relation to our spiritual gifting?
- 4) How might the Lord be calling you to express your spiritual gifting?
- 5) If God esteems “devotion” as more important than “gifting”, what are some ways you can grow in your own devotion to and availability for Christ and His kingdom?