

Gifted for Worship 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

Continuing on the topic of Worship, Paul encourages the Corinthians (and us) to understand, enjoy and properly employ our Spiritual Gifts in the act of worship through service to one another - all to the glory of God.

Today's passage from 1 Corinthians actually continues on a line of thought related to worship – and it picks up on a CRUCIAL concept (something God has provided) that is essential for the church to function harmoniously, purposefully, and to the glory of God (not us!)

Context: Chapter 10 emphasized, “seek the good of your neighbor, not self” and “do all to the glory of God”. Chapter 11 zeroed in on Worship, and in particular, ensuring focus (of ourselves and those around us) on GOD – complete attention and affection on Him. In 11, we see the importance of ‘seeking the good of our neighbor’ and ‘glorifying God’ tied together as we are admonished to make our time in worship undistracting to others and NOT about us!

Chapter 12 seems to move onto another subject – that of Spiritual Gifts – and then onto Love (13)...but then back to Spiritual Gifts (14). However, I suggest it is an extension of the same subject(s)...

Recently in this series we learned about: “Lifting Up...Falling Down...Giving In (to God and to One another)...

I suggest that Ch 12 (today) is the beginning of a section on ‘worship with our selves’ (service as worship) in the context of the local church. And that Chapter 13 takes on the importance of employing LOVE in that context – and then Chapter 14 shows how this (employing love) plays out back in the contexts of “serving by our gifts in church”.

In the end, the same idea is emphasized about worship (this ‘service/worship’ – that it is about OTHERS, and more importantly ABOUT GOD!

We’re going to look at all of Chapter 12 today – and will read through it as we go...

I. An Introduction: Basics of Spiritual Gifts (1-11)

READ 1-7

v. 1 Know this stuff!

1 Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.

There was probably a letter to Paul asking about SG’s...so Corinth had context, we need...

Definitions

- Unaware - Ignorant, uninformed, prone to un- or misuse
- Spiritual Gifts (here in 1 Cor, “pneumatikon” = spiritual things)
By context (vs 8-11), meaning is understood as SGs (parallel Rom 12)
Rom 12 & elsewhere: Charismata – charis = grace
Graced, free, undeserved enablings of the Spirit

A SPIRITUAL GIFT: A special enabling, given by the Holy Spirit to every believer when they trust Christ, to be used to minister to God and others, building up the Body of Christ.

v. 2-3 That which comes from the Spirit will exalt JESUS, that which dishonors Him ISN'T

- 2 You know that when you were pagans, *you were* led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.
- 3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

v. 4-7 The Gifts' Variety in our Unity (as in the godhead)

- 4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same **Spirit**.
- 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same **Lord**.
- 6 There are varieties of effects, but the same **God** who works all things in all *persons*.
- 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit **for the common good**.

We see reference to the Trinity in these verses...and demonstration of it as well...

Our varied unity is designed to- (source unknown)

Reflect the nature of God (trinity= 3 yet 1, body= many yet 1)

Show off the creativity, sovereignty and love of God

And note – the common good! "My gift is for you, your gift is for me."

READ 8-11

v. 8-11 The list – and each "through, according to, by, and worked from THE SPIRIT"

- 8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;
- 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,
- 10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

This list is not comprehensive (20 listed here, in Rom 12, and in Eph 4)

Slide with comprehensive list from all passages. No list is comprehensive. We don't know if 20 listed here are "all." We DO know all 20 are gifts.

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. The placement of gifts, & gifted people is very much a matter of GOD's WILL (11)

II. An Illustration: the Human Body

READ 12-14

12-14 One Big Whole – and yet a bunch of Individuals...and not whole without the individuals

- 12 For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.
- 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Baptized – baptizo – plunged into identity of another...salvation...GOSPEL

Drink – also used of irrigation...the Spirit satisfies, nourishes, brings health and growth

Jew/Greek, Slave/free – unity and equality before God

- 14 For the body is not one member, but many.

Intro our MODEL – a familiar old friend. SLIDE 1 Mr. P all together. SLIDE 2 – his parts.

Is this a body? NO. The various parts must be together and functioning to be a body.

READ 15-21

15-16 I'm ONE PART, not a whole body. (I must be what I am & can't do it alone.)

- 15 If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not *a part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less *a part* of the body.
- 16 And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not *a part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less *a part* of the body.

Tough to illustrate with Mr. Potato Head, but... foot is saying, "I can do this on my own"

SLIDE 3 – FEET alone, and SLIDE 4 – EARS alone. Is this a body? What does it lack? (a body!)

***There is also an idea of envy here – wanting to be someone else, more on that later...**

17-19 Every Part (present & in the right place) is Necessary – My body needs me (I'm needed)

- 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?
- 18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.
- 19 If they were all one member, where would the body be?

SLIDE 5 – All EYES, and SLIDE 6 – All EARS. Is this a body?

Without VARIETY (without me AND you, and all of us), where would we be? I'M NEEDED!

20-21 Every Part is Significant – I need my body (I am needy)

- 20 But now there are many members, but one body.
- 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

SLIDE 7 – Missing Arms, (If I'm the mouth here, am I OK? – NO, how will food get into me?)

and SLIDE 8 – Missing Feet (and poor Mr P on his side!)

Without UNITY (Me HONORING You as you do your part, and v.v.) where would we be? We'd be disunified and worse, INCOMPLETE. I AM NEEDED!

III. An Application: The Danger of Inferiority/Superiority

READ 22-26

- Further applications occur in Ch 14, following Ch 13 (which is a glorious passage on LOVE – inserted here because of our tendency to be SO UNlovely in the ways we employ our gifts and work within the body).
- 22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary;
- 23 and those *members* of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable,
- 24 whereas our more presentable members have no need *of it*. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that *member* which lacked,
- 25 so that there may be no division in the body, but *that* the members may have the same care for one another.
- 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

We DO have an idea (culturally and personally) about more/less presentable body parts: in our bodies and in THIS body. And yet, we are to HONOR ALL members and their gifts...

READ 27-31

27 Now you are *Christ's* body, and individually members of it.

- 28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues.
- 29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of miracles*, are they?
- 30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?
- 31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts.
And I show you a still more excellent way.

The "Greater Gifts"

- Not greater in importance (or the prior verses were lies!)
- Yet clearly they are more visible and attention-getting, so folks want them
- It's GOOD to want them/pray for them. For that matter it would be good to want and pray for any gift if motive is right: edify others, glorify God!
- BUT **do not take on superiority** – EVERY part is necessary
- The "superioritization" of any gift is getting OFF THE MARK (remember context here- God most important, others MORE important, ME least important). Self-centeredness in gift employment is TOXIC...
- Setup for Ch 13 – the 'more excellent way'...

Summary truths...

- Only for believers (1 Cor 2:14, 12:27-28)
- Each has at least one gift (1 Cor 7:7, 1 Pet 4:10)
- No believer receives all (Rom 12:4-5, 1 Cor 12:21)
- No single gift to all (1 Cor 12:29-30)
- You can't work for/earn them (Eph 4:7)
- Holy Spirit determines gifting (1 Cor 12:11)
- Given permanently (Rom 11:29)
- Indicate call & purpose (Rom 12:2-8))
- Accountable for their use (1 Pet 4:10)
- Must be used with love (1 Cor 13, Rom 12:9-11)

Application:

- From "Spiritual Gifts" (Bobby Clinton)
 - Study the gifts/analyze yourself
 - Have gifting confirmed by others
 - Confirm in Ministry – start serving!
- Sign up for DISCOVER YOUR MINISTRY

Remember in all you do: Love for God, Lifting Up Others