

**DISCIPLESHIP CHALLENGE
DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
SPIRITUAL GIFTS-PT 9
A MORE EXCELLENT WAY
1 CORINTHIANS 12:28 -13:8a**

Introduction

In our study of spiritual gifts we have been studying this section that deals with God setting members in the Church and gifting them for quite some time now. We have looked at various Spiritual Gifts—especially taking a look at the various sign gifts and why they are no longer applicable to the Church.

We have seen how these sign gifts were given as foundational gifts to be operational in the Church up until a certain time. Some of the sign gifts were given to be used to win Jews and were operational up until the time of A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were dispersed all over the world.

Other sign gifts were given to authenticate the message and the messenger until the time of the completion of the New Testament Scriptures. (A.D. 90)

Now understand that 1 Corinthians 12 ends by talking about coveting earnestly the best gifts. But more importantly, we need to see that it talks about using the gifts that we have been given to serve by love!

God has saved us to serve in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. When we are in the place that God has for us and are doing the job God has assigned us we should do it in the manner that honors the Lord Jesus Christ!

We must have the attitude of Christ as we are being conformed into His image. Let's learn something of what He expects of us.

I. GOD SETS MEMBERS IN THE CHURCH. (12:28-31a)

A. Each Member Is Placed By God. (12:11, 18, 28)
(Member = think of it as speaking of a gifted body part)

B. God Hath Set Or Appointed Certain Offices And/Or Gifts For His Own Use. (12:28)

**1. The Gift Of Apostleship.
Apostles Are Listed First.**

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They are first in order of merit and authority.

“Apostle” in a very special sense refers to the twelve men who were chosen by Christ to lay the foundation of the Church! (Luke 6:13-16; Eph. 2:20)

**There are no “Apostles” in the special sense.
No one qualifies to be one today!**

2. The Gift Of Prophets.

They were second in order of merit.

“Prophesy” = “To speak by inspiration...a person illuminated, inspired or instructed by God to announce future events.”

The gift of prophecy in its truest form was much the same as that of the Old Testament...**i.e. setting forth or telling forth what God has said.**

Before the canon of New Testament Scripture was completed, the gift of prophecy was necessary in the establishment of the foundation of the Church. (Just as much as the Apostles!)

There are no need for prophets today who are revealing anything other than what the completed canon of Scripture reveals!

The completed Word of God tells us **what God wants us to know about the future!** Additionally, it gives us **all the authoritative messages we need to edify one another in the Lord!**

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Men of God today are to “*proclaim*” the messages of this authoritative Book!

The completed Canon of Scripture gives us all that we need to mature in the faith!

3. Teachers.

The word translated here means “*an instructor.*” This word is also translated as “*master*”and “*doctor*”

In fact, 40 times it is used of the Lord Jesus Christ.

i.e. A teacher is one who communicates doctrine.

4. After that we see gifts of lesser importance:

a. Miracles and gifts of healing.

Miracle = the instant demonstration of Supernatural Power, overstepping or going beyond the natural law.

b. Helps

i.e. Those who give aid or assistance.

- 1) Often godly women in the church exercise this gift.
- 2) Deacons are officers whose very title assumes this gift.

c. Governments.

Has to do with directorship or steering. This would be the pastor and those with gifts to help the pastor.

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- d. Diversities of tongues.**
i.e. Different languages.

C. There Are A Diversity Of Gifts. (12:29-30)

1. The question is asked, “*Are all apostles, prophets, teachers?*” 12:29a
The answer is no! These are gifts of leadership!
2. The question is asked, “*Are all workers of miracles or do all have the gifts of healing, tongues, or interpretations?*”
The answer is no! These are spectacular gifts!

D. The Corinthians were admonished to covet the best gifts. (12:31a)

1. Consider this admonition in light of the fact that it has been emphasized that the gifts are given on the basis of God's sovereignty. **12:11, 18, 28**
2. As a body they were to covet the best gifts for their Church!

II. THE CORINTHIANS ARE SHOWN A MORE EXCELLENT WAY– THE WAY OF CHARITY (i.e. “Agape” or “Love”) (12:31b-13:3)

A. Charity Defined By Noah Webster.

1. *In a general sense: love, benevolence, good will; that disposition of the heart which inclines men to think favorably of their fellow men and to do them good.*
2. *In a more particular sense love, kindness, affection, tenderness, springing from natural relations.*

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3. *Liberality to the poor or alms bestowed gratuitously.*
4. *Candor; liberality in judging of men and their actions; a disposition which inclines men to think and judge favorably.*

These definitions show that charity is **a love that goes forth from a kind heart doing good in a tangible way (i.e. It is a love in deed and in truth...a love that serves!)**

It is a love that seeks the highest good for others without regard for self.

B. The Occasion For The Passage.

1. It is involved in teaching about spiritual gifts.
2. It is teaching about members with their spiritual gifts being placed in the body.
3. The Church has just been admonished to covet the best gifts for themselves and their local body.

C. A Gifted Person Is Nothing Without Charity Or Love. (13:1-3)

1. **Let's Consider The Ability To Speak Great Things Without Charity. (13:1)**
 - a. *"Though"*
 - i.e. If I speak with the tongues of men and angels.
 - b. Understand that speaking was a big thing among the Corinthians.

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- c. Consider the person who has great abilities to speak, but does so without love.
 - (1) The person becomes as sounding brass. i.e. The vendors used pieces of metal to call housewives out to see their wares.
 - (2) The person becomes as a tinkling symbol. i.e. A noise made by professional mourners.

2. Let's Consider Gifts Being Exercised Without Love. (13:2)

- a. The gifts listed here involve speaking, thinking, and working.
- b. These gifts exercised without love are meaningless.

3. Let's Consider Doing Good Works Without Love. (13:3)

- a. Right things done for wrong reasons are wrong.
- b. I am nothing.
 - i.e. I keep on in the state of being nothing.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARITY OR LOVE. (13:4-8a)
Love Is Produced By The Holy Spirit As A Result Of Being Filled With The Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18--"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"

Love Can Be Used Synonymously With Christ. (1 John 4:7-21)
Christ is the personification of God and His love!

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- 1. True Love Suffers Long Or Is Longsuffering! (13:4a)**
It is forbearing and slow to lose patience! It has an attitude of grace towards others!
 1. Love does not demonstrate irritation or reflect anger unrighteously!
 2. Consider the attitude of love demonstrated by Christ!
 - a. He hated sin but loved sinners.
(John 3:16; Romans 5:8)
 - b. His harshest speech was to the religious legalists. (Luke 11:39-44)
 - c. He acted harshly to those who defiled the Temple. (John 2:13-17)
 - d. Believers are admonished, *"be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down on your wrath."*
(Ephesians 4:26)
- 2. True Love is kind! (13:4b)**
It looks for ways to be constructive with acts of grace!
It acts benevolently and shows oneself useful!
- 3. True Love Envieth Not! (13:4c)**
i.e. There is no jealousy or spite involved in any way!
Envy looks out for self; Love looks out for others!
- 4. True Love Vaunteth Not Itself! (13:4d)**
It is no "windbag!" It does not boast! It is not egotistical and is not anxious to impress!

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- 5. True Love Is Not Puffed Up! (13:4e)**
There is no inner pride that desires to inflate self at the expense of others! It does not cherish inflated ideas of its own importance!
- 6. True Love Does Not Behave Itself Unseemly! (13:5a)**
It is not dishonorable! It acts in its proper place! It doesn't act unbecoming or unsuitable! It is not indecent in actions!
- 7. True Love Seeketh Not Her Own! (13:5b)**
It does not pursue selfish advantage! It doesn't look out for one's own personal welfare at the expense of others!
It seeks the highest good for the object loved!
- 8. True Love Is Not Easily Provoked! (13:5c)**
It is not touchy! It is not hypersensitive! It does not take things too personally!
- 9. True Love Thinketh No Evil. (13:5d)**
It does not keep account of evil! It doesn't continually review wrongs! There is no negative approach! It doesn't hold a grudge or think the worst!
- 10. True Love Rejoices Not In Iniquity. (13:6a)**
It does not gloat over the wickedness of other people!
It doesn't use others' evils to justify personal weakness!
- 11. True Love Rejoices In Truth! (13:6b)**
This is the opposite of rejoicing in iniquity! It praises God when truth prevails! Love desires to go God's way—God's way is the way of truth!

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- 12. True Love Bears All Things! (13:7a)**
It keeps things confidential! It does not gossip about inconsistencies in the lives of others! It endures those things patiently!
- 13. True Love Believes All Things! (13:7b)**
There is a full development of faith! It trusts other people and gives them the benefit of doubt! It is eager to believe the best about others!
- 14. True Love Hopeth All Things! (13:7c)**
It has great expectation of the future! It has a positive peace and confidence in God and the ways of God!
- 15. True Love Endures All Things. (13:7d)**
It is stabilized so as to be relaxed under pressure! It does not cease when problems come! It endures all trials with a loving spirit!
- 16. True Love Never Fails. (13:8a)**
- a. The word for “*never fails*” is extra strong.
 - b. It speaks of an actor who is never hissed off the stage.
He always does a good job!

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When salvation takes place the individual becomes an integral part of God's plan for the ages!

He is given a gift or gifts to be used to further God's cause!

It behooves each of us to examine our self and determine what we are doing with God's provision of salvation and his provision for service!

How do you stand with God?

Conclusion

The giving of gifts by God and all that is involved with it goes to show God's concern for mankind!

He has provided salvation in the person of Jesus Christ! That salvation is available to anyone who is willing to receive Him as their personal Savior!