



1 Cor 12:4-11

Paul's Teaching on Spiritual Gifts

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,

10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

In the Christian faith there tend to be two reigning errors regarding the distribution of what we would call spiritual gifts to the members of the Church. Some feel that the Kingdom of God is actually “The People’s Republic of God” and that all members of the church are absolutely equal in their abilities and that same gifts have been equally distributed to all. Therefore if someone wants to preach or teach, it doesn’t matter whether they are called or qualified, the assumption is that all are equally gifted and therefore they may and should be allowed to do these things. No restraint biblical or simply wise may be applied. THEY want to do it, they are going to do it.

Then there are those who are more than happy to acknowledge that not all members of the church are equally gifted, but seem to feel that the spiritual gifts are actually a sign of their own spiritual superiority. They may not tell you outright, but they make it clear that their “anointing” makes them a better class of Christian. It is as though this was some quality that was either inherent to them or that they deserve praise for developing.

In Corinth there is much left behind in the archaeological evidence indicating that the rich and famous were constantly parading their achievements before the city. I have done this, aren’t I splendid? Now unfortunately, the Corinthians seem to have carried the same attitude into the church with them about the spiritual gifts they had been endowed with.

If I can give you an analogy of the practical result of that, they are kind of like the professional athlete who wants to make sure that everyone else knows he is the best of the best. He’s always preening and strutting himself, like a barnyard rooster, he’s *puffed up* to use Paul’s phrase, arrogant, full of himself or herself.

His view is that the gifts are there for his own glory. He may not spike the bible and do a victory dance after a sermon, but it's the same general idea. This, from what we can tell were most likely the problems of the Corinthians, some believing that everyone should have and exercise the same gifts, or an arrogance regarding their possession and a wrong attitude about the purpose of those gifts.

Paul wants to remove both of those misconceptions – by first pointing out that there are *diversities of spiritual gifts*. Everyone has some, but Christians are not all born again clones, we have all been provided with gifts of the spirit, everyone has one or more, but they are by no means the same.

First: When it comes to the gifts there is a *Dairesis* or apportioning, allotment, of the *Charismaton* or gifts. God distributes or allots these gifts as *distributing to each one individually as He wills*. So not all have the same. Each had different gifts.

Additionally, men were not the author of these gifts, they had nothing to boast in.

God is the giver of all of them

Their purpose was for the building up of the one body

They saw it terms of society – therefore competition

But they are part of the same body

This is not the equivalent of two boxers boasting to one another about who is better, it is the equivalent therefore of the arm on the same boxer boasting of its superiority over the leg or the eye boasting of its superiority over the ear. The key there is, the ear asking, oh yes, how well do you do at seeing.

You see each has a different function, properly understood they work together, and their joint purpose is the building up of the body and the body serves the Lord. The emphasis here is a proper unity in diversity. We serve the body the body serves the Lord, each component is necessary. Each gift has been given to a member of the body for the benefit of the whole body, and should be exercised accordingly.

He mentions this diversity of gifts, Now during the time when the canon was being laid down, many of these gifts were what we would call “sign” gifts or “extraordinary” gifts. Big emphasis on that here, not today.

Varieites of Gifts, *dioakonia* service or ministries, and *energemata*, literally the out working of power which our translators render activities.

It is difficult to because we do not see many of these supernatural gifts in place to be exact and authors differ.

The **word of wisdom**, is the gift of speaking or communicating wisdom; and the word of knowledge is the gift of communicating knowledge. Properly understood they are intimately related

The **word of knowledge** was the gift correctly to understand and properly to exhibit the truths revealed by the apostles and prophets. Whereas Biblically wisdom is the ability to correctly apply those truths to life. 95% of counseling is simply the application of Biblical wisdom to individual lives.

Now **Faith** is something that all true Christians have, but here we are speaking of a gift of faith in an extraordinary degree the kind that one sometimes sees in the missionaries who never gave up. Every church has its cost counters, but it also needs the men and women of extraordinary faith

Healings is rather obvious: we see it in the ability granted to the Apostles. Gifts by which healing of the sick was effected. Evidently refers to the miraculous healing of diseases. Differs markedly from the “healings” we hear of today

Acts 3:5 So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them -- walking, leaping, and praising God.

Completeness etc.

Miracles, refers to mighty works – For instance:

Acts 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

9 Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

10 and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?"

11 "And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

Gift of Prophecy: This is the speaking forth of the word of God to their generation. In Paul’s time this was the speaking forth of inspired words, and it is vital obviously because it is the inspired prophets and Apostles who brought forth God’s revelation and set it down for all generations. Today, we dwell overly on the *predictive* element of Prophecy and that, especially in the OT prophets, was important for when it came to pass it showed that what the prophet declared was true. But we should consider that Paul was an inspired teacher of the church and yet the majority of what he preached and wrote was didactic, that is teaching, as opposed to predictive.

1 Cor. 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

Paul later will say this is the gift the church should most earnestly desire.

During the Reformation in England Puritan gatherings for the purpose of preaching were called prophesyings and accordingly William Perkin’s excellent little manual on how to preach God’s Word from the scriptures is called “*The Art of Prophesying*”. So when you think of this term think of the idea of conveying the message of God to hearers.

Discerning of Spirits: As we have seen this testing of the spirits is critical all Christians must exercise it, and if we ever needed a gift today it is this one, we spoke of that last Sunday

Tongues and interpretation: Other Languages or Ecstatic Speech - Corinthians 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. Without interpretation it was of no use to the church

Cause of massive disorder otherwise: *1 Cor 14:26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.*

27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.

28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.

Applications:

Difference between these gifts and the confused and confusing profusion today:

Importance though of having them and exercising them: Everyone has them My own experience, I was an introvert and I was *terrified of public speaking*.

Importance of not attempting to exercise a gift you don't have.

Spiritual gifts are given to all believers for the benefit of the body, not for the personal benefit – DO THEY GIVE GLORY TO GOD and not men? Do they point to Jesus and edify his body? We should be doing that!

1 Cor. 14:5 I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.