

Spiritual Gifts

(Part 1)

1 Corinthians 12-14

Romans 12

Ephesians 4

1 Peter 4

Part 1: Background

Part 2: The “Gifts”

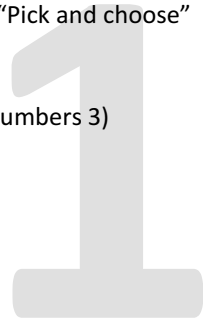


Why So Much Confusion?

- What did Jesus teach? (Matthew 24:4, 5, 11, 24)
- What did Paul teach? - 2 Timothy 3:13 - see Peter’s warning: 2 Peter 2:1-3
- What did John teach in Revelation 12:9; 13:14; 18:23; 19:20; 20:8, 10.
- What did Paul command? 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 - see Isaiah 8:20; 1 John 4:1.
 - ★ **BECAUSE THERE IS SO MUCH COUNTERFEITING TODAY!!!!**
 - Why is there so much confusion? **BECAUSE** we are NOT disciples!
 - **BECAUSE** we listen to men and NOT what God has said in the **whole counsel of His written Word**. - see Acts 20:26-27; Ephesians 4.
 - Why? Complacency (Zephaniah 1:12); laziness/sluggishness (Hebrews 6:11-12); idleness (Ecclesiastes 10:18; Amos 6:1); no real fear of God (Zephaniah 1:2; Romans 3:18); **spiritual pride (Revelation 3:14-22)**; we do not meditate on God’s Word (Psalm 1:1-3; 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148)
 - ★ The danger and consequences of “verse theology.”
 - ✗ False: This is what this verse says therefore this is what the Bible says.
 - ✓ True: This is what the Bible says from Genesis to Revelation therefore this verse must mean this.
 - ★ The evilness of “pick and choose” obedience. “Pick and choose” obedience is DISOBEDIENCE.

Understanding Gifts from the Old Testament (Numbers 3)

- **The Levites: A Gift to the High Priest** (vv. 6-13)
 - Son of Jacob and Leah (Genesis 29:34)
 - Brothers and Sister (Genesis 35:23; 34:25)
 - His sin. (Genesis 34:25-30)
 - His curse. (Genesis 49:5-7)



- Their call. (Exodus 32:26; Luke 14:26-27)
- They were **separated** by God. (Numbers 1:48-53)
- They were **chosen** by God. (Deuteronomy 18:5)
- They **belonged** to the LORD. (Numbers 8:14)
- They were **presented** (*given*) by God to the Aaron, the High Priest. (Numbers 8:14) **JUST AS, all Christians are given, by the Father, to Christ, our High Priest to serve Him and the Church.** (John 10:27-82; 6:38-40; 17:1-22)
- Their duties (service) were **determined** by God. (Numbers 3)
 - **KOHATHITES:** the Ark, the Table of Showbread, the Lampstand, the Altars, the utensils, the screen.
 - **MERARITES:** the boards, the pillars, the sockets, the pegs (pins), the cords, and utensils.
 - **GERSHONITES:** the tents with its coverings, the door, the screen to the court.
- The Levites were God's! (v. 12)
- The Levites received no inheritance (land) – God was their inheritance! (Deut. 10:9; 18:1-2; Ezekiel 44:28).

Authors of 1 Corinthians

- Paul and Sosthenes.
- Sosthenes was at one time the leader of the synagogue in Corinth and now a convert to Christianity. He could have been Paul's secretary. Or he, being a Corinthian himself, was adding his support to Paul's letter.
- Paul – the great recipient of God's grace and the communicator of the doctrines of grace.
- Paul was an example of how a person can be **sincerely** religious, believing they are a believer, doing the work of God, and, yet, be **absolutely** blind to the truth.
- (Acts 8:3) Paul "made **havoc** of the Church" ("irrational and relentless persecution - to devastate, destroy, do great harm, severely injure. In classical Greek this word was used to a **ravaging animal.**)
 - ★ Paul was a **very evil** person. (Acts 26:11; 1 Timothy 1:13)
- ★ **BUT** God saved him!!
 - God saved Paul as a **demonstration** of His great mercy. (1 Tim 1:12-17)
 - God had **WORK** for Paul to do as He does for all whom He saves. (Acts 9:15-16; Ephesians 2:8-10)
 - God **decided** that Paul would be an **apostle**. Everything is by the "will of God".

Audience - Church of God at Corinth (1 Corinthians 12:2)

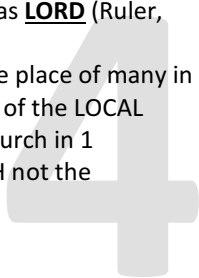
➤ The City

- In biblical times, Corinth was a thriving, prosperous, international city.
- Located on a small *isthmus* that connects north and south Greece.
- Since sea travel around the southern part of Greece was **dangerous** ships were either dragged across the 7km isthmus or off loaded and reload on different ships.
- The *canal* today that connects east and west was started by Nero in the 1st century but not completed until the end of the 19th century by the French.
- Corinth hosted the ***Isthmian Games***. (Important for understanding passages like 1 Corinthians 9:24-27).
- Corinth was a ***extremely morally corrupt*** city. In ancient Greek the word "*corinthianzeshai*" - "to behave like a Corinthians" came to be synonymous with **gross** immorality, moral **depravity**, and drunken **debauchery**.
- The sins of Corinth included fornication, extreme idolatry, adultery, effeminacy, homosexuality, stealing, covetousness, drunkenness, abusive speech (reviling), extortion, etc. (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-10)
- The main problem in the church at Corinth was the need to become "***decorinthianized***".
- In 2 Corinthians 6:14-17, Paul wrote that Christians are to be **separate** because they are **sanctified** or **holy** – they have been made **different** by God.

➤ The Church

- The Corinthian believer had come **out** of a "perverse and crooked" generation.
- Corinth was so evil that it was a common belief that if one went to Corinth he would certainly be "corinthianized" (become very evil, perverse, immoral, etc.)
- We, too, live in a "perverse and crooked" generation. (Philippians 2:15-16; Matthew 17:17; Acts 20:30)
- We are called to be the "lights of the world". (Matthew 5:14-16; Ephesians 5:8)
- **DARKNESS** and **LIGHT** have **nothing** in common. They are **complete** opposites! (2 Corinthians 6:14-17)
- We are to **put off** the works of darkness and **put on** the armor of light. (Romans 13:12-14; Ephesians 6:11-18; Colossians 3:10-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8)

- False teachers came into the church after Paul left the first time.
These false teachers slandered Paul, question his apostleship/ authority and introduced the Church to many false teaching. READ Jude 3-4; 2 Peter 2:1-3
- **BAD COMPANY** (the world) **corrupts** (“corinthianizes”). (1 Corinthians 15:33; 5:6; Proverbs 13:20; Revelation 18:4)
- **“The Church of God at Corinth”** God’s definition of **church** is very different from what we find in the **world**.
- Descriptions of God’s Church as found in the New Testament.
- In the end, it is God’s definition, not man’s, that matters. Many are being deceived today about what **church** really is.
- “Church” is ἐκκλησία ekklesia {ek-klay-see'-ah} meaning “the **called out ones**”.
→ The Church of God is made up of those who have been “**called out**” of the world to be **DIFFERENT**.
- (v. 2) “**sanctified**” literally means “to be set apart”. **Believers** have been “set apart” by God to be His special people in the world.
 - ★ Christians are set apart **for** God to live their lives **for** Him.
 - ★ One is “set apart” only “**in Christ Jesus**”. **Believers** are IN CHRIST.
- (v. 2) “**called to be saints**”
 - ★ To be “called” means to be **effectually summoned** by God. God is the One who calls.
 - ★ “saint” literally is “holy or sanctified one”. Believers are **made holy** by God. People **do not** become saints because they are holy. They are called so that they might be **made** holy.
 - ★ One must be a **saint** before he or she dies. Only **saints** are allowed into God’s heaven.
 - ★ ONLY God can make a person a saint. No man or committee on earth has the right or power to make a person a saint.
- (v. 2) “**with all who . . . call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord**”
 - ★ Believers are part of the “body of Christ”.
 - ★ Those who call on the name of Jesus Christ, **as described in Scripture**, and those who acknowledge Him as **LORD** (Ruler, Master, Owner).
- “at Corinth” is an important phrase because it is one place of many in the New Testament that teaches the importance of the LOCAL CHURCH. So, when Paul writes to the Corinth Church in 1 Corinthians 12 he is speaking of a LOCAL CHURCH not the UNIVERSAL CHURCH.



Reason for Letter(s)

- The Corinth Church was “a mess”! It needed Paul’s exhortations in dealing with:
 - disunity; factions; “cliques”; divisiveness
 - theological problems (i.e. the resurrection of Christ and believers)
 - tolerating gross immorality
 - flaunting their freedom “in Christ”
 - abuse of the Lord’s Supper
 - misunderstanding what the church is
 - misunderstandings/abuse of spiritual gifts/wanting “showy gifts”
 - misunderstandings about marriage/divorce/remarriage
 - members suing one another
 - selfishness
 - roles men and women in the church
 - head coverings in worship
 - stewardship/tithing

★ **THE CHURCH OF THE 21ST CENTURY HAS THE SAME PROBLEMS TO A GREATER DEGREE THAN THE CHURCH at CORINTH.**

1 Corinthians 12-14: Background – IT IS IMPORTANT!

- Greek and Roman mythology was influenced by the religions of the EAST.
- Even during Isaiah’s times Israel (as well as the surrounding nations) were heavily influenced by these eastern religions – Isaiah 2:6, see also Numbers 23:7.
- The first false organized religion came at the tower of Babel through the descendants of Ham. (Genesis 10:9-10, 11:4) The leader was NIMROD.
- God judged this religion by confusing the languages of everyone there.
- “Babel” or “Babylon” is “the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth”. (Revelation 17:5) - This is the **one** world religion of the end-times.
- Nimrod’s wife, Semiramis, soon became a object of worship as a goddess. She became to be known as Ishtar of Syria, Astarte of Phenicia, Isis of Egypt, Aprodite of Greece, Venus of Rome.
- Her son, Tammuz, according to legend, was conceived by a sunbeam. He became known as Baal in Phoenicia, Osiris in Egypt, Eros in Greece, Cupid in Rome.
- Through Semiramis and Tammuz the “mother-child cult” began! See Ezekiel 8:14.

- Many false teaching were birthed by this religion!
- Common to these false religions was “**ecstasy**” which was a “supernatural communion with deity” and “**enthusiasm**” which involved prophecies, divination, and revelations of dreams and visions.
- Out of these pagan practices came the saints of Corinth!

Spiritual Gifts vs. Counterfeit Gifts

- People counterfeit whatever is valuable!
- Satan has a counterfeit gospel, counterfeit ministers, and counterfeit gifts.
- A **counterfeit** by definition is a **copy** of the genuine and is designed to **deceive**.
- Consider the business of “counterfeit diamonds.”
- Satan has been successful in deceiving many because the church lacks discernment. (Jude 4)
- **Reasons for a lack of discernment within the church:**
 - ❶ Weak doctrine – what the Bible truly says. (2 Timothy 4:1-4; 1 Tim 4:16; Eph 4:14; John 8:45; Galatians 4:16)
 - ❷ Relative thinking – no **BLACK** and **WHITE** - no **ABSOLUTES** in our thinking.
 - ❸ Pragmatism – using worldly ways and methodology. “If it works then it must be good.”
 - ❹ Inaccurate interpretation – “I thinking this verse means . . .”
 - ❺ Spiritual immaturity – “baby Christians” – 1 Corinthians 3:1-2; Heb 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:2) – “babies” put anything in their mouths, trust “adults”, do no test anything.
 - ❻ Feeling and experience vs. doctrine. If it “**feels**” right then it must be right.”
 - ❼ Inclusive vs exclusive – having absolute minimum standards of accepting someone or church as Christian. In contrary to Christ’s teaching such as Luke 14:25-35. Or NT teachings of exclusion in Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14; 2 John 10-11; 1 Cor: 5:11; 1 Tim 6:2-5; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 3:10.
 - ❽ Biblical Preaching vs. Entertainment.
 - ❾ Failure to **test** everything and everyone! (Jude 4; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; Isaiah 8:20; Matthew 7:15; Revelation 2:2)

- ONE test for determining if a gift is a genuine gift of God or a counterfeit.
 - LOOK AT THE MAN!
 - Take Paul as an example sine we are **commanded** to imitate him as he imitates Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).
 - ★ Paul was “equipped” by God to be the **apostle** to the Gentiles. In order for Paul to fulfill God’s purpose for him and the Gentiles God “graced” him or “gifted” him.
 - Paul became a STEWARD of this grace/gift. (See Colossians 1:25; Romans 15:15-18; 1 Corinthians 9:17; Galatians 2:7-8; Ephesians 3:2)
 - ★ YET, how did Paul see himself:
 - (1 Corinthians 15:9) “I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”
 - (Ephesians 3:8) “To me, who am the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”
- (Romans 8:14) Being led by the Spirit of God:
 - ① (Romans 8:14) Only those who are LED by the Spirit of Christ are the children of God and heirs of God.
 - ② (Romans 8:13) If you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body (Galatians 5:19-21), you will live.
 - ③ (Ezekiel 36:27) Evidence that Christ abides in ;you is your obedience to God’s commandments. The Spirit will always lead someone to obey the Law of God.
 - ④ (Ephesians 5:18) We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit - emptied completely of self.

NOW, Concerning Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1)

- God **sanctifies** all those who He saves. God **sets His special people apart** for HIS PURPOSE!
- We remind ourselves of our **sanctification** each time we celebrate the Lord’s Supper – specifically with Cup #1.
- To be sanctified (in this context) means to be:
 - ① Chosen by God (Ephesians 1:4)
 - ② Called by God (Romans 8:30)
 - ③ Set apart by God for His purpose. (**Ephesians 2:10**; Titus 2:14)



④ **Equipped by God** (1 Corinthians 12:4-12, 18, 27;
Romans 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:11)

★ God equips His special people by “gracing” or “gifting” them.

- In equipping each and every saint God equips the CHURCH to fulfill His purpose for that CHURCH - to fulfill the Great Commission (Luke 24:47; Matthew 28:18-20).
- (1 Corinthians 12:1) “Now concerning . . .” Paul used this phrase in dealing with the Corinthians’ abuse of the Lord’s Supper in 11:18, here Paul was to deal with the **abuse** of spiritual gifts.
- The Corinthians were bringing into the church those practices that they were accustomed to when they were “Gentiles”. Instead of **renewing** their minds they were adapting old practices to their new “religion”. They were attempting to put “new wine” into “old wineskins”. (Matthew 9:16-17)
- “Christians” attempt this today when they “add” Christ to their lives.
- “I do not want you to be ignorant” – Paul uses this phrase to introduce an important lesson – see 10:1; Romans 1:13; 11:25; 2 Corinthians 1:8; 2:11; 1 Thess. 4:13)
- As Christians we are NOT to be **ignorant** of the teachings of God, but we are to **know** and **understand** the truth of God’s Word. (See Ephesians 5:15-18; Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 1:9)

You Were Gentiles (1 Corinthians 12:2)

- As “pagans” the Corinthians were “carried away” or “led astray” by false all kinds of religions.
- “carried away” is ἀπάγω apago {ap-ag'-o} and is often used to describe prisoners being taken away by an armed guard to prison, trial, or judgment.
- UNBELIEVERS are PRISONERS of their own lusts, the world, and Satan. (Eph. 2:1-3)
- “dumb” here is “mute” – see the foolishness of idolatry in Isaiah 44:9-20.

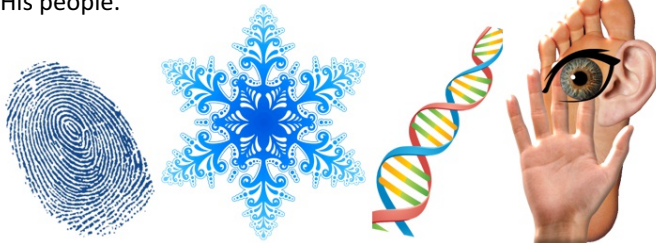
No One Speaking by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3)

- The Corinth’s church’s worship became so “paganized” that people in a state of “ecstasy” and/or “enthusiasm” cursed Christ! **Paul says, “THIS IS NOT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!”**
- “accursed” is ἀνάθεμα (anathema) – consider 1 Corinthians 16:22; Galatians 1:8,9)
- Only those **with** the Holy Spirit can genuinely say, “Jesus is Lord.”
NOTE: “Lord” **not** “Saviour”

- “LORD” is used over **700** times in the NT and “Saviour” under **10!**
- One must confess and live as Jesus Christ is **LORD** (sovereign Ruler, Owner, Master)! (Romans 10:9)
- Paul, in harmony with Joel 2:32, says that anyone who calls on the name of the **LORD** shall be saved! (Romans 10:13)

Different Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4)

- God equips His saints by giving them “spiritual gifts”.
- “Spiritual gifts” is one of the many things that “accompany salvation”. (Hebrews 6:9)
- “gifts” is **χάρισμα** charisma {khar'-is-mah} means “gift of grace” or “free gift”.
 - ★ These are gifts that come from God through the Holy Spirit to those whom He has saved in order to enable them to fulfill the works He saved them for! (Ephesians 2:10)
- “gifts” are NOT talents. Talents are NATURAL and are given to ALL people.
- “gifts” are **SUPER-NATURAL** and are given only to those who have been saved.
- “diversities” is “different”. God gives **different** gifts to accomplish His purpose.
- DIVERSITY is **ESSENTIAL** to UNITY. (Romans 12:4-5)
- The diversity of the lists of gifts in the New Testament are **categories** – God gives His gifts in different ways and in different “quantities” to His people.



- Spiritual gifts are like fingerprints or snowflakes or DNA or part of a body – they are “individualized” for each person to fulfill God’s purpose for that person, church, and time.
- Each believer is **uniquely** equipped by God. No two believers are equipped in the same way.
- THERE IS NO SUCH THING IN A CHURCH WHERE THERE ARE CHRISTIANS WITHOUT GIFTS. (Ephesians 4:7; Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:11; 1 Peter 4:10)

Different Ministries (1 Corinthians 12:5)

- The **different** gifts will be **manifested** in **different** ways (ministries).
- A **teacher** may be “gifted” to teach children while another teacher may be “gifted” to teach adults.
- “ministries” is διακονία diakonia {dee-ak-on-ee'-ah} and means “service”; “those who execute the commands of others”; “those who render a service to others”.
- Spiritual gifts are to be used in the **service** of others as directed by God.
- **God does not give spiritual gifts for self-edification.** God equips His saints to serve each other and, in doing so, serving Christ – the “Body of Christ” – the Church.
- The gifts we receive are **NOT** ours! We are **stewards** of those gifts.
- A **steward** is one who has received something from his Master to use whatever he has received in accordance with his Master’s instructions.

Different Activities (1 Corinthians 12:6)

- “activities” is ἐνέργημα energema {en-erg'-ay-mah} and is translated “effects”; “operations”; “ways”; “workings”; “what is worked out”.
- God who “gifts” each of His saints **EMPOWERS** His saints to use the gifts He gives in order to make those gifts **EFFECTIVE** in order that these gifted saints will accomplish His purpose.
 - ★ See Romans 12:3; 15:15-16; Ephesians 3:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:10; **Colossians 1:29; Philippians 2:12-13.**
- We must be very careful in judging servants of God by **NUMBERS**. Consider Matthew 13:23.
- **REMEMBER:** God gifts saints to accomplish HIS purposes! It is God who works in and through His saints to will and to do for HIS good pleasure/purpose. (Philippians 2:13)
- **NO GIFT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY OTHER!**
- This was a problem in the Corinth church and it is a problem in the 21st Century Church.
- Every believer is “gifted” and every believer is “gifted” **perfectly!**
- Every believer “gifted” by God is **important** to/in the Church.
- NO individual believer is more important than any other.

Different BUT ONE Source (1 Corinthians 12:7)

- The SOURCE of spiritual gifts is the TRIUNE GOD!
 - (v. 4) Given by “the same SPIRIT”
 - (v. 5) Ministries assigned by “the same LORD”

- (v. 7) Powered by “the same GOD”
- “manifestation” means “to make clearly known or evident”.
 - When true spiritual gifts are used in accordance with God’s Word the Holy Spirit becomes EVIDENT in a Church.
 - One can tell that it is the TRUE SPIRIT (and not a counterfeit) by the gifts of the SPIRIT flowing like “rivers of living water” from the Body. (Galatians 5:22-23; John 7:37-39)
- Spiritual gifts are given **for the profit of ALL**. “ALL” is the “BODY”.
- Spiritual gifts are likened to the different parts of a body.
- Spiritual gifts are given to **edify** the Church. (i.e. Ephesians 4:11-13; Acts 6:1-7)
- Spiritual gifts are **NOT** for personal edification.
- No Christian can say he/she is not part of the Body.
- When one part of the Body does not fulfill its/his/her function the WHOLE BODY suffers.

GOD Does Whatever He Pleases - “as He wills” (1 Cor 12:11b)

- When we say that God is **sovereign** we mean that He always does whatever He pleases, whenever He pleases, and however He pleases.
 - ★ Job 23:13; Psalm 115:3; 135:6; Ephesians 1:11
- God is sovereign over good **and** evil. He is sovereign over HIS angels, demons, kings, principalities, dominions, powers and wills of men. (Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 2:10; Romans 11:36; Proverbs 21:1; Proverbs 16:4; Lamentation 3:27-28)
- When it comes to His spiritual gifts He will gift a believer as **HE WILLS** – NOT as man wills.

