

“Now Concerning Spiritual Gifts”

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths © - pastorpat@waukeshabile.org
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“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware” (1 Cor. 12:1).

Read 1 Cor. 12:1-11

Several times within this letter the apostle Paul addresses specific areas that appear to be in response to questions being asked. This is seen in First Corinthians 7:1 (marriage), 25 (virgins), 8:1 (meat offered to idols), 12:1 (spiritual gifts), 16:1 (collections), and 12 (Apollos).

The letter to the Corinthian church is highly occasional. There were specific issues within the fellowship that demanded answers and needed to be addressed. An area of keen interest is that of spiritual gifts. In the first three verses the apostle draws a line of demarcation between the pagan spirits and that of the true God. No one who is a believer can embrace a mindset that curses Jesus Christ or not acknowledge Jesus as Lord (v. 3). What follows are principles concerning spiritual gifts.

First, there are a variety of gifts, but the same Triune God (vv. 4-6). Verses 4 through 6 are in parallel.

v. 4	Varieties of gifts	same Spirit
v. 5	Varieties of service	same Lord
v. 6	Varieties of activities	same God

“The triune God empowers them all in everyone.” How the Church can walk away believing it is bringing anything to the process of sanctification is always hard to understand especially in light of verses like verses 4-6.

Second, everyone has a spiritual gift and it is for the common good (v. 7). Verses 8 through 10 explain the diversity in the giving and receiving of gifts.

There is no such thing as a “gift-less” believer. And every believer has been given a gift to be exercised for the common good of the body of Christ. The expression of the gift is first in the Local Church and then through the Local Church to those around the Local Church both locally, nationally, and globally. God has given every Local Church all the necessary gifts to proclaim Christ to its community.

The listing of spiritual gifts in verses 8 through 10 is not an exhaustive listing. It is not for us in this article to argue against their presence or absence in today’s church. However, it is important to note the gifts.

Continued on the other side...

- The Spirit of utterance of wisdom (v. 8)
- The spirit of utterance of knowledge (v. 8)
- Faith (v. 9)
- Gifts of healing (v. 9)
- The working of miracles (v. 10)
- Prophecy (v. 10)
- The ability to distinguish between spirits (v. 10)
- Various kinds of tongues (v. 10)
- The interpretation of tongues (v. 10)

The last point in this paragraph is verse 11; God is the one who empowers spiritual gifts and gives spiritual gifts. Each individual within His church has been given a specific spiritual gift. He gave the gift to be used within His body for the common good. From this, we can make the following observations.

1. Unity is not based on conformity. Diversity can and should flourish in the midst of intense unity.
2. There should be a deep appreciation for the gifts in other members within the body.
3. Spiritual gifts are for the common good. Each person is special and has been uniquely crafted by God for placement and significance within His body.
4. Spiritual gifts are not to be for the inflation of individual egos but for the edification of His body.
5. God is the one who gives each of His people their giftedness. Each member is a grace gift to His church.

As we continue to study chapters 12 and following, the ideas set forth initially will assist us in understanding our placement in His body.