

Equipped to Serve

Introduction

A. The subject of this message is “Spiritual Gifts”

B. This is a doctrine worth knowing—

1 Corinthians 12:1

¹Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

C. In examining this topic, we will break it down to two main points:

1. Spiritual **Body**

2. Spiritual **Gifts**

Spiritual Body

A. There is “one body”, and “many members” within it

1. The New Testament states:

Romans 12:4-5

⁴For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

¹²For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴For in fact the body is not one member but many.

2. The “one body” refers to the **Church universal**

3. The “many members” refer to **all Christians** that make up the Church universal

B. The church is not an **organization**; it’s an **organism**

1. In the Bible, the church is referred to as “**the body of Christ**”

2. In the body of Christ, there are **many members**

C. As members of the one body, **we should never consider ourselves as being better than others in the Body of Christ—**

1. This point is emphasized in Romans 12:3-4—

³For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

⁴For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function...

2. Because **God** places us in different places in the “one body”, we have different functions as “many members”, and all are important and needed

a. All “members” work together to glorify the Head of the Body—
Jesus Christ

b. The Apostle Paul explained it like this—

1 Corinthians 12:14-27 (NLT)

¹⁴For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

¹⁵If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an

eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye,

where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²²On

the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴which

our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. ²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

D. It is important to grasp that even though we are different members functioning in different ways, we are still part of the same, one body—we are members one of another

Romans 12:5

⁵...so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Spiritual Gifts

A. First, the **Biblical References** for spiritual gifts

1. Romans 12:6-8

⁶Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; ⁷or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

2. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-30

⁴There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: ⁸for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰to 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. ¹¹But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. ²⁸And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? ³⁰Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

3. 1 Peter 4:10-11

¹⁰As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

4. Ephesians 4:11-12 (also called, “Christ’s gifts to the Church”)

¹¹And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...

B. Second, the **Definition** of spiritual gifts

1. “**Spiritual gifts**” are the **supernatural** enablement to do ministry like Jesus

2. There is a distinction between a **natural talent** and a **spiritual gift**:

a. A **natural talent** is given at **birth**, such as artistic and athletic talents

b. A **spiritual gift**, is given at your **new birth**

c. When you're **born naturally**, you have certain talents and abilities and skills, and when you're **born supernaturally** the Holy Spirit brings with Him other abilities to do ministry that glorifies Christ

C. Third, the **Source** of spiritual gifts

1. The Source is **God**

1 Corinthians 12:11

¹¹All these are empowered by **one and the same Spirit**, who apportions to each one individually **as he wills**.

2. Spiritual gifts are a demonstration of God's grace; not human merit

a. The Greek word translated in 1 Corinthians 12:6 as "**gifts**" is "**charismata**" (the root word means "grace")

b. In 1 Corinthians 12:6 Paul emphasizes **God's grace** in the distribution of spiritual gifts—"according to the **grace** given to us"

D. Fourth, the Endowment of spiritual gifts

Being members of the Body of Christ, all Christians have received **at least one** spiritual gift

a. These spiritual gifts **relate to our place and function** in the Body of Christ

b. The place where these spiritual gifts function in the most practical way is within the **“local church”**, such as within Calvary Chapel San Diego

E. Fifth, the Diversity of spiritual gifts

There is a **diversity of spiritual gifts** with a **diversity of functions** working within a **diversity of ministries**—

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (NLT)

Now there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service in the church, but it is the same Lord we are serving. There are different ways God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work through all of us.

F. Sixth, the Purpose of spiritual gifts

1. First, to **glorify Christ**

2. Second, to **build up Christ's church**

1 Corinthians 14:12 (ESV)

¹²So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

3. Third, it is also worth mentioning that, at times, God uses spiritual gifts as **signs to affirm the message of the Gospel** before Non-Believers

Hebrews 2:1-4

¹Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. ²For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ³how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, ⁴**God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?**

1 Corinthians 14:22

²²Tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers...

G. Seventh, the **Description** of spiritual gifts

1. **Prophecy**—the supernatural ability to speak forth God's mind and heart to God's people

2. Ministry—the supernatural ability to serve God’s people in practical ways

3. Teaching—the supernatural ability to explain the meaning of God’s word to others

4. Exhortation—the supernatural ability to encourage others; to stir others to action

5. Giving—(“contributes”) the supernatural ability to display generosity towards others, that which is helpful and needful

6. Leading—the supernatural ability to lead; to inspire others to follow

7. Mercy—(“acts of mercy”) the supernatural ability to display kindness and compassion towards hurting people

8. Word of wisdom—the supernatural ability to speak forth the wisdom of God, especially in important situations in life and ministry

9. Word of knowledge—the supernatural ability to declare knowledge, which could only be revealed supernaturally

10. Faith—the supernatural ability to trust God against all odds and circumstances (exemplified in Hebrews 11)

11. Gifts of healings—this is God’s healing power (it often operates in conjunction with the spiritual gift of faith)

12. Working of miracles—(“acts of power”) this describes when God chooses to “over-ride” the laws of nature, working in or through an available person

13. Discerning of spirits—the supernatural ability to tell the difference between true and false doctrine, and between what is of the Holy Spirit and what isn’t

14. Different kinds of tongues—this is a personal language of prayer given by God, whereby the Believer can communicate with God beyond the limits of knowledge and understanding

15. Interpretation of tongues—this spiritual gift allows the gift of tongues to be of benefit for those other than the speaker, as they are able to hear and agree with the tongue-speaker’s words to God.

16. Helps—this is the supernaturally ability to assist, especially in the context of the local church

17. Administrations—this is the supernaturally ability to administrate, especially in the context of the local church

18. Apostles—

a. The apostles of Jesus Christ (see Galatians 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1)

i. In this category of apostles, the position was limited only to Christ’s 12 apostles + Paul

ii. There are no apostles today in this same category

b. The apostles of the churches (see 2 Corinthians 8:23):

i. In this broader category of apostles, there were others in the New Testament that were referred to as “apostles”

aa. For example, Barnabas (Acts 14:4); Silas (1 Thessalonians 2:6); Timothy (1 Thessalonians 2:6)

bb. Their responsibilities was to proclaim God’s word and establish churches

ii. In this broader, more general sense of the term “apostle”, it’s my opinion that there are still people who function as “apostles” today

For example, cross-cultural missionaries and church-planters

19. Prophets—

a. These were not ordinary Believers who had the gift of prophecy, but specially commissioned men in the early Church

b. The office of prophet seems to have been exclusively for work within a local congregation

c. They sometimes spoke practical, direct revelation for the church from God (see Acts 11:21-28) or expounded revelation already given (implied in Acts 13:1)

d. Their messages were to be judged by other prophets for validity (see 1 Corinthians 14:32) and had to conform to the teaching of the apostles

20. Evangelists—

- a. These are people God called and commissions to deliver the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ to unbelievers
- b. These people often travel from place to place to preach the Gospel and win lost souls for Christ

21. Pastors and Teachers—

- a. Literally “Pastor-Teachers”
- b. “Pastor” means, “shepherd”, and the primary responsibility of pastors is, “feed (“teach”) the flock”
 - i. A person can be a teacher without being a pastor, but he cannot be a pastor without being a teacher
 - ii. All pastors are called to be “pastor-teachers”
- c. For this reason, an essential qualification for pastors is the spiritual gift of **teaching**

H. Eighth, the **Application** of spiritual gifts

1. First, we should **use our spiritual gifts**

- a. Spiritual gifts are not to lie dormant, but rather are to be exercised for the benefit of all—

Romans 12:6

⁶“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, **let us use them**”

1 Corinthians 12:7 (NLT)

⁷A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of **helping the entire church.**

1 Peter 4:10

¹⁰As each one has received a gift, **minister it to one another**, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

b. Remember: Spiritual gifts operate so naturally, we sometimes forget it is supernatural (such as—for me—the spiritual gift of teaching)

2. Second, we should use them being motivated by **God’s love**—

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

³¹...earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

¹Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ²And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

⁴Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not

seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

¹¹When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

¹³And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.