

1 Corinthians

Wisdom & Unity

Meeting the demands of
Christian life and living



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Starting where
you are:

Any questions?



1 Corinthians 12:1 - 14:40—On Spiritual Gifts

“Now concerning” (12:1) suggests a transition to another issue brought to Paul’s attention—spiritual gifts. Paul’s response, in chapters 12-14, offers believers lenses through which to view spiritual gifts. Paul’s main concern is that believers receive with gratitude and employ with grace the Spirit’s endowment for their benefit.

This portion of the letter highlights the significance of the love that should undergird the understanding and use of spiritual gifts. The graces of the Spirit are vital for the continued well-being of individuals and the community.

Outline: 1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40

- 1 Cor 12:1-13 □ Unity through the Spirit
- 1 Cor 12:14-31 □ Diversity in the Spirit
- 1 Cor 13:1-13 □ Maturity because of the Spirit
- 1 Cor 14:1-40 □ Wisdom in demonstration of the Spirit

This outline adapted from Warren Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary.

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1 Corinthians 12:1-31 – On Spiritual Gifts, pt. 1

The human body is a complex organism comprised of many members—i.e., limbs/extremities, muscle groups, nerve endings, organs, etc. How amazing it is, then, that with so many different “moving parts” and functions, it takes all the various parts, working together, to empower the body! Paul makes his case concerning the value and necessity of diverse spiritual gifts to ensure that the Body of Christ functions as God intends.

In this first address of spiritual gifts, we recognize the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the individual uniqueness of spiritual gifts which unite a faith community.

Outline: 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

- Concerning Spiritual Gifts (prelude) (12:1-3)
- The Unity of Spiritual Gifts (12:4-13)
- The Diversity of Spiritual Gifts (12:14-31)

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United, Yet Unique

Spiritual gifts join the Church
together by differences, according
to God's purposes.

Concerning Spiritual Gifts (12:1-3)

12:1-3. Addressing the Reality of Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are a reality for the Church, because the Holy Spirit is the One who gave birth to, and continues to sustain, the Church (Acts 2). The problem in Corinth appears to have been the abuse of the Spirit's gifts by spiritually immature believers. Their abusiveness portrayed their ignorance.

pneumatiko,j: pneumatikos – of/pertaining to/from God the Holy Spirit; refers to things or people. In 12:1, “things spiritual” is the literal reading. Given the context, esp. 12:4, we know that Paul writes specifically about “gifts” that are of, and come from, the Holy Spirit.

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Concerning Spiritual Gifts (12:1-3) cont'd.

- The presence of spiritual gifts. How are the gifts recognized?
 - By correction
 - Rejecting that which leads one away from God (see 1 Cor 10:20-22)
 - Reliance on the Living God (see 1 Cor 8:4-6)
 - By confession
 - Agreeing with the Spirit who enables confession
 - Accepting the Lordship of Jesus Christ by the Spirit's power (see 8:6; Rom 10:9; 2 Cor 4:5)

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The Unity of Spiritual Gifts (12:4-13)

Unity in all things drives this portion of the letter. Paul's case is clear: the **one** Spirit holds together **all** things.

12:4-6. Dependence on the same God.

4 - *καρισμα*: charisma – favor; gift of Divine grace; an endowment from the Holy Spirit.

5 - *διακονία*: diaknonia – service, ministering, fulfilling another's commands.

6 - *ἐνέργημα*: energēma – an effect; operation, working

- A variety of gifts (*charismata*) among which there is no distinction; they come from the same Spirit.
- (4-6) “same Spirit”... “same Lord”... “same God”

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The Unity of Spiritual Gifts (12:4-13) cont'd.

12:7-11. Ministry to the same body (see also Eph 4:1-16).

- Gifts are intended for the one whole body, not any individual parts.
- Gifts work in harmonious relationship with other gifts.
- The Holy Spirit works (ἐνεργέω : energeō), or is operative, in the supply of the gifts. There is one Source for the body.

12:12-13. The unity of the body.

- Many members □ one body
- Many expressions/experiences □ one body
- Many personal identifications □ one body

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The Diversity of Spiritual Gifts (12:14-31)

12:14-26. Blessings of diversity (see Rom 12:4-6a)

- Uniform through unique functions
- United by dependence

By God's wisdom, gives as God desires **to** individuals **for** the body.

Why does God distribute and embrace the diversity of gifts?

- To ensure there is a Body (19)
- To ensure mutual benefit within the Body (20-21)
- To ensure humble service for the sake of the Body (22-25)
- To ensure common cause within the Body (26)

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The Diversity of Spiritual Gifts (12:14-31) *cont'd.*

12:27-31. Examples of diversity in function

- Foundational gifts: Apostles, prophets to call individuals to faith—*Eph 2:19-22.*
- Stabilizing gift: Teachers to establish believers in the faith.
- Power gifts: Miracles to demonstrate the ability of faith.
- ‘Practical’ gifts: Healing, helps, leadership, tongues to meet the day-to-day needs of individuals and the Body.
 - Other gifts lists: *Is 11:2-3; Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:7-11*
 - Misc. gifts: *1 Cor 7:7-8; 1 Peter 4:9-10; Eph 3:7-8;*

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'til we meet again:

- Reflect on today's lesson**
- Pray about today's lesson**
- Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13**



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