

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND THE CHURCH

GOD'S GRACE FOR AN IMPERFECT CHURCH: A STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS · 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11 · JULY 21, 2024 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work." (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

What Does It Mean to Be Spiritual? (12:1-3)

- "Gifts of the Spirit" – things that come from the Spirit
- The Corinthian confusion about what it means to be 'spiritual'
- Paul's Jesus-centered spirituality

God, Spirit-Gifts, and Unity in Diversity (12:4-6)

- The Corinthian push for spiritual hierarchy in the church and Paul's push for equality in gifting in the church
- Unity: "The same Spirit...the same Lord...the same God at work"
- Diversity: "Different kinds of gifts [χαρισμάτων]...different kinds of service [διακονιών]...different kinds of working [ἐνεργημάτων]"
- God's gifting as source and God's distribution as shape

God's Spirit-Gifts and the Church (12:7-11)

- The source and meaning of Spirit-gifts: God and God's grace
- The purpose of Spirit-gifts: common God
- Examples of Spirit-gifts
- All from God, given wisely by God, for God's purposes

Final Words on Spirit-gifts

- Spirit-gifts are Given by God and for God's purposes
- Spirit-gifts are gifts, not badges of status in the church
- Spirit-gifts are given for the upbuilding of the church
- Spirit-gifts are given to direct attention to Jesus, the crucified Messiah

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- When you think of "spiritual gifts," what comes to your mind?
- This week we continue our preaching series, "God's Grace for an Imperfect Church" by looking at 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. Whether on your own or with others, begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you through this study and then read that text aloud.
- In verse 1, how does Paul describe his purpose of writing this next section?
- What does Paul say the role of the Holy Spirit is in verses 1-3?

- With verses 4-6, Paul offers a sort of Trinitarian description of these works. What is happening, according to Paul, as the Spirit, the Lord Jesus, and Father God work within the church in these matters?
- The Greek word most often used in reference to spiritual gifts is charismata (1 Corinthians 12:4, 9). This is a derivative of the Greek word charis, which is usually translated as grace. What do you think the significance of this is for our understanding of spiritual gifts?
- How does verse 7 set up the purpose of these gifts given by God to the local church? Why might this be important for the Corinthians to remember?
- What are the differing gifts given by the Holy Spirit described by Paul in verses 8-10? It is likely this is not a comprehensive list. You may want to look at other such listings in Romans 12:3-8, and Ephesians 4:1-16.
- When was a time when you sensed that God particularly strengthened or gifted you to serve someone else or the church in general?
- In verse 11, Paul offers a sort of summary statement about the spiritual gifts' source and purpose. What stands out to you from these words?
- What is one thing God speaking to you personally through this study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then pray about what you shared. If you are on your own, write it down, pray about it, and share this with someone this week.

DIG DEEPER

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize 1 Corinthians 12:4-6
- Take some time to read through and reflect on biblical teaching about spiritual gifts. As you study these passages, ask God to speak to you about His work in your life and how He might want you to grow.
 - John 20:19-23
 - Acts 2:1-21
 - 1 Corinthians 12:7-11
 - 1 Corinthians 12:12-31
 - Romans 12:3-8
 - Ephesians 4:1-16
- Explore these additional resources:
 - Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*
 - Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit: Biblical Teaching for the Church Today*
 - Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*
 - The Bible Project video, "Holy Spirit": bibleproject.com/explore/video/holy-spirit/