

LXXII. SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND IGNORANCE: 1 Corinthians 12:1

INTRODUCTION/CON(TEXT). The passage of Scripture that I would like to draw your attention to today is 1 Corinthians 12:1-3, which was just read to you. In this text Paul deals with another issue in the Church at Corinth. He is in the middle of answering questions the Corinthians had sent him in a previous letter. The question they asked had to do with Spiritual Gifts and their proper use in the Church. Look at it in your own Bible:

1 Corinthians 12:1 "Now concerning spiritual gifts (*spiritual things, i.e. spiritual gifts, which he treats in this section*), brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed (*ignorant*)."

This issue—*Spiritual Gifts*—was not only something the Corinthian Church needed help with in the first century; it is also something the American Church needs help with in the 21st Century.

According to a Barna's Primary Survey (2008 data, published 2009):

- 68% of self-identified Christians in the U.S. said they *had* heard of spiritual gifts.
- About 21% of *aware* born-again Christians said God had not given them any spiritual gift.
- Roughly 20–21% listed "gifts" not found in biblical lists, such as a sense of humor, singing, health, happiness, patience, creativity, clairvoyance, or premonition.
- Only about one-third accurately identified solely biblical gifts.

Additionally, because of the massive growth of those who are especially ignorant concerning Spiritual Gifts, there have been a number of negative effects on the Church not only in America, but worldwide:

- **Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts often *ELEVATE EXPERIENCE OVER SCRIPTURE*:** Many view the emphasis on ongoing miracles, tongues, prophecy, and "Spirit baptism" as a second blessing as unbiblical, distorting the sufficiency of Scripture and promoting extra-biblical revelation.
- **Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts often *DISTOR THE TRUE GOSPEL BY TYING IT TO PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL PROSPERITY*:** Teachings promising health, wealth, and success through faith and giving are seen as heretical, turning God into a means for material gain and ignoring biblical themes of suffering and contentment.
- **Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts often *MOCK THE HOLY***

SPIRIT AND ARE PLAGUED BY ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM: Phenomena like uncontrollable laughter, animal sounds, or "slain in the Spirit" are unbiblical, psychological, or even demonic, fostering emotionalism over sound doctrine.

- Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts often **END UP TEACHING HERESY BY DENYING THE TRINITY:** Early splits produced Oneness Pentecostalism, denying the Trinity, a serious heresy.
- Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts often **FIND THEMSELVES ENGROSSED IN SEXUAL SIN.**
- Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts often **EXPLOIT THE POOR.**
- Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts have been and continue to **EXPORT THEIR DISTORTIONS OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY, ESPECIALLY TO THE THIRD WORLD.**

I say again, this issue—*Spiritual Gifts*—was not only something the Corinthian Church needed help with in the first century; it is also something the American Church needs help with in the 21st Century.

DOCTRINE. Christians must not be ignorant of spiritual gifts nor spiritual fruit.

OUTLINE. Four main truths to note, though I think we will spend the greatest amount of time on the first, then the next three I am going to ask you to turn to another passage (per point) that will help shine light on this one.

I. CHRISTIANS MUST NOT BE IGNORANT ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS (1 Corinthians 12:1).

1 Corinthians 12:1

"Now concerning spiritual gifts (spiritual things, i.e. spiritual gifts, which he treats in this section), brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed (ignorant)."

- **HENRY:** "Right information is of great use as to all religious practice. It is wretched work which gifted men make who either do not know or do not advert to the nature and right use of the gifts with which they are endowed." — **Matthew Henry, Complete Bible Commentary, 1 Corinthians 12:1**

I) THERE ARE MANY ERRORS WE CAN RUN INTO WHEN IT COMES TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

(i) Some overemphasize Spiritual Gifts (some Charismatics).

- **1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:1** "12:31b And I will show you a still more excellent way. 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."
 - **I say to you, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed" and be as those who overemphasize Spiritual Gifts.**

(ii) Some underemphasize Spiritual Gifts (some Reformed).

- Yet the Lord commands us to use the Spiritual Gifts He has sovereignly bestowed upon each of us believers, in order to build up the body of Christ.

Romans 12:6-8 "6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness."

 - **I say to you, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed" and be as those who underemphasize Spiritual Gifts.**

(iii) Some wrongly use or think about Spiritual Gifts.

- Some try to use their gifts to draw attention to themselves, and not Christ.
 - Yet the Christian should be able to say with John the Baptist: "[Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).
- Others try to use their gifts to benefit themselves, and not others.
 - **Ephesians 4:12-13** "12 [Christ gave gifts to men] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. . ."do not think about Spiritual Gifts
 - **I say to you, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed" and be as those who wrongly think or use Spiritual Gifts.**

(iv) Some elevate Spiritual Gifts to the position of assurance of salvation.

- *THIS IS A GRAVE ERROR THAT IS TAUGHT BY MANY IN THE WORD OF*

FAITH/CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT.

- Yet the Scriptures say, no one possesses all gifts, therefore to elevate one or two or three Spiritual Gifts to a level of assurance of salvation is to act like God is a liar.

1 Corinthians 12:29-30 "29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?"

- Additionally, the entire book of 1 John is written to help us have assurance of salvation, and it does not even mention—not even a single time—any Spiritual Gift.

1 John 5:14 "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life."

1 John lays out assurance of salvation by asking these questions and being able to answer yes: **(i)** Do you trust in Christ alone for salvation? **(ii)** Do you labor to walk in the light in obedience to Christ? **(iii)** Do you confess your sins and repent of sin when you stumble? **(iv)** Do you love other Christians in deed, not just in word?

Assurance of salvation is not a matter of speaking in tongues or interpreting tongues or gifts of healing or any other miraculous gift, neither are these necessary signs of one who is filled by the Holy Spirit.

Assurance comes through faith in Christ, obedience to Christ, war with sin, and love for the brothers.

Consequently, that is what a Spirit-filled life looks like—faith in Christ, obedience to Christ, war with sin, and love for the brethren.

- **I say to you, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed" and be as those who elevate Spiritual Gifts to a position which they should not occupy.**

II) THERE IS A CORRECT WAY TO VIEW AND USE SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

- Not overemphasizing, not underemphasizing, not wrongly thinking or using them, and not elevating them—but correctly viewing and using them.

(i) God is the author of Spiritual Gifts and sovereignly decides who gets what, therefore Spiritual Gifts must not result in personal pride or arrogance.

- **1 Corinthians 12:11** "All these (Spiritual Gifts) are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills."

- **1 Corinthians 4:7** "What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?"
 - **I say to you**, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed"—**God is the sovereign giver of your gifts, Christians. Do not puff yourself up.**

(ii) Spiritual gifts are given so that the Christian would use them to build up the body of Christ.

- **1 Corinthians 14:26** "Let all things be done for building up."
 - **I say to you**, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed"—**God is the sovereign giver of your gifts, Christians. Do not puff yourself up.**

(iii) Spiritual gifts must be used in the ways that God the Holy Spirit says in the Scriptures.

- **1 Corinthians 14:40** "All things should be done decently and in order."
 - **I say to you**, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed"—**God is the sovereign giver of your gifts, Christians. Do not puff yourself up.**

II. CHRISTIANS NEED TO REMEMBER WHO THEY WERE BEFORE CHRIST SAVED THEM (1 Corinthians 12:2).

1 Corinthians 12:2

"You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led."

- Re: "Pagans/Gentiles" C.F. Ephesians 2:12. Unbelievers. Heathens.
 - **CALVIN**: "Let us learn from this passage how great is the blindness of the human mind: when it is without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as it stands in amazement at dumb idols, and cannot rise higher in searching after God; nay more, it is led by Satan as if it were a brute." — **John Calvin, Complete Bible Commentary, 1 Corinthians 12:2**
 - **HENRY**: "Note, It is of great use to the Christian, and a proper consideration to stir him up both to duty and thankfulness, to think what once he was: *You were pagans.*" — **Matthew Henry, Complete Bible Commentary, 1 Corinthians 12:2**

TURN WITH ME TO

Ephesians 2:1-3 "1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."

BOYS AND GIRLS...

III. YOU WILL KNOW *FALSE* CHRISTIANS BY THEIR ROTTEN FRUITS (1 Corinthians 12:3a).

1 Corinthians 12:3a

"Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says 'Jesus is accursed!'"

- **JOHN TRAPP:** "'Jesus is accursed' (Romans 12:3). As the wicked Jews do in this day in their daily prayers and abbreviature; and as the Gentiles did of old, and these Corinthians among the rest." — **John Trapp, Complete Commentary on the Bible, 1 Corinthians 12:3a**

- **Here was the dilemma in Corinth and why Paul had to say this:**

There were professed Christians at the church in Corinth who were apparently saying things like "Jesus is accursed" and claiming it was some kind of utterance of the Spirit.

- **And the reasoning of at least some of the Corinthians must have gone something like this:**

Well these professed Christians saying, "Jesus is accursed" are telling me that they are doing it for the glory of God, to build up the church, and it is in fact a work of the Holy Spirit.

- **Therefore, likely to his utter shock, Paul has to write to them,**

"Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says 'Jesus is accursed!'"

- **Q. What is he getting at?**

A. A tree is known by its fruit. The pronouncement "Jesus is accursed" is most assuredly a rotten fruit born not of the Holy Spirit but of Satan.

BOYS AND GIRLS, if someone says, "Jesus is suffering for His own sins in hell" do you think that person is one of the people of God or anti-God? It is easy sometimes to tell a bad tree by its rotten fruit and a good tree by its sweet healthy fruit. But sometimes it is not so easy.

TURN WITH ME TO

Matthew 7:15-23 "15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's

clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

IV. THE ONLY WAY ANY OF US BELIEVES IN AND SUBMITS TO CHRIST AS LORD IS BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (1 Corinthians 12:3b).

1 Corinthians 12:3b

"and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit."

- **JOHN TRAPP:** "That is, no man can, with the fiducial assent of his heart, acknowledge Christ to be the only Lord, whom he is to worship by the same impulses, by which another curses and blasphemes him, but by such peculiar motives as are suggested and revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost." — **John Trapp, Complete Commentary on the Bible, 1 Corinthians 12:3b**
- **HENRY:** "To own this truth before men, and maintain it to the death, and live under the influence of it, could not be done without the sanctification of the Holy Ghost. No man can call Christ Lord, with a believing subjection to him and dependence upon him, unless that faith be wrought by the Holy Ghost. No man can confess this truth in the day of trial but by the Holy Ghost animating and encouraging him. Note, We have as necessary a dependence on the Spirit's operation and influence for our sanctification and perseverance as on the mediation of Christ for our reconciliation and acceptance with God." — **Matthew Henry, Complete Bible Commentary, 1 Corinthians 12:3b**

TURN BACK WITH ME TO

Ephesians 2:4-10 "4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the

coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

BOYS AND GIRLS...

CONCLUDING EXHORTATIONS.

Unbelievers (1):

I) Repent and believe the gospel. Be baptized. Join the church. Walk with the Church all the days of your life for God's glory, your gladness, and others' good.

Believers (4):

I) Resolve that you will not be ignorant about Spirit Gifts.

II) Resolve to meditate on who you were before Christ saved you, or who you would be if He had not, so that you can stir yourself up to thankfulness.

III) Resolve to identify a tree by its fruits, not by its profession.

IV) Resolve to praise the Lord for His great mercy in Christ, and walk in those good works that He both created you and prepared for you.

TEXT WORK

1 Corinthians 12:1-3

“1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers,
 Conj. prep. pneumatikos adj. adelphos
 (bretheren)
 Christians

I do not want you to be uninformed.
 one verb thelo sy agnoeo
 adv. abs. neg. per. poss. pro. (to be unaware)
 (to be ignorant)

2 You know that when you were pagans
 eido hoti hote eimi ethnos
 conj. conj. (unbelievers)
 (Gentiles)

you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.
 apagō ho the pros def. aphanos eidolon hos an agō
 adj. conj.

3 Therefore I want you to understand
 dio one verb gnōrizō
 conj.

that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!”
 hoti oudeis laleo en pneuma Theos legō iēsous anathema
 conj. adj. (prep.) or by

and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.”
 kai oudeis dynamai legō iēsous Kyrios ei me en hagios pneuma
 conj. adj. (has the ability or power) conj./adv. (prep.) or by

HELPS

1 Corinthians 12:5-11

Extraordinary Spiritual Gifts / John Owen

The Works of John Owen. 453-474. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965.

BX9315.O94 W67 1965

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1 Corinthians 12:11

Ministerial Endowments the Work of the Spirit / John Owen

The Works of John Owen. 441-451. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965.

BX9315.O94 W67 1965

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Spiritual Gifts Essential to a Visible Church-State / John Owen

The Gospel Standard 123, no.1464 (Dec 1957): 353-361.

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- **12:1-11** Wickliff, John, "Of Spiritual Gifts," *Writings of the Reverend and Learned John Wickliff*, vol. 1 in the set, *The British Reformers*, pp. 215-218.
- **12:6** Nettleton, Asahel, notes for a sermon, *Sermons*, pp. 466-467.
- **12:13** Boston, Thomas, "Of Union with Christ," *Commentary on the*

Shorter Catechism, i.544-556.

- Boston, Thomas, "How the Sacraments Become Effectual Means of Salvation," *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism*, ii.460-465.
 - **12:27-28** Baxter, Richard, "Christ, & Not the Pope, Universal Head of the Church," *The Morning Exercises*, v.672-689.
 - **12:28** Spurgeon, C.H., "Helps," #777, *MTP* 13.589-600.
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STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Study Questions

1. Ignorance of Spiritual Gifts

According to 1 Corinthians 12:1, why does Paul not want the Corinthians (and us) to be "uninformed" (ignorant) about spiritual gifts? What modern evidences of ignorance does the preacher cite from the Barna survey, and how do these compare to the Corinthian problem of prideful misuse?

2. Biblical Definition and Purpose

From the sermon and cross-references such as Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:7-13, and 1 Corinthians 12:11, summarize what spiritual gifts are, who gives them, and for whose benefit they are primarily intended. Why does the preacher insist that gifts are never given for the individual's own edification or self-promotion?

3. Common Errors

The preacher identifies four main errors related to ignorance of spiritual gifts: (a) overemphasis, (b) underemphasis, (c) wrong thinking or use (e.g., self-exaltation), and (d) elevating certain gifts as evidence of salvation or Spirit-filling. Which of these errors do you see most commonly in churches today? Which one might be most prevalent in Reformed Baptist circles, and why?

4. Assurance of Salvation

How does the preacher contrast the charismatic error of making certain gifts (especially tongues) a sign of salvation or Spirit-filling with the biblical tests for assurance found in 1 John? List the four criteria from 1 John that the preacher highlights, and explain why spiritual gifts are notably absent from John's list.

5. Sovereignty and Humility

Read 1 Corinthians 12:11 and 4:7. Why does the sovereign distribution of gifts by the Holy Spirit eliminate any ground for pride? How does Paul's

reminder in verse 2 ("you were led astray to mute idols") serve to humble the Corinthians—and us?

6. Love as the More Excellent Way

How does the transition from 1 Corinthians 12:31 to chapter 13 demonstrate that love is superior to any spiritual gift? In what practical ways were the Corinthians failing to exercise love while using their gifts?

7. Identifying and Using Gifts

The preacher urges believers to identify their gifts through prayer, self-examination, and confirmation from others (especially elders), then to use them actively to serve the body without waiting for formal church programs. Why is community confirmation important? Give an example of how a gift (e.g., mercy, teaching, encouragement) could be misused if not exercised according to scriptural guidelines.

8. Cessationism and Continuity

From a Reformed Baptist perspective that typically holds that the miraculous/sign gifts (e.g., tongues, prophecy, healing) have ceased, how does the preacher's critique of modern charismatic excesses (prosperity gospel, anti-intellectualism, experientialism over Scripture) reinforce the regulative principle and the sufficiency of Scripture?

Discussion Questions

1. Personal Reflection

What spiritual gift(s) do you believe the Lord has given you? How did you arrive at that conclusion? Have you sought confirmation from mature believers or elders? Share one specific way you are currently (or could begin) using that gift to build up other believers.

2. Corporate Application

In what ways might our local church be guilty of underemphasizing spiritual gifts (common in some Reformed circles)? How can we encourage one another to eagerly desire and faithfully employ the gifts God has given without slipping into charismatic excesses?

3. Cultural Critique

The preacher strongly condemns modern distortions tied to ignorance of spiritual gifts (e.g., prosperity theology, mocking manifestations, anti-intellectualism, exploitation of the poor). Which of these distortions have you personally encountered, and how should Reformed Baptists respond biblically to friends or family influenced by them?

4. Humility and Grace

Paul reminds the Corinthians of their pagan past (v. 2) to humble them. How does remembering that every good gift—including salvation and spiritual gifts—is entirely of grace guard us against pride and division in

the church?

5. Evangelistic Appeal

The preacher closes by noting that unbelievers have no spiritual gifts but are offered the greatest gift: Christ Himself. How does a right understanding of spiritual gifts enhance our evangelism? Why is it important to stress that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, not accompanied by any required miraculous experience?

6. Prayer and Dependence

How should a proper view of spiritual gifts drive us to greater dependence on the Holy Spirit in prayer, rather than either neglecting gifts or seeking sensational experiences

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Brothers and sisters in Christ, friends, visitors, we are picking back up in the book of First Corinthians. And it has been some months since we have been in this letter. And what we have actually done in the past, I do not know, six months or so on Sundays is take a few what we would call a topical sermon series where we go through covenant theology. And then before that, we did the Psalms, which we really do pretty much every summer. And it is interesting because a newer member of the church brought up to me uh maybe a month or so ago. He said, "The church that I was a member of before I moved here, it was just exegetical, like we just go through books of the Bible. And here it is totally different. it is all topical." I was like, "What?" They just had not been here that long. And then I then pulled open my phone and looked at my notes. is like, "we are about to start first Corinthians again, like resume it, and it will be the 72nd sermon on this one letter." he is like, "Oh, well, I have just been here for the Psalms and then this, you know, covenant theology series." But if you are new or you are visiting, this is typically what we try to do on the Lord's day when we gather for worship. We pick a book of the Bible and we just slowly walk through it trying to understand it in its context. Understand what God is saying to the original audience then what it means for us and then to apply it for our lives today. And we typically transition between an Old Testament book and a New Testament book. So 1 Samuel is where we are in the Old Testament right now. But rather than have to go through 1 Samuel really fast, like a big huge overview, we we want to go through it slowly and really see what God is saying and try to mine those depths of the scripture for all the gold we can get. But we do not want to spend seven years in First Samuel without ever going to the Psalms. or maybe there is a sermon series we need to do on a specific topic that

will be helpful to us. We do not want to spend just seven years on First Samuel. So, we will do like a chunk of 1 Samuel and then we will go back to the New Testament, do a chunk of whatever book we are in the New Testament. You know, 72 sermons so far in 1 Corinthians and we are just now starting chapter 12. Got a lot more chapters to go. So, we are going to be likely well over a hundred sermons. And so, we do not want to necessarily spend two straight years in First Corinthians without getting Old Testament or without getting some Psalms. So, we typically jump back and forth. we will take a section in 1 Samuel, then go to a section in First Corinthians, then if it is summertime, we do the Psalms, and then back and forth. So, all that to say, we find ourselves back in 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and we are going to be considering verses 1 through 3. that is a passage that I wish to draw your attention to, the one that was just read to you. And in this text of scripture, Paul deals with another issue in the church at Corinth. In this section of the letter that Paul wrote to the church, he is answering questions that they had sent to him in a previous letter. They send him, they have some kind of question and he responds, you know, he goes through some things he knows about that he needs to address in the letter and then he transitions to responding to the questions they had asked to help them work through specific issues. And you can tell that it is transitioning to him answering another question or issue that they brought up to him in the letter by just the first part of verse one in chapter 12. Look at it in your Bible. Now, concerning spiritual gifts or your translation might say concerning spiritual things or if you have an older translation, it might say concerning spirituals. it is just a word that means spiritual things. But in the context, he is talking about spiritual gifts. And you can see that he is going to get into that later in chapter 12. So there is the transition from speaking of the Lord's supper before that, head coverings before that um and answering specific questions they had. Now he is saying now on to the question that you asked me about spiritual gifts. And now from chapters 12-14, he is going to be dealing with spiritual gifts. They had asked some question about it. We do not know exactly what the question was, but we know he says this in verse one. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. That word uninformed means ignorant. And ignorant is not always it does not always have a negative connotation like you ignorant pig, something like that. It just means you do not know. you are ignorant of the truth that we are dealing with. And he is that is what he means. He does not mean I do not want you to be ignorant idiots. that is not what he is saying. he is just saying I do not want you to be ignorant of the truth concerning spiritual gifts. Now this issue spiritual gifts was not only something the Corinthian church needed help with in the first century. It is also something the church of America needs help with in the 21st century. Not only the church in America, but the church worldwide needs help understanding spiritual gifts so that we could all be able to say, "I am not ignorant. I am not uninformed concerning spiritual gifts." Do you see that in verse one? that is the whole point of why he writes 12-14, these three chapters. I do not want you to be uninformed. We need this today just as much as they did in the first century for different reasons. The

Corinthians were ignorant about spiritual gifts and they just puffed themselves up with it. They loved the spiritual gifts that they had and they tried to exercise the spiritual gifts they had to elevate themselves and draw attention to themselves. And we have some of that today for sure. But there are though there were many issues with the Corinthian church in the first century, there are far more issues with the American church in the 21st century, especially concerning spiritual gifts. According to a Barna Primary Survey, 68% of self-identified Christians in the United States said they had in fact heard of spiritual gifts.

68% of professed Christians affirmed that they have actually heard of spiritual gifts. So, can you do the math? How many does that leave automatically—off the bat—who are absolutely ignorant concerning spiritual gifts? If you have not heard of it, you failed the test pretty quickly. You have not even heard of it. 32% of self-professed Christians in the United States have not even heard of spiritual gifts. Someone comes up and asks him, "Have you heard about spiritual gifts?" You know what is that? Like, uh oh. Paul says, "I do not want you to be uninformed about spiritual gifts." So then furthermore, about 21% of aware born-again Christians, meaning professed Christians who are aware of spiritual gifts. So there was 32% of Christians, professed Christians, who did not even know what that was. But then when you come to those who did know what spiritual gifts were, 21% of those people said God has not given them a spiritual gift. Like uh oh, we just got a lot more people who are uninformed about spiritual gifts. If you take all the ones that just acknowledged it, which was only 68%, then only well then 21% of them said God has not given them one. they are like, uh-oh. God has given every Christian a spiritual gift. At least one. Many Christians have multiple gifts, but at least one. The spirit has given a spiritual gift to roughly 21% of those asked who were aware of spiritual gifts. So 21% God has not given me any. Then another 21% listed gifts that they said God the Holy Spirit had given them which do not actually find their way into any of the biblical lists. it is like none of the things that God says, these are the gifts, different gifts that I give. Uh they listed things such as sense of humor, singing, health, happiness, patience, creativity, clairvoyance, or premonition. Those are the some of the things that Christians said, "Well, yeah, I have got spiritual gifts." And it is 21% of those who said they know what spiritual gifts are. But then by their answers, which do not are not actually spiritual gifts, you would go, "Okay, so you are actually in the other other category that you also do not know what spiritual gifts are." If you think clairvoyance is one of them, only about one-third of the people who said they had heard about spiritual gifts accurately identified gifts that are actually listed in God's word. it is a big issue even today. Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. Do you see why we and the American church and the church at large really needs we really need to properly understand 1 Corinthians 12:13 and 14. Additionally, because of the massive growth of those who are especially ignorant concerning spiritual gifts, there have been a number of negative effects on the church, not only in America, but worldwide. Those who are especially ignorant

concerning spiritual gifts or uninformed concerning spiritual gifts, it is really arisen like crazy. it is exploded in the last 120 years since the Pentecostal movement took off and the Charismatic movement has just gained so much momentum. Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts often elevate experience over scripture. And so your own perceived personal experience with God perceived is elevated above what God says. So God will say something. It is like but I just feel like in my soul God is telling me this like experience gets elevated over scripture all the time especially with those who are ignorant concerning spiritual gifts. Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts often distort the true gospel by tying it to physical and financial prosperity. Find me one prosperity gospel preaching charlatan who does not have a distorted view of spiritual gifts. Find me one. I may be missing them, but I am unaware of one prosperity gospel preacher who distorts the true gospel and tries to marry physical and financial prosperity to the good news of what Christ has done. Saying if you are a faithful Christian, you will be healthy and you will be rich. that is the that in summary, that is the prosperity gospel, which is no gospel at all. Find me one who preaches that who is not also ignorant concerning spiritual gifts.

These are often tied together. Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts additionally often mock the Holy Spirit. They mock God the Holy Spirit by having laughing fits and even laughing tunnels. like you are running down a tunnel with hysterical laughter that is more akin to Hinduism than it is to anything to do with God the Holy Spirit. What is that doing? that is mocking God, saying, "This is what God is doing." And you fall over on the ground seizing like you are possessed by a demon and saying, "This is God, the Holy Spirit." that is mocking God. And sadly, those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts tend to be plagued by anti-intellectualism, which means like I do not need to read books. I do not need to hear from teachers. I do not need to study. I just like need the spirit, man. They say things like that. So, in preparation to preach a sermon, it is like I do not really need to study and write an outline or really think through application or whatever. I just need to depend on the spirit. it is like sounds like a pretty easy job. But it is anti-intellectualism. it is strange that those who are ignorant concerning spiritual gifts in our day are the people who are saying like, I do not need to read books. I only need to read the Bible. it is like, what about some commentaries that could help shine light or cross references or help you understand the Greek or the Hebrew so that you can make sure that you are actually understanding what God is trying to say here. like I do not need any of that. Like, okay.

Plagued by anti-intellectualism. And they chalk it up to things like, I just need the spirit. it is like, absolutely, you and I need the spirit to understand and properly apply the scriptures. And we also are greatly helped by I am greatly helped by someone who knows Hebrew when I am studying the Old Testament because I cannot read Hebrew. I am greatly helped by someone who knows and can write and read and understand Greek because I cannot just read Greek. I am helped by

that. I am helped by people who have studied more than me and can point out other cross references in the scripture and say, "Well, God says this here and look how that shines light on what you are reading here." going to go, "Whoa, I did not even remember that cross reference. I was very helpful. I am very helped by that." Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts in addition usually or often end up teaching heresy. Not heresy gets thrown around a lot today. Heresy a a typical what a real heresy is something that if you believe that, you are going to hell. Like this is not an error. This is a distortion of who God is. Many of those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts end up falling into a denial of the Trinity and even into oneness theology and they deny that Jesus that God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit are three persons yet one God. They end up falling many of them into modalism. that is that is an ancient heresy. that God is not three distinct persons yet one in essence but he is just one God but he changes masks and he presents himself in different ways throughout history that is modalism and that was condemned early on universally by Christians it is what TD Jake teaches it is what Stephen Furtick still teaches because he is been so influenced by guys like TD Jake and often those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts. it is like this. It just makes everything go crazy. Those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts often are found exploiting the poor. They pray on those who are poor. They pray on those who have difficult lives. And they promise them that if you have enough faith, your faith becomes like some sort of weapon that will pull you up. You will get healthy. You will get wealthy. Often those are tied together. And those who are ignorant of spiritual gifts have been and continue to export their distortions of the true gospel to the third world. If you have ever been to the third world that has a decent uh Christian context there, often it is dominated by Charismania idiocy of people who have no idea about spiritual gifts and it is been exported from the United States to the third world and just wreaks havoc. it is easy to go and gain some kind of influence in the third world where people are frequently more sick than we are in the first world because they do not have access to hygiene and medicine like you and I have and people are typically very poor in the third world because the economic system that they live in is nothing like the one we live in. And so these who are ignorant of spiritual gifts come there, put on a big show, promise them health, wealth, and happiness if you just trust in Christ. And people give up everything they can to do it. And they are left utterly devastated.

I say again, this issue, spiritual gifts, was not only something the Corinthian church needed help with in the first century. it is also something the American church needs help with in the 21st century. So, let us learn what God has to say concerning spiritual gifts. Look at verses 1-3 again. 1 Corinthians 12 1-3. Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking in the spirit of God ever says Jesus is a cursed and no one can say Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit. Now the doctrine you and I should understand from these few verses is

simply this. Christians must not be ignorant of spiritual gifts nor spiritual fruit. Christians must not be ignorant of spiritual gifts nor spiritual fruit. that is what Paul is dealing with in these first three verses that launches him into these three chapters concerning spiritual gifts. First of all, I do not want you to be ignorant about spiritual gifts. Secondly, then he reminds them of who they were before they were Christians just to humble them, especially because the church at Corinth was trying to use the spiritual gifts that God the Holy Spirit had given them for the glory of God. They were trying to use them to puff themselves up. And so Paul is trying to humble them and be like, "Hey, you used to be led astray by mute idols, but for the grace of God, you were pagans. You were demon worshippers. You have nothing to be prideful about. God saved you by grace. God has gifted you these spiritual gifts by grace, not any of your own doing. So stop acting like you are special because you are a Christian now and you have received this spiritual gift as if you did anything to receive them. they are all gifts. You were led astray by mute idols. So he humbles them with that. And then in verse three, he highlights the fruit that we need to be aware of spiritual fruit. Not only of spiritual gifts, but spiritual fruit. So, we cannot be ignorant of spiritual gifts nor of spiritual fruit. Now, there is four main truths that we need to make note of here. I will point you to each of them. And I think we will spend our greatest amount of time on the first point. Then the next three truths that we should learn in these few verses. With each one, I am going to ask you to turn to another passage to cross reference this. So, we will go to Ephesians twice and then we will go to Matthew 7 once. Have your Bibles ready. I would love for you to turn there with me so you can read it with your own eyes. First of all, what is the first main truth we should learn? it is this in verse one. Christians must not be ignorant about spiritual gifts. Christians must not be ignorant about spiritual gifts. Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed or ignorant. The word brothers there does not mean he is only talking to men. it is the *adelphoi* is the Greek word. It just means siblings in a family. it is used frequently in the New Testament. Just means Christians, brothers and sisters in the faith. Concerning spiritual gifts, reminding them I am talking to you as Christians. I do not want you to be uninformed. Now, there are many errors we can run into when it comes to spiritual gifts. There are many errors that our ignorance can produce when it comes to spiritual gifts. Some overemphasize spiritual gifts. there is an overemphasis on what is your spiritual gift and are you using your spiritual gift? And this is one of the things that the Corinthian church was falling into. This is what many charismatic or Continuationist churches fall into in our day as well. there is an overemphasis on spiritual gifts. And this is evident that Paul is dealing with a church in Corinth that has an overemphasis on the spiritual gift they have received and how they are using it and all that. Look at the very end of chapter 12, the last clause in chapter 12 into the first part of chapter 13. After he is con talked to them a bit about spiritual gifts, then he says, "And I will show you a still more excellent way." And that is when it goes into chapter 13, the famous chapter. And you remember when Paul wrote, he did not have chapter divisions. it is not like books that we read that

you have chapter breaks. it is all just one thought flowing. So he is talking about spiritual gifts to the church at Corinth and he is saying, "And I will show you still a more excellent way than spiritual gifts." And then it is this. Look, if I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging symbol. And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. You know what is better than overemphasizing spiritual gifts? laboring to love God and love your neighbor in tangible ways. that is what he is saying. you are making all this big deal about your spiritual gifts and you are being unloving towards one another. you are actually, church at Corinth, you are using your spiritual gifts to harm one another by trying to elevate yourself and put other people down. Love, love is a key, a more excellent way. And so, some overemphasize spiritual gifts. And you must not do that. You must not overemphasize them. I say to you concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed and be as those who overemphasize spiritual gifts. But some, now look at me, some underemphasize spiritual gifts. And I would say this is probably a majority in the reformed camp. First point is really easy to swallow, right? Like some overemphasize spiritual gifts. And probably half of you in this congregation grew up in churches who overemphasized spiritual gifts. And so that first point I am saying, well, that is how some people are ignorant of it. you are like, yeah, and now you are reformed. And I say, and some people underemphasize it. do not ever talk about it. do not ever think about it. You do not know what your gift is. You do not use your gift. And you go,

Yet the Lord commands us to use our spiritual gifts he has sovereignly bestowed upon each of us believers in order to build up the body of Christ. Often times those in the reform camp, it seems to me, have a knee-jerk reaction to the Charismania that we see in our culture. And then you could go up to a Christian and ask them, "What spiritual gift or gifts has God given you?" And they would be as ignorant as those people that you were probably scoffing at in the Barna study in my introduction. Maybe you are not going to think clairvoyance is a spiritual gift. But what is your spiritual gift? And are you using it? it is implied that you must identify it because you are commanded to use it to serve the body to glorify the Lord in the church. Romans 12 6-8. Listen. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them. If prophecy in proportion to the faith. If service and our serving. The one who teaches in his teaching. The one who exhorts and his exhortation. The one who contributes in generosity. The one who leads with zeal. The one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness. Some underemphasize spiritual gifts. And I say to you now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed and be as those who underemphasize them. You must not underemphasize spiritual gifts. you are supposed to know what yours is and use it to serve the body for the glory of the Lord. Now, some are ignorant concerning spiritual gifts. the thing Paul is trying to get us to avoid here. And they

run into the error of thinking or using spiritual gifts wrongly. Thinking wrongly about them or using them wrongly. As I have mentioned even earlier, some try to use their gifts even today, not just in the church at Corinth. They try to use their gifts to draw attention to themselves and not Christ. that is not the point of spiritual gifts. The Christian should always be ready to say with John the Baptist, Jesus must increase, I must decrease. A spiritual gift is like, you could think of it like a flashlight. A spiritual gift is a flashlight and you are supposed to use that flashlight to point it at Jesus Christ so that people more clearly see and love the Lord Jesus Christ. But some are given spiritual gifts by God's mercy and they take the flashlight and all they want to do is shine it on their own face. Look at me. Look at me. Like if you are walking in the woods with someone and you need to see where you are going and the person holding the brightest flashlight will only shine it in their own face. How annoying is that? Like I do not need to see you. I need to see where we are going. Or if Christ is before you and he is dim and you cannot see him clearly and the only person with a flashlight around you is shining it at themselves. How frustrating is that? I do not want to see you. I want to see Christ. And so spiritual gifts are like a flashlight in that sense though of course all metaphors are limited. But some think that spiritual gifts exist to increase me. No, they exist to increase Christ and decrease me. Others try to use their gifts to benefit themselves, to build up themselves rather than others. The whole point of the spiritual gift you are given is not for your benefit. it is not for your spiritual growth. it is not for your edification. The spiritual gift you have been given is so that you can use it to help build up the body of Christ. Your gift is for everyone else. My gift is for everyone else, not for me. that is a very clear thing you need to get down that the gifts are given for others good. they are not given for your good. Sometimes your gift might actually feel very much like a burden. it is like, but it does not matter. That was given to you for them. It was not given to you for you. Listen. Listen to Ephesians 4:12-13. In verse 7 of Ephesians 4, he clarifies that when Christ descended on high, he gave gifts to men. He gave gifts to men. Christ gave gifts to men. Verse 12, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. It exists for edification, for building up. that is what Paul is going to keep coming back to in chapter 14 when he is really correcting the specific errors, especially in corporate worship for the Corinthians. he is saying whatever you do, it must be done for the building up of other people, not for your own benefit. If you are speaking gibberish in some ecstatic language that no one else understands, but you are saying, "But it is building me up." Paul is like, "that is not the point of spiritual gifts. it is building me up." Well, then you just revealed that you do not understand spiritual gifts cuz it does not exist to build you up. It exists to build others up. So, some overemphasize, some underemphasize, some wrongly use or think about spiritual gifts, but some even in our day elevate spiritual gifts to the position of assurance of salvation. Some elevate certain spiritual gifts and say this gift and the exercise of this gift is how you know you are truly a Christian. And then some do not go quite that far, but they will say this gift and the exercise of this gift is how you know you are really spirit-filled. So some

elevate it all the way to the position of assurance of salvation. And some elevate it to the position of this is a truly spirit-filled person. This is a grave error. There are some even in our day who still teach in the charismatic movement that speaking in tongues by which they mean speaking gibberish and not speaking in a foreign language that you had not previously learned. They mean speaking in gibberish. they are saying that is the evidence that you are a Christian. No speaking in tongues, no salvation. Some say that. But then there are others who saying that is really the sign. it is not the sign of salvation. You can be saved without it, but that is the sign of really being filled by the spirit. that is what it looks like. These are both grave errors. The scriptures even say that no one possesses all spiritual gifts. Therefore, to elevate one or two or three spiritual gifts to a level of assurance or of truly being spirit-filled is to act like God is a liar.

When you elevate it to assurance or elevate it to this is really spirit-filled, you are acting like God is a liar. Because look at verses 29 and 30 in chapter 12 in your own Bible right here. Chapter 12.

Are all apostles? he is saying, "Is everyone an apostle?" what is the answer? Obviously not. Not everyone is an apostle. Okay. Are all prophets? No. Are all teachers? No. Do all work miracles? No. Do all possess gifts of healing? No. Do all speak with tongues? No. Do all interpret? No. that is Paul is whole point. Those rhetorical questions are to say not everybody has every spiritual gift. And what cares what some charismatics, not all, still do today is elevate, especially speaking in tongues to that position of assurance or even of truly being spirit-filled. But the entire book, hear me very clearly. You and I need to nail this down. And the reason I am trying to be slow and explain like from all these different vantage points is because we live in Muskogee. We live in the shadow of the epicenter for this garbage in the entire world. Tulsa, Oklahoma is like the headquarters of this garbage teaching.

It is Tulsa. People come from all over the world to go to one of the big Word of Faith schools in Tulsa. Some of the biggest churches in Tulsa are those churches who teach not every one of these distortions that I have brought your attention to, but who teach many of them and are definitely ignorant concerning spiritual gifts. I want you to know these things because it affects us. that is why we have so many of even those kind of churches even in Muskogee because guys who grew up around here fall into that and then they easily go to school somewhere in Tulsa and then they come right back here and teach these distortions.

Now, the entire book of First John is written to help you know that you are truly a Christian. that is what the whole book of First John is about. it is written to help you have personal assurance of your salvation. 1 John 5:14, I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. that is at the end of the letter. he is saying the whole the reason I am

writing these things is so that you may know, you may have personal assurance that you truly are converted, you truly are a Christian. John in first John lays out assurance of salvation by asking these questions essentially and being able to answer yes to them. If you can answer yes to these questions, John is saying you should be confident then that you are a Christian, that you are not a false convert. And these are the questions. Do you trust in Christ alone for salvation? Is your faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation? Second, do you labor to walk in the light in obedience to Christ? He says, if you if you say you belong to Christ, yet you continually walk in darkness, you are a liar. Just saying like you cannot just say you are a Christian and you go on sinning in unrepentant sin, just go on living like you were when you were a pagan. he is like, no, no, no. Christ is a great savior and he changes you. So, do you trust Christ alone for salvation? Do you labor to walk in the light in obedience to Jesus? Third, do you confess your sins and repent of them when you stumble into sin? When you sin and you realize it, do you labor to, well, I admit it. I confess it. I am going to labor to turn from it and obey Jesus. John in no way is saying you have to walk in the light 100% of the time. is saying, "Well, yeah, we stumble into the darkness, but the Christian turns from that sin and continues on following Jesus. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanses us of all unrighteousness." So, do you confess and repent of your sins when you stumble into them? And then the fourth thing that John brings up in First John, it is like, you want to know you have eternal life? Trust Christ alone. Labor to walk in the light. Confess your sins or repent of them when you stumble. And fourth, do you love other Christians? Not just in word, but in deed. Those are John's four criteria. If someone is like, "Am I truly a Christian?" Well, ask yourself those four questions. Do you love other believers? he is saying, if you if you say you love Christ, but you do not love the brothers, you do not love other believers, and not just in word, but in deed. he is like, "you are a liar. you are not a Christian.

Anything left out?" that is the whole point of this letter. Guess how many times John mentions spiritual gifts in First John? Zero.

You want to know you are saved? Some will say, "Speaking in tongues, is that evidence?" John says, "What? You want to know you are truly spirit-filled? Speaking in tongues is the evidence." John would say, "What?" No. Faith in Christ, obedience to Christ, war with sin, and love for other Christians. That is evidence of being spirit-filled because that means the spirit is at work in you. If you trust in Christ, you are at war with sin. You want to walk in the light and you are laboring to do so. and you love the people Christ has purchased. Like that is it. Assurance of salvation is not a matter of speaking in tongues or interpreting tongues or gifts of healing or any other miraculous gift. Neither are these necessary signs of one who is filled by the Holy Spirit. Assurance comes through faith in Christ, obedience to Christ, war with sin, and love for the brothers.

Consequently, that is also what a spirit-filled life looks like. I say to you now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed and be as those who elevate spiritual gifts to a position which they should not occupy. Now, there is a correct way to view and use spiritual gifts, and that is really what the next few chapters are. But let me just give you a very quick highlight. We do not want to overemphasize. We do not want to underemphasize, wrongly think or use them. And we do not want to elevate them. We want to correctly view and use spiritual gifts for the glory of God. Right? Well, we need to know these three things. God is the author of spiritual gifts and sovereignly decides who gets what. Therefore, your spiritual gifts can in no way lead to you being prideful or arrogant. He did not do anything to receive them. God is the author of them, and he sovereignly decides who gets what. All these spiritual gifts are empowered by one and the same spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills. that is verse 11. Look at verse 11 in chapter 12. All these meaning spiritual gifts are empowered by one and the same spirit meaning God the Holy Spirit who apportions to each one individually who decides as he wills. He decides. So we cannot ever take pride or be arrogant in the spiritual gift that we have got. What do you have that you did not receive? that is what Paul had asked earlier in 1 Corinthians 4:7. What do you have that you did not receive as a gift? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? So that that first step is in correctly viewing and using gifts is God is the offer author. He sovereignly decides which one I have. Therefore, I cannot be prideful. Second, spiritual gifts are given so that the Christian would use them to build up the body of Christ. As I have already told you, spiritual gifts are given so that the Christian would use them to build up the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 14:26, let all things be done for building up edification. that is what that word means. Mean building up to maturity and strength. building up other people. Let all things be done for building up. Thirdly, the correct way to view and use them is to realize this. Spiritual gifts must be used in the ways that God the Holy Spirit says in the scriptures. You have to use the gifts in the ways that God the Holy Spirit says to use them. Many people fall in to using gifts but use the gift that God has given them and they use it wrongly but not according to the scriptures and then it does not actually build up other people but it can tear them down. If you have the spiritual gift of mercy and doing acts of mercy, one easy ditch you can fall into is someone who does not need you to keep giving them handouts and enabling them in their sin, but they actually need you to love them enough to say, "No, you need to repent and we are not going to continue to enable you in your sin." But that is using the gift of mercy. you are compassionate. you are merciful. You love giving. You love helping people in need. But the pit you can fall into is you are not using it according to God's standard in the scripture. you are not actually loving the person. you are actually enabling them and harming them by continually giving them something they can continue in rebellion against God with. You could say the same thing for teaching. You have the gift of teaching. If you teach in a domineering way, if you teach in an overly critical way, a harsh way, or the flip side, what many pastors do in our day, you

have maybe the gift of teaching, but you teach in such a soft and effeminate way that the un-elect cannot even reject the gospel. Like, no one even knows. Everyone just kind of thinks we are all just like, we are good, man. Well, you might actually have the gift of teaching, but if you are not using it according to preach the word, reprove, rebuke, and exhort according to God's standard, then you are using your gift wrongly. So, spiritual gifts must be used in the ways that God, the Holy Spirit, says in the scriptures, 1 Corinthians 14:40, especially concerning public worship, he says, "All things should be done decently and in order." All things should be done decently and in order. And he is even talking about the use of spiritual gifts.

So there is a correct way to view and use those. I think where we are at right now would be a good place to stop for today. we have got three more main truths that we need to see and that what I want to draw your attention to, but I think we will continue that, Lord willing, next week. My exhortation to you believers in conclusion is to identify the spiritual gifts that God has given you. And the best way I think you can do that is not just by introspection. And please do not do that. Only do that because there are many people who are like I need to figure out what my spiritual gifts are. And so they look inwardly and they think "*What am I good at?*" And they like hey I have the spiritual gift of teaching. And then everyone else around them is like no I do not think you do. So you need to you can first of all like what has God gifted me in? And then you absolutely need to check that with faithful brothers or faithful sisters and with your elders too. Be like, I am thinking, I have this spiritual gift. What do you think? And you need to be humble enough that if they say, no, man, it's got to be another one. They be like, "Oh, dang it. Okay." And then just move on. But get help from other people. Bounce it off other people. And then after you identify your spiritual gift, figure out how to best use that to serve other Christians to build up the body of Christ. Identify by prayer, by thinking, by examining yourself, and by definitely asking for the wisdom and the counsel, the examination of others. And then use it, use it to serve people. Hear me, Christians. you are serving other believers is not a program that the local church needs to put on and organize. it is something that you have gifts. You see a need. let us say you have the gift of mercy. If you do not need a program the church puts on that you show up to and go do acts of mercy. You need to identify people who need help and just go help them. and ask other people if you need help in helping that person. If you need money in helping that person, if you need if you cannot make a specific time, ask other people to help you. But the ch the local church does not exist to prop up programs to make you basically mindless robots that we can just plug into these programs. No, it is you and I using our gifts to serve one another. If you have the gift of encouragement, we do not need to have an encouragement class, you need to just try to identify those who seem like they really need encouragement, which sometimes is obvious. This person really seems like they need some encouragement, go encourage them. But if you cannot find anyone, you have the gift of encouragement. cannot find anyone that looks

like your goggles are on. I do not see anyone who really needs it. Just pick someone then because we could all use it. But all those things, just get engaged and use the gifts that God has given you. Not trying to usurp any authority of the pastors or try to like create weird factions or I do not mean any of that, but I just mean just use your gifts and serve. love. Love other people by using the gifts that you have been given. Remember that everything that you have got, everything I have got is a gift from God. Unbelievers, you do not have any spiritual gifts. You got none. there is one gift I offer you today. it is the Lord Jesus Christ. He offers you himself and says, "Come to me. Come and trust in my life without sin. Come and trust in my death in place of sinners so that you would be forgiven. Come and trust in my resurrection from the dead. And if you trust in if you submit to the Lord Jesus Christ, he will receive you. He will forgive you. He will count you righteous. And he will give you at least one spiritual gift that you can use for others good and for his glory. Come and get the gift of Christ. let us pray.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for your word. We ask you to help us understand it. We ask you to help us not be ignorant concerning spiritual gifts. Help us to not underemphasize, overemphasize, wrongly think about them or elevate them, but help us to be humble and knowing that you have given them. Help us to identify them so we can use them to build up the body of Christ. and help us to use our spiritual gifts in the ways that you prescribe in the scriptures with the safeguard of all of your commands that guide us in our path of holiness. Christ, we thank you for coming into the world to save sinners like us. We ask that you save more sinners, that you make your people more like Christ.

We ask that you fill us, Father. Fill us with the Holy Spirit. Those who are sick, we ask that you would heal them. The suffering, comfort them. The straying, correct them. And those who are striving forward, give them strength. We need your strength. Ours will not do. So strengthen us so that we can do our duties and enjoy you and glorify you. We ask you to continue to purify your church. To protect even this local church from wolves, to protect us from false teachings, protect us from sin and Satan, from demons. Protect us from all wicked influences so that we may love you and glorify you. We ask you to receive our songs, our prayers, the Lord's supper, our offerings, and even our fellowship. receive them for Christ's sake. And it is in his name we pray.