

Growing and Flowing Together *(Janet, get your purse Session 3)*

Summary

What does it mean to truly flow together as a body of believers, each carrying gifts we did not earn but were given by grace? This message takes us deep into 1 Corinthians 12, where Paul reminds us that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one of us, not just a select few, and that it is given for the common good. We explore what it looks like when those gifts are left dormant, sitting unpacked like software we never bothered to learn, and what becomes possible when we choose to step up, catch the light, and let what God placed in us actually show up for others. The image of a sparkling stream is striking here. A sparkle happens when one part of the water rises, catches the light, and then recedes again. That rhythm of rising and stepping back, of knowing when it is our moment and when it belongs to someone else, is at the heart of what it means to flow together in the Spirit. We are not called to a faith that is merely theological on paper. We are called to a living, breathing, manifesting walk with a God who is Spirit, and who designed us to worship and connect with him in spirit and in truth.

Small Group Study Guide – Growing and Flowing Together *(Janet, get your purse Session 3)*

SERIES OVERVIEW

This guide accompanies a sermon series exploring the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the gifts He has given to believers, and how those gifts are meant to function together for the benefit of everyone. The goal is not simply to understand spiritual gifts theologically, but to grow together as a community that actively and lovingly stewards what God has placed within each person.

THIS WEEK'S KEY SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 12:7 -- The apostle Paul teaches that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each believer not for personal benefit alone, but for the common good of the entire body.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE SERMON

1. You are a three-part being by design. Scripture describes human beings as spirit, soul, and body. The spirit is meant to be the governing part of who you are. When the soul takes the throne -- when feelings, reasoning, and self-preservation call the shots -- the order God designed gets disrupted. Worship and relationship with God, who is Spirit, must happen at the spirit level.

2. Spiritual gifts are given, not earned. These are grace gifts. They are not rewards for good behavior or signs of spiritual superiority. They are resources distributed by God to each believer so that the body as a whole can function and flourish.

3. The manifestation of the Spirit requires our cooperation. God does not force His gifts into expression. There is an internal conversation that must happen -- a moment where a believer senses the Spirit's prompting and chooses to say yes. Repeatedly saying no to those promptings can lead to spiritual dullness. Repeatedly saying yes, even imperfectly, exercises and sharpens spiritual sensitivity.

4. Gifts are given for the common good, not personal display. The purpose of every spiritual gift is to benefit others. This means awareness of those around us -- including new believers and visitors -- is not a limitation on the Spirit's movement. It is actually an expression of the love that should surround all spiritual activity.

5. The body needs every member. No single person carries all the gifts. God distributes them intentionally so that believers need one another. Broken or neglected relationships within the body mean the gifts those people carry are also inaccessible to those who need them.

6. Learning to flow together requires knowing when to step up and when to step back. Flowing together in the Spirit is like the sparkle on a moving stream -- it happens when different parts rise, catch the light, and then give way to others. Healthy corporate spiritual life is not dominated by one voice or one expression. It is a community learning to ebb and flow under the Spirit's leading.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening -- Getting Honest

1. When you first encountered a worship environment that was more expressive or spiritually demonstrative than what you were used to, what was your honest reaction? What shaped that reaction?
 2. Have you ever had a "Janet, get your purse" moment -- a moment where something spiritual made you want to quietly exit? What was it, and how did you process it afterward?
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Going Deeper -- Into the Scripture and Sermon

3. The sermon described the three parts of a human being -- spirit, soul, and body -- and explained that the soul was the entry point the enemy used in the Garden of Eden. In your own experience, how have you seen your reasoning or emotions talk you out of something your spirit was stirring toward?
 4. Pastor Rob said, "To not take that gift to heart and not only say thank you, but put it to use" is a missed opportunity. What does it look like practically to say thank you to God for a spiritual gift by actually using it? What has held you back from doing that?
 5. 1 Corinthians 12:7 says the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. How does knowing that your gift is meant for others change the way you think about developing and expressing it?
 6. The sermon made the point that if a gift is not brought forward, the help it was intended to provide is not realized -- and people suffer as a result. Does that framing change how you think about staying quiet or holding back in a group setting? Why or why not?
 7. Pastor Rob described the parable of the stewards and the servant who hid his talent out of fear. He said what that servant was really communicating was a lack of trust in the giver - - a belief that what was given did not have within it what it needed to succeed. Do you relate to that? In what areas of your spiritual life have you been hiding rather than investing?
 8. The sermon described spiritual gifts as sandwiched between communion (chapter 11) and love (chapter 13) in 1 Corinthians. Why do you think Paul structured his teaching that way? What does it say about the spirit in which gifts are meant to operate?
 9. Pastor Rob said, "I am more impressed with the character and nature of Jesus living and loving through people" than with spiritual manifestations themselves. How do you hold the pursuit of spiritual gifts together with the pursuit of Christlike character? Where have you seen those two things come apart in Christian culture?
 10. The image of a sparkle on a running stream was used to describe what it looks like to flow together -- rising, catching the light, then coming back down so others can do the same. Where in your own life, whether in a church setting, a friendship, or a family, have you struggled with knowing when to step up and when to step back?
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Personal Reflection

11. Pastor Rob said some gifts are dormant -- present but not yet unpacked or understood. Do you have a sense of what gifts God may have placed in you that you have not yet developed or expressed? What would it take to begin?
 12. Is there a relationship in your life -- with another believer -- that has become distant or broken? Considering the sermon's point that some gifts are only accessible through relationship, what might be at stake spiritually in that disconnection?
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PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

This Week, As Individuals:

- Set aside time to ask God directly: "What have you placed in me, and am I using it?" Write down what comes to mind without immediately dismissing it.
- Identify one moment this week where you sense the Spirit prompting you to say something, pray for someone, or step into something that feels risky. Practice saying yes rather than talking yourself out of it.
- Read 1 Corinthians 12 through 14 in one sitting to experience the full arc of Paul's teaching -- from gifts, through love, to practical order.

As a Group Over the Coming Weeks:

- Make space in your group time for people to share what they believe their gifts may be, without judgment or pressure to perform. Practice affirming one another.
- Intentionally pray for one another in a way that moves beyond general requests. Ask the Lord if there is something specific He wants to say or do for the person being prayed for, and practice speaking that out.

CLOSING PRAYER FOCUS

Pray together using these themes as a guide:

- Thank God for the specific gifts He has placed in each person present.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to surface anything that has been dormant and to give courage to begin using it.
- Pray for the group to become a safe place where gifts are welcomed, mistakes are covered in grace, and the common good is genuinely the goal.
- Ask God to make your group -- and your church -- the kind of people who sparkle together to His glory.

LOOKING AHEAD

In upcoming sessions, the series will address:

- The difference between motivational gifts and supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit as a distinct experience available to every believer
- The gift of tongues, its purpose, and its role as a gateway into other gifts of the Spirit

Come prepared to engage those topics with an open Bible and a willingness to be challenged.

Main Points – Growing and Flowing Together *(Janet, get your purse Session 3)*

Sermon Summary:

Drawing from 1 Corinthians 12, this sermon challenges believers to move beyond passive acknowledgment of the Holy Spirit's gifts and into active, responsible stewardship of them. Pastor Rob emphasizes that every born-again believer has been given spiritual gifts by grace, and those gifts are intended not for private enjoyment but for the common good of the body of Christ. Using the imagery of a sparkling stream, the sermon calls the congregation to learn how to flow together in the Spirit, stepping up when prompted and stepping back when the moment has passed. Pastor Rob also warns against both the extremes of spiritual ignorance and undiscerning enthusiasm, anchoring the discussion in love, sound doctrine, and sensitivity to others. The series exists to cultivate a church culture where spiritual gifts are celebrated, corrected when necessary, and expressed in a way that draws people toward God rather than alienating them.

Key Points:

- Every believer is a three-part being made of spirit, soul, and body, and the spirit is meant to be the governing dimension of a person's life
- God is spirit, and genuine worship must occur in spirit and truth, making the Holy Spirit's present-day ministry inseparable from authentic Christian life
- Spiritual gifts are grace gifts given to each believer, not earned and not reserved for a select few in paid ministry
- The gifts are meant to be manifest, not suppressed, and repeated resistance to the Holy Spirit's prompting can dull a believer's spiritual sensitivity over time
- The manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good, meaning awareness of and care for others must accompany every spiritual expression
- The church is a body with many members, each carrying unique gifts, and members need one another to function in full health
- Flowing together in the Spirit requires knowing when to step up and when to step back, like sparkles on a moving stream catching and releasing light
- The gifts of the Spirit are not optional extras but essential resources for the church to survive and thrive in the present cultural moment
- The chapter on spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians is intentionally bookended by a chapter on communion and a chapter on love, signaling that gifts must always be exercised within those boundaries

Scripture Reference:

- 1 Corinthians 12:1, which addresses ignorance about spiritual things
- 1 Corinthians 12:7, which states that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good
- 1 Corinthians 12:14-21, which uses the human body as a metaphor for the interdependence of believers and their gifts

- John 4:24, in which Jesus declares that God is spirit and must be worshiped in spirit and truth
- 1 Thessalonians 5:22-23, which describes the sanctification of the whole spirit, soul, and body
- James 2:26, which connects the body and spirit to illustrate that faith without works is dead
- Jeremiah 31:12, which speaks of God's people flowing together to the goodness of the Lord
- Matthew 25 and Luke 19, referenced in connection with the parable of the stewards and the danger of burying one's gifts out of fear

Discussion Questions – Growing and Flowing Together (*Janet, get your purse Session 3*)

Pastor Rob describes mankind as a three-part being made up of spirit, soul, and body, and the spirit is meant to be most enthroned -- in what practical ways might you recognize when your soul or body is overriding your spirit in daily decisions?

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:7 that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each believer for the common good -- how does this challenge the common assumption that spiritual gifts are primarily for personal enrichment or private worship?

Pastor Rob warns that repeatedly resisting the Holy Spirit's prompting can cause believers to become spiritually dull over time -- have you experienced seasons of spiritual dullness, and what do you think contributed to or reversed that condition?

The parable of the stewards in Matthew 25 is used to illustrate that hiding a gift out of fear is considered wicked and slothful -- what fears most commonly prevent believers from stepping out and using the gifts God has given them?

A church body without the active ministry of the Holy Spirit is as lifeless as a physical body without a spirit -- do you agree, and what does a genuinely Spirit-active church look like in contrast to one that is merely theologically orthodox?

The sermon suggests that spiritual gifts are sometimes received through relationships rather than in isolation, meaning you may only access certain gifts by being in community with someone who carries them -- how does this reframe the way you think about the importance of deep, committed relationships within the church?

Pastor Rob uses the image of water sparkling on a stream to describe how believers are meant to flow together -- rising up and stepping back in rhythm -- what might it look like in your own church community to cultivate that kind of sensitivity to when to step forward and when to yield?

The sermon places the chapter on spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians between a chapter on communion and the love chapter, suggesting that love and right relationship with God are the proper bookends for any exercise of spiritual gifts -- how should this shape the spirit and motivation with which believers pursue and express spiritual gifts?

Pastor Rob expresses concern that the Western church model, which centers spiritual responsibility on paid clergy, contradicts the biblical vision of every member carrying and

expressing a gift -- what structural or cultural changes might help a congregation move toward that more participatory model?

The sermon draws a parallel between a toddler learning to walk and a believer learning to step out in spiritual gifts, celebrating effort and risk even when it ends in stumbling -- how might adopting this posture of celebrating imperfect steps change the culture of your church or small group when it comes to exercising spiritual gifts?

Scriptures – Growing and Flowing Together *(Janet, get your purse Session 3)*

Here is a list of all scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon:

1 Corinthians 12:1 - Paul's statement that he would not have believers be ignorant concerning spiritual things

1 Corinthians 12:7 - The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good

1 Corinthians 12:14-21 - The body consists of many members, each needed by the others

1 Corinthians 11 - The chapter on communion, which precedes the spiritual gifts passage

1 Corinthians 13 - The love chapter, which follows the spiritual gifts passage

1 Thessalonians 5:22-23 - Prayer that God would sanctify believers wholly, including spirit, soul, and body

John 4:24 - Jesus tells the woman at the well that God is spirit and must be worshiped in spirit and truth

James 2:26 - As the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead

Matthew 25 - The parable of the stewards and the servant who hid his talent

Luke 19 - A parallel account of the parable of the stewards

Isaiah 29:24 - Those who go astray in spirit will come to understanding and accept instruction

Jeremiah 31:12 - God's people shall come and sing in Zion and flow together to the goodness of the Lord

Genesis 3 - The account of the serpent appealing to Eve's soul in the garden

Genesis 11 - The Tower of Babel and the scattering of the nations through confused language

Acts 2 - The day of Pentecost, when the nations were gathered under the outpouring of the Spirit

Devotional – Growing and Flowing Together *(Janet, get your purse Session 3)*

Day 1: You Were Born for This

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:22-23; John 4:24

Devotional: You are not merely a physical being navigating a material world. Scripture declares that you are spirit, soul, and body, created in the image of a triune God. This means that your deepest longings cannot be satisfied by anything this world offers, because the real you was made for communion with a God who is Spirit. When Jesus told the woman at the well that true worshipers must worship in spirit and truth, he was not describing a style of church service. He was describing the very nature of the relationship you were designed for. Do not settle for a faith that only engages your mind and body while leaving your spirit untouched. Lean in. The God who made you spirit wants to meet you there.

Reflection: In what areas of your life have you been trying to satisfy spiritual hunger with something less than God himself?

Practical Application: Set aside ten minutes today in a quiet place, not to read or study, but simply to acknowledge that you are a spirit before God and invite his presence to meet you at that level.

Day 2: Do Not Neglect What You Have Been Given

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1-7; Matthew 25:14-30

Devotional: Paul's opening declaration in 1 Corinthians 12 is a direct challenge to comfort: he does not want believers to be ignorant about spiritual things. Ignorance is not neutrality. It is an open door. The parable of the stewards makes this painfully clear. The servant who buried his talent did not do so out of malice. He did so out of fear, and God called it wickedness. The gifts God has given you are not decorations. They are tools, placed inside you with a specific purpose in mind. Every time you suppress a stirring in your spirit out of fear of embarrassment or failure, someone who needed what you were carrying goes without it. The gift was given for the common good, and its absence is felt whether you realize it or not.

Reflection: What gift or grace do you sense God has placed in you that you have been hesitant to put to use?

Practical Application: Write down one specific gift, ability, or spiritual stirring you have been sitting on. Pray over it today and ask God for one opportunity this week to step out in it.

Day 3: A Body That Needs Every Part

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:14-27; Romans 12:4-6

Devotional: The human body does not function by majority vote. The elbow does not decide whether it is needed. The eye does not get to dismiss the hand. Every member is placed by God, and every member serves a purpose that no other member can fully replace. The church is no different. When Paul writes that the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," he is dismantling every system of spiritual hierarchy that elevates one believer while sidelining another. You carry something that someone else in your congregation genuinely needs. The wisdom God deposited in your neighbor may be the very thing you have been praying to receive. Broken relationships and neglected community do not just hurt feelings. They interrupt the flow of grace God intended to move through his people.

Reflection: Is there someone in your church community whose gift you have undervalued or overlooked?

Practical Application: Reach out to one person in your church this week and specifically affirm a grace or quality you have observed in them. Let them know they are needed.

Day 4: The Manifestation Is for Everyone

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Hebrews 5:14

Devotional: The manifestation of the Spirit is not reserved for the platform. It is not the exclusive territory of the ordained or the experienced. Scripture says plainly that to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. That word each is not a suggestion or an aspiration. It is a declaration. You have been given something meant to be seen, felt, and received by others. But manifestation requires cooperation. Just as a child learning to walk will fall before they run, stepping out in spiritual gifts is a process of growth. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that maturity comes through practice, through senses exercised by use. God is not waiting for you to be perfect before he uses you. He is waiting for you to say yes.

Reflection: When was the last time you felt a spiritual stirring to act, speak, or pray for someone and held back? What stopped you?

Practical Application: The next time you sense a prompting to pray for someone, encourage them, or share a word, choose to act on it rather than talk yourself out of it. Step out as unto the Lord.

Day 5: Flowing Together to the Goodness of the Lord

Reading: Jeremiah 31:12-13; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; 1 Corinthians 14:26

Devotional: Jeremiah's vision of a people who flow together to the goodness of the Lord is not a picture of uniformity. It is a picture of harmony, each part moving in its moment, rising and receding like light on a running stream. Paul bookends his entire teaching on spiritual gifts with two powerful realities: communion with God and love for people. Without those two anchors, spiritual gifts become performances. With them, they become the very hands and voice of Christ extended to a world in desperate need. The goal was never to have impressive spiritual experiences. The goal is that souls would be watered, sorrow would end, and the name of Jesus would be lifted high through a people who learned to sparkle together.

Reflection: How does love for God and love for others shape the way you engage with the spiritual gifts and expressions in your church community?

Practical Application: Before attending your next church gathering, pray specifically that God would make you aware of someone who needs what you are carrying, and commit to flowing with whatever the Spirit prompts, for the common good.