



# gracefellowship

Spiritual Gifts  
June 9, 2019  
Better Together!

:: Romans 12:4-8

Introduction: As much as I like watching superhero movies when they are about one character- whether that is Spider-Man or Batman, or whomever- I really like watching movies when the heroes come together as a team and use their abilities and powers to fight against an opponent that is greater than any one of them individually.

- Justice League
- The Avengers
- X-Men

Being part of a team creates something special. We have found this to be true in our church as well. One of our Core Values is Function as a Team.

- Elders
- Staff
- Life Groups
- Ministries

We simply believe we are better together! As individuals we can accomplish some great things. But as a team, with the collective gifts and talents of the whole, we can do so much more!

When it comes to our Spiritual Gifts, God designed us to work together in our areas of gifting to be more powerful, more fulfilled and more effective. Jesus knew how important it was for the disciples not to immediately go out and minister in their own power when He left earth to return to heaven. The power we have in this world to do the work of Christ is directly tied to our relationship with the Holy Spirit. As Jesus was leaving His disciples to return to heaven, He promised them a gift that would empower them- a comforter, an advocate- the Holy Spirit. Today is Pentecost on our church calendar, the day the Holy Spirit that was promised by Jesus arrived on the scene with great power. In Acts 2 we read about a powerful wind that blew through Jerusalem and then the Holy Spirit manifesting Himself as a tongue of fire that came to rest on each of Jesus' followers.

I want you to notice that the Holy Spirit did not unify the disciples- they were already all together, praying and unified around the risen Christ. What the Holy Spirit did was empower them for the work of the Kingdom!

- The first thing we see is the gift of tongues displayed.
- The people, who had gathered from many different nations, heard the disciples speaking in their own native tongue. There was no need for this to be interpreted, because their message was understood.
- Peter stood up and declared the gospel and 3000 people were saved that day!

The Holy Spirit empowered the believers for the purpose of expanding the Kingdom of God.

Last week we talked about all the different gifts that are available and one of the key things we discussed was that each of us has a gift (at least one) and we should not envy someone else's gift! The Holy Spirit chooses the gift(s) He knows will benefit us and be used to bless others.

Can you imagine how boring life would be if we all shared the same gift? If you have ever been part of a really strong team you know that...

**The best teams are comprised of people who can help one another by bringing their personal strengths to play for the benefit of the team as a whole.**

Illustration: Over the past few years I have enjoyed cheering for the Golden State Warriors in the NBA. They are playing in their 5<sup>th</sup> straight NBA finals and have won 3 of the past 4 years. One of the things I have enjoyed about this team the most is their willingness to each bring their specific talents to the team for the benefit of the whole team. Some of the guys are amazing scorers, others are willing to play hard-nosed defense and sacrifice their own scoring. Some of the best players in the league are willing to sacrifice their personal greatness and personal accolades for the chance to win championships. In the last series they played against Portland one of the players from the Trailblazers said, "What makes them so hard to beat isn't just their all-stars, it's that even their role players are all-stars at being role players."

Everyone knows their job and everyone does their job! The reason they are a great team isn't just that they have some of the best players, it is that all their players know their jobs and does their jobs willingly for the benefit of the team as a whole.

Let's take that illustration and pick up on something Paul teaches us about using our spiritual gifts within the church.

**:: Romans 12:4-8**

**4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,**

**5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.**

**6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith;**

**7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;**

**8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.**

**1. We are one made up of many.**

Paul uses the illustration of a body to remind us how our gifts work in the church. Just like your body has many different parts, each of them together make up the body as a whole.

**2. The parts of the body are all unique.**

Paul says, “these members do not all have the same function...”

There is uniqueness to what the body parts do. Your eyes and ears and mouth and hands and feet all function with unique capabilities.

**3. All the parts are necessary for completion.**

Paul writes, “...in Christ, we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

**4. All the parts are impacted by the others.**

**:: 1 Corinthians 12:18-26**

**18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.**

**19 If they were all one part, where would the body be?**

**20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.**

**21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!”**

**22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,**

**23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,**

**24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it,**

**25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.**

## **26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.**

Illustration: Is anyone here wearing sandals this morning? (find someone and ask them to join me on stage)

If I were to take this sledge hammer and drop it on your foot, what do you think would happen? Other than me getting fired! (let the person describe what they might feel or do as a result of having a heavy object dropped on their toe)

- Your toe would not be the only thing impacted by that trauma, would it? Pain sensors would alert your brain; your hands would reach for your foot to grab it; your other foot and leg would start supporting the weight of your body (and jumping up and down); your eyes would begin to water; if there is enough pain your stomach might empty its contents! The point is when one part of the body is impacted by something the entire body feels it. Your body functions as a team- all the parts support the other parts and do their jobs when the body is functioning properly.
  
- In the same way, we, as a church, are in this together as a team. We all need one another. We all benefit from the gifts the Holy Spirit has assigned to each one of us. Without you using your spiritual gift, we all suffer! Our gifts, when used properly, benefit one another so our team is stronger.

Teams function well when people are utilizing their gifts and talents and passions in the proper ways. But teams can break down when there are abuses of the gifts the Holy Spirit gives us.

I want to end this morning by highlighting some abuses of Spiritual Gifts and give us some things to be careful of as we learn about our gifts and how to use them in the church and in our daily lives.

### **Abuses of Spiritual Gifts**

- 1. Beware when spiritual gifts are used as a means of manipulation, power, or control in personal and/or church relationships.**

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12 that the gifts are given for the common good- not for people to gain power over others!

- 2. Beware whenever anyone claims to have the ability to give or bestow any particular gift if you follow their formula.**

Who is it that gives spiritual gifts? The Holy Spirit! He gives to each person just as He determines. (1 Cor. 12:11)

- 3. Beware when the focus of a church service, ministry or religious event is on spiritual gifts and their manifestations rather than on the Giver of the gifts and His agenda for His Church.**

We can turn just about anything into an idol! If spiritual gifts become more important than the God who gives those gifts and the advancement of His Kingdom, there is a big problem!

**4. Beware of comparing your gifts with anyone else's; it always leads to carnality.**

**:: 1 Corinthians 12:17-20**

**17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?**

**18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.**

**19 If they were all one part, where would the body be?**

**20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.**

Independence always breeds idolatry! Don't make the mistake of thinking you don't need the people around you to be spiritually healthy!

**5. Beware of extreme positions on spiritual gifts.**

I've heard people say in the past that spiritual gifts ceased to exist after the first century- or perhaps that some gifts did. The Bible never states that, so be careful of taking that extreme position.

Likewise, I've heard of people who say a "spirit-filled" Christian should have all the spiritual gifts! Again, that's not a claim the Bible supports.

**6. Beware of using your spiritual gift in the energy of the flesh to fulfill personal ego needs or to impress other people.**

Why are we gifted? To draw us closer into relationship with and dependence on God; to serve the Church; and to be a blessing to the world. Your ego has nothing to do with this! If you want a picture of this type of abuse of spiritual gift read the account of Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8.

**7. Beware that apparent "manifestations of the spirit" can be counterfeited by human schemes and demonic forces.**

Satan always wants to replicate the work of God in the world to deceive people. Matthew 7 has an account of Jesus telling His disciples when people stand before Him in judgment there will be those who say to Him, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?" But he will respond, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers."

**8. Beware of viewing the discovery, development and deployment of your spiritual gift either as an "optional exercise" or being interesting, but not a serious responsibility.**

Jesus has given us His Spirit to empower us with supernatural gifts. To throw them aside as unimportant is to deny yourself the depth of relationship God

desires to have with you and it denies your brothers and sisters the support you might otherwise provide for them as part of this body.

In the family of God you are part of something much bigger than yourself! God designed you for relationships and He designed you to be a blessing and benefit. We are better together! In a few minutes Andy is going to tell you a little more about how you can become part of a team here at GFC and take another step in the maturation process of your faith by using your gifts in relationship with other people in our church for the purpose of advancing God's kingdom in the world!