

Spiritual Gifts

Ten Things to Know about Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

October 11, 2026

HDBC

Review from last week:

Definition: *Supernatural endowments from God which enable believers to fulfill their God-given assignments.*

Illustration: *The N.T. uses the human body, which is made up of uniquely individual parts, joined together for a common mission.*

Spiritual gifts are like the various parts of the body. They have different abilities, purposes and functions, but they work together in the body.

In a similar way spiritual gifts are intended to be exercised through the church and for the church's edification. Meaning, when the gifts are being used properly the church is built up.

This morning I want us to look at 1 Corinthians 12:1-31. In it we can discover ten things about spiritual gifts which are important to know. Today we have the rare ***Ten-Point Sermon***. So, here we go. **Read the text first.**

1. There are many different gifts. (4)

Four places in the NT where spiritual gifts are mentioned. Each gives a partial list of the spiritual gifts. When you list them all you can come up with a list of twenty gifts. Some could be combined, so you may find that the total number listed by some may be slightly different. In my list, I have twenty.

They range in character and in function. Some are open and obvious when utilized, while others are hardly noticeable even when being used. Some involve group ministry, others one on one. They are different. I think it would be helpful at this point for me to give you a list of the gifts. I've put them into four categories, because that helps me.

Leadership Gifts

Leadership

Administration

Apostleship

Pastor/Shepherd

Ministry Gifts

Service

Hospitality

Giving

Wisdom

Knowledge

Discernment

Exhortation

Mercy

Faith

Proclamation Gifts

Evangelism

Teaching

Prophecy

Sign Gifts

(Not on the survey. I'll address these later in a sermon)

Miracles

Healings

Tongues

Interpretation of Tongues

2. The gifts are given by the Holy Spirit. (4,11)

The pastor is not the giver of the gifts. I have no control over it and I'm so glad! The Holy Spirit is the one who decides who gets which gifts. It is His prerogative. He knows the needs of the body, and He knows the temperament of the individual. Therefore He is best qualified for making this decision. The fact that the Holy Spirit is the source of all the gifts creates an opportunity for unity within the body. No one earns a certain gift. No one is to be exalted because his gifts. There should be no pride associated with a particular gift. None are intended to exalt the person. The gifts are not given based on merit or natural ability.

3. The gifts are ministry oriented. (5)

Paul speaks of ministries that are related to the spiritual gifts. Just as there are a variety of gifts, there are a variety of ways in which the gifts function. Three people may have the same gift, but utilize them in three different ways.

The point is the gifts are given to be used and we will be held accountable for the manner in which we use them. (1 Peter 4:10)

As the gifts are put into action through ministries, they will further develop and mature. This maturing of the gifts will open additional opportunities for ministry, which will provide for a further developing and maturing of the gifts.

4. The gifts are productive only when empowered by God. (6)

Effects - Energizing, works, activities. God's power in action.

You may have gifts within you, but unless the power of God is unleashed through you they remain dormant. Remember that **we are warned against quenching the Spirit**. We quench the Spirit when we fail to allow Him to work through us in utilizing the gifts which He has given to us. I cannot really exercise my gifts in my own power. **Fuel to engine.**

5. Every believer has at least one gift. (7a)

There is not one believer alive today who does not have at least one spiritual gift. (1 Peter 4:10 highlights this truth) When you were saved you were added to the body of Christ. And you were added **not to be excess baggage**, but to join with the other members as a significant member of the body with a specific function or task. If you are saved, you have spiritual gift or gifts.

6. The gifts are given for the common good. (7b)

Each person's gift is **observable to others within the body** of Christ as he or she uses it. They are to be used for the common good, or for the **general well-being of the body of Christ**. They are not given for the purpose of lifting up individuals, but for the good of the church.

I'm afraid this is one of the areas where charismatics are missing it. They often overemphasize the benefit which the spiritual gifts have for the individual, but not for the body of Christ. Not all do this however.

7. We must appreciate the gifts we have. (14-20)

In these verses Paul offers some humorous illustrations from the human body. One point is the uniqueness of each gift, suited to its function.

Another point Paul is making is that each person should be satisfied with his or her gifts and not become envious of others. In other words, **stay in your lane, run the race before you, stick to your assignment.**

He introduces us to a couple of disgruntled body parts.

1) Fretful Foot (15)

No one would depreciate the importance of the foot. With it we can stand and walk or kick a flat tire. Yet Paul pictures an unhappy foot. It would rather be a hand. Maybe it was tired of its limited view. Maybe it was tired of carrying so much weight all the time. Who knows.

At any rate, it has decided that if it cannot be a hand it may as well be dislocated from the body. Yet this declaration did not make it any less a part of the body. Just because it is not a hand does not mean it is not important.

2) Enraged Ear (16-17)

We all acknowledge the importance of the ear. By it we can be **warned of an approaching train.** By it we can hear **the doorbell or answer the phone.** With it we are able to learn basic skills which will help us all through life. With the ear we can **listen to Handel's Messiah, or the rustle of leaves in a gentle breeze.**

Yet here we have an ear, who is dissatisfied with being an ear. It wants to be an eye. Why? Maybe because the eye was always getting the attention. Nobody puts make up on the ear to highlight its beauty. Although, I guess earrings add elegance and beauty. But I doubt they are designed to draw attention to the ear's natural beauty.

All kinds of things can find their way into a person's ear with little notice. **Q-tip. Insects. Popcorn kernel. AA battery. Spiderweb. Live moth. Candy wrappers.** And wax can build up almost unnoticed until it begins to impact our hearing.

But let the smallest speck of dust enter the eye and the body will immediately shut everything else down to deal with it. No wonder this particular ear was **enraged**.

Because it was not an eye, the ear decided that it was therefore not a part of the body. But again, this declaration did not make it any less a part of the body.

Verse 17 Paul shows the folly of this kind of thinking. If the whole body were one member, any member, think how ugly it would be and how useless it would be, how vulnerable it would be. No, Paul reminds us that God's plan for the body is best.

8. We must be respect the gifts of others. (21-25)

Paul now goes back to his human body illustration and offers another truth. This time it is not a case of one member considering itself of no importance, but of one member considering another member unimportant.

Here he has **the eye telling the hand that the hand is unimportant**. That would be a foolish eye indeed, and it would find out the next time the wind blew a speck of sand into itself. There would be no hand to extract it. It would be **self-destructive for the head to tell the feet to get lost**.

The various members need one another. And Paul has even gone so far as to say that God has caused those gifts and members of the body which might seem to be the least significant as the most important. Paul is not communicating here that some gifts are more honorable than others. But he is speaking of the way people look at the gifts. People tend to put the gifts into categories of honor and usefulness. Paul is saying that God has the ability to balance any scales that become unbalanced.

9. We must not long for gifts we do not have. (27-31a)

Since it is the Holy Spirit who decides who gets which gifts, it would be

presumptuous and foolish to ask for anything different. We must graciously and trustingly accept the gifts given to us, remembering that he has given them for the glory of God and for the edification of the church.

They had elevated certain gifts above others so much so that the members all wanted to have the same gifts, the ones they felt were more important. Tongues was most important to them. Paul goes to great lengths to dispel that practice. Two things we are to do:

Accept God's Design (27-30)

He reminds them of the fact that every person does not have the same gift. And that this is exactly the way God wants it to be. He urges them to accept God's plan for the church and that means specific gifts given to specific individuals for specific ministries.

Strive for Most Productive Gifts (31a)

This almost seems to be a contradiction to what I have just said, but I do not believe that it is. They had been elevating the gifts which they felt would give them individual self-gratification. Tongues was on the top of the list.

When Paul wrote ***earnestly desire the greater gifts*** he was not speaking of individuals desiring specific gifts for themselves, but of the church desiring that people with the ***greater gifts*** would be part of the church. By ***greater gifts*** Paul was referring to the ones which would have the greatest impact for the Kingdom. Chapter 14 explains this.

10. We must use our gifts in love. (31b)

No matter what gift or gifts one has, if they are operating apart from love, they are useless and counter-productive. That is the basic thrust of chapter 13. Love is greater than tongues 1, prophecy 2, knowledge 2, faith 2, giving 3. It will outlast them all. Whatever you determine your gifts to be, remember, they must be operated in love.

In Chicago a few years ago a little boy attended a Sunday school I know of. When his parents moved to another part of the city the little fellow still attended the same Sunday school, although it meant a long, tiresome walk each way. A friend asked him why he went so far, and told him that there were plenty of others just as good nearer his home.

They may be as good for others, but not for me, was his reply.

Why not? she asked.

Because they love a fellow over there, he replied.

If the world knows we will love them they are more likely to come.

If church members know they are loved, they are more likely to stay.

What oil is to an engine, love is to the church.

Continue to discover your spiritual gifts. Ask God.

Begin to explore ministry opportunities that suit your gifts.