

SEEKING GOD

“Within the Church” (Part 2 in a series)

For the last few weeks, we’ve talked about the importance of being in the presence of God and listening to His voice. This week, we’ll be talking about *Seeking God* as the “big C” Church within the “church building” and diving deeper into spiritual gifts...What are they, which ones do I have, and how do I actively use them?

Little reminder as we continue in this series, is that this series is designed to help keep our new mission and vision fresh in our minds. Not that we’re reiterating the exact message that we did in January, but applying it and practically using it at Candlewood Church and individually in our lives.

So, as you open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 12, I’d like to share a little fun fact with you. I love watching the Olympics! Honestly, I’ve probably annoyed most of my close-knit family and friends with how much I talk about it, but I really enjoy watching the best in the world compete in sports and support our nation.

Don’t worry, I’m not going to go on and on about the Olympics, but rather just focus on one specific sport that’s near and dear to my heart. Volleyball.

I played volleyball for 7 years and loved every minute of it — I still do. I wish my body could still do what it used to do all those years ago (hey...“if you don’t use it, you lose it,” right?). But let’s talk about the idea of team sports for just a moment. Whether you played sports, still play, or don’t know anything about sports, we all can get an idea of what it means to be a team, right? We work together! Everyone has a specific and important spot on the team.

My position on the team was called the *libero* (or “Defensive Specialist” aka DS). ***Show picture if available*** If you’ve watched volleyball, it’s the player that wears the different color jersey on the team. I had a certain skillset to play in that position (not just being 5’2”), I had specific places I could be and not be on the court, and I knew how to play to best support our team as a whole.

In the same way, we are one team — the Bible words it as “ONE BODY.” But we all have different parts (or positions) in the body. They’re all useful, important, beneficial, and help the body as a whole.

We are the church! Both with a capital C (universal church/the people) and we go to church (little c/the location). We’ve talked about how to be the “Big C” Church, now it’s time to talk about how to attend and get plugged into a location of a church (Candlewood Church, for us). And we do that by fellowship, worship, and using our spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:14-31

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. **13** For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to **drink** of one Spirit.

14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. **15** If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. **16** And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. **17** If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? **18** But as it is, God **arranged** the members in the body, each one of them, as he **chose**. **19** If all were a single member, where would the body be? **20** As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” **22** On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are **indispensable**, **23** and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater **honor**, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater **modesty**, **24** which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so **composed** the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, **25** that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same **care** for one another. **26** If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. **28** And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. **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? **31** But **earnestly desire** the **higher** gifts.

And I will show you a still **more excellent** way.”

One thing that I love to do is exegesis (studying and researching God’s Word, knowing the origin, its history, and word studies). I know it’s not everyone’s cup of tea, and I haven’t actually preached in this way for many years, but I thought I would lead us in a little bit of a deep dive into our scripture today. Are you ready? If you’re taking notes, feel free to write some of these down or grab the digital copy on our app.

Word Study:

- “drink” - potizō (vs. 12)
 - to give to drink, to furnish a drink, to water, irrigate, saturate one’s mind (metaphor)
 - Not only are we created to hold the Holy Spirit (we are vessels), but we are created to irrigate the Holy Spirit. We are intended to use it and share with others to help promote growth. One source of water/power that gets spread/shared with other places/members.
 - Gardening: channels of water that spread throughout the field
 - Circulatory system within the body
 - (Ephesians 4:1-7) *“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **3** eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **7** But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”*
 - This confirms “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one Spirit, one body”
- “arrange”/“to place” - tithēmi (vs. 18)
 - to set, put, place
 - To establish, set forth, ordain
 - Note: God ordained. God has placed and arranged.
- “chose”/“desire” - thelēō (vs. 18)
 - Intention, purpose, take delight in
 - It is God’s will on where he places people and in what capacity. All are necessary and important.
 - Does that mean God will keep us in the same position or giftings forever? Not necessarily. I believe He will shape, grow, and develop other giftings that will come later as well as enhance and equip us in our current giftings to another task we don’t know about yet.
 - We can continue in the giftings He’s given us from the beginning, AND we can develop new ones for the future calling He has upon our life. It looks like strengthening different parts of our body for different tasks.
- “indispensable”/“necessary” - anagkaios (vs. 21)
 - What one cannot do without
 - Absolutely essential
 - (Romans 12:3-8) ***3** For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. **4** For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, **5** so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members*

one of another. 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.

- Cannot function without them
 - In perspective of the body or even a team, the parts or the players that seem replaceable are actually necessary to function properly or win the game.
 - Think of a time you were unable to use a certain body part due to an injury or even something more intense like removal. The value of that part becomes even more valuable and even desired because we're lacking it.
 - Do not think of yourself as indispensable!
- "honor" - anagkaios (vs. 23)
 - A value in which the price is fixed, non-negotiable
 - While the value of our money may change, the value God puts upon us does not. He sees us as non-negotiable and highly valuable.
- "modesty"/"presentable" - euschēmosynē (vs. 23)
 - Beautiful, charming, attractive, pleasing appearance
 - Used only 1 time in the Bible (here in this passage).
- "composed" - sygkerannymi (vs. 24)
 - Mix together
 - Unite together as one
 - What we read from these last few verses is that God has united the church body to be one. We all compliment each other to bring great honor to God because He has set and seen value in all of us.
- "care" - merimnaō (vs. 25)
 - Look out for one another, promote interests, providing for
 - Reiterating the importance of supporting each other.
- "earnestly desire" - zēloō (vs. 31)
 - Burn with zeal in the pursuit of good
 - Continue to seek the spiritual gifts from God. Don't plateau.
- higher/greater - megas (vs. 31)
 - Has a lot of meanings in regards to rank, but it also has the definition of God's preeminent blessings
 - Gifts that come from above; great things
 - If we truly believe that spiritual gifts are designed and designated for each of us, they are most definitely excellent gifts and should be desired.
 - Who are we to dictate who God's gifts in certain ways and rank them in importance. These gifts come from our Heavenly Father who gives us these gifts within His will. They are blessings.

- “more excellent” - hyperbolē (vs. 31)
 - Beyond measure
 - Our gifts are not measured in the ways we measure things (importance, rank, etc.). Rather, they all serve a purpose and work together in unity.
 - So how does this scripture read? “Burn with zeal and seek the preeminent and excellent blessings of God. Not only to seek more gifts but use your gifts in love to build others up.”

Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Ephesians 4:1-16, Romans 12:4-8)

Send to Emily’s email

(Give short little explanation of how to do a QR code
or come see me after service and I’ll walk you through it)

Please take time to research each gifting. If you need help or extra insight, please feel free to contact the church office or connect with our leadership.

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|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| • Wisdom | • Hospitality |
| • Knowledge | • Leader |
| • Healing | • Mercy |
| • Miracles | • Administration |
| • Prophecy | • Apostle |
| • Discernment | • Faith |
| • Speaking in Tongues | • Helps |
| • Interpretation of Tongues | • Intercession |
| • Service | • Missionary |
| • Ekbalism (casting out evil spirits) | • Shepherd |
| • Exhortation | |
| • Teaching | |
| • Generosity/Giving | |



5 Guidelines of Spiritual Giftings

1. Study the Gifts

1. 1 Corinthians 12:14-31
2. Ephesians 4:1-16
3. Romans 12:4-8

- This is just a reiteration of the scriptures we talked about today.
- Take some time to invest in your spiritual gifts and listen to how the Lord is moving you, equipping you, and calling you.

2. Find your Gifts

1. Note there’s no actual set formula to find out your spiritual gifts, but there are some resources to help guide you. Always allow the Holy Spirit to move within you and show you how He wants you to move.
2. Use that QR code or come see after the service.

3. Connect with Others

1. See how others use their gifts. This is part of the “Be One, Make One” motto that we have here at Candlewood Church. Be a Disciple (find your gifts and allow the Spirit to move within you to use them), and Make a Disciple (help others grow in their giftings) — again bonding our Church in unity as we compliment each other).
 1. It doesn’t matter what age you are. We all have a place in the Kingdom of God and a place within the Body of Christ (the Church). Let us glean from each other. We should always be growing, learning, expanding, striving, reaching, and seeking in our Christian walk.

4. Seek & Ask for Guidance

1. (Matthew 7:7-8) **7** *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*
2. Seek the desires of God and His will for your life and how to use your gifts. Remember, our God-given desires originate from God. Seek that and act in it.
3. Ask God when, where, and how He wants you to use your gifts. Enhance them through study, prayer, and discipleship.

5. Be Ready

1. Sharpen your skills and be ready to use them when the Lord calls you.

You might be thinking to yourself, “Does what I do really matter?” First, let me just validate you for a moment and say these are real thoughts and feelings, and you’re not alone; you’re in good company. I myself have thought this many times. But let me silence that thought by saying this: Don’t allow the enemy to have a foothold on your life because of what someone else has told you or doesn’t tell you. Seek God and His voice on what He’s telling you to do or not do. What He’s asking you to do does matter in His Kingdom and does play a purpose in His mission and His vision.

You may not be getting the validation, affirmation, or confirmation from others...and that makes it really difficult. However, let me ask you a question that was said to me recently, “Does what others say or think about you matter for you to fulfill your God-given calling?” Want to know my honest reply? I said, “No...but it helps.” Because truthfully every part of me wanted to say “Yes!” Yes, I care about what people think about me, but it should not trump over what God thinks about me.

Is that you today? Are you feeling like what you do doesn’t make a big difference in the Kingdom of God, or rather, here at Candlewood Church? I’m making it personal because we’re focusing on the location of the church and we just happen to be here at Candlewood Church. Here’s a list of people who I would label “Nameless Yet Famous.” Some names we do have, but ultimately, they’re not super famous and probably thought what they were doing didn’t have much of an impact either.

“Nameless Yet Famous”

Please read these stories for yourself and in its fullness. These are just short recaps.

- **The Little Israelite Girl & Naaman’s Wife (2 Kings 5)**
 - An Israelite girl who spoke up about the miracles performed by Elisha and therefore Naaman was healed through faith
- **Ehud (Judges 3:15-30)**
 - A left-handed Benjaminite who killed an evil king
- **Mordecai (Esther)**
 - Supported Esther and gave wisdom on how to save their people
- **Josiah (2 Kings 22)**
 - An 8-year old king who sought the Lord after years of unfaithful kings and rebuilt God’s temple
- **Phinehas (Numbers 25:10-11)**
 - Put an end to evil behavior with a spear and therefore turned the wrath of God away from Israel
- **Jael (Judges 4:21)**
 - The woman who killed an evil commander with a tent peg through his skull
- **Simon of Cyrene (Matthew 27:32)**
 - A man who helped Jesus carry the cross
- **Tabitha aka Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42)**
 - A woman disciple who was raised from the dead by Peter
- **Lydia (Acts 16:13-15)**
 - A faithful woman who worshipped God and was baptized by Paul (and her household)

The mission of God is constant, but the vision may change. If you’ve never taken a spiritual giftings test, I encourage you to use this resource to help jumpstart you in the right direction. Maybe you’ve taken a spiritual giftings test before, that’s good! However, I would encourage all of us to take a giftings test every 4-5 years to see how the Lord is moving you or developing you within the Church. I believe He’ll raise up the Church for the areas we need enhanced (that includes building up the next leadership and disciples who will carry on the Lord’s work). The Spirit apportions to each one individually but from the same Spirit. Who are we to decide or dictate what the Spirit is doing and how He is moving? This includes talking yourself out of doing what he’s asked you to do.

So take action in your spiritual giftings today. Talk with the Lord about what they are and how He wants you to use them. Not just within the church, but in our every day lives.