

**“Every Person Empowered!”**  
**1 Corinthians 12.1-31**

Repeat after: “I have power,” (2x) “because God lives in me.” (1x)

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**Empowered! (2022 Vision)**

We see a church full of people gifted by God’s Spirit for the good of others. As each person’s unique design is discovered, lived, and celebrated with equal excitement, we will collectively take thousands of joyful steps to serve others! Countless deeds of mercy, kindness, hospitality, healing, teaching, encouragement, and more will lead to story after story of the supernatural becoming natural and God’s love going public in every corner of our church and city. Redemption Hill will be a church where everyone lives empowered everywhere!

**The Point: If we want to be a church on the move, it will be because every person lives empowered**

**1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (text displayed)**

**1. You have been empowered by God’s Spirit for the good of others! (12:1-11)**

Paul begins by making this point: all genuine activity of the Spirit happens in alignment with the central confession of Christianity: “Jesus is Lord!”

- When someone sincerely confesses “Jesus is Lord,” it provides evidence the Holy Spirit has given them new spiritual life.
- When the Spirit gives us new life, he also empowers us with gifts to serve others and reflect God’s kingdom.

Repeat after: “I have power,” (1x) “because God lives in me.” (1x)

- Spiritual gifts are Spirit-empowered abilities that uniquely equip followers of Jesus to strengthen the church and advance God’s redemptive mission.
- *Jordan Seng talks about, “Spiritual gifts giv[ing] us a power boost in specific ministry area[s].”*

With a rhythmic cadence, Paul sets forth a picture of unity in diversity.

Here we have one of the clearest references to the trinitarian nature of God. One God exists as three persons: Father, (referred to as “God”), Son (referred to as “Lord”), & Spirit. Taken together, they reveal all three persons of the Trinity are active in the work of gifting and empowering the church. This is obvious by comparing verse 6 with verse 11, where both God (the Father) and Spirit “empower” our work, and then going to Ephesians 4:7-11 where these gifts are said to be given by Christ

The three terms: gifts, service, and activities are nearly interchangeable.

- The word “gifts” is the Greek word “charismata” which means grace (*charis*) gifts. So important for those tempted to boast in what God was doing through them (we would never do that).
- “Service” refers to all kinds of everyday acts of service.
- “Activities”-comes from the word “energeia” (you can hear our word energy). It refers to “ways divine power is applied.” (Barrett)

We could say: spiritual gifts display themselves in activities of service. :)

Verse 7 may be the clearest, most important verse on gifts in the NT: “To each is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

He begins by saying: “To each”

- Somebody say, “That’s me!” Not just the pastors, not just the Staff, not just Group & Team Leaders.
- Don’t believe the lies... They don’t need you. You don’t have much to offer. This church can reach it’s potential without you! (The devil is a liar!)

God wants to “manifest [his Holy] Spirit [through you].”

- The word “manifest” means to “make known,” to “make clear to the eye,” a display for all to see.

- Sam Storms says, “Spiritual gifts are nothing less than God Himself in us, energizing our souls, imparting revelation to our minds, infusing power in our wills and working His sovereign and gracious purposes through us. . . . Spiritual gifts are God present in, with and through human thoughts, human deeds, human words, human love. . . . Spiritual gifts are concrete disclosures of divine activity and only secondarily human activity. Spiritual gifts are the presence of the Spirit Himself coming to relatively clear, even dramatic, expression in the way we do ministry. Gifts are God going public among His people.”

#### Why does he give us these gifts?

- For “the common good.”
- This could be literally translated “with a view to profiting.”

Verses 8-10 serve as an illustration of verse 7. They are concrete examples of how the Spirit was working. Quick definitions... For more extensive explanation, go listen to my sermon on this same text from May.

- Word of Wisdom: speaking a message from God that provides direction
- Word of Knowledge: sharing information given by God otherwise unknown
- Faith: believing God will work beyond ordinary expectation
- Gifts of Healing: restoring health apart from natural means
- Miracles: an extraordinary event unexplainable by natural causes
- Prophecy: speaking a message given spontaneously from God
- Distinguishing spirits: discerning between the demonic and divine
- Tongues: speaking a language unknown to the speaker
- Interpretation of Tongues: explaining an unknown language

Now, do we believe God is still doing this kind of extraordinary work through ordinary people like us? Absolutely!

#### Why Miraculous Gifts Continue Today

##### **1. Expansive Biblical Evidence.**

- Evidence for the miraculous runs through the OT and NT.
- What is more: the Bible *actually says we should expect these specific gifts* to continue until Jesus returns: 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 says prophesy and tongues will cease “when the perfect comes.”
- Finally, the Bible never indicates that any gift would cease. Give a new believer a Bible. Tell them to read it cover to cover, and ask them what they believe.

##### **2. The Age of the Spirit is now!**

- The new covenant age will be marked by the Spirit’s work. Acts 2, quoting Joel 2, says...
- “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.” (Acts 2:17-18)

##### **3. Non-Apostles Practiced the Gifts.**

- Cessationists often argue that miracles primarily served to authenticate the apostles’ teaching, and once the apostles died, miracles died with them. This misses two important points:
  - This fails to recognize that apostles were also authenticated by the power of their preaching, their godly character, and their endurance through persecution (see 2 Corinthians).
  - This also fails to recognize all of the people in the NT who practiced these gifts but were not apostles

##### **4. Purpose of Spiritual Gifts.**

- Serve the common good (v. 7), strengthen and encourage (Rom 1:11-12), equip and build up (Eph. 4:12ff), edify and console (1 Cor. 14:3). They bring conviction and point people to Christ (1 Corinthians 14:24-25).
- We also see from the Gospels & Acts how miracles: glorify God (John 9:3), display God’s care and compassion (Mark 1:40-41), display the kingdom of God (Luke 11:20) and make way for the gospel (Acts 2-3).
- Why would God take away these precious gifts designed to bring so much good to people he loves?

##### **5. Commanded Pursuit**

- We are commanded to desire and pursue spiritual gifts, including the miraculous ones.
- 1 Corinthians 12:31 – “But earnestly desire the higher gifts.”
- 1 Corinthians 14:1 – “Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.”
- 1 Corinthians 14:39 – “So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.”

##### **6. Evidence from Church History**

##### **7. Unconvincing Counterarguments**

But why we aren’t seeing these gifts or seeing them more frequently. Three quick thoughts:

- 1) Maybe you have, and you didn’t recognize it.
- 2) Maybe God wants to give you those gifts, but you haven’t asked.
- 3) Maybe we are not living lives that require the Spirit’s power. I’m talking about stepping out in faith, moving toward people in love and

actually praying for their healing.

T: You have been empowered by God's Spirit for the good of others! (12:1-11)

## 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 (text displayed)

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## 2. Play your indispensable part by serving with your spiritual gifts! (12:12-31)

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What is Paul teaching us here?

- There is a beautiful unity because we all make up one body.
- There is a beautiful diversity because not one person in the body is exactly the same.

The part you play has value in our church... (14-20) This allows us to wave goodbye to feelings of inferiority.

- Some in Corinth said: "You don't need me!" They felt like their contribution did not matter.
- This can happen in any ministry... including the platform, but let's think together about Redemption Kids
- Where are our Redemption Kids? Let me hear you! Do you have a great time each week? Do you have fun? Do you learn about Jesus? Wouldn't it be sad if some of our wicked awesome adult volunteers ever thought to themselves.
  - I just hold the set up the kids space.
  - I just hold babies and change diapers.
  - I just make sure everyone is checked in and out safely.
  - I just teach simple lessons anyone can understand.
- Kids isn't it awesome that everything that happens in Redemption Kids happens because we have people with the gift of service, and teaching, and administration, and mercy, who God is working through every week!

Let's just take "I just" out of our vocabulary.

Look at what Paul says, in verse 17...

- Think about a body only being an eye (we'd have incredible vision and roll around). Think about the body only being an arm (I guess we'd look like a tree.)
- Verse 18: "But as it is, GOD ARRANGED the members in the body, EACH ONE [SAY: "THAT'S ME!"] OF THEM, as he chose."
- We need a wide variety of gifts to be all God has called and commissioned us to be!

T: You are an indispensable part of this church

While verses 14-20 address our feelings of inferiority, verses 21-26 address our feelings of superiority. Sometimes we feel less than others. Other times, we feel better than others!

Look at verse 21.

- We can't say: "You don't need me." But neither can we say: "I don't need you."
- Some Corinthians were elevating certain gifts, likely the one more miraculous in nature.
- Paul's primary concern is that no one gift is valued over another. "We see a church full of people gifted by God's Spirit for the good of others. As each person's unique design is discovered, lived, and celebrated with equal excitement, we will collectively take thousands of joyful steps to serve others!"

I love how he puts it in verses 22 & 23. Listen carefully, "On the contrary, the parts of the body that SEEM TO BE WEAKER are [what?] INDISPENSABLE!!!, and on those parts of the body WE THINK less honorable we bestow the greater honor."

All of this drives us to care for one another (verse 25), to suffer together and rejoice together (verse 26).

Paul then illustrates this in verses 27-31. He puts the gifts that SEEM to be stronger with the ones that SEEM to be weaker. He lumps miraculous gifts in with the everyday acts of service. Check this out...

### Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:28-30)

- Apostles: expand the mission
- Prophets: communicate God's heart
- Teachers: explain God's truth with clarity and relevance
- Miracles: an extraordinary event unexplainable by natural causes
- Gifts of Healing: restoring health apart from natural means
- Helps/Service: giving time and energy to meet the needs others
- Administration: aligning resources to achieve a common goal

- Tongues: speaking a language unknown to the speaker
- Interpretation of Tongues: explaining an unknown language

In verses 29-30, Paul asks these questions in rhetorical fashion. In other words, he expects them to answer by saying “NO!”

- This teaches us no one has every gift.
- This teaches us that not everyone will speak in tongues.
- This emphasizes the beauty of God’s diverse and strategic arrangement of HIS gifts.

#### RHC TEAMS

- I want to highlight our Serve Team participants for just a minute... If you serve, with our Venue Team, would you please stand up. Connections. Music. AV. Kids. If you serve on one of our Support Teams (like Communications, Finance, and Facilities) or Ministry Teams (like Students, College, and Mercy), would you please stand up. Can we give them a hand?
- If you call RHC home and have not yet taken the opportunity to jump in and serve, you can sign up today! If you are brand new to RHC, we won’t stop you from serving either! Our target participation level is one Sunday a month. Some are eager to serve more frequently. Others may only have the capacity for every other month.

We’re praying for 10 people who have not yet stepped into serving with a Team to do so today!

We are ALL needed., We are ALL necessary. We are ALL indispensable!!

#### The Finish

**“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)**

- You are God’s poem, “work of art.”
- When God saved you, he saved you with a purpose, to live a life of loving and serving others.
- He’s “prepared” stuff for you. “Parare” (Latin root that means to “make ready”); “Prae” (“before”)
- “Walk” - how we live day to day.

Every day, God has good works made ready for you before you even get there. If we really believe what God says, it changes everything! The monotony gets sucked out of life. Adventure is the air we breathe!

- God sees specific opportunities you will have tomorrow to serve a coworker.
- God has already setup a specific way you can serve a family member on Tuesday.
- God will put something on your heart for friend on Wednesday.
- He’ll tap you on the shoulder and remind you of someone’s need in your Community Group on Thursday.
- On Friday, you’ll find yourself speaking with a stranger. By the time you finish, you’ll be amazed that you said the things you said and did the things you did.

God is going before us...

**Jesus is moving! Will we move with him?**