

1 Corinthians 12:1-?

INTRODUCTION FOR CHAPTERS 12-14

We need to understand the context of chapters 12, 13 and 14.

After Paul established the church, degrading moral and spiritual problems plagued the Church in Corinth.

The Corinthian church was becoming very problematic in moral and spiritual misdeeds of the church.

These moral and spiritual problems **were getting so bad** that Paul wrote 4 letters to the church, 2 of which we are studying right now in the first and second letters to the Corinthians.

The saints at Corinth were not progressing as they should in their walk with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*

I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

*For **ye are yet carnal**: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, **are ye not carnal**, and walk as men?*

The Carnal Corinthian Church
had a laundry list of moral and spiritual problems:

1. They had **church divisions and cliques** every way you could cut it.
2. They were **sexually perverted** with the existence of fornication and incest within the congregation.
3. There was a very unhealthy preoccupation with **integrating things of the pagen-evil world** into the church.
4. They were **suing** each other.
5. There was **rebellion against apostolic authority**.
6. There was a **failure to discipline**.
7. There was **marital conflict**.
8. There were **conflicts concerning the roles of single people**.
9. There was **abuse of their Christian Liberty**.
10. There was **idolatry**.
11. There was **selfishness**.
12. There was **pride**.
13. There was **demon worship**.
14. There was the **insubordination of women**.
15. There were **abuses of God's intended roles for men and women**.
16. There were **abuses of the Lord's Supper**.
17. There were **abuses of the love feast**.

And today, we come to the section in Scripture concerning **the abuses and perversions of spiritual gifts** by the Church of Corinth.

This is the context that we are to consider when we are reading and understanding chapters 12, 13, and 14.

Paul isn't, *without warning*, shifting gears here to a nice and fluffy, praise-worthy letter about how the saints at Corinth were doing such a good job in the area of spiritual gifts.

Conversely, In the verses right before the beginning of chapter 12, Paul says... **1 Corinthians 11:34** *"And the rest will I set in order when I come."*

On 2 occasions in the previous chapter, Paul rebuked the saints at Corinth by indicating that **He praised them NOT!**

Paul has **a lot more correcting and admonishment** for saints at Corinth before he is through, and the use of spiritual gifts is one of the areas needed to be attended to due to **the steep abuses and perversions of the spiritual gifts.**

So as we continue on in chapter 12, we must understand that there is NO change in the context so far and thus there is no change in the "rebuking and correcting" tone of the letter thus far.

It is right in line with all the other things that were going on in the Corinthian assembly.

Just as they were abusing and perverting other things in their walk with the Lord, they were abusing and perverting the use and application of spiritual gifts as well.

THE CULTURAL ASPECT

OF THE PROBLEMS WITH SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Many in the Corinthian church were overly fascinated and influenced by the culture. It was **a common pagan practice** to get drunk and worship the false-demonic Gods by uttering **non-language ecstatic sounds and noises along with seemingly uncontrollable gyrations of the body.**

Sound familiar right....

The Corinthian church was **infusing devilish, false god, pagan practices** of engaging in the very popular Greek pagan practice of emotional, *(often preluded by intoxication by alcohol)* **non-language ecstatic utterances** into church.

The Corinthian Church added to the divine and correct use of the spiritual gift of languages **(being able to speak in a known foreign language)** in a **disorderly and un-edifying manner** by adding the pagan (and often demonic lead) practice of using **non-language ecstatic sounds and noises along with seemingly uncontrollable gyrations of the body** to seemingly worship Jesus.

Though it gave an emotional high, a seemingly amazing sense of elevated spirituality, and a feeling of superiority in the culture and above others, **PAUL REBUKES THEM** because it was disorderly and absent of edification of others in the church body.

He will argue for **intelligibility and order** in the worship service, since that is the prerequisite to edification of the church, which is the goal of the gathering of the church body.

¹ Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

- “Now concerning...”: Familiar introductory words when Paul is getting ready to correct the church. Paul is saying in a nice way...you ARE ignorant, you are abusing and perverting the spiritual gifts, and so now I must correct you...
 - “Brothers”: A term Paul uses when entering a sensitive topic. Paul is preparing the saints at Corinth for a loving but heavy rebuke.
 - “Spiritual gifts”: Pneumatikon, gifts from the Holy Spirit, synonymous with charisma, gift of grace. In this chapter, charisma points to activities of the Holy Spirit.
 - “I do not want you to be ignorant...” Paul cares for them and for anyone who reads this letter. He is saying, “I love you so much and so I do not want you to be in error!”
 - Ignorant of what? The proper use of spiritual gifts.
Paul will spend the next three chapters on how to evaluate and use spiritual gifts.
- *Spiritual gifts are to be used **ALWAYS for the benefit of fellow believers**, not as badges of superiority.

– They are given to unite, **not divide**, the Body.

– Two common errors having to do with spiritual gifts:

1. Ignoring them
2. overemphasizing one gift over another.

But, **WHAT DOES GOD SAY.....**
ABOUT WHAT THE PURPOSE IS...
FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

1 Corinthians 14:33,40

*³³ For God is not the author of confusion,
but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.*

⁴⁰ Let all things be done decently and in order.

God always does things in an...

1. In a **Peaceful** manner.
2. In a **Decent** manner.
3. In an **Orderly** manner

God is NEVER part of things that are confusing. There is no bizarreness with God.

The use of spiritual gifts by believers is always sanctioned, licensed, and subject to the authority of the Godhead. You do NOT have the freedom to exercise God's spiritual gift in you whenever and however you please. God has rules concerning the spiritual gifts and that is WHY they are peaceful, decent, and orderly.

ADDITIONALLY, there is NO SUCH THING as a spiritual gift that edifies yourself.

If you say that you have a unique spiritual gift that is for your own edification....

I don't know what that is.....

but I know what it is NOT.....

It is NOT a spiritual gift.

It is okay to do things that are solely for your benefit and enjoyment, but don't call it a spiritual gift.

I like ice cream a lot!! I eat it because it brings **me, myself, and I** much happiness if only for a moment.

Yes, I enjoy getting ice cream with other people...but to be honest I like ice cream because **it pleases me** and my taste buds...it is super yummy to me!!!!

But it is not a spiritual gift, and for me to claim it is, is silliness

**The Purpose Of Spiritual Gifts IS always
for the edification of others in the body of Christ
and is clearly affirmed for us in the Word of God.**

1 Corinthians 12:7 *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. (to profit others, everybody in the church)*

Spiritual gifts are a **DISPLAY** of the Holy Spirit.

What is the purpose of the gift? It is to build up the church, the body of believers.

It is not to be exercised selfishly but **is to give spiritual help to other believers.**

1 Corinthians 13:5 (charity / love) "*seeketh not her own.*"

Note: All gifts must be used in the context of love-charity, which is the whole point of chapter 13. This verse is saying that spiritual gifts are done out of the love for others...**not for the love and edification of ourselves...**

1 Corinthians 14:12 *Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*

Ephesians 4:12

1. *for the perfecting of the saints, (plural)*
2. *for the work of the ministry, (all ministries in the church)*
3. *for the edifying of the body of Christ: (all saints in the church)*

Simply put...there is no TEAM **ME, MYSELF, AND I** in the use of spiritual gifts....

Hold on a second here Pastor...

what about 1 Corinthians 14:2 where is says...

“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue (which, by definition means, an actual language with verbs, nouns, tenses, adjectives, adverbs, etc. /// or the organ part of the mouth)

speaketh not unto men,

but unto God:

for no man understandeth him;

howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”

And then a few verses later in 1 Corinthians 14:4 is says...

“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue (a formed and organized foreign language)

edifieth himself;”

Without considering the context of the passages, it would seem there is a contradiction here, many verses advocating spiritual gifts are only for the edification of others in the church, and 2 verses here saying spiritual gifts can also be for the edification of the self...

But when taken together with the rest of the spiritual gifts' passages in the Bible, and especially in the context of 1 Corinthians, it is very clear that this verse is not a contradiction to the rest of the Bible, but rather a REBUKE, a CRITICISM, and a call to CORRECTION by ceasing and desisting from the self-edification, self-aggrandizement thing you are doing that you are calling a spiritual gift.

**If it does not edify others in the church out of love...
then it is not a spiritual gift, and please stop saying that it is.**

In 1 Corinthians 14, verses 2 and 4, Paul is saying that speaking in a *(formed and organized)* foreign language that is NOT understood by you or anyone else, and perhaps only by God,
is confusing and bizarre to other people.

(and this passage certainly does NOT MEAN some form of angelic language that nobody can understand but God that is found NOWHERE in the Bible?!?!?!)

How would you feel church, if you came to the assembly today only to discover that I have always been secretly fluent in Arabic and would be preaching today's entire sermon in the Arabic language with nobody who speaks Arabic in the audience?

I understand it, God understands it...but nobody else in church would understand it...

This would result in chaos and disorder for everyone here.

It would be un-loving and selfish.

And it would appear to only edify myself and not the body of Christ.

I would essentially be preaching to me, myself, and I for the next 45 minutes...

.....WEIRDO.....!!!!!!!

Another consideration concerning the spiritual gift of speaking a foreign language is that **the gift IS NOT for the edification of **sanctified people in church in any setting.****

1 Corinthians 14:22

Wherefore tongues (foreign languages) are for a sign, not to them that believe,

BUT TO THEM THAT BELIEVE NOT:!!

The use of FOREIGN LANGUAGES-TONGUES as a spiritual gift **is an evangelistic tool** to specifically proclaim the Gospel. The message is specifically aimed at and afforded to LOST people for the sake of leading them to JESUS.

So if the gifting of a foreign language were to be used there are 3 important parameters that govern the gift.

1. It is assumed that there is a lost person in church today that does not speak English.
2. The message in the foreign language will be evangelistic in nature explaining the Gospel message.
3. And in accordance with 1 Cor. 14:13, there must be an interpreter in church today that understands the foreign language so that it will be interpreted in the common language for the edification of the rest of the saints in church who do not speak the foreign language being spoke.

² Ye know that ye were Gentiles,
carried away unto these dumb idols,
even as ye were led.

- “Mute idols” Icons of wood and stone are voiceless and the gods they represent have nothing to say.

Psalm 115:4,8

⁴ *Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men's hands.*

False idols are the work **of self-edification.**

They are the fruitless work of people who are attempting to reconcile themselves to God, without any real relationship with the one true God.

These people don't partake in the blessings of others either.

They are all about self-gratifying, self-edifying, self-reconciling themselves to God **by THEIR OWN WORK...**

⁸ *They that make them are like unto them;*

(you become what you worship)

so is every one that trusteth in them.

³ Wherefore I give you to understand,

Paul is saying essentially,

“I want you to correct your thinking on this point so you will know the truth”

Paul implies here that, the saints of Corinth ARE misunderstanding something about the Holy Spirit and the exercise of spiritual gifts **and so must correct them.**

This is can be a confusing passage if you over-think it, so let's look at it closely.

1. That No Man speaking
by THE SPIRIT OF GOD
calleth Jesus accursed:

2. and That No Man can say
that Jesus is the Lord,
but by THE HOLY GHOST.

There are two points being made here.

The subject of each point IS the Holy Spirit.

*Every believer is **indwelled 100%** and permanently with the Holy Spirit and should always be under the control or influence of the Holy Spirit

Reading this verse IN context of the passage, and considering the previous verse about dumb idols...

and the exercise of spiritual gifts...

THE FIRST POINT here in the first part of the verse.

Paul says that no one who has come to know the Lord truly can ever cease being a follower of Jesus. Once saved always saved right!

We can never return to a point where we say that Jesus is accursed or damned and really mean it. If you are truly saved you truly believe it, even though your words or your actions say otherwise, OR...you were never really saved at all and are still lost in your sins.

Once we have been adopted into the family of God there is no going back. We have become a new creature, and the old us is gone forever. We are like the butterfly that has emerged from the cocoon. There is no way to return to the caterpillar we once were!

THE SECOND POINT here in the second part of the verse.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is both **the cause and consequence** of saving faith in Jesus Christ as savior at justification. And thus, it follows that the Holy Spirit living in a person **defines who is truly saved** and this is why we claim that Jesus is our savior and Lord after the salvation-justification moment in our lives.

And the Spirit's presence in us forever **separates us** from the world and from the person we used to be, and so your life actions should reflect the work of the Holy Spirit in you. **Matthew 7:16** *Ye shall know them by their fruits.*

So we will no longer believe that having faith in Jesus causes us to be lost and deceived resulting in being cursed. (much like the Jews believe, or any other false religion claim)

⁴ Now there are

DIVERSITIES OF GIFTS, **chárisma**, a divine gratuity, a spiritual endowment, a miraculous faculty from God.

but the same Spirit.

Here we have the first installment of the Trinitarian Godhead, GOD THE SPIRIT.

Ephesians 1:11-14

¹¹ *in whom (referring to Jesus) also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose*

of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

¹² *that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

¹³ *in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed,*

ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

¹⁴ *which is the earnest of our inheritance*

until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

We who have believed in Jesus Christ, have received a counselor, a worker, a guide, a power, a redemptive promise in and through the Holy Spirit to do the will of God in us and through us.

Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:*

There are a variety of different gifts. Each serves a different purpose in the church. **There is only one Holy Spirit**, the same one that occupies every person who comes to faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit then displays himself through the gifts of the Spirit.

- Paul will list nine charismata in this chapter: wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, faith, healings, miracles, spiritual discernment, speaking in tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

⁵ And there are

DIFFERENCES OF

ADMINISTRATIONS, One could say, “Different **MINISTRIES** to serve others.” The Greek word here demands service to others...and can't mean service to yourself.

diakonía, attendance as a **servant TO OTHERS**, to **AID OTHERS**, in the **SERVICE OF OTHERS** (especially of the Christian teacher, or technically, a DEACON.

but the same Lord.

Here we have the second installment of the Trinitarian Godhead, GOD THE SON. Who is our LORD GOD? Jesus Christ right. All authority has been given to the God the Father's SON, Jesus Christ to rule, reign, and judge.

Matthew 28:18

*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying,
All power is given **unto me** in heaven and in earth.*

IS JESUS YOUR LORD?

Is Jesus only someone who you allow to love you,
and you love him back,
but never really ceding Lordship of your life to him?

Total Lordship to Jesus in your life will be very obvious
to the casual observer for all to see.

- There are at least 21 administrative *charisma* offices listed in the NT:
Here is a very short list of different *administrative charisma* offices:

Apostleship
serving,
teaching,
encouraging,
contributing,
leadership,
showing mercy
celibacy
evangelism
pastoring
and public service

⁶ And there are

DIVERSITIES OF OPERATIONS, or, “Different **EFFECTS**

enérġēma, an effect of operation, a working towards, the might or skill effecting a work.

but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

Here we have the third installment of the Trinitarian Godhead, GOD THE FATHER working **in** all of us **for** all of us.

Yes, God the Father works in us directly.

Philippians 2:12-13

¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

¹³ For it is God (God the Father) which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

The number of activities spiritual gifts can be used to participate in is varied as well. Injecting energma into charisma means there is an unmeasurable number of charismas based on the uniqueness of the individual way diakonia is displayed by the Holy Spirit through each individual believer.

Example: There are NO two preachers who are exactly alike. Both men have the *charisma* of preaching, but due to the unique *energma* of each pastor, the manner in which his *diakonia* is made known is unique to that individual pastor.

Make sense?

Again, the power to participate in these activities all comes God.

“worketh all in all” = working together, one with another.

This verse demands a plurality of working together. There is no self-edification present here.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

1. A spiritual gift is the ability to do something that is beyond the normal human capacity.
2. A spiritual gift is from God to display the power of God through the Holy Spirit.
3. Spiritual gifts are given to **100%** of all believers, **100%** of the time directly upon justification, and **100%** of the Holy Spirit is given-received-sealed.

1 Corinthians 7:7 *For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.*

4. And in case you forgot.....lest you be ignorant and uninformed...
Spiritual gifts are for the common good of the entire community and the edification and equipping of the Body of Christ, which IS the church.

Whatever we have been given is necessary to assure the common good.

God knows what He's doing.

He knew who would gather in this church body on a certain day,
and He knew what gifts we would need.

So **He equips everybody as needed** to ensure the common good in every unique situation.