

Empowered by One and the Same Spirit

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[0 : 00] Tonight we are going to be reading from 1 Corinthians 12, still continuing in the series on 1 Corinthians.! We're going to be reading from verses 1 to 11, and it will be on the overhead behind me.

This section in my Bible is entitled Spiritual Gifts, Unity in Diversity. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says, Jesus is accursed, and no one can say, Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of service, but the same Lord. And there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit.

[1 : 26] To another, faith by the same Spirit. To another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit. To another, the working of miracles. To another, prophecy. To another, the ability to distinguish between spirits.

To another, various kinds of tongues. To another, the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. I know that Pastor John, Jeremy, and I didn't miss a Sunday. So I'm not really saying that we missed all of you on a Sunday, because we did see one another last Lord's Day.

And yet I will say that we were so encouraged and blessed and thankful for the time that we had together at the General Assembly, brothers and sisters from churches, truly even all around the globe.

So we're excited to be able to share more with you soon, but that is not what we're doing tonight.

Tonight we are back in 1 Corinthians, and we are here in chapter 12.

[2 : 31] So we are getting a double dose today of Paul and the Corinthians. They feel like they're friends of ours now. We're so familiar with them. But we're getting in reverse order to 1 Corinthians this evening.

And here we come to yet another topic in Paul's letter. And it's a topic that he's going to camp on for some time. The next three chapters will all deal with this topic.

And it's the topic of spiritual gifts. And we see this in verse 1. Paul begins with those words, Now concerning, which should be very familiar words to us at this point.

This has been his way of introducing a new topic in his letter. And each time, it's a topic that the Corinthians had written to him about. So they had written to him with questions.

And here are his answers. Like in chapter 7. Now concerning the matters about which I wrote, you wrote. And now concerning the betrothed.

[3 : 33] Chapter 8. Now concerning food offered to idols. And so here in chapter 12. Now concerning spiritual gifts.

That word there, gifts. Translated as such in our English translations. It's actually been supplied for us. More woodenly, it just reads, Now concerning spiritual.

And you could then infer matters or spiritual things. The focus of those spiritual matters though, is that of spiritual gifts. But Paul does address more than just gifts.

In fact, in the first few verses here, we're going to see that he talks about spiritual persons. Those claiming to be spiritual. Who truly is spiritual.

Who are truly those born again and indwelt with the Holy Spirit. And then the Holy Spirit has given them spiritual gifts. So yes, spiritual gifts are the central focus of these next few chapters.

[4 : 38] But there's many things related to the Holy Spirit that Paul addresses. So we're going to focus then tonight on the Holy Spirit. Too often, though not tonight, thank you to Ollie.

In a church, in the main, today, among Christians, we neglect the Holy Spirit. He's overlooked. He's misunderstood. We often think of the Holy Spirit not as a person, but as a power or as a force.

And so we use the wrong pronouns when talking about the Holy Spirit. How often do we hear someone say, It, instead of He or Him? Yes, you heard me right.

Christians can be guilty of using the wrong pronouns. Not when it comes to men and women. But when it comes to Christians thinking the Holy Spirit isn't a person or forgetting that He is.

And even when we as Christians do properly understand the Holy Spirit to be a person, how often do we treat Him as almost inferior to the Father and the Son?

[5 : 43] He's treated maybe not intentionally, but still treated almost like the third wheel of the Trinity. There's the Father. There's the Son. There's the Son. We know much about them. We could rattle off verses that relate to them.

We could explain their role in our lives. We could talk about what they each do in redemptive history. And how related that is. The Father sent the Son.

And He did not withhold His Son, but gave Him up for us. And the Son, He willingly came and He obediently submitted to His Father's will. When we think of that intimate exchange in the Garden of Gethsemane with the Son pouring out His heart to His Father.

And we too pray to the Father. And we pray in the Son's name. We talk about the Father and the Son often. We worship them, and rightly so. But we can't neglect the Holy Spirit.

Too often, He can be forgotten. If you were to poll Christians and ask who each person of the Trinity is and what each person of the Trinity does, I think a lot of Christians would say a lot about the Father and the Son.

[6 : 54] But probably not so much about the Spirit. The one who is sent from the Father and the Son. The one whom we've already been reminded tonight dwells in each of us who are Christians.

And dwells among us as the Church. How important He is to our salvation. To our Christian life.

And so the Triune God would have us to focus on the Holy Spirit tonight.

Who He is. And what He does. His role in the believer's life. So there are three truths in this passage that were taught tonight. Three truths that relate to the Holy Spirit's role in our Christian lives.

And here's the first truth. Those with the Holy Spirit honor Christ. Those with the Holy Spirit honor Christ. Beginning in verse 2.

You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says, Jesus is accursed.

[8 : 02] And no one can say, Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit. So these first few verses are something of a test.

It's a test to discern if a person actually has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him or her. And this was very important.

This was a needed test in the Corinthians day. Because many people were claiming to be spiritual persons. Remember verse 1. Supplies that word gifts for us.

But Paul is talking first here more broadly. He is speaking of concerning our spiritual matters. He's speaking of people claiming to be spiritual.

People even claiming to be led by the Spirit. And Paul says to the Corinthians, We need to exercise discernment. Not everyone claiming to be a spiritual person is actually a person indwelt by the Spirit.

[9 : 07] Not everyone claiming to speak in the Spirit actually has the Spirit living in them. They claim to be spiritual, but they are not biblically spiritual.

And that is such an important, crucial distinction for the Corinthians. Because they had come out of a very spiritual background, but it was dark.

It was demonic. It was evil. It was idolatrous. So we saw that as Paul was talking about the Lord's Supper. Not sitting at the table of demons.

It was spiritual, but not biblically spiritual. And just as Paul says, the Corinthians were led, but it was by mute idols.

It was a false leading. They were led by demonic lies. But they were still spiritually led. So Paul is cautioning the Corinthians.

[10:02] He's warning them of the great dangers of their idolatrous past. You were spiritual then, in a demonic way. And those who are still ensnared in idolatry, they are spiritual still.

They are not of the Holy Spirit. And here's how you know. Here's the text. And it centers around the Lord Jesus Christ. It centers on honoring and esteeming and rightfully confessing Him.

So if you're speaking in the Spirit, you will never say this. You will never say, Jesus is accursed. Or Jesus be cursed.

You will never wish condemnation upon Him. Now as Christians, we do recognize this very sobering reality.

Jesus was cursed. He was condemned. He was hung on the cross for our sins. And the law says, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.

[11:09] But recognizing that Jesus became a curse for us is so far different from saying, Jesus be cursed. One is a matter of worship and awe and wonder.

Remember, Jesus died the death that I deserved? And I will praise Him. I will honor and esteem and boast in Him. That is far different than saying, Jesus is accursed.

Or Jesus be cursed. One is recognizing the curse He became. Recognizing He was condemned in our place and rejoicing and worshiping Him. And the other is wishing upon Him that curse and that condemnation.

So of course, those who speak in the Spirit will never say, Jesus be accursed. Only those who do not speak in the Spirit will say that.

But also, those who do not speak in the Spirit, there's something else that they will never say themselves either. So the one speaking truly in the Spirit, he or she will never say something.

[12:17] But also, the one who is not speaking in the Spirit, they too will never say something. He or she will never say, Jesus is Lord. Now, perhaps, yes, a one-off comment to appease somebody.

But a pattern, a life of confessing Christ and submitting to Him, that you will not find. Because that is to honor Christ. That is to elevate Him as the rightful authority over us.

And those who claim to speak in the Spirit but actually don't, they won't say such a thing about Jesus. Or perhaps more importantly, they won't make the message that they proclaim about Him.

They'll make it about themselves. They may say, Jesus is Lord to win an audience, but they are not seeking to actually lead people or point people to Jesus as Lord.

They simply say it, perhaps, to get their foot in the door. So they can then say, now listen to me and do what I have to say. So I think we get the point, right?

[13:19] The one truly led by the Spirit and not by demonically influenced mute idols, that person will honor Christ with their lips. He will esteem Christ with the very words that He says.

That's the test. You see, it's not the power that they possess. It's the person that they confess.

Because in the Corinthians day, people could have an experience.

They could be demonically energized in their pagan worship. There was real power that could be put on display. Remember when Paul and Silas were thrown into that prison in Philippi.

There was that great earthquake. And the prison doors all burst open. But the prisoners, including Paul and Silas, they didn't leave. And the Philippian jailer, he was converted.

And based on the testimony that Paul and Silas had given. And we know that account well. But do you remember why Paul and Silas were in prison in the first place?

[14:20] Because they were greatly annoyed, the Scriptures said, by a slave girl who was following them around. And we're told that this slave girl had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling.

Now that was in Philippi, not Corinth. But as we've seen, demonic activity, idol worship was present there in Corinth just as it was in Philippi.

There were dark spiritual powers that could be put on display. Idol worship, energized by demons, was very present. So the test wasn't about what someone claiming to speak in the Spirit could do.

No, the test was about what someone claiming to speak in the Spirit would say. And specifically what they would say about Jesus Christ. Paul is saying, don't be impressed by the power that someone possesses.

But listen carefully to the words someone confesses. That was the important needed test for the Corinthians. And the same is true for us today.

[15 : 29] It's an important needed test in our day as well. Because lots of people claim to be spiritual. It's popular. It is trendy to be spiritual in our world today.

But it is a dark pagan influenced spirituality. And don't think, well, that's only for these kind of mystical religions of the East. No, we heard very clearly at the GA of that kind of spirituality in the West.

Of this spiritual, dark, demonic kind of forces at work. In Western nations, here in America, people will claim to be spiritual. But they are devoid of the Holy Spirit.

People will even claim to be Christians. It's quick to say that they believe in God, very generally speaking. But what does that supposedly spiritual person say about Jesus Christ?

Many will claim to be spiritual. But only a truly born again believer, indwelt with the Holy Spirit, will claim Christ Jesus as Lord. As their Lord.

[16 : 36] And gladly submit to Him. Those with the Holy Spirit honor Christ. So you see what Paul is doing here? Before we can talk about spiritual gifts, we must talk about the truly spiritual person.

They honor Christ. Jesus said in John 16, 14, that the Spirit would glorify Him. So it makes sense, doesn't it? That those who have the Holy Spirit, they too would glorify Christ, would honor Christ. So we must exercise discernment. And I know that this isn't directly in our text, but I think that there is an important evangelistic application here. We must share Christ with those around us.

Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The gospel message. That treasure in jars of clay, just as we heard this morning. We must call sinners to repentance and faith in Him.

It is not enough to hear someone simply say, Oh yes, I'm a Christian. Oh, I believe in God. No, in love, we must press in further and ask, But who do you say that Jesus Christ is?

[17 : 48] And that will quickly reveal who we are talking to. Is this a brother or sister or not? Well, what do they say about Christ? Oh, and then we give them Christ. We tell them of Him.

We joyfully speak of our Lord and the Savior for sinners that He alone is. Because that is what those with the Holy Spirit do. So if you're a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit.

That is what we do. We honor Christ with our lips. Well, that's the first truth related to the Holy Spirit in our passage this evening. Let's look now at the second.

Those with the Holy Spirit have been given a variety of gifts. And we see those gifts here beginning in verse 4.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of service, but the same Lord. And there are varieties of activities.

[18 : 47] But it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom.

And to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit. To another faith by the same Spirit. To another gifts of healing by the one Spirit. To another the working of miracles. To another prophecy. To another the ability to distinguish between spirits. To another various kinds of tongues. To another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

So there's this order of operation that Paul has given us in our passage tonight. First, he's established who it is that actually has the Holy Spirit within them. Those who confess Jesus Christ is Lord.

That's the foundation that's been established. Well now we see those who have the Holy Spirit within them. They've been given spiritual gifts. The only truly spiritual people have been given spiritual gifts.

[19 : 56] And these gifts are for the church. And there's a variety of gifts that are given. Paul repeats this point three times for emphasis here.

We see it beginning in verse 4. That when he speaks about varieties of gifts and varieties of service and varieties of activities. That's all centering on spiritual gifts.

And those gifts being put to use. So he states it three times for emphasis. And while we are primarily looking at the role of the Holy Spirit this evening.

Paul gives us this glimpse of how the triune God is at work. So in verse 4. Same Spirit. Well that's God the Spirit giving the gifts.

Then verse 5. Same Lord. That's God the Son. Jesus Christ whom we serve with our gifts. And then in verse 6. Same God.

[20 : 52] God. That's God the Father. Who along with the Spirit empowers us. So we might exercise the gifts. And there are many gifts listed here in these verses.

Nine in total. The utterance of wisdom. The utterance of knowledge. Faith. Gifts of healing. Working of miracles. A prophecy.

The ability to distinguish between spirits. Various kinds of tongues. And interpretation of tongues. So we need to talk about each of these gifts.

But I'm not going to spend a great deal of time unpacking what each of these are. In part because Paul doesn't. He doesn't tell us in great detail what each of these gifts is.

That's not his main priority in this passage. It really is that the same Spirit gives all of these gifts. That's the thrust of this passage.

[21 : 50] The unity in the Spirit. So I want to be careful in seeking to explain the gifts. Because Paul doesn't give us a lot of information about them.

One of the errors of the charismatic movement, I think, is to overly define these gifts. They make them very technical terms. For example, the first gift here in this list is the utterance of wisdom.

Or as the NIV says, the message of wisdom. Now, it's hard to know exactly how is this gift distinguished from the utterance of knowledge. Well, what did the charismatic movement do?

They gave a very technical meaning to each of these. So speaking of the utterance of knowledge, one commentator says, This is a supernatural insight into a specific person's circumstances.

Often followed by a healing. There's lots of problems here. But the first is, where does the Bible tell us that that's what this gift is? Where does the Bible give us that kind of a description?

[22 : 53] Well, it doesn't. And on top of that, the very technical definition makes the gift of the utterance of knowledge sound a whole lot like the gift of prophecy. Which is another gift in this list.

And that supernatural insight into a specific person's circumstances is followed by a healing. Which, that's a whole other gift itself. So, how did we have that coming out of the utterance of knowledge? We have like three gifts that seem to be at work in the definition that they've given. So I think it's important we don't get too specific in that definition. The gift of utterance of knowledge and the gift of utterance of wisdom.

They are not the same or Paul wouldn't have distinguished between them. But at the same time, there's definitely overlap, isn't there? Think about knowledge and wisdom in God's Word. The Proverbs 1-7 quickly comes to mind.

And we see both of those terms in parallel use. So Proverbs 1-7 says, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

[23 : 59] There we see knowledge and wisdom. But they're even more tied together in Proverbs 9-10. Where we also read, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

And the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. So clearly, those who possess these gifts have an understanding of God's Word. Wisdom, knowledge that comes from it.

They grasp His Word. They can clearly articulate it. They can help others to live according to it. Applying it wisely to their lives. There is an instructive element to these gifts.

Well, then we come to the gift of faith. And this is just one word given to us. The gift of faith. Now, of course, Paul isn't talking about the gift of saving faith. Saving faith would obviously precede the giving of a spiritual gift.

So the faith that we put in Christ in order to be saved, that can't be what Paul is talking about, or else we'd have salvation all mixed up. That's not a spiritual gift that's given to some, but not to others.

[25 : 06] It's not that there are some who are Christians who have the gift of faith. And if you don't have the gift of faith, well, then you're not a Christian. Paul is talking about faith differently here. Think about all the times that Jesus rebuked His disciples and those following Him by saying, Oh, you of little faith.

Like the time that Jesus and His disciples went out on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus fell asleep. And when that storm arose, the disciples woke Him. They were frightened.

And what did Jesus say to them? Why are you afraid? Oh, you of little faith. When Paul talks about the gift of faith, that kind of faith that he has in mind, there are those whom the Holy Spirit has given this gift of great trust in the Lord.

They possess, as one commentator said, wonder-working faith. It's the kind of faith that Paul speaks of in chapter 13. He's echoing the words of Jesus.

And he speaks of the kind of faith that is able to move mountains. Now, of course, we should all be striving for that kind of faith. Trusting the Lord all the more.

[26 : 17] Growing in our faith. Just as Paul commended the Thessalonians for doing. So this isn't to say that if we don't have the gift of faith, we should be apathetic about growing in our faith, or somehow content to not have greater faith, by no means.

But to some, God has especially given the gift of faith. And those with the gift of faith, they lay hold of the promises of God, and they don't let go.

And as we're going to see, that is to the great encouragement of the rest of the body. Well, after the gift of faith, Paul lists gifts of healing.

Now, he says gifts of healing, which implies this is something of a category, more so than the specific gift itself. So we've come really to the first gift, or the category of gifts, that requires some further explanation.

I do believe there's good evidence to say that certain gifts of the Spirit are permanent, and others are not. That some gifts given to the church by the Spirit after Christ ascended into heaven, they've continued on, and will continue on until Christ returns.

[27 : 30] But other gifts were temporary. We call them sign gifts, because they were given to authenticate the message that was being preached in the early church.

As the gospel was going forth, and it was spreading to the ends of the earth, these sign gifts, these signs and wonders were also going forth. And they were corroborating, and they were confirming the message of the gospel that was being spoken.

And it wasn't just in the early church that we see this close tie between signs and wonders, and a message going forth. Go back to the Old Testament. As God's word was being revealed, signs and wonders accompanied it.

Think of the prophets, messengers of God, speaking to the people, the very words of God. They were saying, Thus declares the Lord. And what was happening as they were sharing what God had declared?

Signs and wonders, miracles accompanied that revealed word. But when the prophets weren't speaking, when God didn't have a message to share, the signs and wonders ceased.

[28 : 41] Well, the same is true in the New Testament church. And so now that we have God having given us His word, His written revelation has ceased, and so the sign gifts have ceased as well.

The gifts of healing fall into this category of sign gifts. In fact, all of the gifts that follow in our passage fall into this category. So it's the working of miracles, prophecy, the ability to distinguish between spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

Now there absolutely is more to say about these, but for the second time in like four messages, I'm going to punt. So hold me accountable here. We punted on the role of women in the church as it relates to prophecy.

That was in chapter 11. It's coming up again in chapter 14. Please don't forget, we have to cover that. And now we also see this here. These sign gifts. We'll save them for chapter 14 when Lord willing, we come to it.

Because as we'll see, a whole chapter is devoted to several of these gifts. So that's the list. The list of various gifts.

[29 : 53] Now we might be wondering, or we might have wondered at one time or another, which of these gifts do I possess? That's a common question. It should be a question among Christians.

What then have I been given? Which gift? First of all, you might not have any gift in this particular list. Because this list here in 1 Corinthians 12 isn't exhaustive.

It's not comprehensive. Romans 12 gives us another list. 1 Peter 4 gives us another list, or you could say broad categories of gifts.

Even later in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul talks about gifts again. And he gives us yet another category, that of helping gifts. And that raises another point.

Sometimes all that we're given are broad gifts. Gifts of healing, and helping, and administrating. These aren't specific gifts as much as categories of gifts.

[30 : 55] So there's broad gifts, or broad categories given in God's Word. There's multiple lists given in God's Word. There's overlap between those lists, yet also specific gifts that only may appear in one or another list.

All of that to say, we shouldn't look at the list before us tonight, and just assume that we have one of the gifts listed here. We simply don't have that comprehensive list before us.

No, do we have a detailed explanation of each gift in this list. Which I think is important. Because any time that spiritual gifts are talked about in God's Word, the biblical authors are far more concerned with the reality that we do all have spiritual gifts, than necessarily with being concerned with being able to perfectly, precisely identify which gift it is that we have.

There is a subjective element to this. I think it's good to ask God to help us know which gift we possess. I don't think that we should expect God to answer us by giving us some kind of clear, definitive answer in an objective sense.

But isn't that what we often want? I know I do. I want it to be crystal clear. It's why I think Christians are drawn to things like spiritual gift assessments.

[32 : 27] We really want to know. But God's Word just doesn't tell us, necessarily, all that we want to know. There's very little detail, very little description, if any description at all, given to each gift.

There's no methodology. There's no five-step process. There's no appendix to 1 Corinthians that tells us, here's how to discern your spiritual gift.

I think we need to see that. That the biblical authors don't give us a clear process for knowing which gift is ours. So it's probably good not to say, well, Paul didn't give me a process. I'll just invent it myself.

So that's just a word of caution from one of your pastors. Be careful not just about spiritual gift assessments, but the general, at times, overemphasis that can be placed on figuring out with certainty what spiritual gift you possess.

You know, there's a real possibility of spiritual paralysis that can result from this. The person who says, well, I'm not going to serve in the church until I know which spiritual gift I possess, is often the person who just doesn't serve in the church.

[33 : 42] I would think that many of us could actually say that it was through serving that we came to have confidence about which spiritual gift has been given to us. So overly focusing on identifying our spiritual gift can also lead to despair if the confidence never comes.

If we have this assumption that we should know, well, then it's pretty discouraging when we don't know, when we're still unsure, when we don't have that sense of certainty that we think that we should.

That's all very discouraging to us. And it flows from being overly focused on identifying our spiritual gifts. So that's one extreme to avoid.

Hyper fixating on which spiritual gift we possess. But I think there's another extreme, and maybe in the Reformed Baptist tradition, we're more prone actually to this one.

We're not giving enough thought to the spiritual gift that we possess. We give of ourselves, we serve in the church, but we don't connect all of that service back to the fact that God the Spirit has given us spiritual gifts.

[34 : 54] However we contribute to the body, and we should be contributing to the body, and we do contribute to the body, these gifts vary. Not all are as public and visible, but they all contribute to the building up of the body, and they are all from the Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit who empowers us. He has apportioned to each one of us individually as He wills. We have gifts that He has sovereignly chosen to give us. No one has any gift by accident. No one has gotten someone else's gift by mistake.

At dinnertime in our home, we have specific spots at the table that we sit at. And each month, we change up where we sit at the table.

Kids, maybe you can relate to this. You have a different spot. You maybe move around. And of course, we have grown-up plates. We have grown-up cups. We have grown-up utensils that are just a little too heavy on one end for kiddos.

[36 : 01] And so we have specific places that mom and dad will sit. We have specific places with perhaps plastic cups and plastic plates where the kids sit. Sometimes, accidentally, one of the kids ends up with a grown-up plate.

They somehow get their plastic cup, but they get the grown-up plates. And there is a small uproar. An injustice has occurred. That is not my plate, or that is not my cup. How could this happen? Well, we all make mistakes when setting the table. Maybe it is a new month. I often forget at the start of a month. Where does Bodhi sit again? I can't remember. I know he is not there now, but it could be any of these spots.

So a grown-up plate is given to a child, and a child's cup is given to mom or dad. That happens sometimes, but not with spiritual gifts.

No gift is given to the wrong person. No gift needs to be swapped out for another. They are perfectly apportioned according to God's perfect will.

[37 : 06] Just like the Israelites, as God gave them the promised land in the Old Testament. Joshua 18 tells us that for each tribe, God apportioned a very specific amount of land, with clear boundaries to designate where that portion began or ended.

It was called their inheritance. God gifting to his people just the right inheritance for them. So it is with spiritual gifts.

God apportioning just the right spiritual gifts to his people. Isn't that a comforting truth? Isn't that a reassurance to us?

Doesn't that help us to even be content? Which Paul speaks very similarly in 1 Corinthians 7, of God assigning us our portion, of God giving us our allotment.

Let each one remain in where the Lord has placed him in life. That's the contentment he speaks of there in 1 Corinthians 7. Here it is again in 1 Corinthians 12.

[38 : 16] He's apportioned to each individually as he wills. So whatever spiritual gift has been given to us, it's exactly the gift that God intended to give.

He knew just what he was doing. You see, there is more going on here than us just using our natural talents and abilities.

There is something wonderfully spiritual and wonderfully specific. God is at work among us by his spirit according to his perfect will, giving gifts for the common good and for his glory.

There really is something at stake if we forget this. If we forget that we've been given these gifts, won't we also forget to give glory to the giver of those gifts?

We should marvel and rejoice in the fact that we've been empowered by the spirit. Something is going on in the church that the world cannot replicate.

[39 : 22] If we don't give thought to the reality of spiritual gifts, I fear that we'll think of ourselves less as the body of Christ and more as just a bunch of people. Like little different from any other organization in the world with shared values and beliefs and goals.

May the Lord keep us from that kind of mindset. And here's one of the ways that he does that. He reminds us of this truth. Those who have the Holy Spirit have been given a variety of gifts, a portion to us as he wills.

So a couple of extremes to avoid. Don't fixate on figuring out your gifting, but don't also forget that you've been gifted.

So yes, consider how it is that God has gifted you. Ask others to give their input on how they see that God has gifted you.

And then joyfully serve in the church. Knowing that even if you're not absolutely without a doubt sure which gift is yours, God is sure.

[40 : 31] God the Spirit knows which gift he's given you. And so it stands to reason, as you serve, God the Spirit won't let your gifting go to waste. And as you serve, God the Spirit will give you greater confidence about your gifting.

He will see to it that you use that gift to his glory. You'll use it for him because you have received it from him.

Notice that emphasis in our passage on the source. Over and over we read the same Spirit. Why is Paul going to such lengths to emphasize that these gifts all share the same source in the same Spirit?

Because the Corinthians were so divided. He had just finished rebuking them for this division that had been expressing itself in their gathering for the Lord's Supper.

Some were feasting. Others were going hungry. There was this obvious division in the church. And Paul is calling them to unity. And he's using the spiritual gifts to show them and to show us just how united we really are.

[41 : 44] We all have the same Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We have all been empowered by one and the same Spirit to exercise our gifts.

So that brings us to the third and the final truth that we'll consider from this passage. Those with the Holy Spirit use their gifts for the good of the church.

So just verse 7. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. So first we see here that all Christians have been given spiritual gifts.

To each is given. Not to a few. Not to some. Not to most. Not to those who have reached a certain level of maturity.

It's not the super spiritual who receive spiritual gifts. Paul says to each is given. And then that phrase, the manifestation of the Spirit.

[42 : 49] Which maybe sounds a little confusing. Paul simply means that those who have spiritual gifts, which are all Christians, as we exercise those spiritual gifts, we show forth the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In putting our various spiritual gifts to use, we are putting on display that the same Holy Spirit is in us and among us. One Spirit giving varied gifts.

One Spirit giving diverse gifts. And we see it spelled out very clearly here in this passage. Here is a good kind of diversity.

A diversity of spiritual gifts. It is a diversity that is grounded in a unifying source. The Holy Spirit himself. So often in our world today, diversity is just elevated as a virtue in and of itself.

That is not what Paul is doing here. This is not any kind of diversity that just comes from anywhere. This is a diversity that is united in the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

[43 : 58] Just as verse 11 says, all these, that is all these gifts, are empowered by one and the same Spirit. And again in verse 4, now there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit.

And as Paul lists the various spiritual gifts, who is the giver of these gifts? Many gifts, different gifts, but all the same Spirit.

Our gifts have been given by the same Holy Spirit. And as we use our gifts, the same Holy Spirit is manifested among us. So yes, there is great diversity in the body of Christ.

We are a wonderfully varied people. But we are not all just doing our own thing. We are not all just exercising our gifts for different purposes or for divergent ends.

All of these gifts have been given to us by the Holy Spirit. And they are for the common good of the body. So to that end, God is glorified.

[45 : 01] And to that end, the body builds itself up in love. Take for example, the gift of faith. We should again all be striving for that mountain moving faith.

May the Lord help us to grow in our faith. Isn't it wonderful that God gives the gift of faith to certain brothers and sisters?

Who then do what? They spur us on to grow in our faith, to grow in our wholehearted trust of God. Aren't you glad for those brothers and sisters?

We hear them praying to God for Him to do what is impossible for man. Our faith is strengthened.

We are encouraged. We are spurred on to pray bigger. To ask for greater things to the glory of God.

It is not just because we have personally set out to grow in our faith, as good as that is. It is not just because we have been perhaps reading a book on faith. Or our devotions have led us to passages about faith.

[45 : 59] That is all wonderful. But our faith does not just grow from our own personal pursuit of godliness. It grows as well.

It is deepened as well. Because God the Spirit has given us brothers and sisters who have the gift of faith for our good. For the common good of all.

We should think of every gift in that way. We should be rejoicing as we see evidence of how the Spirit has gifted a brother or a sister. And we should be rejoicing that the Spirit has gifted him or her for the good of the body.

This is one of so many reasons that the Christian life is not meant to be lived in isolation. You were not meant to grow in grace in just the privacy of your own home.

That is stunting the growth of so many Christians. Especially in the Western world where individualism is so highly prized. We can easily begin to think, yeah, my relationship is between me and God.

[47 : 03] And that is it. And that is all I need. And that is all there is. But that is not biblical Christianity. Yes, we have a personal relationship with God. And we have a relationship to God's people.

For our encouragement. For our edification. Living alongside one another. Being used by God to help each other to grow in grace.

Not just generally speaking. But very specifically speaking. Because we have been gifted by God the Spirit. This is such a source of joy for us as Christians.

But if you are not a Christian tonight. You don't have the Holy Spirit. He isn't in you. He hasn't gifted you. You don't share in the joy of this salvation.

But you can. You can have the Spirit. You can contribute to the life of the church in these wonderful ways that we have seen tonight. You can if you simply come to Christ.

[48 : 05] Receive the free gift of salvation. And all that we have talked about tonight follows. Come to Christ. Sitting right where you are. In your heart confess to Him that you are a sinner.

Ask for His forgiveness. Turn to Him and trust in Him for salvation. Recognizing that on the cross, He died in your place. Not just for sin in general.

Not just for other people's sin. Not just for the sin of my neighbor who is a far worse person in my eyes than me. But for my sin. Trust in Him. Tell Him that you are a sinner.

Tell Him that you need a Savior. The only Savior that He is. Ask Him to save you from the penalty of your sins. Which is death. Eternal death.

Condemnation before God. Ask Him to save you. And He will. And eternal life will be yours instead. He will receive you. And in turn, what a joy that you will receive the Holy Spirit.

[49 : 06] And for us who are Christians tonight, what gifts God the Spirit has given to us. But even more basic and wonderful than that, what a gift the Holy Spirit is to us.