

DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT

4.19.09

A New Look at Spiritual Gifts - 1 Corinthians 12:1

1 Corinthians 12 - (1) intriguing, (2) controversial, (3) VITAL

OUR TEXT (1 Corinthians 12: 1)

Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.

THE CHURCH

Some think

- a. Religious organization
- b. Social agency meeting community needs
- c. Useful place to marry, be baptized, bury the dead
- d. Social club of likeminded people

Biblically

- a. Living organism – spiritually created
- b. The living “body” of the “head,” Jesus (Eph. 1:23)
- c. Eternal and supernatural
- d. Fueled and fired by the “spiritual giftedness” of its members

Ephesians 4:15b-16 We are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

THE PROBLEMS IN CORINTH

Source

- a. Chloe came and told Paul (1 Cor. 1:11)
 - a. *“I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe”*
- b. 3 others came to Paul – Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus
 - a. (1 Cor. 16:17) *“...they have supplied what was lacking on your part”*
- c. A letter from the church was brought (1 Cor 7:1a)
 - a. *“Now concerning the things about which you wrote”*

Multiple

1. Factions and divisions (1:10) *“I exhort . . . no divisions among you”*
2. Human wisdom, not Godly wisdom (1:25) *“Where is the wise man?”*
3. Spiritual immaturity (3:1) *“men of flesh/babes in Christ”*
4. Rebellion against church authority (4:3) *“examined by you”*
5. Incest (5:1) *“someone has his father’s wife”*
6. Worldliness (5:9) *“not to associate with immoral people”*
7. Lawsuits against brothers (6:1) *“does anyone ...dare to go to law”*
8. Fornication (6:18) *“flee immorality”*

9. Marital conflicts (7:1-40)
10. Struggles about singleness (7:1-40)
11. Abuse of spiritual liberty (8:1-10, 10:23-33) *"not all things edify"*
12. Idolatry (8:4-13, 10:1-22) *"do not be idolaters" (10:7)*
13. Pride (8:1, 10:12) *"knowledge makes arrogant"*
14. Unsubmissive women and abuses of gender roles (11:2-16)
15. Abuses of the Lord's Supper (11:17-34)
16. Abuses and perversions of spiritual gifts (12-14)
17. Wrong teaching regarding the resurrection (15)

The Basic Problem: LACK OF SEPARATENESS FROM THE WORLD
(specifically, regarding spiritual giftedness)

1. Failure to distinguish between natural talent and spiritual giftedness
2. Tendency to favor one giftedness over another in importance
3. Error in seeing the ecstatic and emotional as signs of spirituality (influence of the "mystery religion")
 - a. Religious fervor and physical ecstasy the sign of spirituality ('slaying in the spirit' & speaking in unknown tongues) "lifted above the level of his ordinary experience"
 - b. Following a leader rather than God *"I am of Paul"*
 - c. Sexual freedom as a spiritual freedom *"to Corinthianize"*
 - d. I am my own master (lawsuits, feminism, abuse of liberty, etc.)
 - e. FINAL FORM (Revelation 17:5): MYSTERY BABYLON

12:1

AMONG A LIST OF IMPORTANT ISSUES *"Now. . ." or "Now concerning . . ."*

- **MARRIAGE** 1 Cor. 7:1 *"Now concerning the things about which you wrote..."*
- **SACRIFICES** 1 Cor 8:1 *"Now concerning things sacrificed to idols..."*
- **SPIRITUAL GIFTS** 12:1 *"Now concerning spiritual gifts ..."*
- **RESURRECTION** 1 Cor. 15:1 *"Now I make known to you ... as of first importance ..."*
- **OFFERINGS** 1 Cor. 16:1 *"Now concerning the collection for the saints..."*

A COMMON IDIOM FOR A SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

- *"I do not want you to be unaware" (or "uninformed")*
- **MYSTERY OF THE AGES**
 - *Romans 11:25 "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery . . ."*
- **RAPTURE**
 - *1 Thessalonians 4:13 "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren about those who are asleep..."*
- **PATRIARCHS RELIED ON CHRIST**

- 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 *"For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers . . . were drinking from a spiritual rock . . . and the rock was Christ"*
- SPIRITUAL GIFTS
 - 1 Corinthians 12:1 *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.*

INDICATION OF AN ESPECIALLY CRITICAL ISSUE: Spiritual Gifts

- Put together: "Now" + "I do not want you to be unaware"

SPIRITUALS

- What is translated "spiritual gifts" is actually "spirituals"
- the word "gift" is not in the Greek
- "spirituals" = pneuma t ikon
- "pneuma" = spirit or Spirit
- "ikon" ending a word means "characterized by"
- ICON = an image or representation of something greater

Put together, we have that a "spiritual" or "spiritual gift" is a characterization of and a controlling by the Holy Spirit within us

"UNAWARE" = "Ignorant"

- Paul does not want us to be unaware that the church functions by the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit within its members (the individual Christians) he calls "spirituals"
- This implies that many in the church are ignorant or unaware of how "spirituals" work and power the life of the church. Many are ignoring or misusing the "spirituals" or don't understand the "how" and "why"

A FRESH LOOK AT SPIRITUAL GIFTS ("spirituals")

From other uses of the word in Paul's writings:

1. A "spiritual" is something one Christian can give to another

- Romans 1:11 *"For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established."*

2. The Bible can impart "spirituals"

- Romans 7:14 *"For we know that the Law is spiritual ..."*

3. Receiving "spirituals" indebts us to give "materials" (financial gifts) to the church

- Romans 15:27 *"... for is the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things."*
- 1 Corinthians 9:11 *If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you?*

4. **“Spirituals” can come in thoughts, words or actions**
1 Corinthians 2:13 “which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”
5. **“Spirituals” ultimately come from feeding on the “rock” = Jesus!**
1 Corinthians 10:3-4 And all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.
6. **“Spirituals” are something to seek both to receive and give to others**
1 Corinthians 14:1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts ...
7. **A spiritual person is one who exhibits “spirituals” to help others**
Galatians 6:1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one ...
8. **All “spirituals” (we call blessings) are ultimately given by our Heavenly Father**
Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing...
9. **“Spirituals” can come from singing to one another, or from within our own hearts singing to the Lord**
Ephesians 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord
Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
10. **“Spirituals” are what we offer to God as we build up His church**
1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.