

1 CORINTHIANS: LESSON 36

Chapter 12: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

9 February 2018

Compare the list of gifts given to the Body of Christ in **FIRST CORINTHIANS 12:27-31** and in **EPHESIANS 4:8-13**

Notice: **Apostles, prophets, and teachers** are included in both lists.

But: **Miracles, healings, and tongues** are not mentioned in Ephesians 4. Only the gifts that build, edify, and bring Christians on to perfection are listed in Ephesians. Sign gifts never serve that purpose.

- Sign Gifts never glorify the Lord. They only glorify the person exercising the gift.

The book of Acts records the beginning and the progression of the early church. Under what circumstances are the gifts of miracles, healings, and tongues exercised in the book of Acts?

- When saved Christians are preaching the gospel to lost people who have never been exposed to the gospel before. The signs were for the purpose of confirming God's Word (Mark 16:20).
 - God's Word, preached by the Apostles, needed to be confirmed because there were no New Testament Scriptures yet and no churches established.
 - They had no final authority to turn to like we have. The signs confirmed the Apostles' authority.
 - There is no record of sign gifts being exercised AFTER people believe and a church is established in a new area.
 - In fact, they're only mentioned being used in the Corinthian church where those gifts were being misused and perverted.
 - The result was confusion and division, not unity and growth.
 - The signs confirmed the Gospel, but the church was established by the Apostles' doctrine.
- **The correct use of tongues in the Bible:**
 - God enabled a Christian to speak a language he did not know so that people who DO speak that language can hear the Gospel and be saved. (Acts 2)
 - God enabled GENTILES to speak in tongues to convince JEWS in that area that the Gospel was also for the Gentiles. (Acts 10, 11)
- Incorrect use of tongues in churches:
 - Babbling in an unknown tongue (or gibberish) to "wow" or to "edify" or to bless BELIEVERS.
 - It's not for believers!
 - To speak the "heavenly language." Hebrew is the language of heaven.
 - God wants you to speak so others can understand and benefit from what you say.

James 1:17 says, "**Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.**"

- God's gifts are beneficial gifts! They're profitable gifts! EVERY gift that God gives is a GOOD gift.

FIRST CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 12

Verse 12. Your physical body is very diverse; many different parts, but only one body.

- That's what it's like to be in the Body of Jesus Christ. We're not all the same; we're not all SUPPOSED to be the same! We don't all have the same abilities; we're not all SUPPOSED to have the same abilities!

Verses 13-14. None of us are independent! Believers are all members of one body.

Verses 15-16. All the various parts of your physical body are different and have a different function. But they belong to the body.

Verse 17. God made the human body with many different parts so that we can do many different things and enjoy life to the FULLEST!

God's church is similar. Everybody's NOT given the same GIFT, the same ABILITY, the same PLACE, etc.

- It doesn't mean there are important Christians and NON important Christians, necessary members and UNNECESSARY members of the church, or that there are BIG jobs and LITTLE jobs.
 - You wouldn't call ANY part of your physical body unnecessary!
 - Every part of the church is equally important. Each member has an effect on the rest of the body.

Verse 18. You can't decide which part of the body you are going to be. There is no choice. You may not be naturally GOOD at your position in the body, but that will make you trust the Lord more.

- If you can't figure out your place, just do everything there is to do and God will make it perfectly clear to you where He wants you to serve.

Verses 19-22. The members of the body which SEEM to be more feeble are necessary. It's only through the combined efforts of ALL the members of the Body of Christ that great things can be accomplished for God.

- Churches who realize that the Pastor is not the only one who can serve God are active in many different ministries. Every ministry is equally as important as the others.
- The members who "seem" to be more feeble may be doing a great work for the glory of God. Elderly saints often become prayer warriors. Their prayers get answered!

Verse 23. We make the uncomely (less attractive) parts of our body more attractive with decorations.

- Likewise, there are people in the church who need special attention, special help so they don't detract from the body and so they may even ADD beauty to the body. Give your attention to the people in the church who really need it.

Verses 24-26 God loves every member of the body equally. That's how he wants us to be. We should "have the same care one for another."

- It's very difficult to like everybody the same, love everybody the same, and treat everybody the same, but that is to be the goal.

When one member suffers all members suffer. When one member is honored, all members rejoice.

Verse 27. Some gifts are listed: First apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Verse 31. **Covet EARNESTLY...the best gifts.** If you want one of these "best gifts" God says, "Let me know! COVET it! Beg for it! Study it. Plead for it! Desire it." You'd be surprised what God might do with you.

WHAT IS THE BEST GIFT?

1 Cor. 13: 1-3, 13 God said, "Covet earnestly the best GIFTS" ... and "the BEST thing you could COVET is CHARITY!" God has unlimited power, but the best thing about God is that He loves me.

- Any gift you might receive would be useless if you didn't have charity.
 - You've got to have a love for lost souls to be an evangelist.
 - You've got to have love for the brethren if you're going to be a pastor or teacher, etc.
- It was God's love for us (John 3:16) that moved Him to sacrifice His Only Begotten Son for us.

1 Cor. 14: 1-5. Covet the gifts that will build up, edify, comfort, help and exhort others, not the gifts that only make ME feel better.