

Reflection: *On claims to be regarded as a “person of the Spirit” and the criterion of Christlikeness:* Many at Corinth too readily liked to be regarded by others as “spiritual.” Paul has doubts about whether this reveals something less than genuine about them. The test case is whether their thoughts and life exhibit Christ as Lord. What does it mean to call Christ “Lord,” or to call him “our” or “my” Lord? Why did the early church (and why do we today) consider the confession “Jesus is Lord” to be the most succinct test of being a Christian in whom the Spirit of God is at work? (Anthony Thiselton, *1 Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 196).

CHRISTIANS HAVE SPIRITUAL GIFTS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT (12:4-11)

3. What is the Trinitarian understanding of “Gifts” that Paul is instructing the believers in? Read verses 4-6.

4. What are the Spiritual gifts mentioned in verses 8-11?

Reflection: “Spiritual gifts are supernatural gifts granted by the grace of God. They are not just glorified natural abilities. They are not something you gain by going to school or practicing or inheriting. Spiritual gifts, simply put, are supernatural endowments that enable us to carry out God’s work in God’s way. They are provided by the grace of God, and they are powered by the Spirit of God.” (Daniel Akin and James Merritt, *Exalting Jesus in 1 Corinthians*, 440).

WE USE OUR GIFTS TO LOVE AND EDIFY THE CHURCH (12:12-26)

5. Beginning in verse 12, Paul uses the analogy of a body to illustrate that, just as the different parts of a body are joined together to work together, so is Christ's body, the church. What is Paul's emphasis in verses 12-13? Is his emphasis on the word "many" or "one"?

6. What is the purpose of diversity in the body of Christ according to verses 14-26?

Reflection: "Both an independent spirit and a superior attitude bring atrophy and paralysis to the body as a whole, because it is deprived of certain contributions without which it must degenerate. If we are together in the body of Christ, we need one another, not only for the health of the body as whole, but also to enable each individual to operate at full potential. Any Christian who operates independently from others is reducing his own effectiveness and that of the body as a whole." (David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 213).

PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE

October 28-November 1, 2024

Read 1 Corinthians 12

Monday: 12:1 *"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed."* The phrase *"spiritual gifts"* (v. 1) is best translated as *"spiritual things."* The Corinthian Christians thought they already knew all there is to know about things *"spiritual"* or *"supernatural,"* but Paul noticed that they are *"uninformed."* Reflect on how we may be like the Corinthians and need to know more about *"spiritual matters."*

Tuesday 12:4-6 *"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone."* Take a moment to reflect on the diversity in unity in Briarcliff Church and praise God for how others strengthen your faith and vice-versa.

Wednesday: 12:7 *"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."* What is your gift? What has God the Spirit given to you by which you can function within the Body of Christ? You have a spiritual gift. Prayerfully seek God to discover your spiritual gift and use it for the good of the body of Christ at Briarcliff Church. You exist for a purpose in the body of Christ.

Thursday: 12:12-13 *"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit."* There is not only the diversity of spiritual gifts but also of ethnic diversity that make up the body of Christ. Pray that there will be unity in ethnic diversity in our church and beyond.

Friday: 12:26-27 *"If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."* Bill and Gloria Gaither's song rightly echoes these verses: *"I'm so glad I'm a part of the fam'ly of God ... When one has a heartache | We all share the tears | And rejoice in each victory | In this family so dear."* Are you a part of the body of Christ sharing the pain and joy? Do we know one another well enough in our church to be able to rejoice or to suffer at appropriate occasions?