

Spiritual Gifts

Part 1

August 28, 1994

- **1 Cor 12:1-31**
- There are few other topics that have created as much division in the body of Christ today as Spiritual gifts. Our purpose for studying this topic is not so that we can draw that line of division more clearly but rather so that we can seek and understand the mind of God.
- **The Gifts Do Not Imply Spirituality**
- **1 Cor. 1:1-9**
- Note that Paul says that the Church at Corinth lacked no Spiritual Gift. All of the gifts that were extant at that time were manifest in the church.
- **1 Cor 3: 1-4**
- Despite the fact that the Corinthians were blessed with every Spiritual Gift, Paul says that he could not address them as spiritual people but rather as worldly and babes in Christ. Clearly this is a chastisement from Paul that the Church was not where it should have been Spiritually. But it is important to know that just because someone has a Spiritual gift, they are not necessarily spiritual.
- **The Gifts Are Given by the Holy Spirit For His Purposes**
- **1 Cor 12:1-3**
- It appears that Paul is writing in response to a list of questions that he received from the Corinthians and now he addresses their questions on Spiritual Gifts. From the rest of the book we can infer that this was another topic of division for it appears that the church was very much in a disobedient condition.
- Paul reminds them that they had been persuaded to worship false things by some manner of teaching. We do not know if he is speaking of their pre-Christian situation because he refers to the time when they were "Gentiles". However, I believe that the context of the instruction infers that they were Christians and had gotten involved in some form of heresy. But in order to give them a good rule of thumb he tells them that if someone is cursing Christ then they are not doing so as a Christian therefore pay no attention to them.
- **1 Cor 12:4-11**
- Paul teaches that there are a multitude of gifts that can be distributed to each individual according to the will of the Spirit. This Spirit is the same among all believers and He is the one who decides which gifts are distributed. Therefore we must understand that we cannot require someone else to possess certain gifts because their presence is up to God.
- The purpose of giving the gifts is never for the benefit of the individual but rather for the edification of the body.
- God used the revelatory gifts to testify to the validity of something said or the authority granted to someone. Specifically Heb 2:1-4: Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

- **1 Cor 12:12-31**

- Note that we were included in the body of Christ when we were baptized by the Spirit. It is this baptism which saves us and places us in Christ. Before this event we were not in Christ. We cannot say that there is some second experience that Christians must have in order to be truly a Christian.
- Paul lays out in detail the body analogy for the purpose of setting straight in our minds that we are unified in diversity. Each member has gifts of varying worth and purpose. But all are gifts from God for the benefit of the church and each person must see to it that they exercise that gift in that way.
- We should not seek to be a church which gathers together because of a common gift. Because the gifts of the spirit do not imply spirituality, if we focus on the gifts we have no assurance of true fellowship. If we focus on the gift of the spirit we can be assured that fellowship will exist. This occurs because it is possible to exercise your gift in a selfish way but you can't be selfish and loving at the same time.