

## “Unity and Diversity” (1 Corinthians 12:1-11)

I want you to stop for just a moment and think back on all of your Christmas celebrations. When you were growing up, can you recall a Christmas where you really wanted a particular gift? In your childish ways you didn't just request this gift, you nearly demanded it. You felt like your life would not be complete if you didn't receive this gift. You wanted this gift so badly that you could taste it.

This pretty well describes my Christmas day emotions almost 28 years ago. What was the gift that I was yearning for? [Open a wrapped Christmas gift and take out a Seattle Seahawks football helmet.] I was beside myself. I put that bad boy on and ran around the living room and tried to hug and kiss my parents without injuring them. I was so grateful for this gift that I must have said “thank you” a dozen times or more. This gift was one of my Christmas gift highlights... and as you can see, we are still the proud owners of this Christmas gift and my children wear this helmet today.

Now, let's replay this scenario. Imagine that instead of opening my gift with exuberance and gratitude I opened the package, yawned, said “ho-hum,” and casually laid the gift aside without expressing any gratitude. How do you think my parents would have felt? They would have been devastated after spending time and money locating this gift for me. As parents, they were excited to bless me with this gift and watch me put it to use.

Now imagine how the Lord must feel when He gives gifts to His children and they never make the effort to find out what the gifts are, never thank Him, and never put them to use. It must be incredibly disappointing to the Lord to see so many of the gifts that He has given shelved away and never used or shared with others. Today, I'd like to see us put an end to this common phenomenon. In 1 Cor 12:1-11, Paul is going to tell you to *unwrap your gift and use it to serve others*. This passage addresses the topic of spiritual gifts that runs all the way through chapter 14.<sup>1</sup> In these verses, Paul expresses two realities to you and me to encourage us to *unwrap your gift and use it to serve others*. Like a wide-eyed child in pajamas on Christmas morning, let's begin to unwrap these verses on spiritual gifts.

**1. Jesus is the validation of spirituality (12:1-3).** Before Paul launches into his discussion on spiritual gifts, he wants to focus first on the common work of the Spirit in each one of our lives. In 12:1, Paul lays down a basic introduction to the paragraph and indeed the next three chapters. Paul indicates his concern that the Corinthians not be ignorant of certain truths about the things of the Spirit. Paul writes, **“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.”** The phrase, “Now concerning,” reminds us that Paul is responding to another question from the Corinthians.<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that the word “gifts” is in italics, meaning that it is not in the original text. Thus, the noun “spiritual” (*pneumatikos*) can be rendered “spiritual gifts,” “spiritual persons,” or “spiritual things.”<sup>3</sup> It is likely that “gifts” and “persons” were so closely connected in the Corinthians' minds that Paul used the word “spiritual” to imply both. Perhaps the question could be restated as follows: “Don't the spiritual gifts prove that we are spiritual persons?”<sup>4</sup>

Remember, the Corinthians were the most gifted church in the Scriptures<sup>5</sup> while at the same time the most carnal church in the Scriptures. They were a church of divisions, immorality, and distortion in doctrine. This serves to remind us that a great spiritual gift is no indication of spirituality. It is possible to be gifted and not spiritual. In this case, the Corinthians were getting high on their spiritual giftedness instead of recognizing the source of the gift—Jesus Christ. As a result, Paul informs the Corinthians that he does not want them to be “unaware” or “ignorant.”<sup>6</sup> As we progress throughout chapters 12-14, we shall see that the Corinthians are emphasizing the gift of tongues above everything else. Therefore, Paul has to bring about order in the church and remind the Corinthians that all of God's people have gifts and all are equally valuable to the health and vitality of the church.

In 12:2-3, Paul discusses three different responses to Christ: the rejection of the pagan, the rejection of the Jew, and the faith of the Christian.<sup>7</sup> Paul is clarifying who possesses the Spirit and who does not. In 12:2, Paul reminds the Corinthians of their idolatry during their pre-Christian lives. He writes, **“You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.”** Many of the Corinthian believers had been pagans. These Gentiles worshipped various idols that could not speak or help.<sup>8</sup> A second response is the rejection of the Jews. In 12:3a, Paul writes, **“Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit<sup>9</sup> of God says, ‘Jesus is accursed’”**<sup>10</sup> Here, Paul speaks of the typical response of the Jews. Not all of the Corinthians were Gentiles before believing in Christ...some were Jews who did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. The final response is found in 12:3b, where Paul writes, **“...and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’<sup>11</sup> except by the Holy Spirit.”** To say that Jesus is “Lord”<sup>12</sup> is to say that He is God. In the context of the Jewish world and the OT,<sup>13</sup> this confession essentially affirmed that Jesus was God.<sup>14</sup> This was a counter-cultural assertion. A citizen of the Roman Empire was required to declare, “Caesar is Lord.” But Christians who believed that Jesus was the only Lord couldn’t say this. It was really a challenge to faith. Thus, Paul’s point is this: No one can say that Jesus is Lord except through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is a supernatural act.<sup>15</sup>

Why does Paul bring up these three responses to Christ? He does so to refute the claims of those Corinthians who assume that they alone possessed the Spirit. Paul wants all of his readers to understand that salvation is the greater leveler.<sup>16</sup> Every member of the Corinthian church who has trusted in Christ is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and is incredibly valuable to God. This is also true in our church today. If you have believed in Christ, it is because God did a supernatural work in your life. If you have not believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior, please do so today.

[Paul is clear: Jesus is the validation of spirituality. Now in 12:4-11, Paul is going to explain another reality.]

**2. Variety is the spice of church (12:4-11).** In this section, there are three emphases: the source of our gifts, the goal of our gifts, and the distribution of our gifts. First, in 12:4-6, we will see the source of our gifts from the triune God. Paul writes, **“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries,<sup>17</sup> and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.”** Paul tells the Corinthians that there’s not a single gift or even a one-size-fits-all box of gifts that believers are given.<sup>18</sup> In these three verses, Paul uses the word translated “varieties” three times because God loves variety. Every snowflake, every set of fingerprints, every leaf on every tree, and every grain of sand is different from every other. God never makes an exact replica.<sup>19</sup> Instead, God says we are wonderfully different from one another. And He encourages diversity in His church by gifting each one of us uniquely for ministry. Yet, in spite of this variety believers are united by the same God. Each member of the Trinity (the Tri-Unity of God) has a role in spiritual gifts: the Holy Spirit distributes the gifts, the Lord Jesus places people in ministry, and God the Father empowers people to do ministry.<sup>20</sup> In light of these biblical truths, there are three responses.

*First, you must discover what spiritual gift the Holy Spirit has given you (12:4).* The Greek word for “gift” is *charisma*, from which we get our English words charisma and charismatic. The *charis* part of the word means “grace.” The *ma* portion of the word is the passive suffix meaning that it is grace given. They are “grace gifts” that enable a person to glorify and serve God. The one who exercises his or her gifts could rightly be called charismatic. (So charismatic is not a name for just a few of the gifts.) These grace gifts are not earned; they are not the result of hard work; they are not even ones we choose for ourselves. And they may, or may not, be related to our natural skill set.<sup>21</sup> Remember, God has not gifted you to do what you want to do; He has gifted you to do what He wants you to do. The grace gift(s) that God has chosen in His sovereignty to grant you are expressions of His love. In the exercise of your spiritual gift from God you will find fulfillment.

That's why the question, "What is my spiritual gift?" is so important. Unless you know the answer, you'll never be 100% effective in your service for Jesus Christ. You may spend your life doing something for which you were not gifted by God and so be frustrated and ineffective. It's sort of like taking one of those big offensive linemen and putting him out at wide receiver. He can't run and his hands are like bricks. But put him at left guard and he's right at home, because he was born to knock other men on their backside. In the same way, some people throw up when they are forced to go door-to-door witnessing. They aren't gifted in evangelism. But put those same people over the finances and because they have the gift of administration, they are incredibly successful. There are others who could never get up and teach a class, but they know how to lead a small group because they have the gift of pastoring. Still others work behind the scenes caring for the sick, bringing over meals, comforting those in sorrow. They have the gift of mercy, but don't ask them to speak in public. The very thought makes them break out in hives.<sup>22</sup>

So take the time to discover your spiritual gift. Begin today by carrying out these four steps:

- 1) Pray specifically for God to reveal your gift.
- 2) Ask mature Christians who know you what strengths they see in you.
- 3) Look for open doors of opportunities to try different areas.
- 4) Follow the desires of your heart.

I challenge you today to *unwrap your gift and use it to serve others*.

*Second, you must plug into ministry* (12:5). Jesus died to give you the gift (*charisma*) of eternal life, but He also died so that you could serve Him with your spiritual gift (*charisma*). When you and I fail to do so, we fail to carry out one of the purposes in His death. God has given you a spiritual gift to benefit others around you. That is why it is a tragedy if you don't know what your spiritual gift is, if you're not in the process of finding out what it is, or if you're not using your gift for the body. That means the body of Christ is not benefiting from your supernatural endowment. God wants to know, "Who is benefiting from the gift that I gave you?"<sup>23</sup>

Now I need to state that the discovery of spiritual gifts flows out of service. Whenever you see God gift His people, it's because He has given them a task to perform, not vice versa. The problem is that we have a generation of Christians who sit, soak, and sour every week waiting for God to reveal their gifts to them before they get busy serving. These people will never discover their gifts. Instead of "gift-hunting" these folks need to be "Spirit-hunting."<sup>24</sup>

What is more important than serving in the area of your spiritual gift? The answer is simple: exhibiting a servant's heart. This means showcasing initiative and reliability. My wife is the ultimate servant. She rarely if ever asks me to do anything. She serves me like I am a king. But once a year or so, she asks me to do something for her. Of course, I am glad to do so. But what I really love is to do something for her when she doesn't ask me to do anything. It could be a simple task like make dinner, fold the laundry, vacuum the house, or make a child's bed. There is great joy in serving when you are not asked.

It is also worth pointing out that one of the greatest pleasures in this life is serving others. Research indicates that serving has an overwhelmingly positive impact on one's spiritual growth. Furthermore, church members state that serving others has brought them as much or more joy than other spiritual disciplines.<sup>25</sup> I would also add to this research my own conclusion that the only people who are ever fulfilled or content in a local church are those that are actively serving. I rarely, if ever, receive complaints or whining from those on the front lines of ministry. Hence, one great reason to serve is to live a fulfilled life.

I challenge you today to *unwrap your gift and use it to serve others*.

*Third, you must depend upon God for the results (12:6).* The Father Himself is responsible for the variety of effects. Literally, the word is “energizings.” That means, logically, that we are not responsible. It takes a great weight off of us when we are trying to serve the Lord in ministry. What we are called to is faithfulness in exercising our gifts in the places where Christ directs us. Then God takes full responsibility for the eternal impact.

Is it possible for someone to walk in the Spirit without exercising his or her gift? Absolutely not. The Holy Spirit will reveal Himself in a special way through you, through the exercise of your gift. To refuse to use your gift is to say “No” to the Holy Spirit and to deprive His church of blessing. Many of us have underestimated the consequences of refusing to serve in our personal lives. God disciplines His children for a lack of participation. Therefore, *unwrap your gift and use it to serve others.*

Now that Paul has described the source of our spiritual gifts, he gives the purpose of spiritual gifts. In 12:7, he writes, **“But to each one is given the manifestation<sup>26</sup> of the Spirit for the common good.”** This is the key verse in this section. Paul again reminds us that we have been given a spiritual gift for the benefit of others. Unfortunately, too many Christians are like young children with their Christmas gifts. They have their stash, and they do not want their brothers or sisters to touch their gifts. The parents have to spend part of Christmas playing referee because of the children’s unwillingness to share a gift. In most cases, those children added nothing to the purchase of their gifts. They made no contribution to what was under that Christmas tree, yet they hoard their gifts as if they personally bought and paid for them.<sup>27</sup>

Is your church stronger because of you? Nutritionists speak of “empty calories.” In order for these calories to be processed the body must use some of its nutritional resources, yet empty calories do little or nothing to nourish the body in return. Calories from other types of food, however, that only take from the body’s strength as they are metabolized, replenish it.

Do you receive more ministry from the church than you minister to it? I wonder what needs, long-term or temporary, God is going to meet by placing you here at Emmanuel? Have you asked yourself that question? God intends for every member of the church body to be served by it, and there are times when even the most spiritually mature members will receive more ministry than they give. Nevertheless, the goal for each of us should be to serve in the church in such a way that it is stronger because we are there.

Everyone who really wants to can do something to strengthen the work of the church. I’ve visited many homebound or nursing home Christians who maintained a ministry even though they could never attend the church. They prayed faithfully, some even as a part of the church’s prayer ministry. Some have a ministry of encouragement through cards or calls; still others are determined to be an encourager to all who visit them. Our seniors fold bulletins every week, and every month they prepare communion. They are not retired, they are “refired” to serve the Lord. Regardless of your limitations of time, strength, or money, your church should be stronger because of you.

Are you a consistent worker or a convenience worker?<sup>28</sup> Too many people have decided that they will serve in the church only occasionally and when it’s convenient. They are convenience workers rather than consistent workers. The church needs servants: people who will make long-term commitments and be dependable. The classic example is a Sunday school or Bible study teacher. She or he prepares faithfully every week and serves God in His church, loyally and steadfastly. Of course many other ministries require the same regular commitment. No church can be effective without people like this.

However, there is a lack of commitment in the church. Fewer people want to commit to an ongoing ministry. More and more leaders hear, “I’ll help out when I can,” and “Call on me when you really need me.” Yet the truth is most of us want the benefits of the nursery, the benefits of teaching, the benefits of children’s ministry without being involved.

The late Bud Wilkinson served as the chairman of the President's Council for physical fitness during the Johnson administration. Someone once asked Wilkinson what role professional football had played in America's physical fitness. Wilkinson responded with these words, "Absolutely none. In football you have 22 players on the field desperately in need of rest being cheered on by 50,000 spectators in the stands desperately in need of exercise!" Unfortunately, that is true in many local churches. The members see the pastoral staff as the "players" in ministry but view themselves as merely spectators. If the church is doing well, the members cheer. If the church begins to decline, the cheers quickly turn to jeers. That may make for exciting football, but it is a lousy way to run a church. Paul says God's pattern for the church is that every member be involved in ministry.<sup>29</sup>

In 12:8-10, Paul brings out the idea of the diversity of the gifts as he lists nine of them.<sup>30</sup> When we look at the list as a whole several characteristics emerge: (1) The gifts would have been prominent in the worship service. (2) They are the gifts most frequently referred to by people today as "miraculous." (3) Many of the gifts are directly related to speech and revelation. (4) It follows that we would find little continuity between these gifts and any abilities possessed before one becomes a Christian.<sup>31</sup> In these verses, it is not Paul's desire to explain what he means by each and every gift listed. They are simply enumerated to show the diversity involved in the Spirit's work. However, I will quickly explain the gifts without bogging down into too much explanation or controversy.

- **The word of wisdom:** God-given insight into the mysterious purposes and workings of God.<sup>32</sup>
- **The word of knowledge:** God-given insight into what God is doing in the world.
- **Faith:** the ability to confidently believe God for changes and spiritual growth that will enhance the purposes of God. A person with this gift is quick to believe God for things they may never see.
- **Healing:** the faith to believe God for healing. Individuals can serve as agents of God's healing power.<sup>33</sup>
- **Effecting of miracles:** gives a person the ability to call on God to do supernatural acts. The best use of this gift is that of believing God for miracles that will bring glory to Him and cause others to consider God's will for their lives. This gift can refer to miraculous healings but also to the casting out of demons and other "signs and wonders."
- **Prophecy:** a declaration of God's will to God's people.<sup>34</sup> Prophecy is for edification and encouragement and does not necessarily exclude teaching and doctrine (14:3, 31).<sup>35</sup>
- **Distinguishing of spirits:** the ability to know when truth or error is being spoken and whether a prophet is a true or false one.<sup>36</sup>
- **Various kinds<sup>37</sup> of tongues:** the ability to speak in a Holy Spirit inspired language.<sup>38</sup> It is worth noting that the gift of tongues is last in Paul's list. This is true whenever Paul mentions tongues in 1 Corinthians. One thing we should acknowledge is that Paul considered "tongues" to be a natural part of worship; however, he did not expect that everyone would have the gift of tongues.
- **The interpretation of tongues:** the ability to interpret tongues.

While you may not have any of these miraculous gifts, stick around until next week and you will learn about some other gifts. But don't bog down in what your gift is...just serve.

Paul closes our passage in 12:11 with these words: **“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”** This is a great summary of this whole section. It’s also the fifth reference to the Holy Spirit as the giver of gifts. Paul emphasizes once again that every believer is spiritually gifted. These gifts are not for some spiritual elite, but the entire body of Christ. We are all gifted. We are all called by the Lord to minister with the gifts He has supplied.

Each believer, regardless of his or her gifts, ministries, and the manner and extent of God’s blessing, demonstrates the Holy Spirit through his or her life. All three of these things manifest the Spirit’s presence, not just the more spectacular ones in each category. Believers who have spectacular gifts, ministries, or effectiveness are not necessarily more spiritual than Christians who do not. Each believer makes a unique contribution to the common good, not just certain believers.

The story is told of a boy who did his household chores and left his mother this note: “For cleaning my room, \$5...For washing the dishes, \$3...For raking the leaves, \$10...Total: \$18. You owe me, Mom.” The mother read the note while the boy was at school and put \$18 on the table. With it she left her own note: “For bearing you nine months in the womb, throwing up for three months, no charge. For cooking your breakfast every day, no charge. For washing and ironing your clothes, no charge. For staying up all night when you were sick, no charge. Total: Grace.” When the boy read that note, he ran to his mother and asked, “What more can I do to let you know I am grateful?”

Our salvation cost a lot, but it was no charge to us. In grace, God has given us eternity. In grace, He has given us forgiveness. In grace, He has done more for us than we could ever do for ourselves. One thing you can do to show your gratitude is to pray, “Holy Spirit, as I serve the family of God, show me how You have gifted me. Reveal to me what supernatural enablement You have given me that I can use for the common good of my brothers and sisters in the family of God.” He’ll answer that prayer every time!<sup>39</sup>

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**Scripture Reference**

1 Corinthians 12:1-11  
1 Corinthians 12:28-30  
1 Corinthians 1:4-5  
Romans 12:3-8  
Ephesians 4:11-13  
1 Peter 4:10  
John 13:12-17

**Study Questions**

1. Am I more interested in spiritual gifts than in living for Jesus? Where should my emphasis be? What are the marks of true spirituality? How would I define what it means to be a spiritual Christian? Specifically, what role does serving play in my definition?
2. What is my spiritual gift(s)? How am I currently putting my gift(s) to use? When am I most satisfied with my gift(s)? When am I most dissatisfied with my gift(s)? Do I desire to discover my gift(s) so that I can find my proper place of service?
3. Would I be disappointed if I were to discover that I was gifted to be a helper and not a leader? Do I truly believe that servanthood is the highest form of service? Read John 13:1-20 and Philippians 2:1-11. Regardless of my influence, in what ways has my gift(s) benefited my church family? Who has been touched and built up by God working in and through the gift He has given me?
4. What jobs are not being done in our church right now? Which ones seem like options for me? What interests or skills do I have that might be of use in our church?
5. When is the last time I expressed gratitude to God for the spiritual gift He has given me? How does my degree of gratitude affect my love for Christ and His body? How can I cultivate an attitude of gratitude that will propel me to serve Christ and His body?

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Paul wanted to correct the Corinthians in this section, not just provide more teaching, as he did throughout this epistle. This becomes clear in chapter 14. They were abusing the gift of tongues. The whole section divides into three parts and structurally follows an ABA chiastic pattern, as do other parts of this letter (i.e., chs. 1-3; 7:25-40; chs. 8-10). First there is general instruction (ch. 12), then a theological interlude (ch. 13), and finally specific correction (ch. 14). Thomas L. Constable: *Notes on 1 Corinthians*: 2007 edition: <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/1corinthians.pdf>, 128.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 7:1, 25; 8:1.

<sup>3</sup> “Spiritual gifts” (*pneumatikos*) in 12:1 is either the neuter or masculine gender of the adjective “spiritual” and so could also be translated “spiritual things” or “spiritual people.”

<sup>4</sup> Ken Hemphill, *Mirror on the Wall* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 48.

<sup>5</sup> See 1 Cor 1:5-7.

<sup>6</sup> This is a recurrent phrase in Paul’s letters (cf. Rom 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor 10:1; 11:3; 2 Cor 1:8; 1 Thess 4:13). It was one of his ways of introducing a significant new topic. The word “unaware” comes from the Greek word *agnoeo*, which means “not knowable or not known.” Our word agnostic comes from the same root.

<sup>7</sup> David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 57-71.

<sup>8</sup> See Isa 45:5-7; Jer 10:5; Hab 2:18-19.

<sup>9</sup> In the first 11 verses of chapter 12 there are ten references to the Spirit.

<sup>10</sup> Thiselton outlines 12 distinct explanations that have been offered. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 918-24.

<sup>11</sup> Paul applies the term *kurios* (“Lord”) to Christ no less than 220 times. Nigel Watson, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*: Epworth Commentaries New Edition (London: Epworth [1992] 2005), 127.

<sup>12</sup> See Acts 2:36; Rom 10:9-10; Phil 2:9-11.

<sup>13</sup> The Greek version of the OT translated the Hebrew YHWH (“God”) as *kurios* (“Lord”).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. John 8:58. Verlyn D. Verbrugge, “1 Corinthians” in the *Revised Expositors Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming).

<sup>15</sup> Morris writes, “Paul means that it is not a human discovery that *Jesus is the Lord*. It is a discovery that can be made only when the Spirit works in a man’s heart.” Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, [1958] 1990), 165.

<sup>16</sup> The expression “Jesus is Lord” can be understood objectively (i.e., Jesus is the sovereign ruler of the universe) or subjectively (i.e., Jesus is my Master). Context suggests that Paul had the objective sense in mind.

<sup>17</sup> “The thought of service might be that of service rendered to Christ [cf. 3:5]. But since in the previous and following section it is the action of the divine within the believer that is described, we should probably understand this verse of the service that the indwelling Christ enables His people to render, or perhaps of the service to which he calls them.” Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 166.

<sup>18</sup> Paul had several gifts—apostleship, prophecy, teaching, tongues, evangelism and leadership.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Eaton, *Preaching Through the Bible: 1 Corinthians 10-16* (Kent, England, 2000), 46.

<sup>20</sup> In 12:4-6, we encounter the only place in Paul’s writings where *pneuma* (“Spirit”), *kurios* (“Lord”), and *theos* (“God”) occur in consecutive and closely parallel statements.

<sup>21</sup> Not every professional teacher is gifted to teach in the church. Not every financial expert is geared to deal with church stewardship. Nevertheless, God has given you a special gift so that you could be useful.

<sup>22</sup> Ray Pritchard, “Unwrapping Your Spiritual Gifts” (Various):

<http://www.calvarymemorial.com/sermons/SMdisplay.asp?id=415>.

<sup>23</sup> If spiritual gifts are God’s primary means of administering grace to his people, what does that say about believers who refuse to exercise their gifts for the good of the body? Four things come to mind: (1) They are robbing the body of Christ. (2) They are forcing the other members of the body to carry their load. (3) They are dead weight on the body, dysfunctional limbs. (4) They are out of touch with the Spirit of God.

Charles Stanley, “You Gotta Have Parts,” *Discipleship Journal* 90 (Nov/Dec 1995): 42.

<sup>24</sup> Evans, *The Promise*, 309.

<sup>25</sup> One pastor surveyed his church to see if people saw a relationship between ministering to others and spiritual growth. When asked, “To what extent has your ministry or service to others affected your spiritual growth?” 92 percent answered positively. None responded that ministry had a negative effect on their spiritual growth. Sixty-three percent indicated that service was equally significant in their spiritual growth compared to other spiritual disciplines, such as Bible study and prayer. Twenty-four percent responded that ministry or service to others had

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been “a more significant factor” to their spiritual growth than Bible study or prayer. Over half (58 percent) of those who were not actively ministering to others felt either “not satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with their level of spiritual growth. Eric Swanson, “What You Get from Giving,” *Leadership Journal* (Spring 2003): 37.

<sup>26</sup> “It is not clear whether we should understand *the manifestation of the Spirit* meaning ‘that which the Spirit makes manifest’, or ‘that which makes the Spirit manifest’. Either way the thought is of the spiritual gifts, and of the exercise of the spiritual gifts as something public and open, which others than their possessors perceive.” Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 166.

<sup>27</sup> Tony Evans, *The Promise* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 302.

<sup>28</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines within the Church* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 113.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Jeffress, *Guilt-Free Living* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1995), 229.

<sup>30</sup> For other lists of “gifts” in Paul, cf. 12:27-28; Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11.

<sup>31</sup> Hemphill, *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall*, 55.

<sup>32</sup> See Marion L. Soards, *1 Corinthians: New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 258.

<sup>33</sup> There does seem to be a distinction between the apostolic gift of healing and what is around today.

<sup>34</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 582.

<sup>35</sup> Thiselton supplies discussion and bibliography on the subject of prophecy in the NT. Hill, he says, suggests “that the prophet is a Spirit-endowed person ‘whose preaching contains admonition and comfort, the call for repentance and promise’ and who also counsels, as a pastor, and ‘blames and praises. That, we submit, may be legitimately called a ministry of pastoral teaching and instruction ...Christian prophets exercised a teaching ministry in the church which included pastoral preaching.” Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. 1 Thess 5:20-21; 1 Tim 4:1; 1 John 4:1. Verbrugge, “1 Corinthians.” See also Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians: Sacra Pagina* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 455.

<sup>37</sup> Thiselton lays stress on the “different kinds” and says that it is wrong to seek to limit “tongues” to one specific, tightly defined phenomenon. “A cluster of generic characteristics mark off ‘tongues’ from ‘prophecy’: *in one context*, the contrast between *articulate* speech and *unintelligible* sounds (14:2b, 5, 7-9, 11,19); *in another context* the contrast between being addressed *to God* and being addressed *to other human persons* (14:2a; 14:15); *in yet another context* the distinction between communicative discourse in the *ordinary public domain* and something so exalted as to be associated with *angelic utterance* (13:1); *in one more context* capable of making some believers feel like exiles and strangers ‘*not at home*’ in the community of believers (14:23a) and repellent to unbelievers (14:23b); in other situations that which *benefits the tongue-speaker* and for which he or she can give thanks (14:4a, 5a, 18). *Any generalizing definition will founder on semantic contrasts which constitute counterexamples*. On the other hand, *one or more* of the above characteristics or family traits give adequate grounds for the use of ‘tongues’, provided that they are ‘given’ by the Holy Spirit and not self-induced.”

<sup>38</sup> Fee calls the gift of tongues “the problem child.” Although Fee is a Pentecostal commentator, he acknowledges the fact that Corinthians abused this gift. See Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 591.

<sup>39</sup> Evans, *The Promise*, 313.