

# SPIRITUAL GIFTS

## THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS SERIES

### 1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40

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#### The Church—the Body of Christ and the Gifts, 12:12-31 [Part 1]

(1 Cor.12:12-31) **Introduction:** this passage gives us one of the most meaningful descriptions of the church in all of Scripture. It is also one of the most meaningful messages on the church that can be preached. **The purpose of the passage is to stress *the unity of the church*.** The church is said to be a body, a body of many parts or members. It is compared to the human body throughout the whole passage.

1. **The human body is a picture of Christ and of His church (v.12-13).**
2. **Point 1: some less gifted feel they are unimportant to the body (v.14-20).**
3. **Point 2: some more gifted feel they are more important to the body (v.21-23).**
4. **Point 3: God has put both the presentable and unpresentable into one body (v.24-26).**
5. **Point 4: each is a member of the body of Christ and has his own place in it (v.27-30).**
6. **Point 5: each is to covet the very best gifts (v.31).**

#### 1. (1 Cor.12:12-13) Church—Body, The: the human body is a picture of Christ and of His church.

The picture is practical and descriptive: the human body is one organism, one person, one being, one life; yet it has many members or parts to it. However, despite its many parts, the body is still one organic whole. All the parts of the body are still *in the body* and actually form the body, enabling it to function.

“So also is Christ.” Christ is **One Organism, One Person, One Being, One Life**; yet He too has many members or parts to His body. However, despite the many parts to His body, His body is still one organic whole. All the parts of His body actually give Him form and enable Him to function. The point is that the human body and the body of Christ picture what the Holy Spirit does.

1. **The Holy Spirit baptizes believers into one body, that is, into Christ Himself.** When we really believe *in Christ* (note the significant phrase “in Christ” which is so often found in Scripture. **See note, Believer, Position in Christ—Romans 6:3-5;**

2. **(Romans 6:3-5) Jesus Christ, Death— Believer, Position in Christ:** first, the believer has been *immersed or placed into Jesus Christ*. This is the first thing the believer should know about his position in Christ. This is one of the most glorious truths in all of Scripture, yet so much controversy has raged over what is meant by baptism that the glorious meaning has often been bypassed. The meaning of baptism is discussed in another note. In the present note the glorious truth of these verses is being concentrated upon. Christians everywhere agree that baptism is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When a true believer is immersed, he is proclaiming to the world that he is being identified with Christ:

- ⇒ by being placed under the water, he is proclaiming that he has died and been buried with Christ.
- ⇒ by being raised up from the water, he is proclaiming that he has been raised from the dead with Christ to live a new life.

**Now note three glorious points.**

**1. The believer is immersed, placed into, or identified with Christ in death.** This is the believer's position in Christ. Very simply, if the believer really died when Christ died, then he has died to sin and is freed from sin and its penalty and punishment. What a glorious gift from God! What a glorious position to receive from God's wonderful grace!

What happens is this. When a person really believes in Christ, then God takes that person's faith and *counts* it as the death of Christ. That is, God *counts* the person as having died in Christ. God takes the person's faith (and baptism as stated in this passage) and *counts* the person as *participating in Christ's death*.

God counts and considers the person...

- to have died in Christ's death.
- to be placed into Christ's death.
- to be identified with Christ's death.
- to be a partaker of Christ' death.
- to be in union with Christ's death.
- to be bound with Christ in death.

When a person truly honors God's Son by trusting Him, God honors that person by spiritually placing him into the death of Christ. What is it that causes God to do so much for the believer? Very simply, His love for His Son. God loves His Son so much that He will do anything for anyone who honors His Son by believing and trusting Him.

Now note the point: if the believer is *counted* by God as having been immersed into the death of Christ, then the believer...

- |                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • has died to sin                 | • is freed from sin                 |
| • has died to the penalty of sin  | • is freed from the penalty of sin  |
| • has died to the judgment of sin | • is freed from the judgment of sin |

This means that the **rule** and **reign** and the **habits** and **desires** of sin no longer have control over us. Sin *ceases* to have a place or a position in our lives.

We are free from sin, free from...

- |                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| • sin's habits  | • sin's enslavement    |
| • sin's control | • sin's rule and reign |
| • sin's bondage | • sin's guilt          |

It means that we no longer live "**in**" sin, in the *position and place of sin*. We cannot live without sin, not perfectly, but we are *free* from living "**in**" sin. We no longer practice and desire sin. We desire and practice righteousness, seeking to please God in all that we do. And as

glorious as this is, it means that we are freed from the condemnation of sin, the terrible punishment that shall be measured out in the awful day of judgment.

This is the believer's position in Christ. He is immersed, buried, placed into, and identified with Christ in death. And having died, the believer never has to be under the rule and reign of sin and its judgment again. He is a partaker of Christ's death, bound and united to Christ in death; therefore, he is dead to sin and all its effects.

However, note a critical point. A true believer is a person who *really believes*. This simply means he **repents, confesses, obeys**, and is **baptized**. It is this person whom God credits as having died in Christ. This is the glorious position of the true believer.

**"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" ([Romans 6:3](#)).**

**"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" ([Romans 6:6](#)).**

**"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" ([1 Cor. 12:13](#)).**

**"For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" ([2 Cor. 4:11](#)).**

**"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" ([Galatians 2:20](#)).**

**"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" ([Galatians 3:27](#)).**

## **2. The believer is immersed, placed into, or identified with Christ in His resurrection.**

The same picture of baptism is used again to strike home this glorious truth. God counts the true baptized believer as having been raised in Christ. God takes the believer's faith (and baptism as stated in this passage) and counts the person as participating in Christ's resurrection.

He counts and considers the person...

- to be raised in Christ's resurrection.
- to be placed into Christ's resurrection.
- to be identified with Christ's resurrection.
- to be a partaker of Christ's resurrection.
- to be in union with Christ's resurrection.
- to be bound with Christ in His resurrection.

### **Note two significant points.**

- a. Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. This tells how our glorious position in Christ happened. It happened by the glory and the power of God. The "**glory**" (*doxa* [PWS: 1705](#)) of God means all the excellence of God; all that He is in His might and power, love and grace, compassion and mercy. It means all His attributes: His **omnipotence** (all power), **omniscience** (all knowing), **omnipresence**

(being everywhere), and **sovereignty**. In this particular passage it refers primarily to His glorious power. It was the glory of His might and power that raised up Jesus from the dead, and it is by the glory of His might and power that he *places and positions* us in Christ.

**"And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by *his own power*" (1 Cor. 6:14).**

**"For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the *power of God*" (2 Cor. 13:4).**

- b. God's purpose for raising us up with Christ is dynamic and meaningful. It involves walking in a whole new life. The word "**walk**" (*peripateō*<sup>PWS: 4246</sup>) means to walk about, to walk step by step, to control and order our behavior, to constantly and habitually walk in "**newness of life**."

Think about it for a moment. When Christ died, he laid aside His old life and left it behind Him. Therefore, when He arose, He took on a totally new life, a changed life, a resurrected life. It is His new life, His changed and resurrected life that is given to us. In the Bible the word "**new**" often carries the idea of purity, righteousness, holiness, godliness.

The believer...

- receives a "new birth" (1 Peter 1:23; 1 Peter 2:2).
- receives a "new heart" (Ezekiel 11:19; Ezekiel 18:31).
- becomes a "new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17; Galatians 6:15).
- becomes a "new man" (Ephes. 4:24; Col. 3:10).

God's very purpose for *placing* us in the resurrected life of Jesus Christ is that we might walk in Christ, walk soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. The true believer puts off the old man of sin and puts on the new man of righteousness and godliness. He lives a pure, clean, and holy life.

**"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12).**

**"[That you may know] what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephes. 1:19-20).**

**"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).**

**"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephes. 4:1).**

**"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col. 2:6).**

**3. The believer is immersed, placed into, or identified with the most glorious hope: that he shall be planted (immersed) in the very likeness of Jesus' resurrection.** This simply means that...

- as Jesus was raised to a *new life*, so shall the believer be.

"Even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" ([Ephes. 2:5-6](#)).

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" ([Col. 3:1](#)).

- as Jesus was raised to *live with God*, so shall the believer be.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" ([John 14:2-3](#)).

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" ([1 Thes. 4:16-17](#)).

"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him [identified with His death], we shall also live with him" ([2 Tim. 2:11](#)).

**(Romans 8:1) Believer, Position In Christ:**

1. What do the words "*in Christ*" mean?
2. What does it mean for a person to be *in Christ*?

**1. In the simplest of terms, to be *in Christ* means that a person's faith in Christ places him in Christ.** Positionally, the person is placed in all that Christ is. Christ lived and died and arose, so to be *in Christ* means that a person lives, dies, and arises *in Christ*. Christ is the person's Representative, his Agent, his Substitute, his Mediator in life and death and resurrection. The person who believes *in Jesus Christ* is *identified* with Christ: counted and considered to be "in" Christ; reckoned and credited as "in" Christ.

Spelled out in a little more detail, when a person believes *in Christ*, God *places and positions* the believer "in" Christ. The believer's faith actually causes God to identify the believer *with Christ*, to count the believer...

- as having lived *in Christ* when Christ lived upon earth; therefore, the believer is counted sinless and righteous because Christ was sinless and righteous.
- as having died *in Christ*; therefore, the believer never has to die ([John 3:16](#)). The penalty and condemnation of his sins are already paid for in the death of Christ.
- as having been raised "in" Christ; therefore, the believer has received the "new life" of Christ. Just as Christ had a new life after His resurrection, even so the believer receives the "new life" of Christ when he believes in Christ.

2. To be *in Christ* means that a believer walks and lives *in Christ* day by day. A true believer lives and moves and has his being *in Christ*. He is in union with Christ. To truly believe is to walk and to truly walk is to believe. A true believer...

- lays his life—his past sins, his present behavior, all that he is—upon Christ.
- entrusts his present welfare and destiny—all that he is or ever will be—into the hands of Christ.

A person who truly *lays* his life upon Christ and *entrusts* all he is to Christ is a person...

- who truly believes.
- who lives and walks *in Christ*.

Now, to live and walk *in Christ* means that we do not "walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit" ([Romans 8:1, 4](#)). It means that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" ([Titus 2:12](#)). It means that we bear the fruit of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

It means that we abide *in Christ*, that we become as connected and attached to Christ...

- as the members of the body are connected and attached to each other ([1 Cor. 12:12-27](#)).
- as the branch is connected and attached to the vine ([John 15:4-7](#)).

This is what it means for a person to be "in" Christ. A person simply *believes* in Christ, putting all he is and has into the hands and keeping of Christ. The person honestly believes that Christ will take care of his past sins, present welfare, and future destiny. Therefore, the believer simply places and positions himself—his faith and welfare—*in Christ*; and God in turn identifies the person with Christ, with all that Christ is.

God counts and considers the person to be *in Christ*.

- **the Holy Spirit immerses us into the death of Jesus Christ.** God actually counts us as "*in Christ*," as "in the body of Christ." God sees us as having already died *in the body of Christ*. Therefore, having died *in Christ*, we never have to die.
- **the Holy Spirit immerses us into the resurrection of Christ.** God counts and sees us as having already been raised from the dead *in the body of Christ*. Therefore, we already have the new life of Christ, both abundant and eternal life.
- **the Holy Spirit immerses us into the purpose of Jesus Christ.** God counts and sees us *in the body of Christ* working and carrying out the very same purpose as His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The point is powerful:** we—all genuine believers—owe our very existence to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. All that we have received of God is due to one thing and to one thing only: the baptism of the Holy Spirit into the very body of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

God recognizes and acknowledges us...

- only if we have "*believed in*" the Lord Jesus Christ.
- only if we have been "*baptized into*" *the body of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

God has to see us "*in Christ*," "*in the body of Christ*" in order to accept and approve us. Picture the scene: there is the body of Christ—*out there*. When God looks at the body of Christ, He sees us *in Christ*; then God accepts and approves us—no matter who we are. We may be Jew or Gentile, a slave or a free man—it does not matter. If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the

Holy Spirit takes us and baptizes us into the body of Christ. God sees and accepts, counts and credits us as *in Christ*, as *in the body of Christ*.

**Thought 1.** Note a significant fact. Paul has not mentioned the church. In fact, he does not mention the church until **1 Cor. 12:28** when he begins to mention the spiritual gifts. Why? He does not say, but his thrust is the universal body of Christ: every individual believer around the world, no matter who or where he is, is a member of the body of Christ. And the individual believer is critical to the health of the whole body. **The individual believer is desperately needed to make the body of Christ healthy.**

“And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness [acceptance]” (**Genesis 15:6**).

“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified [counted acceptable] by the law of Moses” (**Acts 13:39**).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace [acceptance] with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (**Romans 5:1**).

**3. There is another significant fact in this verse as well.** We “have all been made to drink into one Spirit”; that is, the Spirit has entered our bodies. He dwells within the hearts and lives of all believers.

⇒ Believers are not only immersed “*into the body of Christ*” by the Holy Spirit...

⇒ but the Holy Spirit is immersed or placed into the lives and bodies of believers.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (**John 14:16-17**).

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (**Romans 8:9**).

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (**1 Cor. 3:16**).

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (**1 Cor. 6:19**).

## **2. (1 Cor.12:14-20) Church: some who are *less gifted* feel they are unimportant to the body of Christ.**

Some members in the Corinthian church were experiencing what so many believers experience, a sense of being...

- less gifted
- less able
- less capable
- less worthy
- insignificant
- unimportant
- inadequate
- ungifted

However, such feelings and thoughts are false, totally untrue. “The body is not one [significant] member, but many [members].” Every person who truly belongs to the body of

Christ (the church) is significant and important to God and has a gift and function in the body.

**Note four significant facts about the church, the body of Christ.**

**1. Each member is necessary.** The foot may not be as gifted as the hand in handling things, but the foot is still part of the body. The ear may not be able to envision things like the eye can, but the ear is still part of the body.

**2. Each member has an essential function.** The eye, the ear, and the nose—they all have their function.

⇒ None can do the function of the other. Each member has its function, and no other member can do the function of the other member.

⇒ If the whole body were only an eye, it would be a freak: **inoperative, unfunctional,** and **useless.** It would be an atrocity.

**Thought 1. Note three significant applications.**

**1)** The body of Christ, the church, can operate only if enough members function as they are gifted to do.

**2)** The body, the church, becomes handicapped if some members do not function and do the work they are gifted to do.

**3)** The ability of the body to operate is determined by the number and efficiency of its members. The more the members of the body (church) function and function efficiently, the more the body (church) can do.

**3. Each member is set “in the body” as God wills.** The eye sees because God gave it the ability to see. The ear hears because God gave it the ability to hear. The same is true in the church. Note the words “**every one of them**”—every member has been set in the church by God and gifted by God. God has not just set the more prominent members in the church. God has set “**every one**” of us in the church, and He has gifted us for an essential function. And note: what we are called and gifted to do is **God’s will**. We are who we are and have the gifts we have because God willed us to be as we are.

**Thought 1.** The implications of this point are forceful. Every believer...

- needs to thank God for who he is and for his gift.
- needs to use his gifts with all diligence and fervency.

**4. Each member is distinct, but *together* there is only one body.** If only one member existed, where would the body be? Of course, there would be no body. So it is with the church. If there is only one member in the church, he would be significant, the most important person around. But where would the church be? **The point is clear:** the church is not one significant and important person. The church is many members—all significant and important. But note: despite the diversity, the church is still one body.

**“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:6-8).**

**“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it**

is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Cor. 12:4-7).

### **3. (1 Cor.12:21-23) Church: some who are *more gifted* feel they are more important to the body.**

This point is a sharp rebuke to those who try to dominate or impose their will upon a church. A person’s own will and desires are never to be pushed forward and forced upon the church. Every member is important and significant and must be considered. Too often, there are some who feel they are more important than others in the church. They feel their gifts and contributions are more significant than that of others. The thrust of this point is that such feelings and thoughts are inaccurate, totally inaccurate. Even the lowest and least gifted member (who is using his gift) is as important to the function of the church as the minister or the most gifted person. **“The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you.” “The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you.”** All are important to God. **In fact, note what Scripture says; the two points are real eye-openers, a shock to what most people think:**

**1. The weaker members (less gifted) are actually more necessary.** The word “feeble” (asthenes) means sick, sickly. It shows that in appearance the lesser members may seem unimportant, but they are not; they are essential. In fact, they are actually more necessary. The average layman who serves as a personal worker, although he is never seen by the crowds, is much more essential to decisions for Christ than the evangelist who is in the center of the scene. **The dear saint who has become a *prayer warrior* is much more essential to the strength of the church than the most eloquent preacher who ever fills the pulpit.**

**2. The unpresentable parts of the body are treated with greater honor.** The reference is to clothing. We take more pains to dress the unpresentable parts of our body, giving them a special nobility.

So it should be in the church. The less gifted should be recognized and treated with a very special nobility, for they are actually more necessary.

**Thought 1.** The point is well made: no believer or group of believers are to look down upon, snub, or by-pass the less gifted in the church. All are important; in fact, the less gifted who are using their gifts for Christ are actually more necessary. They are “where the rubber hits the road”; therefore, they should be treated with greater honor.

**“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Luke 22:26).**

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Romans 12:3).**

**“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Cor. 1:27-29).**

**“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:7).**

**“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5).**

#### **4. (1 Cor.12:24-26) Church: God has put both the presentable and unpresentable into one body.**

The presentable parts of our body have no need for clothing; therefore, we do not clothe them (for example, the face and the hands). God has done the same thing in the church. God has tempered the body together. The word **“tempered”** (**sunekerasen**) means **to mix, combine, and blend together**. God has arranged the church as it is: the gifted and less gifted mixed, combined, and blended together. And He has done it in such a manner that more honor really belongs to those who are not as gifted. The prayer warrior is much more essential than the soloist who is out before the people. The lay witness for Christ is more necessary than the preacher who stands in the pulpit. The person who ministers to the sick or elderly is more honorable than the committee chairman who leads the whole congregation in administrative matters.

All are important, but the more honorable are not necessarily those who stand before the church. Sometimes the more honorable are those who are never seen, those who go about their ministry for the Lord, using their gifts and functioning within the church as He has ordained.

##### **1. God has tempered or blended the members together to keep them from clashing.**

There should be no jealousy, pride, or divisiveness within the church; for God has gifted every believer to complement the others. God has gifted all to function together in harmony.

**“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10).**

**“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11).**

**“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephes. 4:3).**

**“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27).**

**“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Peter 3:8).**

##### **2. God has tempered or blended the members together to create a natural care for one another.**

Note the words “same care.” The very same care should be shown to one member as is shown to another member.

One member of the church is not more important than another member—not to God, and it should not be to us. There should be no favoritism or partiality shown to anyone. When a member of the human body suffers, the whole body suffers. When one member (for example, the feet in a race) is honored, the whole body rejoices with the feet. So it is to be in the church. The church is one body; therefore, it is to suffer and rejoice together. The body is to walk through the experience of life together—suffering and rejoicing with every member, looking after and caring for every member.

“For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matthew 25:35-36).

“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Romans 15:1).

“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22).

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Thes. 5:14).

## 5. (1 Cor.12:27-30) Church: each believer is a member of the body of Christ and has his own place in it. This point is forceful and emphatic.

- ⇒ “Ye are the body of Christ”: collectively, we have the supreme privilege. We are the members of Christ, of His body, of the body of God’s Son Himself.
- ⇒ “Members in particular”: individually, each one of us is a member of Christ’s body. Not a single believer is excluded, and no person is more a member than any other believer.

### Paul illustrates the point by listing some of the gifts. He says two significant things.

1. God has set and gifted each member in the church. For example, consider these eight gifts.
  - a. **First**, God has set apostles in the church.
  - b. **Second**, God has set prophets in the church.
  - c. **Third**, God has set teachers in the church. The gift of teaching is the gift to instruct believers in the truth of God and His Word. It is the gift to root and ground people in doctrine, reproof, correction, and righteousness.
  - d. **Fourth**, there was also the gift of miracles.
  - e. **Fifth**, There was the gift of healing.
  - f. **Sixth**, there was the gift of helps. This is the gift that does just what it says: helps people. We all know some persons who are always ready to jump to help people—always available and ready to offer a helping hand. These are particularly directed to help the needy, for example, the widows or widowers, orphans, disabled, shut-ins, and poor.
  - g. **Seventh**, there was the gift of governments or administration. The Greek word is descriptive (**kuberneseis**). It refers to the pilot of a ship, the person who steers the ship through the dangerous channels of the oceans. The church, of course, needs such persons who can give it direction as it moves along on its journey to reach the destination God has appointed for it.
  - h. **Eight**, There was the gift of different tongues.
2. The point to note is that all members do not have the same gift.
  - ⇒ Are all apostles?
  - ⇒ Are all prophets?
  - ⇒ Are all teachers?
  - ⇒ Are all workers of miracles?
  - ⇒ Do all have the gifts of healing?

⇒ Do all speak with tongues?

⇒ Do all interpret tongues?

The answer is obvious. No! God has not gifted all believers with the same gift.

**“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey” (Matthew 25:15).**

**“But all these [gifts] worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will” (1 Cor. 12:11).**

**“[Gifts are given] for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephes. 4:12).**

## **6. (1 Cor.12:31) Gifts: each believer is to covet the best gifts.**

Note there is a legitimate covetousness. The believer is to covet the “best gifts” so he can more effectively serve his Lord. However, there is a more excellent way than gifts, something much higher, a quality that surpasses all the gifts combined. And it can be possessed by every believer, no matter who he is. What is the quality? What is it that is far greater and far more supreme than the greatest combination of gifts?