

THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING



SPIRITUAL GIFTS SERIES

TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL HELPS

West Los Angeles Living Word Christian Center

**Pastor Eddie Ildefonso, Senior Pastor
6520 Arizona Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90045**

**Email: Admin.@Wlwlwcc.org
WWW.LWCC@WLALWCC.Org**

SPIRITUAL GIFTS-Part 1

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS SERIES

1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40

A. 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;**

(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:

1. by being placed under the water, he is proclaiming that he has died and been buried with Christ.
2. 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.....

1. to have died in Christ's death.
2. to be placed into Christ's death.
3. to be identified with Christ's death.
4. to be a partaker of Christ' death.
5. to be in union with Christ's death.
6. 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**.....

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. has died to sin | d. is freed from sin |
| b. has died to the penalty of sin | e. is freed from the penalty of sin |
| c. has died to the judgment of sin | f. 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.....

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| a. sin's habits | d. sin's enslavement |
| b. sin's control | e. sin's rule and reign |
| c. sin's bondage | f. 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 alway 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.....

1. to be raised in Christ's resurrection.
2. to be placed into Christ's resurrection.
3. to be identified with Christ's resurrection.
4. to be a partaker of Christ's resurrection.
5. to be in union with Christ's resurrection.
6. 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*) 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*) 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.....

1. receives a "new birth" ([1 Peter 1:23](#); [1 Peter 2:2](#)).
2. receives a "new heart" ([Ezekiel 11:19](#); [Ezekiel 18:31](#)).
3. becomes a "new creature" ([2 Cor. 5:17](#); [Galatians 6:15](#)).
4. 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.....

1. 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](#)).

2. 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:

Now I want to speak to you about your position "in Christ".

- **Romans 8:1 (KJV)**
There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
 - *In the heavenly places in Christ (en tois epouraniois en Christōi).*
 - In four other places in Ephesians (**Ephes. 1:20; Ephes. 2:6; Ephes. 3:10; Ephes. 6:12**). This precise phrase (**with en**) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament and has a clearly local meaning in **Ephes. 1:20; Ephes. 2:6; Ephes. 3:10**, doubtful in **Ephes. 6:12**, but probably so here.
 - In **Ephes. 2:6** the believer is conceived as already seated with Christ. Heaven is the real abode of the citizen of Christ's kingdom (**Phil. 3:20**) who is a stranger on earth (**Phil. 1:27; Ephes. 2:19**).

The Word: "in"

Greek Word: **ἐν** (1722 Strong's Concordance)

Transliteration: **en**

Root: a primary preposition denoting (fixed) position (in place, time or state)—
This is where we get the concept to be encapsulated. Our position "in Christ" means that we are permanently placed in Christ in a permanent fixed position from an eternal perspective. We have been permanently fixed or spiritually placed from the beginning of time to the end of time, this is the believer's state or condition when he comes to the cross of Jesus Christ.

English Words used in KJV:

in 1902

by 163

with 140

among 117

at 113

on 62

through 39

misc 265

[Total Count: 2801]

- Now let's look at the book of Ephesians
- To take note of our position *in Christ*.
- Three parts to the book of Ephesians:
 - 1-Our Wealth in Christ
 - 2-His Will in Christ
 - 3-Our Warfare in the Spirit

Ephesians 1:1-23 (KJV)

¹ Paul, an apostle **of (in)** Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful **in Christ Jesus**:

² Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us **with (in)** all spiritual blessings **in heavenly places in Christ**:

⁴ According as he hath chosen us **in** him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him **in** love:

⁵ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children **by (in)** Jesus Christ **to (in)** himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted **in** the beloved.

⁷ **In** whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

⁸ Wherein he hath abounded toward us **in** all wisdom and prudence;

⁹ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed **in** himself:

¹⁰ That **in** the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together **in** one all things **in** Christ, both which are **in heaven**, and which are on earth; *even in* him:

¹¹ **In** whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

¹² That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted **in Christ**.

¹³ **In** whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: **in** whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed **with (in)** that holy Spirit of promise,

¹⁴ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

¹⁵ Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith **in** the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

¹⁶ Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you **in** my prayers;

¹⁷ That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation **in** the knowledge of him:

¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance **in** the saints,

¹⁹ And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

²⁰ Which he wrought **in** Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand **in the heavenly places**,

²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only **in** this world, but also **in that which is to come**:

²² And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the

church,

²³ Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all *in* all.

Ephesians 2:1-22 (KJV)

¹ And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead *in* trespasses and sins;

² Wherein *in* time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh *in* the children of disobedience:

³ Among whom also we all had our conversation *in* times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

⁴ But God, who is rich *in* mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

⁵ Even when we were dead *in* sins, hath quickened us together **with (in)** Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

⁶ And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together *in* heavenly places *in* Christ

Jesus:

⁷ That *in* the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace *in* his kindness toward us **through (in)** Christ Jesus.

⁸ For by grace are ye saved **through (in)** faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created *in* Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk *in* them.

¹¹ Wherefore remember, that ye *being in* time past Gentiles *in* the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision *in* the flesh made by hands;

¹² That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God *in* the world:

¹³ But now *in* Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh **by (in)** the **blood of Christ.**

¹⁴ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

¹⁵ Having abolished *in* his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained in* ordinances; for to make *in* himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;

¹⁶ And that he might reconcile both unto God *in* one body **by (in)** the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

¹⁷ And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

¹⁸ For **through (in)** him we both have access **by (in)** one Spirit unto the Father.

¹⁹ Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

²⁰ And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*;

²¹ *In* whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple *in* the Lord:

²² *In* whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God **through (in)** the Spirit.

Ephesians 3:1-21 (KJV)

- ¹ For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
² If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:
³ How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,
⁴ Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge **in the mystery of Christ**)
⁵ Which **in** other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets **by (in)** the Spirit;
⁶ That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise **in Christ by (in) the gospel:**
⁷ Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.
⁸ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;
⁹ And to make all *men* see what *is* the **fellowship of the mystery**, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid **in** God, who created all things **by (in)** Jesus Christ:
¹⁰ To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers **in heavenly places** might be known **by (in)** the church the manifold wisdom of God,
¹¹ According to the eternal purpose which he purposed **in Christ Jesus our Lord:**
¹² **In** whom we have boldness and access **with (in)** confidence **by (in)** the faith of him.
¹³ Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.
¹⁴ For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
¹⁵ Of whom the whole family **in heaven and earth** is named,
¹⁶ That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened **with (in)** might by his Spirit **in** the inner man;
¹⁷ That Christ may dwell **in** your hearts **by (in)** faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded **in** love,
¹⁸ May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;
¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled **with (in)** all the fulness of God.
²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh **in** us,
²¹ Unto him *be* glory **in** the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

(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...

1. as having lived *in* Christ when Christ lived upon earth; therefore, the believer is counted sinless and righteous because Christ was sinless and righteous.
2. 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.
3. 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.....

1. lays his life—his past sins, his present behavior, all that he is—upon Christ.
2. 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.....**

1. who truly believes.
2. 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.....

1. as the members of the body are connected and attached to each other ([1 Cor. 12:12-27](#)).
2. 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.

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.....

1. only if we have “*believed in*” the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. 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**.....

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. less gifted | e. insignificant |
| b. less able | f. unimportant |
| c. less capable | g. inadequate |
| d. less worthy | h. 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.

- a. **“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.

- b. **“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. **Eighth**, There was the gift of different tongues.
2. The point to note is that all members do not have the same gift.
 - a. Are all apostles?
 - b. Are all prophets?
 - c. Are all teachers?
 - d. Are all workers of miracles?
 - e. Do all have the gifts of healing?
 - f. Do all speak with tongues?
 - g. 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?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS- Part 2

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS SERIES

1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40

B. The Spiritual Gifts, 12:4-11 [Part 2]

(1 Cor. 12:4-11) Introduction—Gifts, Spiritual: a terrible controversy was raging in the Corinthian church over spiritual gifts.

This section focuses on spiritual gifts in the church, dealing with a vital, but controversial subject. The false religion situation in Corinth caused counterfeit spiritual manifestations that had to be confronted. The church was being informed on this subject by Paul and its behavior would be regulated by the **truth** and the **Spirit**.

1 Corinthians 12:1

The NKJV translators italicized “*gifts*” to indicate that the word is not in the original text but is implied by the context (vv.4, 9, 28, 30, 31; 14:1).

The Greek literally means “*pertaining to the Spirit*”, referring to that which has spiritual qualities or characteristics or is under some form of spiritual control.

Spiritual gifts are **divine enablements for ministry** that the Holy Spirit gives in some measure to all believers and that are to be completely under His control and **used for the building of the church to Christ glory.**

These had to be distinguished from the mystical experiences called ‘**ecstasy**’ (supernatural, sensuous communion with a deity) and ‘**enthusiasm**’ (divination, dreams, revelations, visions) that were found in the pagan religions of Corinth.

1 Corinthians 12:1

Gentiles. That is, non-Christian pagans (1 Thes.4:5; 1 Peter 2:12).

Carried away. Incredibly, some church members were mimicking certain dramatic and bizarre practices of the mystery religions in which they had been formerly involved.

The practice of ecstasy, considered to be the highest expression of religious experience, involved supposed supernatural interaction with a deity, induced through frenzied hypnotic chants and ceremonies.

The practice frequently included drunkenness (**Ephes. 5:18**) and sexual orgies, to which the devotees willfully yielded themselves to be led into gross sin.

All kinds of questions were being bantered about:

1. **Which gifts were essential?**
2. **Which gifts were the most valid and true?**
3. **Which gifts were the most important?**
4. **Which gifts were the most useful and needful?**
5. **Which gifts were to have precedence?**
6. **Which gifts were to be desired and coveted?**
7. **Which gifts were the most honorable?**
8. **Which gifts were more acceptable?**

God had blessed the Corinthian believers with an abundance of spiritual gifts **so they could effectively minister to the citizens of pagan Corinth**. This was one of the major reasons why God had given the spiritual gifts to the church. However, the believers never came close to launching the ministry God had intended for the church. Why?

Because many of the believers had misunderstood and were misusing and abusing the spiritual gifts which God had given them.

1. Some began to feel their gifts were more important than the gifts of others, that they were more blessed than other believers. Therefore, all kinds of sins began to swell up in the hearts of these people: **a sense of pride, arrogance, super-spirituality, and of self-importance**.
2. Others began to feel they had to have the same gifts as others, so they *became envious*, and began to seek their gifts. The result was a terrible abuse of the gifts. Some persons began *to counterfeit* some of the gifts, and their abuse brought **disorder** and **disruption** to the church.

There was argument and debate, strife and division over the spiritual gifts of God.

God had given spiritual gifts **to equip His people for ministry; but instead** of using the gifts for ministry, they were arguing over what gifts were **essential, valid, important, needful, honorable, and desirable**.

The present passage deals with these problems, and to the open and honest heart it answers many of the questions about spiritual gifts.

1. **The unity of the gifts (v.4-6).**
2. **The purpose of spiritual gifts (v.7).**
3. **The list of the different gifts (v.8-10).**
4. **The unity of the gifts restressed (v.11).**

1. (1 Cor.12:4-6) Gifts, Spiritual: the unity of the spiritual gifts.

Pointedly, Paul says there should be absolutely no **pride, controversy, or division** over spiritual gifts.

Three simple, yet profound reasons show why.

1. **There are different gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit.**

The Spirit determines what gift to give to a believer. The choice is entirely the Holy Spirit's; it is not the believer's choice. No man **earns, merits, or deserves** a spiritual gift. The gift is given freely by the Spirit as He wills. **He and He alone is the Source of the gift.** Therefore, there is nothing about a gift for a man to feel **prideful and important** about. *He did not earn it, and he certainly does not deserve it.*

Note another fact as well, **a matter that always needs to be remembered by genuine believers: there is nothing controversial about spiritual gifts.**

They are all—every one of them—gifts of the Spirit. He can give whatever spiritual gift and grace He wills **to whomever He wills.** Even if He needed and willed to give a new grace or gift to a person for meeting a special need in the church or in the world, what could anyone say against it? If He willed it, He could do it. He is the Spirit of God. What is there to argue about?

Thought 1. Believers need to do as Paul is soon to say, love—for love is the greatest gift—and get on about the task of reaching our desperate world for Christ.

2. **There are different ministries or ways of serving (administrations), but they are all done by the authority of the same Lord.**

It is the Lord Jesus who gives the believer the right and authority to minister *in His name*. No believer earns, merits, or deserves the right to be looked upon by the Lord, much less represent the Lord. Therefore, when the Lord gives the believer the right to minister in His name, **it is an occasion for humble brokenness and thankful service, not for self-importance, super-spirituality, and arrogant service.**

3. **There are different activities and operations in carrying out the various ministries, but it is the same God who works and gives the power to do it all.**

No man has a greater God or a greater claim to God than anyone else. It is the very same God who **equips and empowers** every believer to do the daily activities of his ministry. No man, therefore, has a greater claim to boast or to feel super-spiritual over other believers. And there is nothing controversial about the matter.

God can do whatever **He wills, just as He pleases**, for it is *God who works all things in all believers*. Therefore, believers need to **humbly thank God for His presence and power** and to be **faithful to the daily activities demanded by their ministry.**

They certainly have no reason for feeling superior and self-important; neither do they have the right to stand against other believers because God is *working different things in them*.

Thought 1. Both the church and believers must always remember *there are differences* among believers. And it is God who has made the differences.

Look at what Scripture has just said: there are.....

- a. *Different gifts*.....*given* by the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4)
- b. *Different ministries*.....*given* by the same Lord (1 Cor. 12:5)
- c. *Different activities*.....*given* by the same God (1 Cor. 12:6)

The point to see is forceful: no matter the gifts, ministries, and activities, they are all *given*—given by the Spirit, the Lord, and God. The gifts are not and could not be worked up by believers, not genuine gifts. Neither are they **earned, merited, or deserved**.

Therefore, all feelings of self-importance and all controversy **needs to be stopped**, and the face of God needs to be sought in repentance. For God is the One who has given and distributed as He willed.

He alone knows best how to reach the people of this desperate and dying world. Therefore, He alone knows what gifts and graces are needed.....

- 1. in the generations and times.
- 2. by the races and countries of the world.
- 3. for the minds and emotions of all people.
- 4. for the conversion and growth of all people.

“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).

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us” (Romans 12:6).

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Phil. 2:3-4).

“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).

2. (1 Cor.12:7) Gifts, Spiritual: the purpose of spiritual gifts is to *enable* believers to do the ministry, the work to which God has called them.

The word “profit” (**sumpheron**) means **edification, advantage, benefit**. Believers are equipped with spiritual gifts primarily for the *benefit and edification of others, not for themselves*.

The gifts are not given to believers for their own gratification or for them to revel in a sense of self-importance and super-spirituality. The believer does, of course, profit and benefit from the gift given him, but he is gifted primarily to edify and help others.

This is seen in the word “**manifestation**.” It means to be openly and publicly seen.

The gifts of the Spirit are to be openly and publicly used; they are...

- a) **to be manifested to the church, that is, used to edify the church.**
- b) **to be manifested to the world, that is, used to benefit the world (reaching the lost).**

Note a crucial fact that is not always understood.

The gifts of the Spirit are “*given to every man*.” They are not given only to the educated and outstanding. Every single believer is given some spiritual gift by the Spirit of God, and it is given because it is needed within the church and the world, needed to help in ministering to people and in reaching the lost for Christ.

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (John 15:16).

“And he gave some [gifts]....for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephes. 4:11-12).

3. (1 Cor.12:8-10) Gifts, Spiritual: the list of the different gifts is given to show just how diverse the gifts of the Spirit really are.

He can gift a person as He wills, and His gifts are many and varied. This list is only partial; other gifts are mentioned in other passages (**see—Romans 12:6-8;—Ephes. 4:11**).

1. **There is the gift of the *word of wisdom (sophia)*. Wisdom means the wisdom of God; this is made clear by 1 Cor. 2:7. **Wisdom: σοφία-sophia—from <G4680> (sophos); *wisdom* (higher or lower, worldly or spiritual) —“(spiritual) wisdom,” Col 1:28; Col 3:16; Col 4:5; Jas. 1:5; Jas. 3:13, 17; 2 Pet. 3:15; Rev. 13:18; Rev. 17:9;****

Wisdom is derivative of <G5428>—φρόνησις, *phronēsis*—“understanding, prudence,” i.e., a right use of *phren*, “the mind,” —

Note: “While *sophia* is the insight into the true nature of things, *phronēsis* is the ability to discern modes of action with a view to their results; while *sophia* is theoretical, *phronēsis* is practical” (Lightfoot). *Synesis*, “understanding, intelligence,” is the critical faculty; this and *phronēsis* are particular applications of *sophia*.

The wisdom of God is the truth which God has now revealed to man; it is the whole system of truth revealed by God—the truth about God and man and the world.

Therefore, the word of wisdom is the gift to share the wisdom and truth of God with men—to share the truth in simple and understandable language.

The gift of wisdom is the distinctive ability to discern the mind of Christ and apply scriptural truth to a specific situation in order to make the right choices and help others move in the right direction.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33).

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

“Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his” (Daniel 2:20).

2. There is the gift of the *word of knowledge* (*gnosis*). This is practical knowledge. Knowledge: <G1108> *εγνώσις*-*gnōsis*—*knowing* (the act of), —a seeking to know, an enquiry, investigation especially spiritual truth. absolutely, in **Luke 11:52; Rom. 2:20; Rom. 15:14; 1 Cor. 1:5; 1 Cor. 8:1**

It is knowing what to do in the day-to-day situations that arise. It is knowing how to apply the wisdom that one has to daily living. It is being able to make practical application of truth to life. It does no good to know truth unless a person knows how to use the truth.

The *word of knowledge* is the gift to share with others how they should live; the ability to apply truth to their lives in day-to-day living; the ability to make practical application of truth to life. The gift of knowledge is the distinctive ability to seek out, gather, organize, and clarify facts and ideas on a number of diverse subjects.

“The trouble with the world is not that the people know too little, but that they know so many things that just ain’t so.” Mark Twain

“Those who think they know it all are very annoying to those of us who do.”
Robert Mueller

“Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:16-17).

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).

“Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God” (Proverbs 2:3-5).

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding” (Proverbs 3:13).

3. **There is the *gift of faith*.** This is not the usual faith that we mean when we speak about saving faith. **Faith:** <4102> πίστις-pistis—from <G3982> (peitho); *persuasion*, i.e. *credence*; *moral conviction* (of *religious truth*, or the *truthfulness of God* or a *religious teacher*), especially *reliance* upon *Christ* for *salvation*; by extensive the system of *religious (Gospel) truth* itself :- *assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity*.

It is a very special gift of faith: a mustard seed faith, a strong faith, a powerful faith, a wonder-working faith, a special gift of faith that enables a believer to do great things for God and His people.

The gift of faith is the distinctive ability to believe God with confidence for the things unseen, spiritual growth and the will of God. “Faith does not operate in the realm of the possible. There is no glory for God in that which is humanly possible. Faith begins where man’s power ends.” **George Muller**

“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matthew 17:20).

“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth” (Mark 9:23).

“And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith” (Luke 17:5).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12).

4. **There is the *gift of healing*.** This is a gift that has been minimized and de-emphasized for generations because of the charlatans and the abuses that too often surrounded it. **Healing:** <G2386> ἰαμα-iama— from <G2390> (iaomai); a *cure* (the effect) :- *healing-to cure* (literal or figurative) :*heal, make whole.-to restore to normal*.

All kinds of theories and doctrinal positions were held saying that the gift was only for the early church. However, as **William Barclay** so openly points out, it is a gift that is being rediscovered by the church. It is a gift that is definitely experienced and demonstrated in the lives of multitudes all over the world today (*The Letters to the Corinthians*, p.122f).

The gift of healing is the distinctive ability to be used as a human intermediary through whom God's supernatural power is applied to a person's physical or emotional need.

“And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease” (Matthew 10:1).

“And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils” (Mark 3:14-15).

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:17-18).

“To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:9).

5. **There is the gift of the *working of miracles*.** This would refer to miracles other than that of healing which has just been discussed. **Working:** <1755> ἐνέργημα--*energēma*—from <G1754> (*energeo*); *an effect :- operation, working.*—

Miracles: <1411> δύναμις-*dynamis*—from <G1410> (*dunamai*); *force* (literal or figurative); specially miraculous *power* (usually by implication a *miracle* itself) :- *ability, abundance, meaning, might (-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) miracle (-s), power, strength, violence, might (wonderful) work.*

There are times when circumstances and situations arise, and believers need a miraculous deliverance of some sort. Apparently, this is what the gift is.

When it is in God's will for a storm to cease—for an enemy to be temporarily blinded, for a fire to be turned or put out, or for an innumerable number of threats against believers to be altered—God raises up some believer and gifts him to work the needed miracle. The gift of miracles is the distinctive ability to perform supernatural acts as an instrument or agent of God which alter the expected course of nature.

Examples of this gift would be Christ stilling the storm; **Paul** smiting **Elymas** with blindness (**Acts 13:11**); and Paul being delivered from a poisonous snake bite (**Acts 28:5**).

6. There is the *gift of prophecy*. This is the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God's Spirit. **Prophecy:** <4394> προφητεία-*prophēteia*—from <G4396> (*prophetes*) ("*prophecy*"); *prediction* (scriptural or other) :-*prophecy*, *prophesying*.

Usage Notes: signifies "the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God" (*pro*, "forth," *phēmi*, "to speak:" see **PROPHET**); in the NT it is used

- (a) of the gift, e.g., **Rom. 12:6**;
- (b) **1 Cor. 12:10**; **1 Cor. 13:2**;
- (c) either of the exercise of the gift or of that which is "**prophesied**," e.g., **Matt. 13:14**; **1 Cor. 13:8**; **1 Cor. 14:6, 22**; **1 Thess. 5:20**, "**prophesying** (s);" **1 Tim. 1:18**; **1 Tim. 4:14**; **2 Pet. 1:20, 21**; **Rev. 1:3**; **Rev. 11:6**; **Rev. 19:10**; **Rev. 22:7, 10, 18, 19**.

Though much of Old Testament prophecy was purely predictive, see **Micah 5:2**, e.g., and **John 11:51**, prophecy is not necessarily, nor even primarily, fore telling.

However, It is the declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means, **Matt. 26:68**, it is the forth-telling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future, see **Gen. 20:7**; **Deut. 18:18**; **Rev. 10:11**; **Rev. 11:3**.

In such passages as **1 Cor. 12:28**; **Eph. 2:20**, the 'prophets' are placed after the 'Apostles,' since not the prophets of Israel are intended, but the 'gifts' of the ascended Lord, **Eph. 4:8, 11**; **Acts 13:1**; ...; the purpose of their ministry was to edify, to comfort, and to encourage the believers.

1 Cor. 14:3, while its effect upon unbelievers was to show that the secrets of a man's heart are known to God, to convict of sin, and to constrain to worship, **1 Cor. 14:24, 25**.—

With the completion of the canon of Scripture prophecy apparently passed away, **1 Cor. 13:8, 9**. In his measure the teacher has taken the place of the prophet, the significant change in **2 Pet. 2:1**.

The difference is that, whereas the message of the prophet was a direct revelation of the occasion, the message of the teacher is gathered from the completed revelation contained in the Scriptures.

It includes both prediction and proclamation, and neither one should be minimized despite the abuse of the gift. There is no question; the gift to predict events has been abused to the point of the ridiculous.

However, the abuse of a gift does not eliminate the fact that the Spirit of God *sometimes* gives believers a glimpse into coming events in order to prepare and strengthen them to face the events.

The gift of prophecy is the distinctive ability to boldly declare the truth of God, regardless of the consequences, calling people to righteous living. However, the major function of prophecy is clearly stated by Scripture, and the fact should be learned by all believers:

“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (1 Cor. 14:3).

7. **There is the gift of *discerning of spirits*.** This is a gift that is desperately needed by believers in every generation, for there are always false prophets and teachers in their midst. **Discerning:** <G1253> δικάρισις-diakrīsis—from <G1252> (diakrino); **judicial estimation :- discern (-ing), disputation.**

Usage Notes: transliterated in English, primarily denotes "a discrimination" (*dia*, "apart," *ginōskō*, "to know"), hence, "a judicial decision," which is its meaning in [Acts 25:21](#),

In reality, some measure of the gift is needed by every believer in order to keep from being led astray. The gift of discernment is the distinctive ability to perceive whether a person's actions originate from the Godly, satanic, or merely human sources.

Let's read [1 John 4:1](#)

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

Try: <G1381> δοκιμάζω dokimazō—from <G1384> (dokimos); to *test* (literal or figurative); by implication to *approve*:- allow, discern, examine, × like, (ap-) prove. **Discernment, Examination, Examine, Prove, Refuse, Try, Tried**

Let's read [2 Cor. 11:13-15](#)

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

Let's read [1 Thes. 5:20-21](#)

“Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thes. 5:20-21).

Try - Prove: <G1381> δοκιμάζω dokimazō—from <G1384> (dokimos); to *test* (literal or figurative); by implication to *approve*:- allow, discern, examine, × like, (ap-) prove. **Discernment, Examination, Examine, Prove, Refuse, Try, Tried**

Let's read **1 Tim. 4:1-2**

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

Depart from the faith: Those who fall prey to the false teachers will abandon the Christian faith.

The Greek word for **“depart”** is the source of the English word **“apostatize”** and refers to someone moving away from an original position. These are professing or nominal Christians who associate with those who truly believe the gospel, but defect after believing lies and deception, thus revealing their true nature as unconverted.

Seducing spirits or deceiving spirits: Are those demonic spirits, either directly or through false teachers, who have wandered away from the truth and lead others to do the same.

Let's read **1 Tim. 4:1-2**

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

Doctrines of demons/ devils: Not teaching about demons, but false teaching that originates from them. To sit under such teaching is to hear lies from the demonic realm (**Eph. 6:12; James 3:15; 2 John 7-11**).

Let's read **1 Tim. 4:1-2**

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

The influence of demons will reach its peak during the tribulation (**2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 9:2-11; Rev. 16:14; Rev. 20:2,3,8,10**). Satan and demons constantly work the deceptions that corrupt and pervert God's Word.

Let's read **1 Tim. 4:1-2**

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

Speaking lies in hypocrisy: Literal-**“hypocritical lie-speakers.”** These are the human false teachers who propagate demon doctrine (**1 John 4:1**).

Conscience: God created man with a “**conscience**” as his self-judging faculty. Because God has written His law on man’s heart (**Rom. 2:15**), man knows the basic standard of right and wrong.

When man violates God’ standard, his conscience produces guilt, which acts as the mind’s security system that produces fear, guilt, shame, and doubt as warnings of threats to the soul’s well-being (**John 8:9; 1Cor.8:7,10,12; Titus 1:15; Heb. 10:22**).

Let’s read **1 Tim. 4:1-2**

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience **seared** with a hot iron” (**1 Tim. 4:1-2**).

Seared: <G2743> **καυτηριάζω-kautēriazō**—from a derivative of <G2545> (**kaio**); to **brand** (“*cauterize*”), i.e. (by implication) to **render insensitive (figurative):- sear with a hot iron**. This is a medical term referring to cauterization.

False teachers can teach their hypocritical lies because their consciences have been desensitized (**Eph. 4:19**), as if all the nerves that make them feel had been destroyed and turned into scar tissue by the burning of demonic deception.

Let’s read **2 Tim. 3:5**

“[Men] having a **form of godliness**, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (**2 Tim. 3:5**).

Form: <G3446> **μόρφωσις-morphōsis**—from <G3445> (**morphoo**); **formation**, i.e. (by implication) **appearance (semblance or [concrete] formula) :- form**.

Form of godliness: “**Form**” refers to outward shape or appearance. Like the unbelieving scribes and Pharisees, false teachers and their followers are concerned with mere external appearances (**Matt. 23:25; Titus 1:16**).

Let’s read **2 Tim. 3:5**

“[Men] having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such **turn** away” (**2 Tim. 3:5**).

Turn: <G665> **ἀποτρέπω-apotrepō**—from <G575> (**apo**) and the base of <G5157> (**trope**); to **deflect**, i.e. (reflexive) **avoid :- turn away**. To fall from the base or from the foundation.

8. There is the **gift of tongues**. This is the gift of an ecstatic or deeply emotional speech.

Divers: <G5023> **ταῦτα-tauta**—**these things :- + afterward, follow, + hereafter**—

Kinds: <G1085> γένος-genos—properly denotes "an offspring;" then, "a family;" then, "a race, nation;" otherwise, "a kind or species;"

Tongues: <G1100> γλῶσσα-glōssa—of uncertain affinity; the *tongue*; by implication a *language* (specially one naturally unacquired)

Usage Notes: is used of (1) the "tongues ... like as of fire" which appeared at Pentecost; (2) "the tongue," as an organ of speech, e.g., [Mark 7:33](#); [Rom. 3:13](#); [Rom. 14:11](#); [1 Cor. 14:9](#); [Phil. 2:11](#); [Jas. 1:26](#); [Jas. 3:5, 6, 8](#); [1 Pet. 3:10](#); [1 John 3:18](#); [Rev. 16:10](#);

It has always been greatly coveted by people familiar with the gift because it brings a person into a deep sense of God's presence.

What is the language spoken?

1. Some say it is in no known language.
2. Others say it is in some foreign language unknown to the speaker.
3. Still others say it is a heavenly language.

Tongues: using the normal words for speaking a foreign language and translating it, like the other (miracles, healings) were for the authentication of the truth and those who preached it.

Tongues: This true gift was clearly identified in [Acts 2:5-12](#) as languages, which validated the gospel as divine. They were, however, because of their counterfeit in the culture disproportionately exalted and seriously abused in Corinth. Here Paul identified them, but throughout [Chapt. 14](#) he discussed them in detail.

This is an illustration of how the Holy Spirit gifts people differently in order to meet the needs of the person and local situation.

Again, this is a gift that has been abused so drastically and tragically that much of Christendom has shied away from the gift. However, the gift is dramatically sweeping the world just as the gift of healing is. The gift of tongues is the distinctive ability to speak in a language you never learned and communicate a divinely anointed message from God to unbelievers.

It should be noted that it is the gift that was being so abused and causing so much havoc in the Corinthian church. (The gift of tongues is covered in detail in [1 Cor. 14:1-40](#) for more discussion.)

9. **There is the gift of the *interpretation of tongues*.** This is simply what it says: the Spirit of God gifts some believers to interpret the tongue.

Interpretation: <G2058> ἑρμηνεία-hermēneia—from the same as <G2059> (hermeneuo); *translation* :- interpretation.

Usage Notes: (Hermes, the Greek name of the pagan god Mercury, who was regarded as the messenger of the gods), denotes **"to explain, interpret"** (Eng., "hermeneutics"), and is used of explaining the meaning of words in a different language, **John 1:38**

The gift of interpretation of tongues is the distinctive ability to interpret a language you never learned and communicate a divinely anointed message from God to unbelievers.

4. (1 Cor.12:11) Gifts, Spiritual: the unity of the gifts is restressed. The point is critical for the church to learn and practice; therefore, it is repeated.

1. All the gifts just covered are given by one and the same Spirit. God's gifts do not come from any other source.

True spiritual gifts cannot be earned, merited, or worked up by men. No man deserves the gift of the grace of God. Therefore, there is no room for self-importance and super-spirituality, nor for controversy. One believer has one gift and another believer has another gift, but both have come from the Spirit of God.

2. The Spirit of God endows the gifts to every man exactly as He wills.

He knows what gifts are needed and where they are needed all over the world. He knows what gifts will edify the church most and what gifts can be most effective to reach the world and to minister to the desperate needs of all mankind. Therefore, he meets the needs of all believers in their respective calls and localities.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Believer and His Daily Behavior-[Part 3]

Questions concerning spiritual gifts series

Romans [12:1-15:13](#)

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

Romans 12:3-8

A. The Believer and Himself, [Romans 12:3-8](#)

(Romans 12:3-8) Introduction: after looking at the subject of the believer and God, the believer needs to look at the subject of himself. He needs to see what the exhortation of God is to him personally. God directs two forceful charges to the believer personally.

1. **Think highly of oneself, but not too highly (v.3-5).**
2. **Use the gifts God has given (v.6-8).**

1. ([Romans 12:3-5](#)) Humility— Gifts, Spiritual— Church— Body of Christ: the believer is to think of himself, but not too highly. The exhortation is directed to "**every man that is among you.**" Every believer needs to work at humility. There is a tendency within many persons to think too highly of themselves. Too many become conceited, prideful, and arrogant. They become *puffed up* with their own...

1-importance	5-ability	9-opinions
2-looks	6-performrance	10-education
3-popularity	7-wealth	11-goodness
4-position	8-possessions	12-title

There are too many who esteem themselves too highly and who think of themselves as *better* than others. God stands against such *puffed up* attitudes.

1. Think of yourself, but think soberly (*sōphronein*). The word means to be balanced, sane, in one's right mind. Therefore, the exhortation is to think of oneself wisely and accurately, making a sane and well-balanced evaluation of one's person and abilities. An evaluation of oneself should be made, but it should be a sober and sane judgment, not an insane, imbalanced judgment. Note how strong this is: thinking too highly of oneself is an insane thought. Thinking that one is more important than someone else is insane behavior. Every person is important to God; every person is meaningful and significant to God's kingdom, no matter who the person is.

2. The reasons why we are to walk humbly before others are clearly spelled out.
 - a. What we are and have has come from God. It is God who has "**dealt to every man the measure of faith.**" The word "**faith**" in the context of these verses means a *working faith*.

It includes both...

- a) the gifts and abilities God gives to a person.
- b) the faith and drive or confidence to use the gifts.

Very simply, a *working faith* is the ability and drive within a person to get to it and to serve God, to make his contribution to life and society. Another way to say the same thing is this: the measure of faith ([Romans 12:3](#)) and the proportion of faith ([Romans 12:6](#)) mean the spiritual gift and power which God gives to each believer for his special task on earth. Very simply, everything a person is and has comes from God. Nothing comes from man himself. Therefore, no person has reason to think too highly of himself.

"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" ([James 1:17](#)).

"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](#)).

Note another fact as well: what we have received from God is *only a measure*. No person has a full measure of anything. No person is perfected in any area. We all age, deteriorate, and decay. We all have to move aside eventually for others, no matter what our abilities and contributions. We have no reason to think too highly of ourselves.

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" ([Ephes. 4:7](#)).

- b. God gifts *every person*, not just one person nor just a few persons. Note that God deals to *every man* a measure of faith. No person or persons have a monopoly on any gift or ability. Every single believer has been gifted by God; not a single believer has been omitted by God. One believer is as important to God as any other believer, no matter who the believer may be. There is no room for pride and arrogance in the Kingdom of God, no place for thinking that one is more important than others. Such thoughts are insane.
- c. Genuine believers are *one body* in Christ. This is the most beautiful picture of the body of Christ in Scripture, and because of its effectiveness it is often used (cp. [1 Cor. 10:17](#); [1 Cor. 12:12f](#); [1 Cor. 12:27](#); [Ephes. 1:22-23](#); [Ephes. 2:16](#); [Ephes. 4:4, 15-16](#); [Ephes. 5:22f](#); [Col. 1:18, 24](#)).

Believers can be compared to the human body. The human body has many parts or members, and no two members have the same function. So it is with believers. Believers are many, yet they are one body *in Christ*. Every single believer has a distinct function to fulfill in the world, yet he is a member of all other believers. It should be noted that the believer's union is not organizational.

It is not the same kind of unity that exists in a civic or social club, which is a unity based upon such things as friendship, preference, neighborhood, profession, human need, opinion, or organization. The union between genuine believers is born of the Spirit of God, of a true *spiritual birth and union*. It is a union that is in constant and intimate fellowship with God and that draws its life and purpose and meaning and significance from God. The union between genuine believers is a union that is *quickened and made alive* by a common Spirit, a Spirit that truly lives, The Holy Spirit of God Himself.

The point is clearly stated: all members do not have the same office (*praxis*) or function. God has set the believer in the world for a specific purpose, and God has gifted the believer with whatever measure of faith is needed to fulfill his function. The believer is a member or a part of the whole body, with each member having his task to perform. There is no room for self-elevation, pride, or arrogance—no room for thinking too highly of oneself. The believer does not stand alone in the world. Every believer has a measure of faith to do his task, and every member is needed to get the task done. Therefore, no believer has the right to think of himself more highly than any other believer. Every single believer is important to the *body of Christ*. Every believer is needed to complete, fulfill, and perfect the body. The body becomes handicapped without the active functioning of every member. Every member is very important.

The point is this: believers are to evaluate and know themselves well. They are to know who they are and the gifts which God has given them. They are to evaluate the measure of faith God has given and they are to be honest and accurate in their evaluation. They are not to over evaluate nor to under-evaluate. A believer's judgment about himself must be accurate and wise in order to accomplish his task upon earth.

Thought 1. Only as we know ourselves—accurately, honestly, and truthfully—can we make the contribution we should to our families, jobs, society, church, and the world. Only as we serve to our full capacity can we fulfill our task on earth.

- ⇒ If we think too highly of ourselves, we attempt too much and end up failing.
- ⇒ If we think too little of ourselves, we never do as much as we could nor make the contributions that we could have made.

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4).

"But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee" (Luke 14:10).

"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](#)).

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" ([James 4:10](#)).

"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](#)).

"By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honor, and life" ([Proverbs 22:4](#)).

"A man's pride shall bring him low: but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit" ([Proverbs 29:23](#)).

Thought 2. God gifts the believer with a certain measure of spiritual gifts; therefore, the believer is to use whatever measure of faith he has to use his gifts for God. However, the believer should always be praying for more and more faith.

"Lord, increase our faith" ([Luke 17:5](#)).

"Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" ([Mark 9:24](#)).

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" ([Romans 10:17](#)).

2. ([Romans 12:6-8](#)) Gifts, Spiritual: the believer is to use the gifts God has given him. The word "gift" (*charisma*) means the very special ability given to the believer by God. Note that the gift is from God; it is not a natural talent. The believer could not have attained nor secured the ability himself. It is a spiritual gift; that is, it is given by the Spirit of God for spiritual purposes. It is given to the believer so that he can fulfill his task on earth.

Note also that the gifts are said to be given "**according to the grace that is given to us.**" This means that the gifts are given after we come to know the *grace* of God.

This is part of our *heritage in Christ*, the glorious privilege...

- a) of being given a very special task upon earth.
- b) of being given purpose and meaning and significance in life.
- c) of being given a very special gift or gifts to fulfill our task on earth.

Now, what are the gifts? Several are singled out in this passage. ([See 1 Cor. 12:4-11-Part 2 series; Ephes. 4:7-16-Part 4 series for previous discussion.](#))

1. There is the *gift of prophecy*. In the Old Testament the gift of prophecy was the gift to proclaim and explain the will of God. The proclamation dealt with past, present, and future events. However, in the New Testament, the gift of prophecy changes dramatically. The prophet is seldom seen predicting the future. Instead, he is seen proclaiming what has taken place in the Lord Jesus Christ and what has been *revealed by*

Christ concerning future events. His function is to edify, exhort, and comfort. The Scripture is clear about this.

"He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort" (1 Cor. 14:3).

The prophet is the man who proclaims and explains the Word of God...

- a) the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.
- b) the written Word, the Holy Scripture.

Having said this, it should be noted that prophecy is the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God's Spirit. It includes both prediction and proclamation, and neither one should be minimized despite the abuse of the gift.

There is no question, the gift to predict events has been abused to the point of the ridiculous. However, the abuse of a gift does not eliminate the gift: the Spirit of God does sometimes give believers a glimpse into coming events in order to prepare and strengthen them to face the events.

However, the major function of prophecy is clearly stated by Scripture, and the fact should be learned by all believers:

"He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort" (1 Cor. 14:3).

Thought 1. Note a crucial point. A prophet of the Lord Jesus Christ must first know Jesus Christ before he can proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ. How can a man tell the world about Someone when he does not know the person himself?

2. There is the gift of ministry (*diakonia*). The word is often used of a servant or of a person who serves and ministers to others in the most practical ways. Therefore, the meaning would be the very special ability to serve, minister, aid, help and assist others—to assist them in such a way that they are *built up* and truly helped. It is the most practical of gifts. Most of us know a few people who are always willing and who are unusually gifted to help others when help is needed. All of us can help, and all of us can develop our willingness and ability to help, but there are some believers who are unusually gifted with the very special gift of ministry.

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42).

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" ([Phil. 2:5-7](#)).

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" ([James 1:27](#)).

3. There is the *gift of teaching* (*didaskon*). Teaching is the ability to explain, root, and ground people in the truth. The Word of God not only needs to be proclaimed by the prophet, but it must also be explained by the teacher. People must be guided and rooted in all the truths of the Word day by day, week by week, and year by year. This is the teacher's task.

Thought 1. How desperately the church needs good, solid teaching. People are walking out the back door of the church almost as fast as they are coming in the front door, all because they are not rooted and grounded in Christ.

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" ([1 Cor. 12:28](#)).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" ([Ephes. 4:11](#)).

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" ([Matthew 28:20](#)).

4. There is the *gift of exhortation* (*paraklēsei*). This is the very special ability to excite, motivate, advise, encourage, comfort, and warn people. The dominant factor would be the motivation and encouragement of people, the ability to stir people to make a decision for Christ and to grow in Him. It is the gift that arouses people to get up and get busy fulfilling their task for the Lord.

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" ([2 Tim. 4:2](#)).

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" ([Titus 1:9](#)).

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" ([Titus 2:11-15](#)).

5. There is the *gift of giving* (*metadidōmi*). This simply means the giving of one's earthly possessions such as money, clothing, and food. Note that in listing this particular gift, Scripture adds a point: it tells how the person is to give. He is to give with "simplicity" (*en haplotēti*). The word has several ideas.

It means...

- a) to give with sincerity and in simplicity.
- b) to give with singleness of heart and without show.
- c) to give liberally and generously.

The point is this: God gives some persons the special gift to make money in order to have plenty to help others and to spread the gospel around the world.

These persons...

- a) must give and give generously. God gave them the gift of making money in order to have enough to fulfill the will of God for the world. Therefore, they must give liberally.
- b) must not hoard and bank and misuse their gift of wealth.
- c) must not give grudgingly and complainingly about having to give.
- d) must not give to attract attention or to heap honor upon themselves.
- e) must not give to boost their own egos and pride.

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" ([Matthew 6:3](#)).

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" ([1 Cor. 16:2](#)).

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" ([2 Cor. 9:7](#)).

6. There is the *gift of ruling* (*proistēmi*). This means the ability of leadership, authority, administration, government. Note that this person is to lead with diligence (*en spoudē*): with haste, zeal, desire, and concentrated attention. There is no room for laziness, complacency, and irresponsibility in the Kingdom of God and His church. The leaders are the ones who are to blaze the path for the flock of God, and they are to do it with zeal, hard work, and iron determination.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" ([Romans 12:11](#)).

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" ([1 Peter 5:2-3](#)).

7. There is the *gift of mercy* (*eleōn*). This is a person who is full of forgiveness and compassion, pity and kindness toward others. Note that the merciful person is to show mercy with a cheerful (*hilarotēs*) heart. The word means kind, cheerful, joyful.

The person with the gift of mercy...

- a) is not to forgive grudgingly.
- b) is not to hesitate in forgiving others.
- c) is not to show mercy in an annoyed spirit.
- d) is not to show mercy in a spirit of criticism and rebuke toward the person who needs help. (This often happens when the person is down and out because of unemployment, lack of education, or some other unfortunate circumstance.)

The believer who has the spirit of mercy is to show mercy with a cheerful and joyful heart, doing all he can to lift up the person needing mercy.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" ([Matthew 5:7](#)).

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" ([Luke 6:36](#)).

"Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually" ([Hosea 12:6](#)).

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" ([Micah 6:8](#)).

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Walk of the Christian Believer-[Part 4]

Questions concerning spiritual gifts series

[Ephesians 4:1-6:9](#)

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

[Ephesians 4:7-16](#)

A. The Believer is to Walk by Using His Gifts, [Ephesians 4:7-16](#)

([Ephesians 4:7-16](#)) **Introduction:** note the word "but." It is strong. As studied in the previous passage, the church is one body, and every member is to strive to keep the oneness and unity of the Spirit. But believers are not only a unity, they are diversity. There are differences between believers.

What are those differences? They are gifts, special abilities given by God which are to be used to strengthen believers and to reach the world and minister to it. Gifts—spiritual gifts given by God—are the subject of the present passage. The believer is to walk using the gifts God has given him.

(See [1 Cor. 12:4-11-Part 2 series](#); [Romans 12:3-8-Part 3 series](#) for previous discussion.)

1. Every believer is gifted (v.7).
2. Every believer's gift has cost the greatest possible price (v.8-10).
3. Every believer's gift is Christ-centered (v.11).
4. Every believer's gift has a threefold purpose (v.12-16).

1. ([Ephesians 4:7](#)) **Gifts, Spiritual: every believer is gifted.**

Note the words, "But unto every one of us is given...the gift of Christ." There is not a single believer exempted or left out; Christ has given every believer some spiritual gift. It is important to note what is meant by spiritual gifts. A spiritual gift does not mean the natural ability or talent of a person. God, of course, keeps natural abilities and talents in mind when He gifts a person, but spiritual gifts are special gifts given to believers. They are highly specialized gifts—gifts that are given to build up believers in the church and in witnessing and ministering to the world. The point to note is that every genuine believer has received a spiritual gift, a highly specialized gift. He has received his gift to carry out the ministry of the Lord upon the earth.

Note another significant point. Jesus Christ gives us the grace to use our gifts. Grace means "the strength, wisdom, courage, motivation, love, concern, care, and power—all the favor and blessings of Christ". Whatever is needed to use the gift, Christ gives us. He measures out the exact amount of grace needed for the maximum use of a gift.

Thought 1. What a glorious truth! What a spark of encouragement! Everyone of us is gifted by Christ—gifted with a highly specialized gift. And we have the measure of grace—whatever measure is needed—to use our gifts. Christ pours out His grace upon us, equipping us to carry out our task upon earth. This is significant, for it means that our gift is the gift of Christ. It is the very best gift for us. We should not be displeased with our gift, nor covet to be like someone else and have his gift. Christ has placed us and given us the very best gift for us—if we are truly His, yielded and committed to serve Him.

"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](#)).

"God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" ([Romans 12:3](#)).

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith" ([Romans 12:6](#)).

"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](#)).

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" ([1 Cor. 12:4](#)).

"But the manifestation [illuminations, gifts] of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" ([1 Cor. 12:7](#)).

2. ([Ephesians 4:8-10](#)) Gifts, Spiritual: every believer's gift has cost the greatest possible price.

1. Note the picture. The picture of Christ giving gifts to men is dramatic. It is the picture of an ancient king who has conquered his enemies. The king is sitting astride his white stallion and riding under the arch of triumph as he enters the city. Teeming thousands shout their adoration and praise. Following in his train is his army. And then following his army they come, the enemy stumbling along on foot in chains, looking like the defeated foe they are. They had initially come to fight tooth and nail to subject the people of the great king to their tyranny. But now they come to offer gifts to the great conqueror. The conqueror receives the gifts and in turn bestows the gifts upon his own people. ([Psalm 68:18](#).)

There are great enemies of man—enemies that attack time and time again—enemies that try to make man aimless and meaningless.

- a) There is the great enemy of alienation and separation. Alienation is the energy and tendency that tries to shut God and others out of a person's life. Tragically, alienation results in a sense of emptiness, uselessness, and loneliness.
- b) There are two great enemies that snap away all meaning for man—sin and death.

However, Christ has gone to war in behalf of man. Christ has conquered all enemies that make life useless and meaningless. Now He gives the greatest gift of all—the gift of meaning, purpose, and significance in life. He fills life with all that a man could possibly desire and use. He gives the greatest gifts, gifts that keep a person busy with the most meaningful and purposeful life imaginable.

Thought 1. If Christ has really given such meaning and purpose to life, why then are so many people bored with their work and life? Why are so many (even believers) dissatisfied, empty, without purpose, and wanting a change?

Scripture tells us, and it tells us plainly.

- 1) A person has not committed his life to Christ—not fully, not totally. He does not really deny himself and follow Christ.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" ([Luke 9:23](#)).

- 2) A person has not sacrificed himself, all he is and has, to serve Christ and mankind. A person has not committed himself to a life of service. Real life is found *only* in service. God has ordained it so.

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" ([Matthew 16:25](#)).

"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" ([Matthew 23:11](#)).

"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](#)).

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" ([John 4:35](#)).

- 3) A person lives and sows to his flesh instead of the Spirit.

"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting [meaning, purpose, significance]" ([Galatians 6:8](#)).

2. Note the great cost Christ paid to gain the right to gift believers. He had to die and descend into the lower parts of the earth. F.F. Bruce points out that the "**lower regions**" of the earth may mean three things: the earth to which Christ came; the sepulchre in which the Lord's body was laid; or Hades—the abode of the dead ([Acts 2:25-35](#); [Psalm 16:10](#); [Psalm 110:1](#)). (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p.83.)

In allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture, the correct interpretation would seem to be "**Hades.**" When other Scriptures contrast the descent of Christ with the ascent of Christ, the two farthest extremes seem to be indicated.

- a. In [Romans 10:6-7](#) "**ascending into heaven**" is contrasted with "**descending into the abyss**"—the abode of the dead.
- b. In [Phil. 2:8f](#), Christ humbling Himself to the lowest "**depths of death**" is contrasted with Him being "exalted to the highest" heavens by God.
- c. In [Matthew 12:40](#), Christ being "**three days and three nights in the heart of the earth**" is taken from [Jonah 2:3-4](#) "**in the heart of the seas.**" In light of these facts, Christ's descending into the lower parts of the earth must mean more than Christ just being placed in a sepulchre. It must mean *the place of departed spirits or the abode of the dead.*

The point is this: Jesus Christ had to die for men in order to gain the right to gift men. That is the enormous price our gifts cost. If He had not died, then we could not be saved or gifted with spiritual gifts. There would be no purpose or significance to life—not beyond a few short years upon this earth. All we would have to look forward to would be death. But Christ has died, and He has conquered all the enemies of man—conquered them in order to gain the right to save and gift us.

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" ([John 12:31](#)).

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)" ([Ephes. 4:8-10](#)).

"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" ([Col. 2:15](#)).

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" ([Hebrews 2:14](#)).

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" ([1 Peter 3:18-20](#)).

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" ([1 John 3:8](#)).

3. The great value of what Christ did is glorious. He died that He might ascend above the heavens and fill all things, that is, fill the whole universe with His presence. Jesus

Christ is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father, and He rules and reigns over all. He is now able to save and gift men. But remember: it is because He paid the greatest price possible. He died for us—died to gain the right to pour His grace and gifts out upon us.

"Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God" ([Luke 22:69](#)).

"And 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](#)).

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" ([Phil. 2:8-9](#)).

"Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" ([Rev. 5:12](#)).

3. ([Ephesians 4:11](#)) Gifts, Spiritual: every believer's gift is Christ-centered.

Note the words, "He gave." It is Christ and Christ alone who gives spiritual gifts to men. Men cannot work up the gifts, nor give the gifts to other men. Christ alone possesses the spiritual gifts to give to men.

Five gifts are mentioned here.

1. The gift of an *apostle*. The word "**apostle**" (*apostolos*) means to send out. An apostle is a representative, an ambassador, a person who is sent out into one country to represent another country.

Three things are true of the apostle.

- a) He belongs to the One who has sent him out.
- b) He is commissioned to be sent out.
- c) He possesses all the authority and power of the One who sends him out.

The word "**apostle**" has both a narrow and a broad usage in the New Testament.

a. The narrow sense. It refers to the twelve apostles and to Paul as an apostle ([Acts 1:21-22](#); [1 Cor. 9:1](#)). In this narrow sense there were at least two basic qualifications.

- 1) The apostle was a man chosen directly by the Lord Himself or by the Holy Spirit ([Matthew 10:1-2](#); [Mark 3:13-14](#); [Luke 6:13](#); [Acts 9:6, 15](#); [Acts 13:2](#); [Acts 22:10, 14-15](#); [Romans 1:1](#)). He was a man who had either seen or been a companion of the Lord Jesus.
- 2) The apostle was a man who had been an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord ([Acts 1:21-22](#); [1 Cor. 9:1](#)).

- b. **The broad sense.** The word "apostle" refers to other men who preached the gospel. It is used of two missionaries, **Barnabas** ([Acts 14:4, 14, 17](#)) and **Silas** ([1 Thes. 2:6](#)); and two messengers, **Titus** ([2 Cor. 8:23](#)) and **Epaphroditus** ([Phil. 2:25](#)). There is also a possibility that **James, the Lord's brother** ([Galatians 1:19](#)) and **Andronicus and Junia** ([Romans 16:7](#)) are referred to as apostles.

In the narrow sense, the gift of an apostle was bound to die out because of the unique qualifications to receive the gift. But historically, in the broad sense, there is perhaps a sense in which the qualifications and gift itself are still given and used by the Lord. The Lord's servant of any generation must *see* the Lord and know Him intimately.

Similarly, the servant must personally *see and experience* the power of the resurrection. Certainly there are some in every generation who have *seen* the Lord Jesus and who *know* and *experience* the power of the Lord's resurrection. Perhaps the Lord Jesus endues them with the very special gift of an apostle to be used throughout His most precious domain—the church.

2. The gift of a prophet (*prophētas*). This is the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God's Spirit. It includes both prediction and proclamation, and neither one should be minimized despite the abuse of the gift.

There is no question, the gift to predict events has been abused to the point of the ridiculous. However, the abuse of a gift does not eliminate the fact that the Spirit of God sometimes gives believers a glimpse into coming events in order to prepare and strengthen them to face the events.

However, the major function of prophecy is clearly stated by Scripture, and the fact should be heeded by all believers:

"But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" ([1 Cor. 14:3](#)).

3. The gift of an evangelist (*euaggelistas*). This is the gift of carrying the gospel all over the world. It is the gift that specializes in proclaiming the gospel to the lost of the world. It would include both what we call the evangelist and the missionary.

"And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him" ([Acts 21:8](#); cp. [Acts 8:26-40](#)).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" ([Ephes. 4:11](#)).

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" ([2 Tim. 4:5](#)).

4. **The gift of a pastor (*poimenas*).** This word means shepherd. A.T. Robertson points out that the Lord Jesus told Peter to shepherd His sheep ([John 21:16](#)), that Peter told other ministers to shepherd the flock of God ([1 Peter 5:2](#)), and that Paul told the elders (ministers) of Ephesus to shepherd the church of God for which Christ had died ([Acts 20:28](#)) (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.537.)

The traits of a shepherd can be seen by looking at the references to Christ as the shepherd of believers. The pastor is an under-shepherd to the Chief Shepherd, Christ Jesus our Lord.

- a. The shepherd knows the sheep; He knows each one by name. This is said to have been a fact among shepherds and their sheep in Jesus' day. Shepherds actually knew each sheep individually, even in large herds. The fact is certainly true with Christ and His sheep.

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" ([John 10:14](#)).

"But if any man love God, the same is known of him" ([1 Cor. 8:3](#)).

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" ([2 Tim. 2:19](#)).

"Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" ([Isaiah 43:1](#)).

- b. The shepherd feeds the sheep even if He has to gather them in His arms and carry them to the feasting pasture.

"He shall feed the flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" ([Isaiah 40:11](#)).

- c. The shepherd guides the sheep to the pasture and away from the rough places and precipices.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" ([Psalm 23:1-4](#)).

- d. The shepherd seeks and saves the sheep who get lost.

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the

mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?" ([Matthew 18:11-12](#)).

"I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick" ([Ezekiel 34:16](#)).

- e. The shepherd protects the sheep. He even sacrifices His life for the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" ([John 10:11](#)).

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant" ([Hebrews 13:20](#)).

- f. The shepherd restores the sheep who go astray and return.

"For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" ([1 Peter 2:25](#)).

- g. The shepherd rewards the sheep for obedience and faithfulness.

"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" ([1 Peter 5:4](#)).

- h. The shepherd shall keep the sheep separate from the goats.

"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" ([Matthew 25:32-33](#)).

5. The gift of a *teacher* (*didaskalous*). Some commentators consider teaching to be part of the gift of the pastor, that is, the pastor is the pastor-teacher. The function of the teacher 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. Teaching is a high calling, one of the greatest of callings. Teaching is ranked second only to the spiritual gifts of apostle and prophet ([Acts 13:1](#); [1 Cor. 12:28](#); [Ephes. 4:11](#)). Every apostle and prophet and pastor has the gift of teaching, but every teacher is not an apostle or prophet or pastor. The gift of teaching bears one of the largest responsibilities given by God; therefore, the teacher will be required to give a strict account to God for his faithfulness in using his gift ([see below, Deeper Study # 1 Teacher—James 3:1](#)).

The spiritual gift of teaching is the gift of understanding and communicating the Word of God, of edifying believers in the truths of God's Word. It involves understanding, interpreting, arranging, and communicating the Word of God. The gift of teaching is

given to the believer who commits his life to the Word of God, to sharing its glorious truths with God's people.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" ([Acts 20:32](#)).

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" ([1 Cor. 12:28](#)).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" ([Ephes. 4:11](#)).

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" ([2 Tim. 2:15](#)).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" ([2 Tim. 3:16](#)).

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" ([Acts 17:11](#)).

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" ([1 Peter 2:2-3](#)).

Deeper Study # 1 Teacher

([James 3:1](#)) Teachers: not many believers should become teachers because teachers shall face a stricter judgment from God. A "teacher" (*didaskaloi*) is always telling others how to live and correcting them when they come short. In fact, a teacher is responsible for the lives and spiritual growth of those under him. God holds him responsible. Therefore, if the teacher fails to live what he teaches, he shall bear a greater judgment and condemnation. The teacher must live what he preaches and teaches.

Note three facts.

1. This verse stresses a pointed truth: a person should commit his life to teach only if he cannot keep from teaching. Teaching is a high calling, one of the greatest of callings. It is ranked second only to the apostles and the prophets ([Acts 13:1](#); [1 Cor. 12:28](#); [Ephes. 4:11](#)). Therefore, it has a large responsibility and is to receive the greater condemnation by God.

2. However, a person is not to fear this responsibility and neglect the gift of teaching. If he is called and gifted to teach, then he must teach. The great responsibility and potential condemnation enhances its great dignity.

3. A teacher's main tool for work is speech or the tongue. Therefore, it is the tongue and its use that will have a great bearing upon the teacher's condemnation. The tongue is where the first great temptation attacks teachers, the temptation to misuse the tongue. There are four things about the tongue that believers must know, but especially teachers.

4. (Ephesians 4:12-16) Gifts, Spiritual: every believer's gift has a threefold purpose.

Note a significant fact: the five gifts described above are gifts that involve speech or proclamation. They are very specialized gifts, gifts that are usually looked upon as being the official or professional gifts of the church.

They are not given in full measure to every believer although every believer.....

- a) should be as an apostle in that he is serving Christ in a very special ministry and faithfully using the gift God has given him.
- b) should be as a prophet in that he is daily proclaiming God's Word.
- c) should be as an evangelist in that he is bearing witness to the lost.
- d) should be as a pastor in that he is shepherding and caring for people all the time.
- e) should be as a teacher in that he is teaching the truths of God's Word to all whom he knows.

1. There is an immediate purpose for the professional or office-bearing gifts in the church and among God's people. It is to equip believers to do the work of the ministry. The word "**perfecting**" (*katartismos*) means "**to equip for service and ministry**".

This is critical to see, for the office bearer in the church is not to be the only one who goes about doing the work of the ministry. In fact, his *primary task* is to be an equipper, a person who makes disciples and prepares others to serve Christ (see [Deeper Study # 2, Discipleship—Matthew 28:19-20](#) at end of this section).

Note another critical point: the very purpose for equipping laymen is so that the body of Christ, the church, may be built up. This is a significant point, for it means that the church cannot be built up without the members themselves doing the work of the ministry. All believers within a church must be involved in the work of the ministry. As Wuest says: "This is an order that the Body of Christ, the Church might be built up, by additions to its membership in lost souls being saved, and by the building up of individual saints." (Wuest, Kenneth S. *Ephesians and Colossians*. "Wuest Word Studies," Vol.1. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953, p.101.)

If the work of the ministry was left up to the professional ministers, the task would never get done, for there are too few official ministers. Lay persons must be equipped to

reach the lost and to minister to the needs of a world reeling under the weight of evil and suffering and death.

2. There is an eternal purpose for the office-bearing or professional gifts. It can be stated no clearer than what the verse itself says. It says three things:
 - a. The minister of God works to bring about a perfect unity among God's people.

The minister of God is called.....

1. to bring peace and reconciliation to the church.
2. to lead people into perfect harmony and oneness of spirit.
3. to shepherd people out of cliques, divisiveness, murmuring, grumbling, griping, and all the other sins that militate against a perfect unity.

"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 [behavior] 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](#)).

- b. The minister of God works to bring about the knowledge of the Son of God.

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" ([Hosea 6:3](#)).

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" ([John 8:31-32](#)).

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" ([John 17:3](#)).

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" ([Phil. 3:10](#)).

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" ([Col. 1:10](#)).

c. The minister of God works to bring about a perfect man, a man who measures up to the stature of Christ Himself—to the fullness of His stature.

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" ([1 Cor. 13:11](#)).

"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" ([Hebrews 5:14](#)).

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God" ([Hebrews 6:1](#)).

"And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness" ([2 Peter 1:5-6](#)).

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever" ([2 Peter 3:18](#)).

"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" ([1 Tim. 4:15](#)).

3. There is the personal purpose for the professional or office-bearing gifts. This purpose also involves three parts.

- a. That we no longer be children and immature, being led astray by false teaching. Again, the verse is the best commentary on itself. Ministers are given to us to keep us from being **"children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of [false] doctrine"** or false teaching.

We must always remember, there is such a thing as.....

1. **"the sleight of men"**: deceivers, cheaters in the faith, men who will cheat us out of the truth.
2. **"cunning craftiness"**: deceivers who act clever and have novel ideas that sound correct, but they are only deceptions of the truth.

Note that such men are plentiful, so plentiful that they are just lying, waiting to deceive.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" ([Matthew 7:15](#)).

"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" ([Matthew 15:9](#)).

"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" ([Acts 20:30](#)).

"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" ([Romans 16:18](#)).

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" ([Hebrews 13:9](#)).

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily [secretly] shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" ([2 Peter 2:1](#)).

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" ([2 John 7](#)).

- b. That we grow up in all things—in Christ. **Note there is only one way to do this:** by speaking and proclaiming the truth. This is the task of the minister.

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" ([John 15:3](#)).

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" ([John 17:17](#)).

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" ([1 Peter 1:22](#)).

- c. That we do our part in building up the church. Note that *every joint or every believer "supplies"* something to the body of Christ (the church). And what every joint or believer supplies is very significant. Note how the significance is stressed:

Christ takes every joint or believer and the believer.....

1. is fitly joined together with all the other believers.
2. has his work compacted with that supplied by other believers.
3. has an effective and productive work along with that measured by other believers.
4. helps to increase the body.
5. helps to edify the body in love.

What more could be said about the contribution made by every believer? What greater challenge could be given to a believer? We must give all we are and have to get the job done. Much is at stake for each of us. An eternal weight of responsibility rests upon every single believer, for each one is responsible for reaching people and building them up. Some people will never be reached and ministered to if a single one of us comes up short. For this reason, everyone of us is gifted by Christ Jesus our Lord.

"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](#)).

"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" ([1 Tim. 4:15](#)).

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" ([2 Cor. 3:18](#)).

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" ([Psalm 92:12](#)).

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" ([Proverbs 4:18](#)).

Deeper Study # 2 Discipleship

([Matthew 28:19-20](#)) Commission, Great— Disciples, Making: Jesus commissioned His followers. He commissioned not only the eleven apostles, but all who were present, more than five hundred disciples. However, note something of crucial importance: it was impossible for that generation to reach the whole world in its lifetime. Therefore, the commission given to the first generation of believers extends beyond to all generations of believers. The very same charge given to them is given to us. Our Lord charges us with the very same words, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations...."

The Lord's commission was threefold.

1. He commissions us to "go ye...and make disciples of all nations." This is one of the crucial verses in the Bible. No verse is more important for genuine believers.

Teaching and baptizing are not enough to reach the world for Christ. Both are important, and Christ commissions both; but He says something else must precede both: discipleship. "Go ye therefore and '*matheteusate*' all nations" ([Matthew 28:19](#)). (*Mathēteusate*) means to make disciples. Thus the verse accurately reads, "Go ye therefore and 'make disciples' of all nations...." Most messages that are preached on this passage stress the objective of our Lord, the reaching of all nations, as though this is what our Lord had in mind. There is no question, the great commission is what Christ had in mind. He has instructed us to go to all nations and evangelize them. But there is the strong conviction that He had more than that objective in mind, more than just an overriding purpose—much more.

Our Lord was not only telling us "to go and evangelize," He was telling us *how* to go and *how* to evangelize. He was not only giving His ultimate *objective* and overriding purpose, He was giving *the method* to use in evangelizing the world.

Think about the word (*mathēteusate*) (make disciples). What does our Lord mean by "make disciples"? Does it not mean that we are to do what He did: make disciples and do things with them as He did. Is He not telling us to do exactly as He did?

What *did* He do? Christ "**came to seek and save that which was lost**" ([Luke 19:10](#)). He sought the lost, those who were willing to commit their lives to Him. And when He found such a person, He saved that person. When Christ found a person who was willing to commit his life, Christ attached Himself to that person. Christ began to mold and make that person into His image. The word *attach* is the key word. It is probably the word that best describes discipleship. Christ made disciples of men by attaching Himself to them; and through that personal attachment, they were able to observe His life and conversation; and in seeing and hearing, they began to absorb and assimilate His very character and behavior. They began to follow Him and to serve Him more closely. In simple terms this is what our Lord did. This is the way He made disciples. **This was His mission and His method, His obsession: to attach Himself to willing believers.**

There is another way to describe what Christ did. Christ envisioned something beyond Himself and beyond His day and time. He envisioned an *extension* of Himself, an *extension* of His very being, and an *extension* of His mission and method. The way He chose to extend Himself was discipleship, attaching Himself to committed persons, and through attachment, the persons absorbed and assimilated the Lord's very character and mission. They in turn attached themselves to others and disciplined them. They, too, expected their disciples to make disciples of others who were willing to commit their lives to Christ. Thus was the glorious message of Christ to march down through the centuries ([2 Tim. 2:2](#)).

There is no question what our Lord's commission is: we are to go; but more than that, we are to make disciples, to attach ourselves to those persons who will follow our Lord until they in turn can make disciples ([2 Tim. 2:2](#)).

"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" ([Matthew 10:7](#)).

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" ([Mark 16:15](#)).

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" ([John 20:31](#)).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).

"Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" ([Acts 5:20](#)).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" ([2 Tim. 4:2](#)).

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" ([1 Peter 3:15](#)).

2. He commissioned us to baptize all nations .Two things need to be noted here.
 - a. Baptism is of crucial importance. Christ says that it is as essential as teaching, despite the fact that it is a one-time act. It is as much a part of the commission of Christ as discipling and teaching. Christ is definitely teaching that baptism is to be the immediate sign and the identifying sign that a person is now stepping out of the heathen (unbelieving) ranks and taking his stand with Christ.
 - b. Baptism **"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"** means more than just saying a formula as one is baptized, much more. **It means.....**
 1. a statement of faith: of belief in God as the true Father of Jesus Christ; of belief in Christ as the true Son of God, the Savior of the world; of belief in the Holy Spirit as the Comforter of the believer.
 2. a commitment to follow God: to follow Him as revealed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Christ's constant references to God as His Father, to Himself as the Son, and to the Holy Spirit throughout the Gospel of John).

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" ([Mark 16:16](#)).

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" ([Acts 2:38](#)).

"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days" ([Acts 10:48](#)).

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" ([Acts 22:16](#)).

3. He commissioned us to teach all that Christ had commanded. Teaching is just as essential as making disciples and baptizing. One is not to be emphasized over the other. All are part of the commission of our Lord.

Note what is to be taught (*edidaske*): **"all things whatsoever I have commanded you."**

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" ([John 6:45](#)).

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" ([Col. 3:16](#)).

"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" ([1 Tim. 4:6](#)).

"These things command and teach" ([1 Tim. 4:11](#)).

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" ([2 Tim. 2:24](#)).

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" ([Deut. 6:6-7](#)).

"And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" ([Ezekiel 44:23](#)).

Thought 1. What Christ taught and commanded must be studied and studied, to the point of learning and knowing and practicing. The commandments of Christ will be the first things taught. They should be the rule of society.

Thought 2. Society deteriorates and crumbles when it neglects the teaching and commandments of Christ.

([Matthew 28:20](#)) Jesus Christ, Presence: Jesus promised to be with His followers—always.

1. Note the word "lo," or behold. Christ used this striking word to get the attention of His followers, to startle them to wake up and listen. He was about to encourage them in the great task He had charged to their care.

2. Note the great promise: "I am with you." He gave emphatic assurance: not "I will be with you," but "I am with you." Christ is with the believer as the believer goes forth to make disciples of all nations.

Christ is with us.....

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. every step | 8. when poor |
| 2. every decision | 9. when having nothing |
| 3. every trial | 10. when having plenty |
| 4. every joy | 11. when abused |
| 5. every day | 12. when sick |
| 6. every hour | 13. when facing death |
| 7. every sorrow | |
| 8. when without | |

3. Note the boundless promise: **"always, even unto the end of the world."** There is not a moment when Christ is not with the believer to help him in his witness, even if his witness means abuse, persecution, and martyrdom.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" ([Matthew 18:20](#)).

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" ([Matthew 28:20](#)).

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" ([Hebrews 13:5-6](#)).

"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" ([Genesis 28:15](#)).

"Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" ([Isaiah 41:10](#)).

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" ([Isaiah 43:2](#)).

The Gift of Tongues

THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS,

[1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40](#)

[1 Corinthians 14:1-25](#)

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

A. The Gift of Tongues Contrasted with Prophecy, [1 Corinthians 14:1-25](#)

[\(1 Corinthians 14:1-25\)](#) **Introduction:** remember that [1 Cor. 12](#) through [1 Cor. 14](#) are dealing with the spiritual gifts which God gives to His followers for the work of the ministry. Believers are gifted to minister and to help people in their desperate need for life, both life abundant and life eternal. However, when men focus upon their gifts and abilities, the problems of pride, arrogance, superiority, and super-spirituality always arise.

There are always some people who feel that their gifts and abilities make them better and more favored and privileged than others. This is exactly what happened to the Corinthian church, and it is what has happened to multitudes of believers since that day. The gift of tongues is especially subject to pride and super-spirituality because it involves a static and heavenly utterance as opposed to ordinary human language.

The point is this: the gift of tongues (and all other gifts) is just one of many gifts. Each gift has its place in fulfilling the mission of the Lord and each must be used effectively in reaching the world for Christ and in ministering to the needs of people. The present passage is a contrast of the gift of tongues with prophecy.

1. [Gifts are to be coveted—especially prophecy \(v.1\).](#)
2. [The difference between tongues and prophecy \(v.2-5\).](#)
3. [The problem with tongues \(v.6-14\).](#)
4. [The gift of tongues and Paul's personal worship \(v.15-20\).](#)
5. [The purpose of tongues and prophecy \(v.21-25\).](#)

1. [\(1 Corinthians 14:1\)](#) Gifts, Spiritual— Prophecy: gifts are to be coveted, especially prophecy.

Note two points.

1. **Love is to be pursued above all else in life.** Gifts, abilities, and service are important; but they pale into insignificance in comparison with love. Love is the greatest need and the supreme answer to all the needs of men. It is when we love a person that we meet the needs of a person. In fact, if we truly love a person, then we will do all we can to meet all the needs of that person.

The word "**follow**" (*diōkete*) means to pursue, to persist, to continue on and on, never giving up until love is possessed.

2. Spiritual gifts are to be desired. We are to pursue love first, but this does not mean we are not to seek the spiritual gifts of God. On the contrary, the more we love God and men, the more we covet the gifts of God so that we can minister and help the world of men more effectively.

The word "**desire**" (*zēloute*) means to covet earnestly; to be zealous and ambitious for.

2. (1 Corinthians 14:2-5) Tongues, Gift of— Prophecy: the difference between tongues and prophecy.

Remember that the gift of tongues is the gift that is so subject to pride and super-spirituality because of its unearthly or heavenly nature. However, its true importance is shown by contrasting it with the gift of prophecy.

The differences between tongues and prophecy are immediately said to be threefold.

1. Tongues are addressed to God, whereas prophecy is addressed to men (1 Cor. 14:2-3). Very simply stated, Scripture declares that tongues do not edify or benefit men as much as prophecy. **There are reasons for this.**

- a. Tongues are directed toward God; they are for God, for communion with Him, for sharing the mysteries (secret things) of God with God.
- b. Tongues are not understood by men. Scripture is clear: "**no man understands,**" that is, hears, gets the sense, grasps the meaning of what is being said.
- c. The believer who prophesies edifies, exhorts, and comforts men (see [Deeper Study #1, Prophecy—1 Cor. 14:3](#)).

Thought 1. Note the importance being laid upon proclaiming the message of the gospel in understandable terms. Men can be reached and helped only as they can understand the message of believers. The point is clear: the primary message upon our lips must be the gospel, and it must be understandable to all men.

2. Tongues edify self, whereas prophecy edifies the church (1 Cor. 14:4). The point is clear: tongues are useful; they edify self. But prophecy is of much more benefit. The believer who prophesies edifies the *whole* church; he builds up far more people. Note something else as well: the gift of tongues is focused upon self-edification, but the gift of prophecy is focused upon the ministry, upon the edification of others. Self-edification is, of course, important; but the ministry of edifying others is far more important.

3. Tongues are commendable, but prophecy is more commendable. This is a verse that needs to be given close attention both by those who emphasize and by those who minimize and deny tongues.

1. Paul would like for all to speak with tongues.
2. But it is far more important for all to prophecy and proclaim the gospel.
3. The prophet is far more important than the man who speaks in tongues unless the tongues are interpreted.

Again, note that the stress is edification. The purpose for the believer speaking in worship must be to edify the church. (See [Deeper Study #1, Prophecy—1 Cor. 14:3](#) for verses on edification.)

DEEPER STUDY #1 (14:3) Prophecy

3. (1 Corinthians 14:6-14) Tongues, Gift of: the problem with tongues.

There are two specific problems with tongues that are discussed in these nine verses.

1. The first problem: tongues do not communicate in the church, not apart from some other gift (interpretation, [1 Cor. 14:13](#)).

Paul illustrated the fact with several illustrations.

- a. Paul himself, if he were to visit the church, would not speak with tongues. Why? Because his speaking in a tongue would not profit us. We would not be able to understand what he was saying. His visit and proclamation would do us no good.

The only way his visit and words would help us would be if he shared...

1. some revelation.
 2. some knowledge.
 3. some prophesying.
 4. some teaching.
- b. Musical instruments also illustrate the fact. Pipes (**Greek, *aulos*, wind instruments**) and harps (**Greek, *kithara*, string instruments**) must have a distinctive sound or else their sound is meaningless, confused, and nonsense—just not understood. Musical instruments must communicate or else the music is unknown and fails to inspire the listeners.
 - c. A military trumpet illustrates the point. When the soldier blows the trumpet, he must communicate or else the army is unprepared for the battle.
 - d. A person's own speech is a fourth illustration. A person must speak words that are understood or else the listeners do not know what he is saying. He is doing nothing more than speaking into the air.

- e. Different foreign languages are a fifth illustration. Very simply, there are many different voices (languages) in the world, and each language has its own distinct speech.

If a foreigner speaks to men and I do not understand what he is saying.....

- a. I am as a barbarian, that is, as a dumb and senseless man to him.
- b. He is as a barbarian, that is, as a dumb and senseless man to me.

He is of no use to me, not in sharing and communicating the gospel. What he has to say is meaningless, unintelligible, unprofitable, and of no value. It does not reach or edify, strengthen or comfort me.

- f. The point is striking: the believer who is zealous of spiritual gifts is to seek for the gifts that edify the church. Note: a believer's zeal is not to be dampened even if he has been misinformed and emphasizes the wrong gift. He is to straighten out his emphasis, keep his zeal, and direct his energy to edifying the church. The important gifts are those that build up people for Christ.

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" ([1 Cor. 9:24](#)).

"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" ([1 Cor. 12:31](#)).

"Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy" ([1 Cor. 14:1](#)).

"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" ([1 Cor. 14:12](#)).

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 3:13-14](#)).

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands" ([2 Tim. 1:6](#)).

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" ([Rev. 3:19](#)).

2. **The second problem: tongues do not communicate even in prayer, not apart from some other gift (interpretation).**

Paul definitely says one can pray in a tongue. The idea seems to be a tongue of "ecstasy" ([1 Cor. 14:2](#), Williams) or of some "strange language" ([1 Cor. 14:2](#), Beck).

The speaking in tongues in [Acts](#) seems to be the speaking of foreign languages. But the speaking in tongues in [1 Cor. 14](#) is an ecstatic utterance. An objective and thorough study of [1 Cor. 12-14](#) shows this. Some of the passages have to be really strained to make them apply to foreign languages (or to a learned and conditioned reflex as claimed by some interpreters). Several examples are as follows.

"Tongues speaketh not unto men, but unto God...in the spirit he speaketh mysteries" ([1 Cor. 14:2](#)).

"He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself" ([1 Cor. 14:4](#)).

"If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth...." ([1 Cor. 14:14](#)).

Paul says, "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding" ([1 Cor. 14:18-19](#)).

The point is an eye-opener: even if a believer prays in an unknown tongue, it is unfruitful unless he has the gift of interpretation. He has no idea what he is praying unless there is the gift of interpretation. His prayer is unfruitful and meaningless.

4. (1 Corinthians 14:15-20) Tongues, Gift of— Paul: Paul's own personal worship and use of tongues is covered in these six verses.

He says three distinct things.

- 1. Paul worships by praying and singing both with the spirit and with the understanding ([1 Cor. 14:15-17](#)).**

Note a crucial point throughout this passage: Paul is not denying or forbidding the exercise of the gift of tongues. He is *insisting* on the proper use of the gifts. He says that he himself will do it **"with the understanding also."**

The stress is that he does not pray or sing without understanding what he is praying and singing.

He gives two reasons for this.

- a. He wishes others to understand and to confirm what he prays and sings ([1 Cor. 14:16](#)).** The illustration is pointed. If you bless God with the spirit (that is, with a tongue), how shall the unlearned (those who do not understand tongues) say "Amen," that is, confirm what you say? Agreeing and sharing in your prayer and praise is impossible, for no one understands what you are saying.
- b. He wishes others to be edified ([1 Cor. 14:17](#)).** The giving of thanks and prayer are not wrong; in fact, they are good. But if they are done in a tongue, others are not edified.

2. Paul speaks in tongues often, but in the church he always uses another gift (1 Cor. 14:18-19). Nothing could be any clearer about Paul's practice of tongues than this verse:

- a. Paul had the gift of tongues and used the gift more than "ye all."
- b. However, in church, he would rather speak five clearly understood words than ten thousand words in a tongue. To the honest and open reader, Paul's point is clear: in the church, he used other gifts to worship and proclaim the gospel. He used his gift of tongues in private worship.

3. Paul urges one thing: understanding and edification. This is a strong imperative, a forceful statement: **"Be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."** It seems as though "tongues" had so divided the Corinthian church that bitterness and malice had become quite a problem between some. Some of the believers just did not understand the gifts, their importance and purpose. Therefore, they were acting like children, stricken with the different, emotional, and spectacular experience. They desperately needed to understand the gifts and their proper place in the believer's life. One thing was certain: there was to be no place for divisiveness over the gifts. There was to be only love and mature understanding. Believers are to be as mature men and women, not as children.

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Cor. 3:1-2).

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Cor. 13:11).

"Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (1 Cor. 14:20).

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephes. 4:13-14).

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat....But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:12, 14).

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

"I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" ([1 John 2:14](#)).

5. ([1 Corinthians 14:21-25](#)) Tongues, Gift of— Prophecy: the purpose of tongues and prophecy.

Three points are discussed.

1. **Tongues are a sign to warn unbelievers; prophecy is a gift to edify believers.** The Old Testament passage quoted is [Isaiah 28:11-12](#). The meaning seems to be a promise that God will bear witness to unbelieving Israel through many tongues (languages), yet they will still not hear Him.

Paul seems to be saying several things here.

- a. Tongues are foreign languages, although they are often experienced in an ecstatic moment and may not be understood by the speaker himself.
- b. Tongues are a sign to warn unbelievers. How can this verse be reconciled with the fact that tongues are said to be primarily for personal edification ([1 Cor. 14:2, 4, 17](#)) and prophecy is said to be primarily for public edification and witness ([1 Cor. 14:24-25](#))?

The answer is probably twofold.

1. Unbelievers clearly see the hand of God when a foreign believer is suddenly and miraculously given the ability to witness to them in their own native language. Such was definitely the case at Pentecost ([Acts 2:6-13](#)).
2. The believer who speaks in tongues has an exciting and exhilarating experience while in his prayer closet. This exciting experience enables him to become the kind of witness he ought to be for the Lord Jesus Christ. His gift of tongues edifies him personally, and he is quickened with a new fervor to warn the unbeliever of pending judgment. [1 Cor. 14:21, 23](#), and the whole context point toward this meaning. One thing is certain: God knows what every child of His needs to make that child the witness he ought to be. He knows what experience and what gifts are needed—and He always provides these experiences and gifts.

Prophecy is primarily for believers, for their edification, strengthening, and comfort (see [Deeper Study #1, Prophecy—1 Cor. 14:3](#) for more discussion).

2. Tongues within the church confuse and harden unbelievers. The point is clearly seen: tongues without interpretation cause a person to appear insane. The tongue speaker seems to be babbling just like an insane person does. Tongues (the ecstatic gift) are not to be used to reach people within the church.

3. Prophecy within the church convicts unbelievers. This is a great passage on the effect of preaching upon unbelievers. Note that although prophecy is primarily for believers and their edification, it is used by God to reach the lost as well. (See [Deeper Study #1, Prophecy—1 Cor. 14:3](#) for discussion.)

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" ([Acts 2:37](#)).

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" ([Acts 24:25](#)).

"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" ([Isaiah 66:2](#)).

"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known" ([Luke 12:2](#)).

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" ([Eccles. 12:14](#)).

DEEPER STUDY #1 (1 Corinthians 14:3) Prophecy

(1 Corinthians 14:3) Prophecy (*prophēteuōn*): this is the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God's Spirit. In the Bible it includes both *prediction and proclamation*, and neither one should be minimized despite the abuse of the gift.

There is no question.....

1. The gift to predict events has been abused to the point of the ridiculous. However, the abuse of the gift does not eliminate the fact that the Spirit of God does sometimes give believers a glimpse into coming events in order to prepare and strengthen them to face the events.
2. The gift to proclaim the gospel has been abused to the point that most people's understanding of the gospel is tragically warped. However, the abuse of the gospel by both the false and immature prophets (ministers) does not eliminate the fact that God does call some men to proclaim His Word.

The New Testament clearly states the purpose of prophecy in this verse: "**he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort**" ([1 Cor. 14:3](#)).

1. **Edification** (*oikodomēn*) means to build up. It is a construction word referring to constructing some building. The first purpose of prophecy is to build up people.

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" ([Romans 14:19](#)).

"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" ([Romans 15:2](#)).

"...knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" ([1 Cor. 8:1](#)).

"...let all things be done unto edifying" ([1 Cor. 14:26](#)).

"Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying" ([2 Cor. 12:19](#)).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" ([Ephes. 4:11-12](#)).

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" ([Ephes. 4:29](#)).

2. **Exhortation** (*parakiesin*) means to strengthen, to encourage, to call to the side of. The second purpose of prophecy is to strengthen and encourage people by calling them to the side of God.

"And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people" ([Luke 3:18](#)).

"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" ([Acts 2:40](#)).

"Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" ([Acts 11:23](#)).

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" ([Acts 14:22](#)).

"And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them" ([Acts 15:32](#)).

"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](#)).

"Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" ([2 Thes. 3:12](#)).

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" ([1 Tim. 2:1](#)).

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" ([1 Tim. 4:13](#)).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" ([2 Tim. 4:2](#)).

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" ([Titus 1:9](#)).

"These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" ([Titus 2:15](#)).

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" ([Hebrews 3:13](#)).

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" ([Hebrews 10:25](#)).

"And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words" ([Hebrews 13:22](#)).

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" ([1 Peter 5:1](#)).

3. Comfort (*paramuthian*) means to give strength and hope to, to ease the grief or trouble of someone. It has the idea of comforting through the most severe experiences of life, for example, through death ([John 11:19, 31](#)). The third purpose of prophecy is to comfort people as they walk through life.

"So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" ([2 Cor. 2:7](#)).

"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do" ([1 Thes. 5:11](#)).

"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](#)).

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God" ([Isaiah 40:1](#)).

The Gift of Love

THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1 Corinthians [12:1-14:40](#)

1 Corinthians [13:1-13](#)

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

A. The Most Excellent Quality of Life: Love, Not Gifts, [1 Corinthians 13:1-13](#)

[\(1 Corinthians 13:1-13\)](#) **Introduction:** there is no question, what the world needs more than anything else is love. If people loved each other, really loved each other, there would be no more war, crime, abuse, injustice, poverty, hunger, starvation, homelessness, deprivation, or immorality. Love is the one ingredient that could revolutionize society. Love is the greatest quality of human life. Love is the supreme quality, the most excellent way for a man to live.

1. [The great importance of love \(v.1-3\).](#)
2. [The great acts of love \(v.4-7\).](#)
3. [The great permanence of love \(v.8-12\).](#)
4. [The great supremacy of love \(v.13\).](#)

[DEEPER STUDY #1 \(1 Corinthians 13:1-13\) Love](#) See page # 11.

1. [\(1 Corinthians 13:1-3\)](#) [Love: the great importance of love.](#)

Unequivocally, the decree is pronounced; the judgment is given; the verdict is declared:

- a) the superior quality of life is love; it is not gifts.
- b) the most excellent way to live and serve is to possess and share love; it is not gifts.

The contrast between love and gifts is vivid. **Three verdicts are declared** and the verdicts stress with resounding force the great superiority of love.

1. Verdict one: tongues without love are meaningless.

- a. The "**tongues of men**" probably means all the languages of men ([Acts 2:4-13](#)).
- b. The "**tongues of men**" probably means the heavenly language or the spiritual gift of an ecstatic utterance given by the Holy Spirit of God.
- c. "**Sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal**" do not mean the sound of musical instruments but the tinkling together of either small cymbals or the clashing and banging together of large cymbals by untrained persons.

A person can possess the gift and ability to speak and share Christ in all the languages of the world, but if he does not have love, *he becomes* only a clanging and tinkling noise. His speech is meaningless.

A person can possess the spiritual gift of tongues, that is, speak in the heavenly languages of angels; but if he does not have love, *he becomes* only a clanging and tinkling noise. His heavenly, angelic language is meaningless.

Note the phrase "*he becomes*." This is a crucial point: the gifted person's speech is not only meaningless, the person himself *becomes meaningless*. He becomes useless in his life and ministry for Christ. **Love is far more superior than the gift of tongues.**

2. Verdict two: gifts without love are nothing.

Three particular gifts are contrasted with love.

- a. **There is the gift of prophecy** (see previous teaching, **Prophecy—'1 Cor. 12:8-10'**). A person may have the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God's Spirit, both predicting the future and proclaiming the truth of God's Word. He may possess all the charisma, stature, eloquence, and descriptive language in the world; but if he does not have love, he is nothing. Not only is his gift of prophecy nothing, but he is nothing.

Thought 1. There is always the danger of feeling and acting superior because of one's prophetic gifts and eloquence. It is possible to long for souls and to preach the glories of heaven and the tragedy of hell with an attitude and a tone that one is better than others.

- b. **There is the gift of understanding "all mysteries and all knowledge"**—the sum total of all that God has ever revealed and of all that man has ever learned, discovered, and developed. Just imagine! A person possessing all the knowledge in the world! Yet if he does not have love, he would be nothing! Not only would his understanding and knowledge be nothing, he would be nothing.

Thought 2. The danger is looking down upon others, of feeling that one is more knowledgeable or better equipped than others. A coolness or detachment or aloofness often characterizes such a person.

- c. **There is the gift of faith**, that is, the very special gift of faith that is given by the Holy Spirit to remove mountains and to do great and miraculous things for God (see previous teaching, **Faith—'1 Cor. 12:8-10'**). Note the word "*all*". Imagine a person possessing "*all faith*"; yet, if he did not possess love, he *would be nothing*.

Thought 3. The danger is spiritual superiority, an overblown sense of importance. A person with the gift of faith can easily hurt others by speaking openly of their *great faith*. They can easily make others feel inferior and of less importance to God.

3. Verdict three: giving without love profits nothing.

Two phenomenal illustrations are given.

- a. **There is the illustration of selling and giving everything that a person has.** Imagine giving everything—"bestowing *all my goods to feed the poor*"—yet, if I have not love, it profits me nothing.

Thought 4. There are several dangers in giving.

There are the dangers of:

1. Giving out of duty.
 2. Giving with contempt because one is forced to give.
 3. Giving with an air of superiority because one has and the needy do not have.
 4. Giving with a rebuke because one feels the needy are just irresponsible and ought to make their own way in life.
 5. Giving unsacrificially.
- b. There is the illustration of martyrdom, the most terrible martyrdom of all—of being burned alive at the stake. Yet, if a person does not have love, his martyrdom profits him nothing. He dies in vain.

Thought 5. There is always the danger of counting martyrdom as a thing of glory and of pride, as something to show one's commitment to a cause. If a believer is ever called upon to die as a martyr, he is to die only out of love for Christ and for his fellow man.

2. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) Love: the great acts of love.

What is given in these four verses is not a long, dry, methodical definition of love. On the contrary, the very acts of love are given—the very behavior of a person, the very way a person is to live among and with others. In living and moving among others in the world, a person is to love, and this is what loving others means.

1. Love "suffers long" (*makrothumei*): is patient with people. The word always refers to being patient with people, not with circumstances (William Barclay. *The Letters to the Corinthians*, p.133).

Love suffers a long, long time.....

- a. no matter the evil and injury done by a person.
- b. no matter the neglect or ignoring by a loved one.

Love suffers a long, long time without resentment, anger, or seeking revenge. Love controls itself in order to win the person and to help him to live, work, and serve as he should.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith" ([Galatians 5:22](#)).

"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" ([Col. 1:11](#)).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" ([2 Tim. 4:2](#)).

2. Love is kind (*chresteuetai*): courteous, good, helpful, useful, giving, showing and showering favors. Love does not resent evil; it does not revel in the hurt and neglect. Love reaches out in kindness: in helpfulness, in giving, and in showering favors upon the person who neglects or hurts oneself.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" ([Romans 12:10](#)).

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" ([Ephes. 4:32](#)).

3. Love does not envy (*zēloi*): is not jealous; does not have feelings against others because of what they have, such as gifts, position, friends, recognition, possessions, popularity, abilities. Love does not begrudge or attack or downplay the abilities and success of others. Love shares and joys and rejoices in the experience and good of others.

"Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another" ([Galatians 5:26](#)).

"Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity" ([Psalm 37:1](#)).

"Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways" ([Proverbs 3:31](#)).

"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones" ([Proverbs 14:30](#)).

"Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long" ([Proverbs 23:17](#)).

4. Love does not vaunt itself (*perpereuetai*): is not boastful; does not brag nor seek recognition, honor, or applause from others. On the contrary, love seeks to give: to recognize, to honor, to applaud the other person.

"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](#)).

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" ([Romans 12:10](#)).

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" ([Phil. 2:3](#)).

5. Love is not puffed up (*phusioutai*): prideful, arrogant, conceited; does not think nor act as though oneself is better or above others. Love is modest and humble and recognizes and honors others.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 18:4](#)).

"But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee" ([Luke 14:10](#)).

"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](#)).

"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](#)).

6. Love does not behave itself unseemly (*aschēmonei*): unbecomingly, rudely, indecently, unmannerly, disgracefully. Love does nothing to shame oneself. Love is orderly and controlled; and it behaves and treats all persons with respect, honoring and respecting who they are.

"That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" ([Phil. 1:10](#)).

"For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you" ([2 Thes. 3:7](#)).

7. Love seeks not her own (*zētei ta heautēs*): is not selfish; does not insist upon its own rights (Williams). Love is not focused upon who one is nor upon what one has done. Love seeks to serve, not have others serving oneself. Love is acknowledging others, not insisting that others acknowledge oneself; it is giving to others, not insisting that others give to oneself.

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth [welfare]" ([1 Cor. 10:24](#)).

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" ([Phil. 2:4](#)).

8. Love is not easily provoked (*paroxunetai*): not easily angered; not ready to take offence; not quick tempered; not "touchy" (Phillips, as quoted by Leon Morris). It is not easily aroused to anger; does not become "exasperated" (Barclay). Love controls the emotions, and never becomes angry without a cause ([Romans 12:18](#)).

"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" ([Col. 3:8](#)).

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" ([James 1:19](#)).

"Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil" ([Psalm 37:8](#)).

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" ([Proverbs 16:32](#)).

"The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression" ([Proverbs 19:11](#)).

"Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools" ([Eccles. 7:9](#)).

9. Love does not think evil (*oo logizetai to kakon*): does not consider the wrong suffered; is not resentful; does not hold the evil done to oneself. Love suffers the evil done to it and forgets it.

"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" ([Matthew 5:39](#)).

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men" ([Romans 12:17](#)).

"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men" ([1 Thes. 5:15](#)).

"Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" ([1 Peter 3:9](#)).

10. Love does not rejoice in iniquity (*adikia*): unrighteousness, evil, wrong-doing. Love does not take pleasure in the unrighteousness and sin of others; it does not feed upon sin and wrong, nor does it pass along the stories of sin and wrong. Man's nature is too often fed the tragedy of evil, whether personal sin or natural disaster (cp. the daily news reports and most subjects of conversation between so many people).

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" ([Matthew 7:3](#)).

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

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" ([Galatians 6:1](#)).

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" ([1 Peter 4:8](#))

11. Love rejoices in the truth: rejoices when the truth is known and when it prevails; rejoices when others are recognized and promoted for whom they are and for what they have contributed. Love rejoices when the truth is rooted and grounded in a person and among the people of the world. Note that love never covers nor hides the truth; love is courageous in that it faces the truth.

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another" ([Ephes. 4:25](#)).

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" ([Ephes. 6:14](#)).

"These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates" ([Zech. 8:16](#)).

"The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity" ([Malachi 2:6](#)).

12. Love bears all things: the word bears (*stegei*) means both to cover all things and to bear up under all things. Love does both: it stands up under the weight and onslaught of all things and it covers up the faults of others. It has no pleasure in exposing the wrong and weaknesses of others. Love bears up under any neglect, abuse, ridicule—anything that is thrown against it.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" ([Ephes. 4:2-3](#)).

"And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him" ([Ephes. 6:9](#)).

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" ([Col. 3:13](#)).

13. Love believes all things: is "completely trusting" (Barclay); "always eager to believe the best" (Moffatt, as quoted by Leon Morris); is "ever ready to believe the best" (Amplified New Testament). Love sees and understands the circumstances and accepts and forgives and believes the very best about a person.

"And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" ([Luke 17:4](#)).

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" ([Ephes. 4:32](#)).

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" ([Col. 3:13](#)).

14. Love hopes all things: it "never ceases to hope" (Barclay); it expects the good to eventually triumph and to gain the victory; it refuses to accept failure; it always hopes for the best and for the ultimate triumph of the good—no matter how fallen or how tragic the fall or how difficult gaining the victory may seem.

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" ([Romans 8:24](#)).

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" ([Romans 15:4](#)).

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work" ([2 Thes. 2:16-17](#)).

"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" ([1 John 3:3](#)).

15. Love endureth all things: the word endures (*hupomenei*) is a military word meaning to stand against the attack of an enemy. Love actively fights and endures all attacks. Love is strong, full of fortitude and fight, and it struggles against any and every assault to buckle in to being unloving. Love conquers and triumphs—always—because it endures all things. No matter what attacks love, named or unnamed, it endures the attack and continues to love.

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" ([Matthew 10:22](#)).

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" ([1 Cor. 15:58](#)).

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" ([Galatians 6:9](#)).

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [trial]: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" ([James 1:12](#)).

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" ([James 5:11](#)).

"Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" ([Rev. 3:11](#)).

3. ([1 Corinthians 13:8-12](#)) Love: the great permanence of love.

Love is far superior to the spiritual gifts. The great permanence of love clearly shows its superiority.

1. Love never fails, never ceases, and never vanishes. Love endures and lasts forever. But not so with spiritual gifts: the spiritual gifts shall cease to be and shall vanish. When? When we stand in eternity before God. Spiritual gifts are only temporary; they are not permanent; therefore, they are far inferior to love. Spiritual gifts are only temporary tools for us to use in reaching and ministering to a lost and needy world.

Thought 6. Note how believers become guilty of the very things they accuse the world of doing: focusing upon the temporary instead of the eternal. Too many believers glory in their earthly gifts and abilities instead of serving and ministering in love.

2. Love is perfect and complete. We know nothing perfectly, and we can proclaim and predict the truth only with partial certainty. No person knows all the truth. However, a day of perfection is coming, and when it comes, only that which is perfect will stand and endure.

The point is this: love is perfect; therefore, love shall endure and be the primary trait between believers in eternity. Therefore, love is far superior to the gifts.

3. Love is mature—maturity of behavior. While on earth, all that man is and possesses—his abilities, knowledge, and being—all are as a child. Man is just immature and imperfect, no matter what area of his life is being considered. However, the day of maturity is coming, the day when he shall set aside all the childhood understanding and thoughts and become a mature man, a perfected man. When will that day come? It will come when love is perfected between God and man and between man and man. Love is the great gift and quality existing upon earth today that shall endure throughout eternity; therefore, love is far superior to the gifts and abilities of men.

4. Love is being face to face with God—a perfect consciousness and knowledge of God. Our present relationship with the Lord is comparable to the reflection we see through a dark mirror. We can faintly see the figure, but it is not fully distinct nor clear. Therefore, we only see God and the truth in part and we only know God and the truth in part. However, the day is coming when we shall know God even as He knows us—perfectly.

- a. When is that day coming? The day love is perfected between God and man.
- b. What will bring the day about? Love—God's perfect love for man.

It is love that will be perfected and that will bring the day of perfection to reality for man. It is love that will bring us into a face to face relationship with God and into a perfect knowledge of truth. Therefore, love is far superior to the spiritual gifts.

4. [\(1 Corinthians 13:13\)](#) **Love: the great supremacy of love.**

Both faith and hope are great qualities and gifts, but love is far superior. How? Remember that Paul is contrasting love with the spiritual gifts and dealing with the tendency of people to center attention upon their gifts and accomplishments. Love is far superior to faith and hope for at least six reasons.

1. Faith focuses upon the revelation of God, whereas love focuses upon *God Himself*. We know about God only by the revelation of God through Jesus Christ, the Word, nature, and the inner witness of thoughts and conscience ([Romans 1:18-20](#); [Romans 2:14-15](#)). A man believes in God by focusing upon one or more of the revelations about God. But love is different, entirely different. Love focuses and centers upon God Himself and stirs a relationship of adoration and worship. Faith, of course, can stir the same adoration and worship; but faith can also exist without adoration and worship. A person can believe in someone and not love him.

2. Hope focuses upon being eternally with God in a perfect world, but again, love is superior because it focuses upon God Himself. A person can have hope in someone without loving him, but a person who loves someone always hopes in him.

3. Love—true love (*agapē* love)—does not originate in the nature of man, but in the nature of God. God is love; love is the basic trait of His nature. The very existence of man is due to the fact that God is love, not to the fact that God believed or held hope for man. Therefore love, which is the basic trait of God's nature, is far superior to faith and hope.

4. True love is a gift of God. A man can know true love only as he comes to know the love of God. Faith arises from the heart of man, but love is deposited or given to man by God. It is shed abroad in the heart by God. Apart from God, man loves only those who love him; he either opposes or withdraws from those who hate him. A man can only love (*agapē* love) his enemies through the love of God. Therefore love, being the very special gift of God, is far superior to faith and hope.

5. Experience and nature itself prove that faith and hope reach and grow people, but love reaches and grows people far more than any other gift or quality.

6. **A person can believe in God, yet feel he is above others.** He can act prideful, arrogant, and super spiritual. He may hope for an eternity to be with God and with other believers, yet he can be cold and distant. But love—true love—has no weaknesses or dangers. Love never fails, never comes short. But remember: love is not indulgence and license. Love involves control and discipline as well as care and giving, selflessness and sacrifice.

DEEPER STUDY #1 (1 Corinthians 13:1-13) Love

(1 Corinthians 13:1-13) Love: throughout this passage the word used for love or charity is the great word *agapē*. (See **DEEPER STUDY # 2, Love**—" **John 21:15-17** on page #13 for more discussion.)

The meaning of *agapē love* is more clearly seen by contrasting it with the various kinds of love. There are essentially four kinds of love. Whereas the English language has only the word *love* to describe all the affectionate experiences of men, the Greek language had a different word to describe each kind of love.

1. **There is *passionate love* or *eros love*.** This is the physical love between sexes; the patriotic love of a person for his nation; the ambition of a person for power, wealth, or fame. Briefly stated, *eros love* is the base love of a man that arises from his own inner passion. Sometimes *eros love* is focused upon good and other times it is focused upon bad. It should be noted that *eros love* is never used in the New Testament.

2. **There is *affectionate love* or *storge love*.** This is the kind of love that exists between parent and child and between loyal citizens and a trustworthy ruler. *Storge love* is also not used in the New Testament.

3. **There is an *endearing love*, the love that cherishes.** This is *phileo love*, the love of a husband and wife for each other, of a brother for a brother, of a friend for the dearest of friends. It is the love that cherishes, that holds someone or something ever so dear to one's heart.

4. **There is *selfless and sacrificial love* or *agapē love*.** *Agapē* love is the love of the mind, of the reason, of the will.

It is the love that goes so far.....

- a. That it loves a person even if he does not deserve to be loved.
- b. That it actually loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved.

Note four significant points about *agapē* love.

a. Selfless or *agapē* love is the love of God, the very love possessed by God Himself. It is the love demonstrated in the cross of Christ.

1. It is the love of God for the *ungodly*.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" ([Romans 5:6](#)).

2. It is the love of God for *unworthy sinners*.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" ([Romans 5:8](#)).

3. It is the love of God for *undeserving enemies*.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" ([Romans 5:10](#)).

b. Selfless or *agapē* love is a gift of God. It can be experienced only if a person knows God *personally*—only if a person has received the love of God into his heart and life. *Agapē* love has to be shed abroad (poured out, flooded, spread about) by the Spirit of God within the heart of a person.

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" ([Romans 5:5](#)).

c. Selfless or *agapē* love is the greatest thing in all of life according to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these" ([Mark 12:29-31](#)).

d. Selfless or *agapē* love is the greatest possession and gift in human life according to the Scripture ([1 Cor. 13:1-13](#)).

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" ([1 Cor. 13:13](#)).

DEEPER STUDY #2 (John 21:17) Love

(John 21:17) Love: Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him with *agapē* love or *phileo* love. The difference between *agapē* love and *phileo* love is as follows.

Phileo love is the love of tender affection, of warm and deep feelings within the heart. It is the deep and precious love of those near and dear to one's heart. It is brotherly love, a love between family members, a love that would die for its brother.

Agapē love is the love of the mind, of the reason, and of the will. It is a love that is born of choice; one simply chooses to love regardless of feelings. A person may insult, injure, or humiliate; but *agapē* love chooses to seek only the highest good for that person. It is sacrificial love, a love that is willing to die even for its enemies.

Agapē love means.....

1. Sacrificial giving.
2. Free acceptance (one freely accepts without any expectation of return).
3. Cherished attachment.
4. Unselfish devotion.
5. Personal commitment.
6. Genuine concern.
7. Strong loyalty.
8. Precious tenderness.

Agapē love was so new and so unusual, it can be said that after Christ a new word for love had to be created. Jesus' primary interest with Peter was, of course, that he possess *agapē* love: the love that comes from reason and will, that controls the corruptible lusts and wandering thoughts of life, that puts a willingness within a man to serve and to die for all men—even for a person's enemies. Even the enemies of God must hear the gospel and have an opportunity for salvation. However, the fact that Jesus also used *phileo* love with Peter shows that God wants the love of man's warm instinctive feelings as well.

Agapē love means at least eight things.

1. *Agapē* love is not only a love of emotions. It is a matter of the mind as well as of the heart, of the will as well as of the emotions.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8).

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" ([1 John 4:9-10](#)).

2. *Agapē* love is God's love—His very nature. It is the love that God extended toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us....For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" ([Romans 5:8, 10](#)).

"Beloved, let us love one other: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins....And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" ([1 John 4:7-10, 16](#)).

3. *Agapē* love is a seed that can be planted in the heart only by Christ. It is a fruit of the Spirit of God.

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" ([Romans 5:5](#)).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" ([Galatians 5:22](#)).

4. *Agapē* love is the great love that God holds for His own dear Son.

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" ([John 15:10](#)).

"And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" ([John 17:26](#)).

5. *Agapē* love was perfectly expressed when God gave up His own Son to die for man.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" ([2 Cor. 5:14](#)).

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us" ([Ephes. 2:4](#)).

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" ([Ephes. 3:19](#)).

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" ([Ephes. 5:2](#)).

6. *Agapē* love is the love which holds believers together. For three years Jesus Himself had held the apostles together. Now that He was about to leave them, what was going to keep them together and keep them at the task? One thing: the new commandment—*agapē* love. *Agapē* love is the love believers are to have for one another.

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" ([John 13:33-35](#)).

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" ([1 John 3:17-18](#)).

7. *Agapē* love is the love which believers are to have for all men.

"Let all your things be done with charity [love]" ([1 Cor. 16:14](#)).

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" ([1 Thes. 3:12](#)).

"And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" ([2 Peter 1:7](#)).

a. *Agapē* love seeks the welfare of all.

"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" ([Romans 15:2](#)).

b. *Agapē* love works no ill to its neighbor.

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" ([Romans 13:8-10](#)).

c. *Agapē* love seeks opportunities to do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" ([Galatians 6:10](#)).

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness" ([Col. 3:12-14](#); cp. [1 Cor. 13:1f](#)).

8. *Agapē* love is proven by obedience to Christ. Doing as oneself wishes instead of doing as God wills shows that one does not have *agapē* love.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments....He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him....Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" ([John 14:15, 21, 23](#)).

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" ([John 15:10](#)).

"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" ([1 John 2:5](#)).

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" ([1 John 5:3](#)).

"And this is love, that we walk after his commandment. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it" ([2 John 6](#)).