

# Letters to the church in...



# Corinth

**Focus:** 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

## Lesson 12-Spiritual Gifts in the Church

- **Spiritual gifts and the Spirit's working (v.1-3)**
  - (v.1)-we should not be ignorant about Spiritual gifts but should understand them. (v.3) Spirit filled men will speak the truth, not falsehoods about Jesus (calling Him accursed). **A converted, Spirit-led person will confess truly that Jesus is the Christ. It is evidence of the Holy Spirit's working in this person's life, if they can make a genuine and honest confession about Jesus Christ being the Lord.** (See the example of Peter; Matthew 16:15-17). (It's not talking about someone just saying some foolish words they don't mean, but about a genuine faith in Jesus Christ—that is the work of the Holy Spirit—it is evidence of the working of God's Spirit.
- **The Diverse gifts of the Spirit are distributed according to the Spirit's will (v.4-11)**
  - (v.4-7) there are different gifts of the Spirit given to different people (these are to help and to edify the church)
  - **Many gifts of the Spirit are listed for us here (v.8-10)**
    - **The word of wisdom; The word of knowledge; Faith** (strong, trusting; implicit faith) —the Spirit gives Faith to all who seek for it.; **Gifts of healing; Working of Miracles; The gift of Prophecy** (prophetic gift); **Discerning of Spirits**—some have an uncanny ability to sense whether someone has a bad or a good spirit about them. (animals can be sensitive to this at times too)
    - **Diverse kinds of Tongues** (ability to speak a previously unlearned language)
    - **Interpretation of Tongues** (to understand and interpret)
  - **Not everyone gets the same gifts. But some may get more than one** (example: Daniel, he had wisdom, knowledge, faith, and the gift of prophecy—that we know of). And "...to whom much is given, much is expected" (Luke 12:48). **The Spirit gives to everyone as He will! (v.11). We are not to Judge someone as unconverted because they didn't receive one of these gifts in particular!** The Bible is clear. Not everyone will have the same gifts.
  - **Do not confuse the gifts of the Spirit with the fruit of the Spirit: They are different (See Galatians 5:22,23)** The fruit of the Spirit is what shows evidence of conversion, NOT the absence or presence of one specific gift!! Jesus said, **"You will know them by their FRUITS!! [not gifts]"** (Matthew 7:16,20).
- **Just because you have one gift, and not another gift, does not make you any less a member of God's church (v.12-20, 21-24)**
  - Not everyone can perform the same function. You need many different functioning members to make up the whole body of Christ. **Not everyone can be an eye. Not everyone can be an ear. We don't need everyone to have the same gift or any to have all of the gifts either!!** (God has WISELY distributed the gifts to many different members so that we have to work together. No one person can have it all, nor do they need to have it all!! We must depend upon one another's help. We must be humble. Only God has everything—we are to worship God, not men!!

- **God does not want us to be divided, but pressing together, working together, and sharing with others according to the Spiritual gift that He has given to us (v.25-31)**
  - (v.25-27) *If one hurts the others hurt—just like with our bodies. We should all appreciate one another and be united to work as one body—the church!*
  - (v.28-30)—**an ordered list of the gifts is here given.** “Tongues” is at the bottom of the list—**NOT** the top!! (and clearly, not everyone can have the same gift!). After the Apostles (of which there were only 12 since the time of Christ), we then have Prophets (given to the church).
- **One of the very often misunderstood gifts is the gift of Prophecy (a few guiding principles can be given here)**
  - *This gift has sometimes been ignored, neglected, despised, faked, or misused. It is important that we truly understand what the Bible teaches in regard to this gift!!*
  - **Jesus warned us to watch out for false prophets in the last days (Matthew 24:24)** —*He said there would be some false prophets...NOT “no prophets” (the Devil would not counterfeit the gift if there was no TRUE gift!! No one would be foolish enough to make a counterfeit 3 dollar bill (because there is not a real 3 dollar bill)!*
  - **The Bible says, “Do not despise prophesying...but TEST all things...hold onto that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).** And, *“do not believe every spirit ...but test the spirits whether they be of God...” (1 John 4:1) “...because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”*
  - **The early Christian Church had Prophets** (even besides the Prophet John the Revelator) **and the Bible tells us there would be many in the very last days** (even male and female ones) (See Acts 2:17,18; Early examples can be found in Acts 11:28; 13:1; 21:8-10; keep in mind that none of the early prophets mentioned here wrote anything in the Bible—a prophet does not have to be a Bible writer—But, they will agree with and uplift all of the Bible’s teachings—see 1 Corinthians 14:32). The Bible tells us that God’s last day church would have the “Testimony of Jesus” or the “gift of prophecy” among them (ref. Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8,9)
- **How should we test anyone who appears to be a prophet, or claims to be one? (the Bible gives us several tests that will help us to know for sure!!)**
  - **A true prophet must uplift Jesus as our Savior—the Divine son of God** (1 John 4:1,2)
  - **A true prophet must live by the Bible, agree with, and uplift all of its teachings** (Isaiah 8:20; 1 Corinthians 14:32,33) *“the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”—this means a true prophet cannot and will not differ from the true teachings of God’s Word—the Bible!*
  - **If a true prophet makes any kind of predictions, we should be able to see those words coming true** (being fulfilled; happening) (Deuteronomy 18:22). *However, if their words do come to pass, but they are teaching you to disobey God, do not follow them!! They must pass ALL the tests of a true prophet! A true prophet will teach us to be obedient to all of God’s commandments (See Deuteronomy 13:1-5).*
  - **A true prophet must bear the “fruits” of a true and faithful Christian in their life** (Matthew 7:20). *This verse also teaches us that the “fruit” of their ministry will lead souls closer to Jesus!*

*Question (s) for the Heart:*

**Would you like to have the fruit of the Spirit, and to be trusted by God with a gift of the Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_**