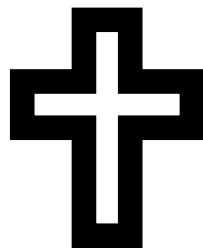


**Twelve Lessons**

*on*

***Spiritual Gifts***

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## **INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS – LESSON 1**

### **I Corinthians 12:1-7**

**Introduction:** The subject of spiritual gifts is abused by some, misunderstood by many, and ignored by most Christians (and the cause for much confusion in our churches today). Spiritual gifts relate to the capacity to serve God effectively in some area of spiritual ministry. Spiritual gifts are not given to exalt “super saints”. They are given to equip us for the benefit of those we minister to and for the glory of God.

When you mention spiritual gifts in a Baptist Church a lot of people think you have gone off in the modern day charismatic movement. God gave spiritual gifts to certain people in the church 1,900 years before anyone ever heard of a “charismatic”. Every Christian receives at least one spiritual gift when they are saved. Not everyone is a preacher, singer, musician, missionary, but each and every child of God has a “gift” of the Spirit. That gives them a place of service in the church.

### **Lesson Goals:**

1. To clearly set forth the scriptural meaning of a spiritual gift.
2. To differentiate between the gift and the Giver.
3. To explain that every believer has a gift, that there is diversity and multiplicity.
4. To accent the fact that a gift is both profitable and practical to the believer.

### **Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:**

1. Gift – “charisma” – a gift of grace. In the technical Pauline sense “gifts” denote extraordinary powers distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 1:7; 12:4,31; 1 Peter 4:10) (Unger’s Bible Dictionary’s Bible Dictionary).
2. Diversity – A separation between parts which are designed to be joined together.
3. Manifestations – Credentials of genuineness, to sustain the testimony of every member of the Corinth church.
4. “To profit withal” – An Old English term which has lost its meaning today. It means “for the profit of all; for the common good”.

### **I. SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE REAL** – I Corinthians 12:1

**A. A spiritual gift is called charisma in the Greek text of the Bible.** The term occurs seventeen times in the New Testament (16 times in the epistles of Paul and 1 time in the first epistle of Peter). Each time it is translated “gift” or “free gift”. Since *charis* means “grace”, *charisma* means “a gift of grace”.

1. Charisma is not a natural talent, though it may coincide with it. A natural talent comes at birth, while a spiritual gift comes at spiritual birth. A spiritual gift is not an emotion or experience, though emotions of joy commonly follow the use of one’s spiritual gift to serve people in the name of Jesus. A spiritual gift is the capacity to serve God effectively in some area of spiritual service.
2. To be uninformed about spiritual gifts is to fail to serve in the area in which God has gifted you. To be informed and committed to serve in the area of your gifting is to be delivered from carnality and experience the joy of effective service to God. That is why Paul wrote, “*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant*” – I Corinthians 12:1

**B. It is important to distinguish spiritual gifts from spiritual graces and spiritual offices.**

1. Spiritual graces are features of Christian character. Every believer is responsible for the development of all of them (cf. Gal 5:22-23).
2. Spiritual offices are positions in the church for the administration of its affairs, whether spiritual oversight of the flock (elders) or spiritual oversight of temporalities (deacons; cf. I Tim. 3:1-13). Only certain believers hold spiritual office (Wycliffe Bible Commentary).

### **II. SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE SACRED** – I Corinthians 12:2, 3

**A. They are for the redeemed only** (vs. 2).

1. The unredeemed are carried off by the force of the devil. The redeemed are liberated by the Holy Spirit. Those who are controlled by the devil cannot receive or understand the subject of spiritual gifts. Only those born of the Spirit have a spiritual gift.
2. Paul reminds them, how they were “carried away”, led along; that is, deluded by your passions, deluded by your priests, deluded by your vain and splendid rites of worship (Barnes’ Notes)

**B. They are related to the Lordship of Jesus Christ** (vs. 3). The spirit which denies the Lordship of Jesus

Christ is not of God. It is the spirit of antichrist (I John 4:3). The Spirit which confirms His Lordship is of God (I John 4:2).

1. So the question to be asked at the exercise of any so-called spiritual gifts is this: "Does it speak of itself, an experience, or of the Lord Jesus?"
2. To know that Jesus is "Lord" (sovereign, ruler, Jehovah of the Old Testament) is an insight which comes by divine revelation (Matthew 16:15-17). It is the result of the Holy Spirit taking the things of Christ and showing them to us (John 16:12-15). Every true spiritual gift bears witness to Him.
3. 1 Cor 12:3 – It cannot occur, or even happen, that anyone will acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah who is not influenced by the Holy Spirit. The meaning is, not that no one has physical ability to say that Jesus is Lord unless aided by the Holy Spirit, since all people can say this; but that no one will be disposed heartily to say it; no one will acknowledge him as their Lord; it can never happen that anyone will confess him as the true Messiah who has not been brought to this state by the agency of the Holy Spirit (Barnes' Notes).

#### **C. They are distinct from the Giver.**

1. Notice references to the "gift" of the Holy Spirit and the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit. The former refers to the Spirit Himself, while the latter refers to the enabling for service which the Spirit confers.
2. The promise of Acts 2:38, "*Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,*" was a promise of the indwelling Spirit and not a promise of the gift of languages. Watch for "gift" and "gifts" in Bible passages which discuss the subject.

#### **D. They are distinct from spiritual fruit.**

1. "*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.*" – Galatians 5:22,23
2. The fruit of the Spirit has to do with character, what one is in Christ. Gifts have to do with service, what one does for Christ.
3. Every Christian may have every aspect of the fruit of the Spirit; but no Christian has all the gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:28-30). Cultivate all the fruit and develop the gift which the Holy Spirit has given to you.

### **III. SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE DIVERSE** – I Corinthians 12:4

**A. Diversity means a separation** between parts which are designed to be joined together. Each of the diverse things is distinct, and yet they fit together to function.

1. They differ in their relationship to God. The Holy Spirit confers the gifts, the Lord Jesus directs the use of the gifts, and the Father empowers the function of the gifts (I Corinthians 12:4-6).
2. They differ in their duration. I Corinthians 12:8 mentions three gifts (prophecy, knowledge, and languages) which passed away on the completion of the writing of the Holy Scripture.

**B. It is our duty** to recognize the diversity in Spiritual gifts.

1. Then we will not demand that we have our gift in order to be "spiritual". Neither will we feel superior because of the gift we have received.
2. We are to use our particular gift in cooperation with other gifts so that people may be served and God may be glorified (I Peter 4:11).

**IV. SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE HOLY** – I Corinthians 12:4-6 – Viewed 1) as from the Spirit, they are gifts; 2) as from the Lord, administrations, or services, to the assembly; 3) as from the Father, operations, or supernatural workings. I Cor. 12:7 "Given to every man" distinguishes gift from office (cf. 1 Peter 4:10) (Wycliffe Bible Commentary). The Spirit is treated of – I Cor. 12:7, etc.; the Lord, I Cor. 12:12, etc.; God, I Cor. 12:28; Compare Eph. 4:4-6 (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary).

**A. They are conferred by the Holy Spirit** (vs. 4). Regardless of which gift you have received, the same Holy Spirit which conferred your gift conferred mine also. Notice the repetition of the phrase "by the same Spirit" in I Corinthians 12:8-11. Each gift is given by the Holy Spirit as He chooses. His endowment makes each gift holy.

**B. They are governed by God the Son** (vs. 5). There are many different ways in which service is rendered, but the Lord Jesus is in charge of them all.

1. Jesus is called the head of the church (Ephesians 5:23).
2. As the head (brain), is the control center of the physical body, so the Lord Jesus is the control center of the churches. He governs all they are and do.
3. Colossians 2:19 teaches that from the head (Jesus Christ) the whole body is nourished, strengthened and grows with the growth which God produces. That is the consequence of all the spiritual gifts being

directed by the Son.

**C. They are empowered by God the Father** (vs. 6). There are many activities which do the work of God. But in every work the one God and Father of our Lord Jesus is performing His purposes.

1. He produces the desired results in all our works by empowering what we do in His name (Eph. 1:19).
2. The power of almighty God is at work in the children of God this present hour (Eph. 3:20).

**V. SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE UNIVERSAL** – I Corinthians 12:7

**A. The Manifestation** – What does God mean when He says, “*The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man*” (vs. 7)? It means each believer is given a spiritual gift by which the Holy Spirit is made manifest in his life.

1. Distribution of spiritual gifts were visible manifestations, credentials of genuineness, to sustain the testimony of every member of the Corinth church.
2. The word “every” means “the entire group taken one at a time”. You have a spiritual gift if you are trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour.

**B. The Distribution** – No one is left out. The Holy Spirit made a sovereign choice as to which believer would receive which gift. But He made a positive choice that each believer would receive some gift.

1. I Peter 4:10 – “*As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*”
2. Recognize the gift that God has given to you, and don’t worry about what gift God has given to someone else, use your gift and get busy for God.

**VI. SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE PRACTICAL** – I Corinthians 12:7

**A. God said that gifts are given to each of us “to profit withal”.** That is an Old English term which has lost its meaning today. It means “for the profit of all; for the common good”.

1. “*...is given to every man to profit withal*” – *pros to sumpheron* – To or toward the profit (of others).
2. Paul asserted that visible manifestations of supernatural gifts held by the Corinth members, were not for their singular, individual, or personal profit and glory, but for the help of the entire church, and even those without.
3. Miracles and special spiritual gifts appear to have been given primarily to convince the unbelievers of the deity of Jesus Christ and to strengthen the weak believers. Mark 2:10,11; John 11:41-44; I John 2:11 (Garner Baptist Commentary).

**B. Each gift is to be administered for the good of other people.** It is never to be used for the mere benefit of the one who exercises it. It is for the sake of those who receive its ministry.

1. Someone may say, “The use of my spiritual gift makes me feel good!” That may be true, (mine makes me feel good most of the time), but that is not the purpose for which the gift is to be used.
2. The teacher does not teach because that makes him feel good, but to instruct the students that they may know and serve God.
3. Using one’s spiritual gift for personal enjoyment grieves the Holy Spirit of God. It is sin. Every spiritual gift is to be used in such a way as to meet the needs of people about us.