

Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 14:1-40

MEMORY VERSE

1 CORINTHIANS 12:11-12

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A large poster board or pieces of construction paper or an old, large poster, scissors, and a blindfold.

Small containers of items like salt, sugar, flour, rice, cloves, cinnamon, oatmeal, pepper, curry, cumin, etc. and a blindfold.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Every Job is Important!

Think of different “jobs” that your class can do around the room. Have them do things like pick up trash, pass out Bibles, serve cups of water to the other children, clean off the chalkboard tray, pass out papers, etc. Make sure that everyone has at least one task to do.

When everyone is done with their task, discuss why each responsibility was important. Explain that today we are going to be talking about spiritual gifts and why each person’s service is so important. Ask what would have happened if any part hadn’t done their job. Explain that **God gives us all different gifts to serve Him and to serve others.**

LESSON TIME!

All of us like to receive and give special gifts. The giving and getting of gifts produces different feelings for everyone; some may be happy, overjoyed or excited. Often times we feel so good about a gift we've received that we want to share it with everyone.

Well...you know what? God loves to give gifts and He has given each of His children some very special gifts that He wants us to share with each other and to use to help each other. These aren't gifts that come in a box or a package; they are called spiritual gifts and are given to us by God's Holy Spirit. We'll learn more about some of those different gifts today as we take a look at Paul's letter to the Corinthian church.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.

Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,

to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

In this letter to the church at Corinth, Paul tells us about the different gifts and abilities that the Holy Spirit has given to each believer. He wants to explain to us about the different gifts that God has given so that we won't misunderstand what they are and how they are to be used in the church. It is very important that we understand what God's word says about spiritual gifts because many today don't use them according to God's word.

Paul says that there are many different kinds of service to God, but it is still the same Lord we are serving and the gifts God has given us are to be used to serve Him. God may give the gift of wisdom (or wise advice/discernment) to one person and to someone else He may give knowledge or the ability to teach.

He may give special faith to another and to someone else the power to heal the sick. He gives power to prophesy and to preach. He might give someone else the wisdom to know whether evil spirits are speaking through those who claim to be giving God's message or whether it is really the Spirit of God who is speaking.

Still another is able to speak in languages he never learned; and to others, who do not know that language, the ability to understand what is being said. God distributes these gifts individually as He wills, but it is still the same Holy Spirit that works all these together. Paul explains that **God gives us all different gifts to serve Him and to serve others.**

These gifts that God has so graciously given us, may not be purchased in a store, but they were still made possible at a great price. God gave His one and only son, Jesus Christ, to pay the price for our sins, and because Jesus was obedient to God the Father, He died on a cross to forgive us of our sins and He made it possible for us to have these spiritual gifts.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

For in fact the body is not one member but many.

If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?

But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.

And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.

And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty,

but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,

that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?

Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

Paul explains the “body of Christ working together” by explaining how our bodies have many parts, but the many parts only make up ONE body. So it is with the body of Christ. He gives examples of what it means about the whole body of Christ working together by explaining the importance of our body parts.

What if the foot should say, “I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand”? That doesn't make it any less a part of the body. And what would you think if you heard an ear say, “I am not part of the body because I am only an ear and not an eye”? Would that make it any less a part of the body? Suppose the whole body was an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body was just one big ear, how could you smell anything?

That isn't the way God has made us. He has made many parts for our bodies and has put each part just where He wants it. Some of the parts that seem the weakest and least important are really the most necessary. All of us together are the one body of Christ, and each one of us is a separate and necessary part of it; all our gifts are different and important too. **God gives us all different gifts to serve Him and to serve others.**

Funny Body

Cut from a large poster board or pieces of construction paper parts representing the different parts of the body: head, torso, arms, hands, legs, feet (if you have an old, large poster, you may want to cut it out).

Put a blindfold on volunteers and see if they can reconstruct the funny body.

Explain to your class that each part of the body is important. **God gives us all different gifts to serve Him and to serve others.**

Paul's illustration of the body parts can seem somewhat humorous, but he made it simple enough for us to understand. That's the way God is, He gave Paul this example to share with us because He knew all of us could understand it. God's plan for us is so wonderful! He makes each of us different and special and with different abilities, yet they are all necessary and important for helping and encouraging each other.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-40

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?

Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played?

For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance.

Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.

Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.

What is the result then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?

For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;

yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

In the law it is written: "With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord.

Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.

Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is judged by all.

And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.

But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.

For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.

And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?

If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.

Let all things be done decently and in order.

Aside from all the “gifts” that the Holy Spirit has given us, Paul says we are to pursue love. That is to be the most important aim we should have. God wants us to ask for the special gifts the Holy Spirit gives, but He wants love to be our greatest aim.

Paul concludes his talk about spiritual gifts by explaining that when the body of Christ meets together and is sharing their various gifts, the result will be that some will sing, another will teach, and another will worship and extol the Lord in an unknown language. But everything that is done must be useful to all and build each other up in the Lord. Paul also wants the believers to know that God is a God of order and therefore He wants us to use our gifts in an orderly manner that wouldn't bring attention to ourselves but rather bring glory to God.

God delights in giving us special gifts, but He wants us to use them correctly and according to His word. He loves to see the body of Christ (that's us) using our gifts together as one. Everything we do should be done in love; like Paul said "That's our greatest aim." **God gives us all different gifts to serve Him and to serve others.**

Maybe some of you have heard of speaking in tongues and wondered what it is. Really it is praising the Lord in a language that you have not learned. These passages of scripture teach us that not everyone has the gift of tongues, but many do. It really isn't the most important gift, but should be exercised if you have it. When the church comes together and someone wants to speak in other tongues they can only do it if there is someone to interpret or explain what is being said. Paul taught the importance of people being able to understand what is happening in a church service. Things should never be out of control.

We need to desire spiritual gifts. We should pray and ask the Lord to show us what our gifts are. For additional gifts you can also refer to Romans 12:6-8. Remember, the Lord gives us gifts not to get people to notice us or think we are great people, but to serve others and to give Jesus glory through our lives. What a blessing and privilege it is to serve the Lord and His people.

Guessing Game

You will need small containers of items blindfolded children can feel, touch, smell, and taste to guess what they are (salt, sugar, flour, rice, cloves, cinnamon, oatmeal, pepper, curry, cumin, etc.)

Blindfold volunteers and let them try to figure out what each item is.

When you are through, explain the importance of each of our senses and how we use them to navigate our way through life. We need them all to know what things are, just like we need every part of the body of Christ to function well together. Explain that **God gives us all different gifts to serve Him and to serve others.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for being a part of the body; pray for commitment to be what God wants us to be in His body. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.