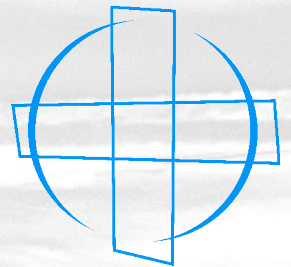


JULY
2025

Donald J. Wills
Senior Pastor

ONE



The purpose of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is to ***introduce*** people into a loving relationship with Jesus, ***instruct*** them in spiritual growth through God's Word, ***inspire*** them to serve for God's kingdom, and ***incorporate*** them in authentic worship to glorify God.

Suggested Plan for Using this Bible Study Guide Effectively

Introduce

Day 1: Read and meditate on the Scripture, asking God to guide you throughout the week as you study His Word and allowing Him to speak to you through the Spirit. Read the **INTRODUCE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Instruct

Day 2: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and read the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary. Concentrate on memorizing the focal verse for that particular week.

Day 3: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and answer the focal questions in the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary.

Inspire

Day 4: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and begin thinking about tangible ways you can incorporate the principles you learned into your daily life. Read the **INSPIRE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Incorporate

Day 5: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and apply the theological principle that you learned from this week in a tangible way. Use the **INCORPORATE** portion of the lesson commentary to guide you.

Day 6: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and in the journal section describe how God allowed you to apply this passage in a real and tangible way this week.

Day 7: Review the Scripture and share with others in your Connect Class on Sunday morning at 9:30 am. Be ready to share your experience about how God allowed you to apply the lesson for that week.

3



July 6, 2025

One Spirit, Different Ministries

[1 Corinthians 12:7-11](#)

27

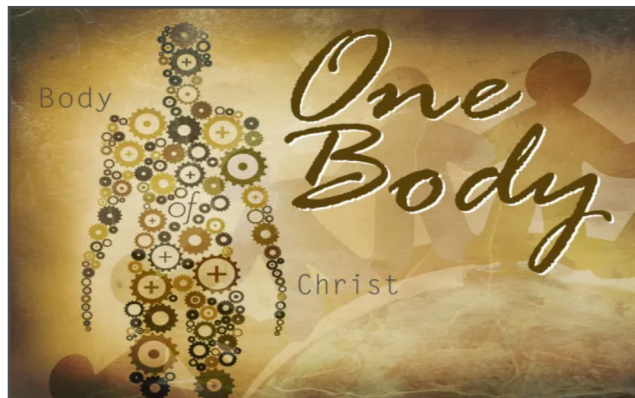


July 13, 2025

One Spirit, Same Mission

[1 Corinthians 12:7-11](#)

48



July 20, 2025

One Body, Many Parts, Pt. 1

[1 Corinthians 12:12-26](#)

51



July 27, 2025

One Body, Many Parts, Pt. 2

[1 Corinthians 12:27-31](#)

July 6, 2025

SPIRITUAL GIFTS



MANY GIFTS ONE SPIRIT

One Spirit, Different Ministries

[1 Corinthians 12:7-11](#)

Focal Verse:

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

back to
Table of
Contents

1 Corinthians 12:7

Introduce

Recently, the United States Army celebrated its two-hundred-fiftieth birthday with an awe-inspiring parade in Washington, DC. Not only did the event highlight the remarkable technological advancements our nation has made over the years, but it also honored the hundreds of thousands who volunteer to serve in this vital military branch—those who risk their lives to protect our country from both foreign and domestic threats and defend our freedom. As groups of soldiers marched down Pennsylvania Avenue, the parade showcased the Army's intricate organizational structure—one that enables it to operate as the most effective military force in the world. At the same time, it served as a powerful reminder that, despite the Army's complexity and diversity, it functions as one unified body. Reflecting this idea, the Army adopted the slogan “Army of One” in the early 2000s to emphasize the strength found in unity behind a shared mission and common goal.

The Army is organized into five broader units—infantry, armored, airborne, air assault, and calvary—which are further subdivided into squads, platoons, companies, battalions, brigades, divisions, and corps. Each division serves a specific purpose and fulfills a vital function. Within these units, every soldier has



a designated role. Some gather intelligence, others serve as analysts, mechanics, or computer programmers; some distribute ammunition, work as cooks, or provide medical care. The success of any mission depends upon each soldier knowing his or her role and performing it with precision, since everyone relies on one another doing his or her part effectively.

Moreover, each level operates under a clearly defined chain of command that guides the unit toward a common objective and keeps everyone focused on the mission at hand. Ultimately, authority rests with the President—the Commander-in-Chief—who is responsible for deploying the troops into battle. Yet, within each division, officers play a critical role: they train soldiers, equip them for combat, assign

Introduce

responsibilities, issue orders, and clearly communicate mission objectives. This ensures that every individual knows his or her role and can work together seamlessly within the unit. Now imagine the chaos on the battlefield if no one knew his or her exact responsibility, if everyone simply did what seemed right in his or her own eyes, or if some refused to engage altogether, choosing instead to sit on the sidelines. That's a recipe for disaster—not victory.

As we are learning in our study of 1 Corinthians 12, God designed the church to function much like an “Army of One.” Like the Army, the church is a complex and diverse body with many different parts, all united in Christ. Each part is called to work together in fulfilling His will. God has assigned every member a unique role with a distinct function, yet He has given us one common mission: to advance the gospel and help build His kingdom. While the ultimate success of the mission is guaranteed by God, it still requires our faithful obedience—each of us doing our part as God has called us.

As the Head of the church, Christ holds ultimate authority to distribute and deploy every member as He sees fit. But unlike the President who issues orders from afar, Christ doesn't merely send us into battle—He leads us into it and fights for us ([Deut 1:30](#); [3:22](#); [20:4](#); [Exod 14:14](#); [Isa 52:12](#)). At the same time, God has appointed human leaders within the church to train and equip every member for the work of ministry, to communicate His directives clearly, and to keep the congregation moving forward and focused on His mission ([Eph 4:11-12](#)). Every member must not only understand his or her own role within the body, but also serve faithfully under the Spirit's guidance, recognizing that we need each other's unique gifts to carry out the work of ministry together.

Key
Question

To what role has God called you or is He calling you to fulfill in this local body?

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

ONE SPIRIT, MANY MINISTRIES:

Having emphasized the diversity of the church united in Christ behind a shared purpose, Paul now arrives at the heart of his instruction to the Corinthians on spiritual gifts: **the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all** (v. 7). We rarely use the term **manifestation** today—and it was uncommon even in the Greek-speaking world of the first century. In fact, it occurs only twice in the entire New Testament—here in this verse and in 2 Corinthians 4:2—where it generally means “revelation” or “appearance.” This raises a crucial question: “In what sense do we ‘manifest’ or ‘reveal’ the Spirit?” One way is by allowing Him to empower us to use the spiritual gifts God has given us for ministry. Others should clearly be able to see the Spirit working through our lives to build the church. In this context, manifesting the Spirit involves more than simply reflecting His holy character or representing Him through our personal testimony. It means being fully surrendered to His direction—yielding ourselves as instruments He can actively use in service.

To illustrate, consider the difference between a novice and master. In the hands of a master, the same tool will produce drastically different results than it would in the hands of a novice.

For example, I enjoy painting mountainous landscapes in the



Definitely not a Bob Ross Original

style of Bob Ross. I even use the exact same paint and brushes he used on his classic PBS show. But if you placed one of my paintings next to one of his, the difference would be obvious. The detail, depth and richness in his work would clearly “manifest”—or reveal—that the tool was in the hands of a master. The same principle applies to our service in the church. When we submit ourselves to the Spirit and allow Him to work through us, others will notice a dramatic difference. In contrast to the results we produce when we try to serve according to our own strength, the work of the Spirit becomes “manifest”—visible and unmistakable—in our lives. Thus, by referring to **the manifestation of the Spirit**, Paul is saying that others should be able to see the hand

of the Master at work in us, using the spiritual gifts He has given us to build His church and expand His kingdom.

Question
1

What evidence is there that the Spirit is manifest in your life through your service in this church?

Furthermore, by describing the Spirit's work as a **manifestation**, Paul emphasizes the role of the Spirit over the nature of the gift. This reminds us that our focus should always be on the Spirit of God—not on ourselves or our own abilities. He is the One who equips and empowers us to use our gifts effectively. Because of this, we must continually rely on the Spirit's guidance, allowing Him to keep us humble in our service and focused on the mission God has entrusted to us. We can't serve effectively in our own strength, however. If we attempt to exercise our gifts apart from the Spirit's leading, they become little more than natural talents—things that could easily be mistaken for human effort and ability. At the same time, however, this doesn't mean we can overlook the "ordinary" or "small" things in life; the Spirit works through both the miraculous and the mundane to accomplish His will. Therefore, the work of the Spirit should be evident to others through our faithful, Spirit-led service—whether in grand moments or in everyday tasks.

At this point, it will prove helpful to distinguish between natural talents and spiritual gifts. Natural talents are innate abilities with which we are born—abilities related such areas as music, art, athletics, woodworking, crafting, and the like. Both believers and non-believers possess these abilities and skills, which can be refined through training and practice. Spiritual gifts, on the other hand, are only available to believers. We receive them when we accept Christ as our Savior and the Spirit comes to indwell our lives. Consequently, God has endowed every believer with at least one of these gifts, designed to build His church and point people to His transformative work through us.

While spiritual gifts, like natural talents, can be developed to some extent through training and practice, they are wholly dependent on the Holy Spirit for their effective use. Therefore, unlike natural talents, the proper, Spirit-led exercise of spiritual gifts becomes clear evidence of God's work in our lives. We as believers are called to utilize both our natural talents and our spiritual gifts for the glory of the Lord, not for self-promotion. Yet only spiritual gifts can be attributed solely to God's work in our lives,

Instruct

not to mere human ability or talent which we have at birth.

In the church in Kentucky where I served as a youth, the pulpit in the sanctuary had a small blue strip of plastic with white block letters that read: SIR, WE WOULD SEE JESUS. It was placed there as a reminder to anyone who spoke that his words and life should be consistent with Christ.

More importantly, it called him to be led by the Spirit—to let others see and hear Jesus in him. He was to set aside personal preferences, pursuits, and ambitions so that the work and words of Christ could shine brilliantly through His life. But this is not just a call for pastors or those who speak on Sunday morning; it is a call for every believer. We too must set aside these things so that the work of the Spirit can shine brightly—become manifest—through our service as a testimony to the Lord.



Question
2

In your life what shines the most brightly: your personal pursuits, preferences, and ambitions or the work the Spirit does through you? Why?

Sadly, some in Corinth abused their so-called “giftedness,” using their spiritual gifts for self-promotion rather than for the glory of the Lord and the benefit of the church. Driven by pride and arrogance, some individuals sought to elevate their status by claiming to possess certain spiritual gifts—namely speaking in tongues, prophecy, and knowledge. They sought to be viewed as spiritual elites when, in reality, their behavior was worldly. Instead of exalting Jesus and allowing His presence to shine through their lives, they obscured Him through their unloving service which led to chaotic worship marked by competition instead of unity.

Unfortunately, this same tendency persists today. Some still use their spiritual gifts as platforms for self-promotion rather than opportunities to glorify God. Yet to be effective witnesses, we must humbly allow the presence of Christ to radiate through

our lives by the work of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus Himself taught, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” ([Matt 5:16](#)).

Paul echoes this charge by reminding us “that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God, without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” ([Phil. 2:15](#)). Whether through a transformed character or through the Spirit’s work in us by using His gifts, others should see Jesus working in our lives.



Question
3

In what ways do we see an abuse or misuse of spiritual gifts today?

In addition to showing us how we should reveal or manifest the work of the Spirit in the way we use our gifts, this opening declaration also highlights two vital truths. First, every believer has been equipped with at least one spiritual gift to use in serving the Lord through the church. Paul explicitly reminds us that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one—meaning every believer has a role to play. We are called to be active participants in helping the church to mature spiritually and grow numerically through the spread of the gospel. No believer should ever sit idly on a pew. If we’re not actively serving and using our gifts to accomplish the mission God has set before His church, then we are being unfaithful. Simply attending corporate worship, as good and vital as it is, is not enough. God has called us to penetrate the culture with the life-changing message of the gospel.

Moreover, no believer can ever claim to be ill-equipped or not gifted for service

at all. While God often gives us spiritual gifts that align with our natural talents and personalities, we must seek the areas of service to which He is calling us—rather than pursuing only those gifts we desire for ourselves or that seem to fit best with our personalities. God-centered, Spirit-led service will always bear more fruit and produce more abundant joy than anything that we could ever accomplish in our own strength! So, if a particular area of ministry doesn't seem to be your spiritual gift, it's essential to seek the Lord in prayer and through His Word to discern the gift He has entrusted to you. Failing to identify our spiritual gifts and find our specific place of service aren't valid reasons for inaction—they are merely excuses. In reality, such statements reveal a lack of initiative, obedience, and laziness on our part. When we faithfully seek the Lord, He will make it clear where He wants us to serve—for God has called us to find where He is working and join Him!

Question # 4

What areas of ministry or service may I have felt a prompting from the Lord to pursue, but I chose to ignore? What would my obedience to His call look like?

If you haven't yet identified your gift or found your place of service, spend time this week in prayer, asking the Lord to reveal these things to you. After having sought the Lord in prayer and Bible study, spiritual gift assessments can also be a helpful tool for gaining insight into how God has equipped you to serve. However, we must use them with caution. At times, these assessments can be skewed by our own perceptions, reflecting how we see ourselves rather than how God has truly gifted us. In some cases, we might even manipulate these tools to justify pursuing a particular gift we desire, rather than accepting the one God has actually given us. This was the case in Corinth, where some sought prominence by claiming to prophesy or speak in tongues.



For this reason, it's also wise to seek the counsel of mature believers who know you well—especially those whom God has placed in positions of leadership. Their insight can help you confirm your gifting and point you toward ways you can faithfully use it serve the Lord and build up His church. As you study these gifts in your Connect Class, use this time to discuss where members sense their gifts may lie, as well as what gifts others in the group may see certain individuals in your class. Then, encourage them to meet with the staff to explore ways to serve effectively within the broader ministries of the church.

Question # 5

As we begin our study of the spiritual gifts, what gift(s) has the Lord given you for serving Him?

If God has called and equipped **each one** of us to serve, then He will also provide the opportunities—we just have to take the initiative to seize them. No one should ever complain about the lack of opportunities or claim to be too busy to serve. The issue is not about availability but commitment. Too often, we fail to make serving the Lord through the church a priority in our lives. Yet God gives us moments every day to serve Him—in the workplace, at school, in the marketplace, at sporting events, senior centers, neighborhoods, or within the homes of friends and family. He calls us to use our gifts intentionally, to connect people to Christ through the gospel, and then to connect them to this local body, where together we can grow in our faith.

If serving the Lord were a true priority, we would bear far more fruit in ministry. We wouldn't wait to be asked us to volunteer for certain positions; we would actively seek ways to join in where God is working. And although God has called us to serve wherever we are, He also has called us to serve within the framework of the church's mission. What we do must align with and support the church's overarching scope of ministry. So, if you've yet to find an area of service or have an idea for a new ministry, sit down with a staff member. Let them help you discern and shape that idea so it can become an effective, intentional, and purposeful way for the church to connect people to Christ and disciple them for active service within the body of believers.

Instruct

This need to work within the framework of the church naturally leads to Paul's second point: **the manifestation of the Spirit** through the gifts **is for the profit of all**. God has not called us to live in isolation as believers. Perhaps the biggest challenge the church must overcome in our culture is the pervasive individualism—even selfishness—that dominates nearly every area of life. Too often, we focus on personal needs, preferences, and ambitions at the expense of the greater body of Christ. In many ways, we've forgotten the importance of how genuine spiritual growth is rooted in community, mutual service, and a shared commitment to the glory of God.

People often remain only loosely connected, merely acquainted with others in the church. Every Sunday, I watch as people stream out of the sanctuary after worship. Some may pause briefly to chat, but many make a beeline for the parking lot, never slowing down. As they rush to their cars, they say, "See you next week." This is not the kind of community



God intended. Most of these individuals aren't serving in any capacity, they don't share the gospel during the week in their daily walk, and they don't even invite others to church. They simply attend out of habit.

How can this be **for the profit of all** if we never spend time with one another during the week? How can it build up the body if we don't serve together, prayer together, and minister to one another's needs? It is vital that we not only pray for another and share requests but also walk alongside one another in service and fellowship—living out the reality that the gifts of the Spirit are meant to benefit the entire body of Christ.

Question
6

What should serving together look like for the benefit of all in today's church?
people?

In verse 8, Paul begins listing some of the individual gifts present within the life of the church. Ideally, we should study this passage alongside Romans 12:3-8 and Ephesians 4:7-16, where Paul likewise addresses serving through our spiritual gifts. Though these three lists share significant overlap, each varies slightly, suggesting that Paul never intended any of them to be comprehensive lists. While we won't have time to explore all three in depth during our current study, it would be beneficial to read them during our personal quiet time this week and observe the differences. Doing so will help us see the full range of ways God equips His church for service. Above all, the variations in these lists remind us to never limit how God might choose to work through us. We must remain open and willing to serve in any way His Spirit leads, for His glory.

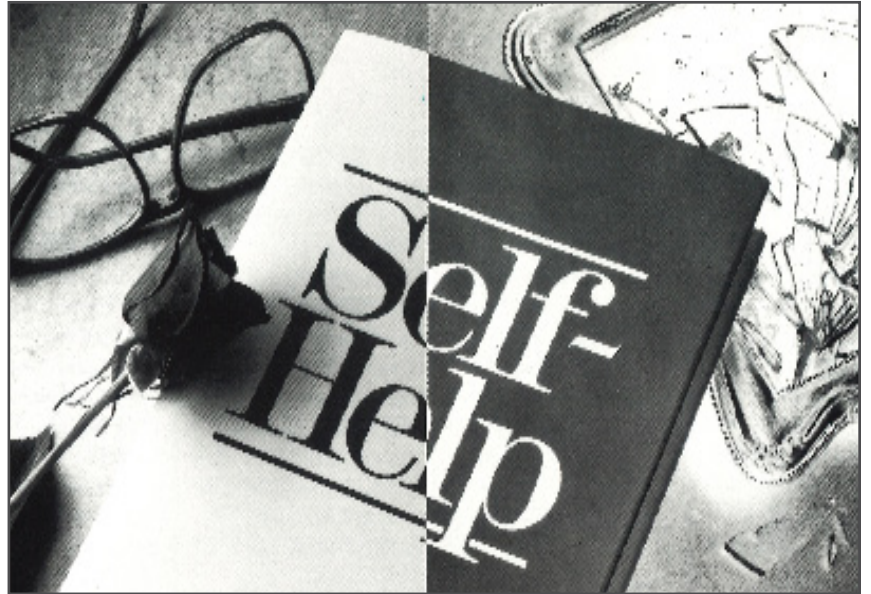
Question
7

What similarities and differences did you notice among the three lists?

From this list in 1 Corinthians 12, we will focus on the first four gifts this week, starting with the “**word or wisdom**” (v. 8). Though this gift is closely related to the second gift listed—the “**word of knowledge**”—we will examine them separately to better understand their distinct nuances. Paul likely places these gifts first not because they are more important or significant than any of the others, but because they were among the most misused and abused within the Corinthian church, along with the gift of speaking in tongues. He wanted the Corinthians to recognize that all spiritual gifts must work together for a healthy, thriving church. No one gift is more important than the other. Every gift must operate cohesively, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, to accomplish God's purpose for the body.

For example, Paul spends nearly one-fifth of this letter contrasting the wisdom of God with the so-called human wisdom that many in the Corinthian church seemed to value ([1 Cor 1:12-3:32](#)). He reminds them that true wisdom for life—both for our future, eternal life spent with God and for the transformed life we live now in Christ—can only come from God through the Spirit ([1 Cor 2:6-16](#)). To live successfully by God's standards, we must pursue His wisdom rather than the wisdom of the world. Yet many, like the Corinthians, continue to elevate and emulate human wisdom, which Scripture bluntly exposes as nothing more than sheer foolishness in God's sight ([1 Cor 3:19](#)).

This same tendency persists in our culture today—and, unfortunately, within the church as well. Instead of seeking clarity in Scripture and prayerfully asking God for wisdom ([Jas 1:5-8](#)), many turn to the world first. They pursue the quick fixes and instant gratification promised by self-help books, podcasts, TED talks, and television shows that claim to have the “keys” to a better life or a solution for trauma. Others place their trust in secular counseling or therapy, relying exclusively on human psychology rather than addressing the deeper spiritual issues that only Scripture can truly illuminate. Still others seek advice by polling friends and family, moving from person to person until someone validates the decision they’ve already made. What often masquerades as seeking “wise counsel” becomes little more than a search for affirmation—a way to justify doing what one already intended, regardless of what God’s Word clearly teaches.



Question # 8

Whose wisdom am I relying on most—God or the world’s? What influences my decisions and priorities every day?

“The word of wisdom” mentioned here is not some homespun logic or purely practical insight gained from experience—except for that which God has taught us in connection with His Word. It is wisdom that only the Holy Spirit can impart, grounded firmly in the truth of Scripture. Since wisdom and knowledge are closely related, it’s important to understand the difference between the two. Knowledge centers on content—the “facts and figures” one might call “book learning.” For instance, knowledgeable people are adept at recalling information, answering questions, and excel in activities like *Jeopardy* and *Trivial Pursuit*.

Wisdom, on the other hand, focuses on application. It is “street smarts” or “common sense” shaped and guided by the Word of God—the ability to apply knowledge in a practical, faithful way that is aligned with Scripture. In this sense,

the two gifts work hand in hand. To apply wisdom effectively, one must first have knowledge—in this case, a solid understand of God’s Word. Conversely, knowledge without the ability to apply it wisely is equally ineffective. Both gifts must work together, and often operate in tandem with other gifts, such as teaching, preaching or prophecy, evangelism, and administrations—those gifts that involve communication and the faithful application of truth of God’s Word.

Question
9

At what times in life have you experienced knowledge and wisdom working together through teaching or counseling to communicate God’s truth? What did you learn from that example?

To be clear, every believer has some measure of wisdom and knowledge, even if he or she does not specifically have these gifts. Not possessing them doesn’t excuse any of us from diligently studying Scripture, learning its content, and applying its truth to our lives. Rather, it means that God has granted certain people with a special ability to help the church better understand and apply His Word. Nevertheless, we are all called to seek God’s wisdom—not to rely on our own human understanding ([Prov 3:5-6](#))—but to live faithfully according to His Word as the Holy Spirit leads and enables us.

How do we see this gift of wisdom applied in the church today? It is primarily expressed through the gifts and offices that focus on the communication of God’s Word: teaching, prophesying or preaching, evangelizing, and providing biblical counseling. The gift of wisdom is not simply about

giving advice or sharing an opinion. It’s about declaring what God says in Scripture and applying it to how we live! Everyone has an opinion, and many are quick to offer it—whether about marriage, parenting, work relationships, finances, or the like. But the more vital question is: What does God’s Word say? And how can it be applied practically so that we can bear spiritual fruit in our lives?

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3:5-6

Just because we think we “know” something doesn’t qualify us to give counsel or

Instruct

guidance. True spiritual wisdom depends on the Holy Spirit's leading, allowing us to help others apply God's truth rightly in their lives! In fact, this was Paul's main point in 1 Corinthians 12:1-3—that those who are truly spiritual must speak and live consistently with the Word of God. Their lives and their counsel should both reflect the character of Christ and remain faithful to the truth of Scripture.

Question
10

In what specific ways can people with the gift of wisdom use it to glorify God and benefit the church?

Not only does God use those with the gift of wisdom to counsel others in rightly applying His Word, but He also uses them to help restore those caught in sin by pointing them to repentance in Christ. In Galatians 6:1, Paul instructs those who are “spiritual”—that is led by the Spirit—to go and restore someone caught in sin.

God grants these individuals both the insight to discern the right application of His truth and the ability to communicate it effectively and lovingly. Just as a parent must understand a child's unique needs to discipline effectively—for each child responds differently—the same is true when addressing sin within the church. God gives certain

"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted."

Galatians 6:1

people the wisdom to approach each situation in a way that encourages repentance, promotes restoration, and ultimately produces the most fruitful results.

As we have established, the second gift Paul mentions—**the word of knowledge**—is closely related to the gift of wisdom. Like wisdom, this gift was misused by the Corinthians who turned their “knowledge” into a source of pride and arrogance ([1 Cor 8:1-3](#)). Therefore, Paul reminds them, “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” ([1 Cor 8:1](#)). True knowledge is not about self-promotion or gaining superiority over others. It is a Spirit-given ability to understand and recall Scripture for the benefit of the church. Those with this gift often have a deep familiarity with God's

Word an aptitude for memorization, and a sensitivity in pointing others to the right passage at the right moment. In doing so, they help the body locate, understand, and apply biblical truth in a way that leads to obedience, growth, and maturity.

Question
11

In what specific ways do you see the gift of knowledge applied in the church today?

Once again, the gift of knowledge is closely connected with the gifts that communicate the gospel. Those called to teach must have a solid grasp of Scripture if they are to faithfully and effectively proclaim it. Without this foundation, confusion and error can easily arise. In fact, Paul rebuked some in Ephesus for attempting to teach God's Word despite their ignorance saying, "Desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm" ([1 Tim 1:7](#)). In other words, they tried to teach truths that they didn't truly comprehend themselves!

Therefore, the gift of knowledge should be evident in anyone serving in an office or role of spiritual leadership within the church. How can one faithfully guide others if he doesn't first understand what Scripture teaches? This applies not only to pastors and teachers, but also to apologists (i.e., those who defend the truthfulness of Scripture), devotional writers, authors of curriculum, and anyone who communicates God's truth. Without this gift, leaders risk leading others astray due to ignorance, misunderstanding, and distortion of God's Word.



The third gift God grants through the Spirit is an extra measure of **faith** (v. 9). Like **wisdom** and **knowledge**, every believer must have some degree of **faith**—for it is only through trusting in Christ that we can be saved and surrender our lives into His care. God also calls every believer to continue exercising **faith** daily, relying on Him to guide us and meet our needs. The gift of **faith**, however, is more than just "saving faith" or

Instruct

trusting in Christ to meet our daily needs. It is a supernatural, Spirit-led **faith** that looks beyond our circumstances to trust God even when things seem impossible.

What does this extra measure of **faith** look like? The best way to understand this gift is to point to concrete examples in Scripture. Consider the remarkable faith of Noah, who built an ark when it had never yet rained upon the earth and though he faced relentless mockery from others ([Gen 2:5-6](#); [Gen 6-9](#); [Heb 11:7](#)). Or the profound **faith** of Abraham, who was willing to sacrifice Isaac—the son of promise—believing that God could raise him from the dead ([Heb 11:19](#)). Remember the bold faith of Joshua and Caleb, who trusted that God would deliver the fortified cities and mighty people of the Promised Land into Israel’s hand, despite the fears and objections of the other ten spies ([Num 13](#)). Think of the unwavering faith of David, who, as a young man, went into battle with only a slingshot and five smooth stones to defeat the giant Goliath when all of Israel’s soldiers—including King Saul—cowered in fear ([1 Sam 17](#)). Reflect on the steadfast faith of Daniel, who refused to stop praying openly to the Lord despite a royal edict that condemned such defiance to the lion’s den ([Dan 6](#)). Recall the unshakable faith of Daniel’s three friends, who refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar’s statue, knowing it would mean being thrown into a fiery furnace ([Dan 3](#)). Finally, consider the faith of Peter and John, who stood before the Sanhedrin—the very court that condemned Jesus to death—and refused to stop preaching, teaching, and ministering in His name.

Question
12

What modern examples of this extraordinary measure of faith can you cite in addition to these biblical examples?

Each of these examples demonstrates the nature of this gift of **faith**: a supernatural confidence that God will accomplish His purposes, regardless of how impossible the circumstances may appear from our perspective. At times, the Lord calls us to step out in **faith** and trust Him to do the extraordinary—things that seem far beyond our ability and capability but are fully possible for Him ([Mark 10:27](#)). Today, this call to tackle the “impossible” takes many forms: starting a new ministry, raising support for a crucial project, reaching a certain person or people group with the gospel, confronting sin and corruption in the culture, or standing up to the government when the laws of the land contradict the Word of God.

Often the outcomes in such scenarios seem far-fetched and hopeless. We may frequently feel overwhelmed and outnumbered, pressured by the culture given in, stay silent, or conform to the status quo. The numbers and resources might not add up when we break them down, but still God has called us to trust Him and serve Him faithfully as His people so He can work through us to accomplish His will. Those with the gift of **faith** will be forerunners

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Mark 10:27

and encouragers. They are the first to step out—like Joshua and Caleb—trusting that God can do the impossible when we surrender ourselves fully to Him. These individuals don't just model bold faith through their personal actions; they also become catalysts who inspire others to trust God, yielding themselves wholly to His will, so that together as His church we can witness Him doing mighty things beyond what we could ever ask or imagine when we are rooted and grounded in His love ([Eph 3:20-21](#)).

Question
13

Who do you know that has the gift of faith? How have they encouraged you to strengthen your own faith and step out in faith in your

As with every gift, we must be certain that we are truly being led by the Spirit, lest we mistake our own ideas and desires for God's call to step out in "faith." Such misguided ventures will always end in dysfunction and disaster. True faith is never an excuse to charge ahead of God. It's not a matter of trusting ourselves but of trusting the Lord to work through us. We must remember to follow Him, rather than trying to lead Him where we want to go and then labeling it as "faith." Above all, true faith means following wherever He leads and serving however He chooses to use us.

Exercising the gift of **faith** doesn't mean acting impulsively or making reckless decisions based on emotions or feelings. Nor does it justify ignoring wisdom and discarding sound judgment. Those with this gift will still count the cost and seek the Lord's direction ([Luke 14:28-33](#)). They will move forward measured in their response,

prudent in their planning, and tenacious in their obedience. They will proceed with confidence and persistence—undaunted by the circumstances and determined to overcome any obstacle that may arise with the help of the Lord.

For example, many believers fear engaging the culture and so withdraw into the safety of a holy huddle, surrounded only by other believers who share their same convictions. They may acknowledge the decay of society but feel the task is too overwhelming, too costly, and too “impossible” for the church to address. Yet how can we impact the culture if we isolate ourselves and fail to proclaim the gospel boldly—both verbally and visually through the witness of our transformed lives? Those with the gift of **faith** will rise to the challenge. They will recognize that no matter how few workers, how great the needs, or how overwhelming the odds, God can accomplish the “impossible” when His people step out in **faith**. They will live and speak boldly, confident that the Spirit of the Lord can and will work through their faithful obedience to transform the hearts and minds of the lost for His glory.



In the closing credits of the 1980s show *Knight Rider*, the voice-over of the narrator reminds the protagonist, Michael Knight, that “one man can make a difference.” As believers, we recognize that we can’t make a lasting difference in our own power and strength. Yet when we submit ourselves to the Lord and allow His Spirit to work through us, together as one body we can truly make an eternal impact! That’s why we so desperately need those with the gift of faith. We need them to lead the way—to point us to the Lord, to show us what it looks like to trust Him when the way forward seems impossible, and to inspire others to follow God’s lead. We need them to set the example, to encourage and challenge the rest of us to step out in faith, and to help the church remember that with God, all things are possible.

The final gift we’ll discuss this week is the **gift of healings** (v. 9). Today, this is one of the most misunderstood—and often abused—gifts in the church. Sadly, charlatans,

especially some who present themselves as televangelists, have highjacked this gift for notoriety and personal gain. They manipulate people, suggesting that a monetary donation as an “act of faith” can secure healing for all types of diseases or maladies. As a result, many churches have shied away from this gift altogether, fearing its distortion and spectacle. Yet when exercised as God intended, this gift is not about showmanship or greed but about serving others and bringing glory to Him.

So, how does God use this **gift of healings** in the church today? Far from merely invoking a public scene where someone is pushed over and declared “cured” of cancer, paralysis, or some other disease, God often works through those with a special interest in medical care. These individuals further refine their gifts by pursuing careers as doctors, nurses, physical therapists, or other medical professionals. Through their knowledge and training, they have the ability not only to help people physically but also minister to them spiritually—praying with patients, sharing the gospel, and extending the love of Christ during difficult moments.

Moreover, God can use this gift within the church as well—to respond to medical emergencies, offering life-sustaining treatment until help arrives. These individuals can also provide first aid, serve as medical staff for church camps and retreats, or utilize their training for medical missions both locally and internationally. In this context, the **gift of healings** is about using medical knowledge, skill, and compassion as tools for God’s glory and the advancement of the gospel.

Similarly, those with medical training can also share their expertise with the church in proactive ways by offering seminars on topics such as recognizing the warning signs of strokes or heart attacks, understanding fall



prevention, administering basic first aid, or teaching simple medical procedures that can help keep people safe. In this way, the **gift of healings** is not only about responding to people in crisis but also preventing it. Furthermore, God has gifted some within the church with a special interest in nutrition and dietary health. So many

illnesses and ailments arise from imbalanced diets and unwise eating habits. The Lord has placed people within the body of Christ who can educate others, helping them to make wiser, healthier choices about how they eat and care for their bodies. In doing so, these servants enable the church to live more faithfully as stewards of the life and health God has granted to each of us—allowing us to minister longer and more effectively as God gives us breath.

Question
14

How else might we see the gift of healings used in the church today?

Some might argue that these examples of healing reflect only natural talents and abilities, since medical professionals in the secular world do the very same things. They would further contend that the healings we see in the New Testament were truly miraculous—acts only God could accomplish—such as restoring sight to the blind, making the paralyzed walk, delivering those possessed by demons, and even raising the dead. It's true that Jesus performed such miracles, but His purpose is very specific: to demonstrate His identity as the Messiah, the Son of God, come in the flesh ([John 20:30-31](#)). The apostles likewise performed miraculous healings on certain occasions—selectively and intentionally—to confirm and validate the work of Jesus as the rise Savior ([Acts 2:22-39](#)).

Yet even in these instances, the focus was never exclusively on the physical healing itself. The greater emphasis was always on the spiritual healing that Christ came to offer through His salvific work on the cross. As Matthew reminds us, "Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" ([Matt 9:35](#)). The miracles were signs pointing to who Jesus is and to the deeper, eternal work He came to accomplish in the hearts of mankind.

Can God still heal in miraculous ways? In short, yes—He can. But He doesn't promise to heal every person in every circumstance, and when He does heal, it's always for a specific purpose: to point people to salvation in His Son, not to create a public spectacle. At the same time, God may also choose not to heal, using that very circumstance as a testimony of His grace and glory. For example, the Apostle Paul pleaded with the Lord to remove the thorn in his flesh—whatever it may have been—

but God chose to leave it in place, supplying Paul with the grace and strength he needed to persevere ([2 Cor 12:7-10](#)). As with every spiritual gift, we must seek God's will through prayer. We are not called to command God to heal on demand, but to pray in humble obedience submitting ourselves to His sovereign will. As John reminds us, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" ([1 John 5:14](#))

Question
15

Why is it more important to focus on spiritual healing (salvation) rather than physical healing? How can you use your gift in this area to help point others to Christ, looking beyond their circumstances?

Those with this gift must be extremely cautious that it doesn't become a stumbling block—causing others to doubt their faith or wonder if God is withholding healing because they've done something wrong. An overemphasis on physical healing can distract from the message of the gospel. If Jesus Himself prioritized preaching the gospel over healing, that must be our priority too. What purpose does it serve for God to "heal" a person physically, only for them to spend eternity in hell separated from Him? Share the gospel first. Then, pray faithfully that God will reveal Himself to that person in the midst of their circumstances. Encourage them to look beyond their illness and to see God at work, trusting in His greater purpose—just as Job looked beyond his physical plight and loss to trust in God's sovereignty, confident that the Lord would deliver Him, whether in life or death. In doing so, we point others to the ultimate healing found in Christ, regardless of the outcome of their earthly situation.

Question
16

Have you ever seen someone discouraged because God choose not to "heal" them physically even though they prayed faithfully? How can you help them to see and understand God's greater purpose for their lives?

Just as every member of the United States Army has a specific role to play, every believer in the church has a God-ordained role to fulfill. Each part must work together seamlessly to advance the gospel into all the world and help the church mature. The key to this unity and fruitfulness is allowing ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit—relying not on our own strength and talent but wholly submitting ourselves to the Lord and trusting Him to work through us. When we do, we will see fruit in the ministry to which God has called us, both individually and collectively. Though we are many members, it is one Spirit who guides us, empowers us, and works in and through us. In doing so, we reveal Christ to the world—through our words, through our attitudes, and through our actions—so that others might come to know Him and find life through His sacrificial death.

Incorporate

Do you tend to focus more on personal needs or serving others? What might need to shift in your thinking so that you can use your spiritual gift more effectively to help the church grow?

What are ways you can help create an environment in the church where trusting God to do the “impossible” can allow the congregation to flourish?

How can you encourage and support those in the church who have different gifts than your own? How can these gifts work together with the gift(s) that God has revealed He has given to you?

Journal: Document God's Work

July 13, 2025

Spiritual Gifts



One Spirit, Same Mission

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

Focal Verse:

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

[back to
Table of
Contents](#)

1 Corinthians 12:11

Introduce

Last month, I toured the Kennedy Space Center in Titusville, Florida, where NASA has preserved the original control room from the Apollo 11 mission. Today, it serves as an interactive display, highlighting one of America's greatest accomplishments in the space race. We might not recognize the significance of the mission by its official name—Apollo 11—but we will most certainly recognize it by the names of its crew: Michael Collins, Buzz Aldrin, and Neil Armstrong, the first men to land and walk on the surface of the moon. As I sat in that room in Florida, watching the hundreds of gauges, indicators, and displays come to life and listening to the radio transmission from July 16, 1969, play in the background, I was struck by how many people it took working together—united by a common goal—to make this historic mission a reality.

While much of the acclaim and notoriety go to the astronauts—especially Neil Armstrong, who took that first historic step onto lunar soil—the success of the mission depended on countless individuals, many of whom we'll never know by name. They worked quietly behind the scenes to make it all happen. Just for a moment, think about the



engineers and scientists who designed the Saturn V rocket and command module to carry the astronauts safely into space—and all the machinists and metalworkers who physically built them. Consider the hundreds of computer programmers and technicians who input data, tested complex systems, and monitored thousands of sensors. Think of the medical personnel and nutritionists who trained the astronauts, prepared them for the grueling demands of space travel, and developed regimens to keep them healthy in orbit. And then there was launch day—requiring teams of meteorologists to monitor weather conditions, and hundreds more to transport, position, and prepare the rocket on the launch pad. Every detail mattered. Every person had a specific role to play.

On September 12, 1962, President Kennedy issued the call to send a man to the moon and the men and women of NASA answered that call and accepted the mission.

Introduce

Everyone, from those behind the scenes to those most visible to the public, worked tirelessly together to achieve that one common goal. It required dedication, hard work, and, in some cases, tremendous sacrifice. It wasn't an easy challenge, but our nation rose to meet it. Similarly, as the church, God has issued a call to us—not to send a man to Mars, but to take the gospel to the world. As His people, have we truly answered that call and accepted His mission? It requires all of us working together—whether we serve behind the scenes or in public view. Every role matters. Every believer plays a specific and crucial part. May we unite in the Spirit, banding together to fulfill this God-given mission.

Key
Question

How are you actively involved in fulfilling our God-given mission right now?

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

ONE SPIRIT, SAME MISSION:

Last week, we learned that God has equipped every believer with at least one spiritual gift to manifest the Spirit “for the profit of all.” Those around us should see clear evidence of the Spirit at work in our lives—both through the transformation He brings and the fruit He produces as He empowers us to serve using our gifts. As we use these gifts, others should see the unmistakable hand of the Master accomplishing things in us that are impossible in our own strength—so that these works may point them to the salvation and life found only in Christ. In this way, the Spirit enables us to bear fruit through our service—the visible evidence that God is living and working in us.

Since every believer has received at least one spiritual gift, we are all called to bear fruit in the areas of service God has assigned to us. But we cannot bear fruit unless we are led by the Spirit—plugged into His power, so to speak. Have you ever called tech support about a malfunctioning computer, only to be asked the most basic and infuriating question: “Is it plugged



in? Are you sure it’s getting power?” As annoying as that may be, it’s a valid question—because without being connected to the proper power source, a computer is essentially useless. It might look modern, sleek, and fully functional on the outside, but it cannot do anything on its own. Jesus makes the same point about those who try to live and serve apart from His Spirit: “I am the vine and you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in Him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” ([John 15:5](#)).

Even when a computer is plugged in, it still depends on the user to input data, control operations, and guide its function. Despite all the advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI), a computer still only operates within the framework its designer or its programmer has created. It must obey the logic it was given. Likewise, we must fully surrender ourselves to the Lord and listen closely for His direction through the Spirit. To

function as God intended—to use our gifts in fruitful service—we must follow the of design and boundaries He has established for us. This means relying on His power and submitting to His leadership—a truth we must keep in mind as we continue our study of the spiritual gifts.

Question
1

What are some ways believers might look functional on the outside but are actually disconnected from the true source of power through the Spirit of Christ?

The fifth spiritual gift listed in 1 Corinthians 12:10 is often translated as the performing or **working of miracles**. The word translated **miracles** (*dunamis*) is more commonly rendered “power” throughout the New Testament. For instance, Jesus uses this word in Acts 1:8 when commissioning His followers: “But you shall receive *power* when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” In both Acts 1:8 and 1 Corinthians 12:10, **miracles** or power (*dunamis*) carries the sense of supernatural empowerment—divine activity beyond human capability, clearly pointing to the work of the Holy Spirit through believers.

In this sense, **the working of miracles** may overlap somewhat with the gift of “healings” mentioned in the previous verse. However, here, it more broadly refers to any supernatural act—not limited to physical healing alone. The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke)

frequently describe Jesus’ **miracles** in terms of His power (*dunamis*) over nature, disease, demons, and even death ([Mark 2:10](#); [Luke 4:36](#); [5:17](#), [24](#); [6:19](#)). Beyond healings, Jesus also turned water into wine ([John 2:1-12](#)), calmed a raging storm ([Matt 8:23-27](#)), cast out demons ([Matt 8:28-39](#)), walked on water ([Matt 14:22-33](#); [John 6:12-22](#)), paid

I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me.

John 5:36

the temple tax through a coin in a fish's mouth (Matt 17:24-27), fed 5000 and 4000 people ([John 6:1-15](#); [Mark 8:1-12](#)), and raised the dead ([Luke 8:40-56](#); [John 11:38-44](#)).

Moreover, the Gospel of John particularly emphasizes the evangelistic nature of Jesus' **miracles** by referring them as "signs" rather than powers or wonders ([John 2:23](#); [3:2](#); [6:2](#), [26](#); [7:31](#); [9:16](#); [11:47](#); [12:37](#); [20:30](#)). By doing so, John underscores their primary function: to reveal Jesus' divine identity and affirm the truth of His message. John even concludes His Gospel with this declaration: "These [signs] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" ([John 20:31](#)).

Jesus also entrusted this power to His disciples, enabling them to perform similar acts in His name ([Matt 10:1](#); [Mark 3:15](#); [6:7](#); [16:17](#); [Luke 9:1](#); [10:19](#)). In the book of Acts, we witness the apostles continuing these miraculous works as evidence of Christ's ongoing ministry through them. For example, Peter raised Tabitha (also known as Dorcas) from the dead ([Acts 9:36-43](#)), and Paul cast out a demonic spirit from a slave girl in Philippi ([Acts 16:16-18](#)), raised a man from the dead who fell from a window during his sermon ([Acts 20:9-20](#)), and he himself survived a poisonous snake bite on the island of Malta ([Acts 28:3-6](#)).

Like the gift of healings, **the working of miracles** was always closely tied to the proclamation of the gospel. As Paul affirms, "I will dare not to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God" ([Rom 15:18-19](#)). Through this declaration, Paul does two things. First, he credits Christ as the true source of all his ministry accomplishments. Second, he highlights the transforming power of the gospel through the work of the Holy Spirit. In doing so, Paul shows that the purpose of such miracles was always to point people to salvation in Christ—not to draw attention to the messenger.

Hebrews 2:3-4 captures this same sentiment: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" The performing of **miracles** demonstrates the continuity of Jesus' ministry through the church, pointing people to the truthfulness of His message and the hope of salvation found only in Him through His completed work on the cross.

Like the gift of healings, **the working of miracles** can be abused—even counterfeited. Jesus Himself warned about this when addressing the topic of “signs and wonders.” He cautioned His disciples about the rise of false messiahs and prophets who would perform impressive feats that misdirect and mislead: “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” ([Mark 13:22](#); [see also Matt 24:24](#)). This warning remains relevant today. We must exercise great discernment when evaluating such apparent “**miracles**,” ensuring that we’re not drawn away from our true mission: proclaiming the gospel of Christ.

Unfortunately, much of what is promoted as “miraculous” in our time falls into the category of deception. These displays often lack spiritual authenticity and instead serve as tools for self — promotion, manipulation, or financial gain. Such counterfeit miracles distract from the gospel rather than point people to Christ. As with all spiritual gifts, the **working of miracles** must be tested against the truth of Scripture, grounded in the power of the Holy Spirit, and aimed at glorifying Christ—not exalting the individual.

"For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

Mark 24:24

Question
2

How do we see this counterfeit use of “miracles” in our world today? in ministry?

Can God still work these same kinds of **miracles** today if He so chooses? In short, yes—He absolutely can. As the sovereign God, He retains the power to perform any miracles He has ever done. However, He also knows what will be most effective in each generation to draw people to the truth of the gospel. One reason we may witness fewer “**miracles**” today is because of the widespread counterfeiting and misuse of this spiritual gift, which often obscures rather than illuminates the work of God. But another reason is that we already possess the complete revelation of Jesus Christ through the Scriptures. We no longer need additional “signs” to confirm who He is or what He has done.

Scripture itself affirms the limited effectiveness of **miracles** or “signs” in producing

lasting faith. John writes, “But although He [Jesus] had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him” ([John 12:37](#)). **Miracles** can support faith and reaffirm one’s belief, but they cannot substitute for it. Jesus also rebuked the religious leaders of His day who demanded signs as a condition for belief: “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah” ([Matt 12:39](#)). In other words, Jesus pointed to His resurrection as the ultimate sign—a sign sufficient for all people in all generations. His victory over death is definitive proof that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and the only Savior of the world.

Question # 3

Why is the empty tomb sufficient evidence for someone to believe in Christ?

In our so-called “enlightened” society, God knows that **miracles** would have limited success in affirming Christ’s identity and leading people to salvation in Him. Today, **miracles** are often met with skepticism. People tend explain them away with natural causes—even when those explanations fail to account for the timing or circumstances. In most cases, they dismiss them as mere coincidence or luck. But the same cannot be said of the resurrection. When examined carefully and honestly, the evidence for the resurrection stands apart. No natural cause or physical phenomenon can adequately explain the empty tomb. Either Jesus truly rose from the dead—just as He claimed He would—or He didn’t. And if He did, then, He is indeed the Son of God, the Messiah. Therefore, the resurrection offers irrefutable proof of who Jesus is and affirms that eternal life is found in Him alone.

So, is the **working of miracles** still an active gift if we already have all the proof we need through the resurrection? And if so, what does it look like when properly exercised today? We must remember that it is God who performs **miracles** through His servants—not for spectacle or self-glory, but as a means of pointing people to



Christ and leading them to salvation. When we interpret **miracles** in light of their scriptural purpose—as signs that affirm Christ’s identity, lead people to salvation, and demonstrate the continuation of His work among His people—we can begin to see that the radical transformation of human lives through salvation in Christ is one of God’s most powerful **miracles** today.

Chief among the **miracles** we witness in our time is the transformation of lives. This is the miracle God most often uses now to draw people to Himself, especially since we have the complete revelation of Scripture—both the Old and New Testament—as our guide. These **miracles** happen through the proclamation of the gospel and the Spirit’s power to radically change hearts. Yet we often fail to recognize them as “**miracles**.” But by definition, they are. True change in our hearts and minds always requires supernatural intervention—something only God can do. On our own, we are powerless to change. It’s only by God’s grace that we are made new.

Our transformed lives, then, become living signposts—testimonies of Christ’s ongoing work. While a so-called “enlightened” society may try to explain away **miracles** involving the physical realm or natural phenomena, it cannot easily dismiss the miracle of personal transformation. One cannot argue with the evidence of the change in a life once ruled by sin but now surrendered to Christ. Paul highlights this reality in his praise of the Thessalonians, whose changed lives bore witness to the gospel’s power. He writes, “For they themselves [the people of Macedonia and Achaia] declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” ([1 Thess 1:9](#)). Their transformation spoke louder than any physical sign—and pointed people directly to Jesus.

Question
4

To what transformation in your own lives or in the lives of others can you point as a testimony to God’s miraculous work?

This does not mean that God cannot still do miraculous things like control the weather, feed 5000 with five loaves of bread and two fish, cast out demons, or raise the dead through His servants. As the sovereign God of the universe, He can do any of these things. But when He does, it is always in alignment with His divine purpose and for His glory! God typically chooses to work through the kinds of **miracles** that are most effective in reaching a particular generation, in a particular place, at a particular time,

Instruct

with the gospel. And while every believer is called to share the gospel in daily life, sometimes God calls certain individuals into especially difficult—even seemingly impossible—situations from a human perspective. Some are sent to hostile cultures where Christians face persecution and even death. Others are called to minister among addicts, inmates, or those often considered by society to be “irredeemable.” Still others are sent to reach those who are bitter, wounded, or angry with God—including atheists who deny His very existence because of the evil and suffering they see in the world.

And yet, when the gospel is faithfully shared in these places—when someone repents and turns to Christ—we witness a miracle. The transformation of a heart hardened against God is no less supernatural than any physical healing or sign. At the same time, we must not overlook the miracle of salvation in those whom



the world considers “good.” Regardless of how we may rank our sin or compare ourselves to others, every person is in need of God’s grace and His salvation. Whether someone is rescued from a life of crime or from a life of quiet self-righteousness, it is a miracle when God saves a soul and brings transformation. In every case, salvation is a supernatural act of God, revealing His power, mercy, and glory for all to see.

Question
5

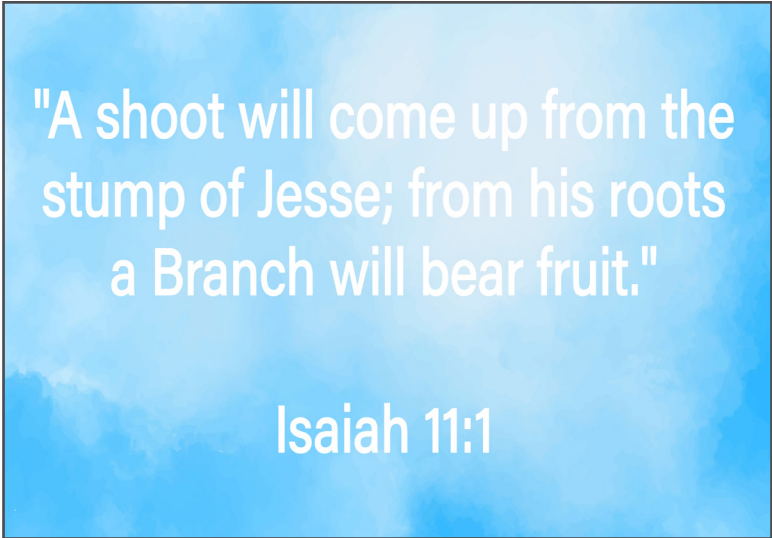
What miracles have I witnessed that testify to God’s power to save? How might God be calling me to step out in faith—perhaps into a difficult situation or unlikely place to share the gospel?

The sixth gift Paul lists is **prophecy**. While this gift can be misused, it is more often misunderstood today, so it’s important to define clearly what it entails. Broadly speaking, **prophecy** refers to the communication of a message from the Lord. These messages typically have a two-part structure: 1) a description of the present situation along with a call to immediate obedience, and 2) a future response from God based on

the people's reaction to His message. In the Old Testament, prophets primarily focused on the present. Their role was to expose the people's disobedience—their current sins—and call them to repent, that is, to turn from their sins and return to the Lord. This call to immediate obedience formed the heart of their message.

The predictive element was secondary. Prophets warned that if the people refused to repent, God would send judgment. For Israel, this often came in the form of military conquest—such as invasions by Assyria or Babylon—which resulted in exile and the loss of their land. Yet out of His grace and mercy, God would also promise future restoration for the faithful remnant. He reassured them that His blessings would continue because of their obedience—and ultimately, that those blessings would be fulfilled through the long-awaited Messiah, who would bring salvation and restoration to the entire world, both Jews and Gentiles alike.

While the predictive elements play an important role in prophecy—revealing God's redemptive plan for humanity and the specific actions He would take—the prophet's primary message still centered on his own time. Today, however, we often reverse that emphasis. **Prophecy** is viewed almost exclusively as foretelling the future, often disconnected from any present or moral spiritual call. But this popular perception doesn't reflect the biblical pattern—except perhaps in apocalyptic sections of Scripture, such as Revelation 4-22, which focus heavily on future events.



"A shoot will come up from the
stump of Jesse; from his roots
a Branch will bear fruit."

Isaiah 11:1

Even in prophetic writings that include predictive elements, the core message still addresses the people's current spiritual condition. God's warnings about the future are almost always tied to their present behavior and include a call to repent of their wickedness and disobedience. In short, biblical **prophecy** is primarily about forth-telling—declaring God's truth concerning the present—and only secondarily about foretelling the future. Recognizing this helps us better understand both the nature of **prophecy** in Scripture and the spiritual gift Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12.

The gift of **prophecy** can be broadly defined as the communication of a message

Instruct

from God that calls people to respond in faithful obedience. Today, however, we no longer receive new revelation from God, since His complete message is preserved in the Old and New Testaments. As a result, the office of prophet no longer exists in the same way it did in biblical times. While God may still prompt individuals to speak on particular issues and grant them insight and understanding into certain topics, He does not impart any new self-revelation about Himself or His work in the world. Anyone speaking on behalf of God—especially those who claim to have received a “new” message—must be evaluated by the same biblical standards: 1) does their message align with the teaching of Scripture, and 2) does it come to pass ([Deut 18:20-22](#))?

Those with the gift of **prophecy** help others to understand God’s Word and respond to His call to action. This gift typically operates in conjunction with the other gifts of communication—such as teaching, preaching, evangelism, and the like. For example, both a lesson plan and a sermon outline follow the same two-part biblical pattern described



above: they begin by examining the current situation, then explain what God says in Scripture about that particular issue, and finally call the audience to respond in faithful obedience. Usually, there is also a warning about the consequences of disobedience and a call to repentance, if needed. These elements may not always appear in a fixed order, but if you pay close attention, they are always present—or at least, they should be.

Question
6

In what ways do we see the gift of prophecy used in the church today?

When rightly applied, the gift of **prophecy** helps the church grow in faith by understanding and practicing God’s Word. This is not a responsibility to take lightly. Like teachers, those who communicate God’s truth will “receive a stricter judgment,” for our words carry the power to mislead if they are not properly aligned with God’s intent ([Jas 3:1ff](#)). **Prophecy** should not intimidate us or make us think we must predict specific future events. God has already given us all the revelation we need in His Word to

understand how the story ends! Instead, we should use the gift of prophecy to counsel others concerning what God's Word says about navigating daily life. The "predictive" element comes into play when we warn of the consequences of disregarding God's commands. But we don't have to speculate about those consequences—God has clearly outlined them in Scripture.

Question
7

In whom do you see the gift of prophecy in our church?

The seventh gift counterbalances **prophecy: the discerning of spirits** (see [1 Cor 14:29](#)). In this context, discernment refers to the Spirit-enabled ability to distinguish truth from error. Scripture frequently warns that many will distort God's Word for personal gain, influenced by the god of this world—Satan ([2 Cor 4:4](#)). As John writes in Revelation, "The great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" ([Rev 12:9](#)).

Because of Satan's deceptive influence, many have become corrupted in their teaching. So, John cautions believers, "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world ([1 John 4:1-3](#)). Even Paul's teaching was not immune from distortion, as Peter explains: "And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures" ([2 Peter 3:15-16](#)).

It is the responsibility of every believer to be led by the Holy Spirit and know Scripture well enough to recognize error and avoid being led astray. No believer is without excuse, because the Spirit guides us into truth and helps us interpret the Word rightly

Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many.

Matthew 24:4-5

([2 Peter 1:19-21](#)). Yet, just as some are given an extra measure of faith (v. 9), God grants certain believers an extra measure of discernment to protect the church from falsehood and to keep it moving toward Christ.

For example, every believer should be able to recognize that anyone who claims to know the exact time of Christ's return is a false prophet. Jesus made it clear that no one knows the day or hour except the Father ([Matt 24:36](#); [Mark 13:32](#)). Scripture also describes His return as coming "like a thief in the night" ([1 Thess 5:2](#); [Rev 3:3](#)). A thief doesn't announce his arrival—he shows up suddenly and without warning. Although Jesus gave signs that would precede His second coming ([Matt 24:3-14](#)), no one can definitively declare the time. Yet this has not stopped some misguided individuals from trying, or others—sadly—from being deceived and following them.

Question
8

How has God given you some level of discernment in your walk with Him throughout the years?

More often, however, deception is subtle and difficult to detect—barely discernable. People who claim to speak on God's behalf may sometimes wrongly interpret natural disasters or personal misfortunes as signs of divine judgment. Job's friends offer a classic example. They insisted that his suffering must have been caused by some sin he—or perhaps someone in his family—had committed. Their assumption was based on a faulty understanding of God's justice: that He only allows devastating circumstances to afflict the wicked, never the righteous. But this conclusion was not only incorrect—it provoked God's anger. The Lord rebuked Eliphaz directly, saying, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has" ([Job 42:7](#)). These men made sweeping accusations without true discernment, failing to understand that even the righteous can suffer in a fallen world through no fault of their own. Rather than offering Job comfort and encouragement, they brought God's wrath upon themselves. Though their intentions may have seemed noble, their lack of discernment led them to misrepresent the situation—doing harm instead of good.

Question
9

In what way do you see a lack of discernment in the church today?

A modern example occurred in 2005 when a well-known televangelist claimed that Hurricane Katrina was God's judgment on the United States—specifically for the sin of abortion. Then, in May 2006, when the government released its official hurricane forecast, this same individual predicted that a series of storms—clearly referring to hurricanes—would strike the East Coast as further judgment. Yet not a single hurricane made landfall in the US that year! A discerning believer would have stepped back from the hype, evaluated the claims, and tested them against both Scripture and reality to see what God had truly said.

While it is true that God punishes sin and disciplines His children when we disobey, we must exercise discernment instead of rushing to conclusions. We are called to seek the Lord and examine the evidence carefully. In Scripture, God does not typically send a “prophet” after a disaster to explain why it



happened—that's backwards. Rather, He sends prophets beforehand to warn of impending judgment, giving people time to repent and turn from their sin. Consider the example of Jonah. God didn't unleash destruction on the Assyrians and then send Jonah afterward to explain it. On the contrary, He sent Jonah to confront their sin and call them to repentance—and when they responded, God relented from sending disaster.

Question
10

Who has God given the gift of discernment in our congregation?

Those with the gift of discernment not only protect the church from false teaching and prophecy but also help identify inauthentic—even dangerous—individuals who would tear the church apart rather than build it up. As Jesus warned, they can distinguish wolves from sheep ([Matt 7:15-23](#)). Led by the Spirit, such individuals are often able to perceive the true motives and attitudes of others by observing the fruit they bear. However, this does not mean they can determine whether someone is saved or not—that knowledge belongs to God alone, who sees

Instruct

the heart, and to individual himself. Their role is not to condemn, for judgment is reserved solely for God ([Matt 7:1-6](#)). Rather, the discerning believer helps the church remain spiritually healthy by evaluating teachings, behaviors, and decisions with spiritual clarity.

Those with this gift can also assist the church in identifying mature, faithful believers to fill key leadership roles and help in making significant decisions—whether relating to staffing, finances, facilities, or ministry strategy. For this reason, people with discernment often serve in advisory roles to the pastor, as deacons, or on committees such as trustees, stewardship, personnel, and gifts and grace. They can spot questionable business dealings or individuals seeking to exploit the church's generosity. They also offer wise counsel in matters of church discipline—ensuring the goal remains restoration, not division and disunity.

Discernment is just as valuable in one-on-one relationships within the church. Those with this gift can offer insight that helps others make wise, Spirit-led decisions in everyday life. For example, many young adults struggle with dating—not only with where to meet potential spouses but also in evaluating whether someone is truly a good match. Infatuation—especially when driven by outward appearance—can often blind a person to serious red flags that he or she would normally notice in others. What is overlooked now may lead to great heartache later. In such cases, the discerning eyes of godly friends, family members, and trusted believers—combined with prayer and seeking the will of the Lord—can help individuals make wiser choices.



Question
11

Is there an area in my life right now where I need more discernment? After praying and seeking the Lord, who in my life could offer me clarity through their Spirit-led discerning eyes?

The last two gifts Paul mentions in these verses are speaking in **different kinds of tongues** and the ability to interpret these **tongues**. Along with **prophecy**, the

these two gifts was one of the most abused gifts in Corinth, so Paul devotes significant attention to correcting the church's misunderstanding of **tongues** in the next two chapters. Today, it also remains one of the most misunderstood gifts in the entire list. For this reason, we must define what it means to speak in **different kinds of tongues** based on clear, undisputed biblical passages. The clearest example of speaking in **tongues** appears in Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost. There, the apostles—mostly uneducated and untrained men—astonished the crowd because, when they spoke, each person heard the gospel in his or her native language or dialect.

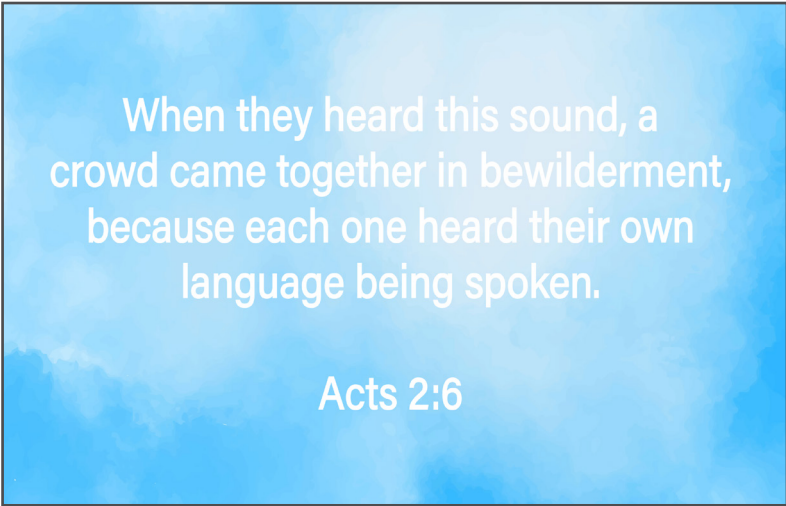
This account in Acts 2 offers us three key observations that will shape our understanding of what Paul is referring to as **tongues** in 1 Corinthians 12:10. First, the apostles spoke in an intelligible, recognizable language—not gibberish or repetitive syllables that resemble baby talk. The exact language spoken—whether ancient Hebrew, Greek, or another language since they would have primarily spoken Aramaic—is not specified, but it was a real human language, understood by the listeners.

Second, the miracle was not merely one of speaking, but also of hearing and understanding. People from all across the Roman Empire, who spoke a variety of native **tongues**, each *heard* the gospel message clearly in their own language! The Spirit enabled both the proclamation and the reception of the message. Third, speaking in **tongues** served a specific purpose:

proclaiming the gospel. Peter and the apostles were preaching the good news of Jesus Christ so that the people attending the Pentecost festival might, hear believe, and receive eternal life through Him. The gift was not for personal display, emotional experience, or spiritual elitism—it was

for the proclamation of the gospel and the building up of the church.

How do the gifts of speaking in **tongues** and **interpretation** function in the church today? Both gifts must operate together to proclaim the gospel effectively. **Interpretation** must always accompany the speaking of another language. After all, what benefit is there in delivering an important message from the Lord about salvation through Christ if no one can understand it? In the modern church, we often see these



When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.

Acts 2:6

gifts at work in individuals whom God has uniquely equipped to learn and speak other languages with remarkable ease. These believers are able to communicate in the language that most resonates with the people groups they're trying to reach. Likewise, God calls and equips some missionaries to go to cultures with no access to the Scripture, where an unfamiliar dialect is spoken. These individuals learn the language and translate God's Word into that dialect so that the people may hear and understand the message of salvation.

Question
12

When have you witnessed the speaking in other tongues properly applied in the church? What was the message delivered?

Several years ago, while on mission in East Africa, I often found myself in situations where no translator was available. Instead of withdrawing or keeping to myself, I still did my best to engage with the people around me. On one such occasion at an elementary school in Tanzania, I begin speaking the little Swahili I knew, and soon a crowd of children had gathered. I took out my Swahili New Testament and began reading passages that spoke about salvation. Although I didn't understand every Swahili word, I knew what the passage said in English. I could also tell the children were understanding because they would correct me when I mispronounced a word. After about half an hour, someone who could translate finally arrived, and we conducted an invitation. That day, several of the children repented of their sins and accepted Christ as their Savior—just from hearing God's Word read in their own language.

However, much of what we observe today in some charismatic circles—what is often characterized as speaking in **tongues**—is not an authentic manifestation of the Spirit. We can make this bold assertion for three reasons. First, many of these individuals who speak in unintelligible sounds have no interpreter present to translate the message. Second, these gatherings are frequently disorderly, with multiple people speaking over one another. But God is not a God of chaos and confusion—He is a God of order. If He gives a message, it is for the purpose of clear understanding and application. Third, much of what is falsely passed off as speaking in **tongues** is done to elevate the individual rather than glorify God. Many who attempt to practice this gift do so with an elitist, prideful spirit, which distracts from the gospel rather than enhancing its presentation. We'll examine this issue more fully when we study ch 14.

We must also be cautious of those who present themselves as knowledgeable or experts in biblical languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek—claiming to provide insights that scholars over the centuries have supposedly missed. While it's true that God gives some believers understanding of the original languages to help communicate His Word more clearly, such insight must always align with the context of the passage. It can never rest solely on a single word interpreted however the “expert” sees fit. Often, these interpreters fall into common fallacies—distorting the meaning of a word by reading modern ideas into it (an anachronism) or by breaking the word down into its component parts to extract some supposed hidden meaning. But language simply doesn't function that way. For example, we wouldn't define the word butterfly by dividing it into “butter” and “fly” and then trying to create meaning from those parts.

The meaning of any word depends on how it is used in context—as God, the divine Author, intended. This is a more complex issue than space allows us to fully explore here, but it's important to understand that the gift of **interpretation** and translation applies not only to spoken languages, but also to the original biblical languages. If we fail to handle them with care, we risk unintentionally distorting the meaning of God's Word.

Question
13

Why must we be extremely careful about making meaning dependent upon a single word apart from its context?

In verse 11, Paul offers a brief summary statement that ties together everything he has said so far. He reminds us that God has intentionally and purposefully placed each one of us exactly where He wants us. Each believer has been given a spiritual gift—personally equipped by God for a specific area of service and ministry that will best contribute to the growth and health of His church. But more importantly, Paul emphasizes that we are not left to carry out this monumental task in our own strength. The same Holy Spirit works within each one of us, empowering us to do the will of God. What would be impossible on our own becomes possible as we work together, through the Spirit, as one body. When we walk in unity and obedience, God will accomplish everything He has purposed through us. While our ultimate success depends upon God, our individual fruitfulness depends upon our obedience and faithfulness to the

Instruct

calling He has placed on our lives. So, let us ask ourselves: Am I using the gift God has given me? Am I serving in the way God has called me? Am I doing my part to fulfill His command to reach the world with the gospel?

Inspire

Just as the success of the Apollo program depended on every team member working together toward a common goal, the work of the church depends on every believer working together under the direction of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the global mission that God has given us. He has assigned each of us a unique role and equipped us with a distinctive spiritual gift to carry out His mission. Every part must work together seamlessly. Every part matters—whether highly visible or quietly working behind the scenes. God’s mission will not fail. It will be accomplished. The only question is this: Have I accepted the call and joined God in His mission using the gift He has given me, or am I sitting on the sidelines, watching the mission move forward without my participation?

Incorporate

Am I doing my part to fulfill the command God has given me to use my spiritual gifts to reach the world with the gospel? If so, what have I done and what fruit is there? If not, what needs to change?

How is the work of the Holy Spirit shown through my life in the way that I use my gift(s) and the fruitfulness that I bear? Are there any areas that I might be neglecting because I am trying to serve in my own strength? If so, what are these areas? What happens when we try to serve on our own strength and apart from our calling in the Lord?

Do I truly believe that my role in the body of Christ matters? If so, what is the evidence of that? How can I encourage someone else in the church who may feel that their role or gift doesn't matter? Why is it just as important for us to work as diligently behind the scenes as much as we do in more visible roles?

July 20, 2025



One Body, Many Parts, Pt. 1

[1 Corinthians 12:12-26](#)

Focal Verse:

"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."

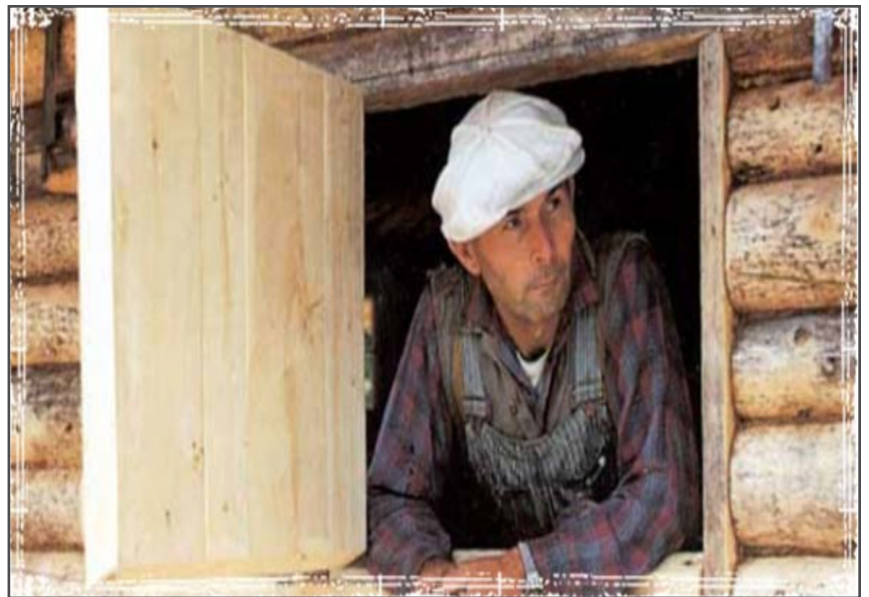
[back to
Table of
Contents](#)

1 Corinthians 12:12

Introduce

Several years ago, I saw a fascinating documentary called *Alone in the Wilderness*, featured on PBS during a telethon for our local station. It followed fifty-one-year-old Dick Proenneke, who in 1968 set out for a remote part of Alaska to escape the pressures of civilization and live a life of quiet isolation at his own pace. In what would eventually become part of Lake Clark National Park, he built a tiny homestead along the banks of Twin Lakes using only hand tools and the lumber he had harvested during a previous trip. Equipped with a 16mm camera, Proenneke documented his adventures on film while also recording his thought in a journal that vividly captured the emotional struggles he endured, the challenges he faced, and the milestones he achieved as he forged his new life in this isolated yet unforgiving, wilderness.

In a way, he became one of the earliest “survivalists”—a trend that has since grown popular on television and social media. Proenneke viewed his time in Alaska as an experiment, a test to determine whether he could truly survive without any outside assistance. In his journal, he writes, “I suppose, too, I was here to test myself—not that I had never done



it before, but this time it was to be a more thorough and lasting examination. What was I capable of that I didn’t know yet? Could I truly enjoy my own company for an entire year?”* Reflecting on the impact of the long, lonely Alaskan Winter, he wondered, “Would I love the isolation then with its bone-stabbing cold, its ghostly silence?”*

Truthfully, we don’t have to test ourselves in this way. Scripture clearly reveals that God has not created us to live such isolated independence. No matter how capable or self-sufficient we consider ourselves to be—or how appealing it might seem to “escape” society’s demands— God designed us to live in community. Certainly, Scripture affirms times of solitude for the purpose of connecting with God through prayer and Bible study ([Matt 6:5-6](#)), or for physical rest and renewal ([Exod 20:8-11](#); [Mark 2:27](#)). Even Jesus withdrew to isolated places to pray ([Matt 14:23](#); [Mark 1:23](#)), and at times, He and His disciples stepped away from ministry to rest ([Mark 6:31-32](#)). But Jesus always balanced

Introduce

these moments with an active and intentional public ministry. He modeled that while solitude is necessary at times, isolation is not God's design for His people. He created us to function in community—interconnected and interdependent—as we live out the mission of God together.

Even Proenneke, though far from civilization, did not survive completely on his own. He had help from others. First, someone had to teach him the skills necessary to survive—skills like construction, hunting, fishing, and farming. He learned those not by instinct, but through his upbringing on a farm in Iowa and his career as a diesel mechanic. Second, he initially live in a cabin built by Spike Carrithers, a retired Navy captain, while he worked on building his own. Third, friends who owned a floatplane would fly periodically to deliver necessary supplies and help him maintain vital connections with family. And finally, though he crafted his cabin and hunted much of his own food, the metal tools he used—and even his rifle and ammunition—were made by other people in factories. Despite his apparent isolation, Proenneke still relied on others to make his life in the wilderness possible.

As we continue our study of spiritual gifts this week, this example reminds us that God has not called us to isolation. He has called us to work together as one body to fulfill the mission He has entrusted to us. God has intentionally placed us in the church exactly where He wants us and equipped each of us with the spiritual gift best suited for our role. These gifts are meant to function together—complementing one another as we grow in maturity, bearing one another's burdens, keep each other focused and on the right track, and share the gospel with the world. We need each other. We can't live the Christian life on our own. God simply hasn't designed us that way. We need one another—surrendered completely to the Spirit—working together to glorify God and advance the gospel.

Key
Question

To what evidence in your life can you point to show that God has not created us to live in isolation but community?

In Reference



Bob Swerer, *Alone in the Wilderness* (Fort Collins, CO: Bob Swerer Productions, 2003).

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

GOD CREATED US FOR A RELATIONSHIP:

In the previous verses, Paul emphasized the diversity of spiritual gifts that make up **the body** of Christ. God has equipped the church with every role and gift necessary to fulfill His purposes. But for **the body** to function as God intended, every **member** must come together as **one**—each using his or her unique gift for the benefit of all, to advance the gospel and glorify Him. In verse 12, Paul shifts the focus slightly—from diversity to unity—to show that while our gifts may differ, our purpose and mission remain the same. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, who works through us, we are called to set aside personal ambitions and preferences in order to fully participate in the shared mission God has entrusted to us as His people.

To reinforce this unity—despite our diverse ethnic and social backgrounds—Paul appeals to our common heritage in Christ as the bond that most deeply unites us. As believers, we have **all** become **members** of this **one body** through our shared experience of salvation in Christ. **Whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free**, we all receive eternal life

in the same way: through Jesus' death and resurrection when we repent of our sins and trust Him as our Savior. There is no distinction when it comes to our salvation (v. 13). Jesus is the only way to eternal life ([John 14:16](#))! This shared experience should unite us in God's grace, compelling us to work side by side toward the goal to which He has called us: to live out the gospel through our transformed lives and to proclaim it the ends of the earth ([Matt 28:19-20](#); [Acts 1:8](#)).



Question
1

How does your salvation in Christ help you look beyond differences we might perceive to see our common goal as His body—the church?

The two analogies Paul uses to describe our shared salvation in Christ—being **baptized into one body by one Spirit** and having **been made to drink into one Spirit**—have been distorted in some charismatic circles, causing confusion and even division (v. 13). Some wrongly interpret these analogies as a “second blessing” or an elite spiritual experience given to only a few—primarily associated with speaking in tongues today. But the key word in verse 13 is **all**. Paul clearly states that every believer experiences this “baptism” **by one Spirit**. This baptism occurs at the very moment we accept Jesus as our Savior and He sends His Spirit to indwell our hearts ([Matt 3:11](#); [Mark 1:8](#); [Luke 3:16](#); [John 1:33-34](#); [14:16-18](#))! This is not a separate event that occurs later. Rather, this baptism is what unites us in Christ and identifies us **members** of His **body**—the church. Therefore, every genuine believer has received the Holy Spirit and is empowered by Him to do God’s will.

Question
2

How is the concept of this so-called “second blessing” proposed by some denominations today exclusivist and elitest—the very thing Paul is correcting in Corinth?

What does it mean, then, to be **baptized by** and drink **into one Spirit**? It points us to the truth that God created us for a relationship with Him—one that had to be restored because of our sin. Rather than isolate ourselves in fierce independence with an “I’ve-got-this” attitude, God created us to have a life-giving, life-sustaining relationship with Him ultimately through His Son ([Eph 1:3-14](#)). From the beginning, God intentionally designed us to have substantive fellowship with Him. We see this relational design in Genesis 1:27, where He made man in His own image and likeness. And before the couple rebelled and sinned, God walked and talked with them in the garden daily ([Gen 3:8](#)). He created them not for isolation, but for an intimate relationship with Him.



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But when sin entered the picture, everything changed. Adam and Eve’s first instinct was to hide—they tried to isolate themselves from God ([Gen 3:10](#)). The pattern remains the same today. Sin isolates or separates us from the God who created us, loves us, and wants a relationship with us. As Isaiah 59:2 says, “[Our] iniquities have separated [us] from [our] God and [our] sins have hidden His face from [us] so that He will not hear.” Sin cuts us off from the very One we were created to know. Often, we hide out of shame, guilt, or fear of being exposed. Sometimes, we even try to run from the Lord altogether—foolishly thinking we can somehow escape the consequences.

Thankfully, God did not leave us isolated or separated in our sins. Through the death of Christ on the cross, He provided a way for us to be reconciled to Himself. Ephesians 2:16 reminds us that God offered forgiveness so “that He might reconcile them both [Jew and Gentile] in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity”—that is the hostility and judgment we rightly deserve for rebelling against Him. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul describes this reconciled or restored relationship using the language of being **baptized by** and **made to drink into one Spirit**. Both expressions refer to a single, defining moment in a believer’s life: salvation. When we repent, believe, and fully surrender to Christ, the Holy Spirit immediately comes to dwell within us. His presence serves as both the guarantee of our eternal inheritance ([Eph 1:13-14](#)) and the seal of God’s ownership over us, identifying us as His beloved children ([Rom 8:16-17](#)).

Question
3

Is there anything in your life which truly isolates you from the Lord or prevents you from doing His will by serving in this local church?

Instruct

Baptism, then, is a symbolic picture of what has already taken place in the life of a believer. It signifies that we have died to our old way of life—marked by sin and selfishness—and that we have been raised to walk in a new life that reflects the holiness of Christ ([Rom 6:1-10](#)). Therefore, being baptized by one Spirit is not some kind of heightened spiritual experience or purely external display of holiness, as some have misunderstood it. Rather, it is the act of surrender—giving God full control of your life, dying to your “self,” and living in Christ ([Luke 9:23-26](#); [Gal 2:20](#)).

However, because we still live in a physical and fallen world, we will continue to wrestle with sin and the desires of our flesh. This doesn’t mean that we will live in continual, willful sin, but there will be times when we try to take control of our lives away from the Holy Spirit and stop following His direction. Although we receive the Spirit’s

full indwelling presence at the moment of salvation, we can resist His influence when we choose to follow the desires of our flesh over the will of the Lord ([Rom 7:13-20](#)). This struggle does not indicate that we have more or less of the Holy Spirit at any point. Rather, it shows that we’ve taken control and pushed Him out of the driver’s seat. In those times, we must repent and yield ourselves once again to His leadership—allowing Him to regain control of our hearts and lives. In this way, baptism **by** the **Spirit** is not some mystical or elite spiritual experience; it is the daily surrender of our will so that Christ may live and work through us.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

Question
4

Have you truly died to yourself? If so, what does that look like in your service to the Lord?

To summarize, Scripture does not support the idea of a “second blessing” in which the Holy Spirit later empowers us to use our spiritual gifts in some spectacular or heightened way. On the contrary, the moment we are saved—which Paul describes

as being **baptized by one Spirit**—every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and given at least one spiritual gift, along with all the ability needed to use it for God’s glory as He directs. If we do not see fruit or the evidence of God working in our lives, it is not because we have less of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it is because we have not fully surrendered to His leadership. When we notice this lack of spiritual productivity, we must honestly ask ourselves: Have I completely surrendered to the Lord? Am I allowing the Holy Spirit to guide my every step? No spiritual gift is superior or inferior to another; one does not have an advantage to another’s disadvantage. God uses each one equally, as He wills, to accomplish His purposes. Therefore, we must all do our part—working together to build up the body and spread the gospel.

Question
5

How am I contributing to the growth, unity, and mission of my local church? What might God be calling me to do differently? How would this make my service more effective?

Not only has God created us for a relationship with Himself through His Son, but He has also designed us for meaningful relationships with one another. He never intended for us to live in isolation. From the very beginning, God established community—rooted in families and extended into broader relationships with our neighbors and fellow countrymen. After forming Adam, God observed that something was still missing. Although everything He had made was declared “good,” He identified one exception: “It is not good for man to be alone” ([Gen 2:18](#)). So, God provided a companion—devising husbands and wives as complementary partners who would work together to serve Him and lead their families into a relationship with Him.

God also established families to help us navigate life together, constantly reminding one another that our salvation and provision come from Him alone.

"God sets the solitary in families,"

Psalm 68:6

Instruct

Psalm 68:8 reminds Israel that “God sets the solitary in families,” showing His heart for placing people in supportive, relational environments where they can thrive together as a community. Likewise, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 highlights the value of companionship and community—how friends lift each other when they fall, fight in battle together, stand together during hardship, and help us meet our physical needs by overcoming physical hardships. God has not called us to spiritual isolation, but to thrive in close-knit, godly relationships that pursue His will together.

This same concept carries over into the church. As we’ll see in the remainder of 1 Corinthians 12, God expects us to function as a community—united in purpose, even though He has gifted each of us differently and assigned us unique roles within His body. Every believer has been intentionally placed in a local body of Christ right where God wants him or her to serve. He doesn’t make mistakes. The church lacks nothing; God has provided it with all the spiritual gifts and people it needs to thrive. Our task is to walk in unity, using our gifts in harmony to glorify Him and build one another up in love.

Question # 6

How does compartmentalizing our lives and our rugged Western individualism which often leads to isolation hinder the development of the church? How can we overcome such compartmentalization, individualism, and isolation?

GOD DESIGNED US FOR A SPECIFIC ROLE:

Not only did God create us for a relationship with Himself and with one another, but He also designed each of us to fulfill a specific role within the church. In verses 14-19, Paul uses the human body as an illustration to show how we are called to function together cohesively as a community. After emphasizing our unity through our shared salvation in Christ, the Apostle now shifts our attention back to the abundant diversity in the church: **the body is not one member but many** (v. 14). In the human body, each part has a distinct role or function that contributes to the whole—working together to sustain life and fulfill the purpose determined by the “head.” In the same way, each **member** of the church has been uniquely placed by Christ to carry out a specific function, and all of us are meant to work in harmony to accomplish His will as the Head of the body.

For example, in order for the hand to pick up an object, it requires multiple, complex systems working together: the cardiovascular system supplies blood to deliver oxygen and other nutrients; the skeletal system provides structure and support, giving the hand its characteristic shape and stability; the muscles and tendons enable the various parts to move cohesively; and the nervous system transmits signals to and from the brain, giving specific direction to each individual part and coordinating their movements in unison. Though each system is distinct and every component serves a unique function, they all operate in harmony to enable the hand to operate as intended and carry out the will of the person directing it. In this same way, Paul stresses that every part of the body of Christ relies on the other doing its job—none can function properly in isolation.



Because the Corinthians had elevated certain spiritual gifts—namely, wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, and speaking in tongues—to the detriment of the broader community, Paul poses a series of rhetorical questions to underscore the value of every member participating in fulfilling God’s will. He asks, **“If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body”** (v.

Instruct

15)? And again, **“If the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body”** (v. 16). In other words, if the Corinthians continued to overemphasize a few gifts while neglecting the rest, the body of Christ would cease to function as God intended. When we limit God’s work in our lives to only a few “key” areas or to only a few “prized” spiritual gifts, we hinder the mission He has given us. We need every person using the full range of gifts, skills, and talents God has graciously provided us in order to accomplish the purpose He has set for us as His church.

Question # 7

How would our church’s witness and ministry change if every member actively used his or her God-given gifts?

Just because someone possesses a particular spiritual gift—such as prophecy—that doesn’t mean that the other gifts are unnecessary or that those who have them are unimportant. Likewise, those who desire or seek after gifts or roles they see as more visible or glamorous shouldn’t think, “Because I don’t have that particular gift, I am not really part of what God is doing.” It’s not about our personal preferences, the gifts we may admire the most, or the ones we assume are the most valuable. It’s about how God has actually gifted us and where He has intentionally placed each one of us to serve in His body. Our calling, therefore, is not to chase the spotlight but to be faithful right where God has called us—using the unique gifts He has given us, empowered by His Spirit, for the good of the body and the glory of His name.

Question # 8

Am I being faithful to serve right where God has called me and placed me—or am I waiting until I have a “better” role or more recognition? In other words, how do I view using the gifts that God has given me?

To illustrate the important role every **member** of the body of Christ plays, consider this scenario: Would you fly on an airplane if you knew it were missing just a single part—no matter how significant or insignificant it may seem? When we think about airplanes, we tend to focus on the visible, important components we associate with flight—like the engines, wings, or fuselage. But in reality, an aircraft is composed

of thousands of individual parts, from bolts and screws to complex computerized systems in the cockpit. Every piece must function in perfect harmony with the rest to ensure the safety of the passengers and crew at 36,000 feet. A pilot can't look at even the smallest component and declare it unnecessary. One faulty or missing piece—however minor it may seem—could result in catastrophic failure. While planes are built with fail-safe features to handle emergencies, such as engine failure—any malfunction, even in a small part, will ground the aircraft until it's repaired. Why? Because every piece matters.

Each part of an airplane plays an indispensable role. It doesn't matter if it's clearly visible or hidden deep within the aircraft's internal systems. If a part truly served no purpose, the engineers wouldn't have included it in the original design. Every panel, bolt, screw, gear, wire, and fastener is essential to the safe and successful operation



of the plane. At cruising altitude, even the smallest bolt is vitally important. We may think of the engine as the most important part because it generates the power to fly—but if the bolt securing it to the wing fails, the engine becomes worthless as it plummets to the earth. That tiny, overlooked piece, then becomes the difference between a safe flight and a disaster. It may not look impressive, or powerful, but without it, the entire aircraft is at risk.

In the same way, every **member** of the body of Christ plays an indispensable role—regardless of how visible or “glamorous” their ministry may seem. Just as an airplane cannot fly safely unless every part is functioning properly, the church cannot operate as God intended unless every believer faithfully fulfills the role God has given to him or her. As we will see in verse 18, God has intentionally and intricately placed each **member** in the church exactly where He wants them to serve. From His perspective, there are no missing or faulty parts. If something is lacking, it's not because God has failed—it's because we have chosen, in disobedience, not to be faithful in the area of service to which He has called us. And if our ministry is not bearing fruit, it may

be because we are not allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us we should.

Question
9

If your spiritual “part” or gift is not functioning well—or even at all—how might that affect the health and mission of the church?

Because God didn’t design the church to function with only one gift or role, Paul asks, **“If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling”** (v. 17)? Not everyone is called to be a teacher, nor are all gifted with mercy, service, or administration. If a church operated with only one type of gift or role, it would cease to function as a proper body. It wouldn’t have all the necessary parts to carry out the ministry as God has assigned. That’s why God has distinctively gifted each of us and placed us together to serve collectively. Each gift complements the others, working together to fulfill His purpose. Although we come from widely diverse backgrounds—different levels of education, personalities, interests, skills, and life experiences—we all share a common goal. The primary purpose of the church is to glorify Christ through faithful service, with the gospel as our highest priority. Our diversity is by design: Christ has gifted each of us uniquely and called us to specific roles within the church to fulfill that purpose!

To build a house, it takes craftsmen with a wide range of skills all working together—concrete foremen, framers, roofers, drywall installers, plumbers, electricians, brick layers, and more. The general contractor overseeing the project works to coordinate



these trades, scheduling each phase so their work fits together and doesn’t interfere with each other. Because every position is essential, no one tradesman can say to another, “We don’t need your expertise.” Now imagine if the plumber suddenly said, “I wish I had gotten licensed as an electrician instead. I don’t really want to work on the

plumbing.” Or the electrician said, “I’d rather be part of the framing crew, so I’m not going to participate.” While the other subcontractors might attempt to pick up the slack, the project would be delayed, the burden on others would increase, and the final structure wouldn’t meet the intended standards—or worse, some jobs might not get done at all. And who would want to live in a house without working plumbing or electricity?

Likewise, building the church requires every **member** working together and doing his or her part as God has gifted. In this way, God serves as the ultimate General Contractor—coordinating every task and ensuring each person is in the rightful place, working effectively and efficiently: **“God has set the members, each one of them, in the body as He pleased”** (v. 18). Looking back at 1 Corinthians 3:10, we see that God Himself laid the foundation of the church in Christ Jesus, and He is the one who causes its growth. Yet, He invites us to partner with Him in building upon that foundation. As Paul writes, some are called to plant and others are called to water ([1 Cor 3:5-6](#)).

Though God brings the increase, we are still responsible to participate in that growth--by pointing people to a relationship with Christ and connecting them to His church. Importantly, God doesn’t leave us to fend for ourselves in this task. He works through us, equipping each of us with the gifts, skills, and resources needed to do what He has asked. Therefore, we have no excuse to withdraw from service or isolate ourselves from the church community. Every member is vital to the mission—and every role matters.

Question
10

How does my role complement others in the church family? Who do I rely on and who relies on me?

However, I want to mention a so-called “spiritual gift” that you’ll never find in Scripture: God hasn’t given anyone the spiritual gift of merely *attending* church. God has indeed called us to meet together regularly for worship, prayer, and Bible study (see [Heb 10:25](#)), and Acts 2:42 reminds us of the value and priority of corporate worship in the church which met daily. But attending church—or even serving solely inside the walls of the church on Sundays—is not the full extent of what God has called us to do. As the church, we are called to impact the culture and bring true, lasting transformation into the secular world through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yes, teaching a Bible study,

Instruct

serving in the nursery, helping with children's, youth, or adult ministries, and running media or security teams are all vital ways we serve and build up the church body. But ministry doesn't end when the Sunday service does. It must propel us into the week to reach our families, neighbors, classmates, coworkers, and community.

Too often, we compartmentalize our spiritual gifts and relegate them to Sundays and Wednesdays, believing we've fulfilled our duty by volunteering once a week. But we must not settle for "checking the box." Instead, we must ask: How does my Sunday service equip me to



serve Christ the rest of the week? Ministry is meant to overflow from the church into the world—into our workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and daily interactions. We gather on Sundays and Wednesdays to worship together, study Scripture, and encourage one another through prayer. These gatherings equip us to live on mission the rest of the week. Please hear me clearly: I'm not saying that Sunday and Wednesday service is unimportant—far from it. These roles are indispensable for the ministry God has given us here at First Baptist. But I am saying that we must not isolate those acts of service as the full extent of our calling. We must take the gospel into the culture with us wherever we go. We must have a mindset of constant ministry, looking for opportunities to advance the gospel and build the church!

Question # 11

How intentional are you in using your spiritual gifts throughout the week to connect people to Christ and then connect them with this church?

We are called to live out our faith beyond the church walls. Why? Because our identity in Christ—who He has transformed us to be—should shape everything we do. As followers of Jesus, our lives are not defined merely by what we do, but who we have become in Him. And we have become in Him should ultimately determine what we do. The same principle applies to the church. The church isn't primarily about what we "do," but about who Christ has made us to be. And because of who we have become in Him, we joyfully participate the work of ministry.

We don't "cease" being the church at noon when the service ends. We are the church—twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. What you do in a restaurant reflects Christ. What you do pulling onto the access road reflects Christ. What you do on Monday morning at work reflects Christ. If we treat church as something we "do" rather than who we "are," we begin to compartmentalize our spiritual life. Sunday becomes disconnected from Monday. But it shouldn't be. So, here's a simple test to evaluate whether you're truly living as part of the body of Christ throughout the week: How is my life reflecting Christ today? Have I used what God has given me to connect others to Christ and His church? We need every believer doing his or her part every day of the week to be the church Christ has called us to be.

Question
12

How would your life look different if you truly believed you are the church every day of the week?

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One Body, Many Parts, Pt.2

[1 Corinthians 12:27-31](#)

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