



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 54

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Spirit and the gifts are given to build up the body of Christ.



MONDAY

THE STORY: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11

The Spirit of God and His gifts exalt Christ. The Corinthian church was struggling. In the church there could be found immorality (see 1 Corinthians 5:1), lawsuits among believers (see 1 Corinthians 6:1-11), and divisions (see 1 Corinthians 1:11-12, 3:1-4). Instead of being an interdependent, connected family of believers, the Corinthian church was competitive and divided.

In addressing spiritual gifts within this church, Paul first reaffirmed the solid foundation upon which the Spirit of God operates. First, the Spirit of God testifies to Christ. No true Christian testimony can come except by the Spirit of God. Secondly, all gifts come from the same Spirit and are therefore given for the ministry of Christ. Third, the manifestations of the Spirit, though given to individuals, are for the common good - that is, the good of the body of Christ, which is the church.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why does God give spiritual gifts to the church? (God gives them for the common good.)

Why is it important to remember that spiritual gifts are given by God for the benefit of the church? (It would be very easy for a person to think he is better than

others because of his gifts. People often use these gifts to exalt themselves and not Christ. This is what was happening in the Corinthian church. People were boasting that they were more spiritual because of their gifts.)

How have you been tempted to boast in your accomplishments? (Help your children see how they might have boasted in their accomplishments. How much more might they be tempted if God used them powerfully through a spiritual gift?)

PRAY:

Pray that God would help you always remember that all our gifts are meant to serve the body of Christ for the glory of God, not our own glory.



TUESDAY

THE STORY: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-26

Every Christian is a dependent part of the body. One of the most helpful pictures of the church is Paul's analogy of the church as a body. Though each member is different, we are all important for the effective functioning of the body. None of us can say we don't need others in the church. Since we have all been given different gifts, we need each other. Our gifts and placement in the body have been sovereignly directed by God (see 1 Corinthians 12:18).

TALK ABOUT IT:

How does the picture of the body help us to know we need each other in the church? (Imagine a leg trying to walk around without an eye, or an eye trying to get somewhere in its sight without legs to take it there. The only way the body works is if all its parts work together, each with its own special gift.)

Paul talks about two separate problems in the body. What are they? (In 1 Corinthians 12:14-17, the first problem is jealousy or self-pity among members who long to be a different part of the body. The second problem is in 1

Corinthians 12:21-25, when one part of the body is proud and thinks it does not need the other parts of the body. We are not to reject the church because others are more gifted than us, or cause division in the church because we think we are more gifted than others.)

Which of the two problems noted above might you be most tempted to struggle with? (Parents, help your children by answering first and then help your children to answer. They are not likely to refer to spiritual gifts but rather to general gifting. Even so the principle and the sinful patterns are the same.)

PRAY:

Ask God to help you trust Him for your gifts and the way they fit into the body.



**WEDNESDAY
WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?**

THE STORY: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27

Through Paul's entire discussion regarding the gifts, Christ is at the center. The Spirit never speaks in opposition to Christ; no one can come to Christ except by the Spirit. The gifts are given not for individual benefit but for the benefit of the church, the body of Christ. The gifts of God are given to us as He determines and are not given merely for our individual pleasure.

There is a greater purpose: the building up of Christ's body, the church. Though God has given various gifts to individual members, all believers are to pursue their spiritual gifts to strengthen the body of Christ. Jesus Christ died that a people might be reconciled to God.

Prior to the death of Christ, the presence of God was limited to the Most Holy Place, behind the curtain in the temple. At the death of Christ, that curtain was torn in two, symbolizing a wonderful change. After Christ's death we, the

believing body of the church, are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Together we can encourage each other with the gifts God has bestowed upon us.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Who is at the center of all the gifts? (God, specifically the Spirit of God, is the center of all the gifts.)

Who did God send the Spirit to remind us of? (The Spirit was sent to remind us of Christ and all he said and did [see John 14:26].)

PRAY:

Ask the Spirit of God to touch your family and help each family member know Jesus more each day.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27-31

Eagerly desire the gifts. Even though Paul tells us that not everyone will receive all the gifts, and we are to be satisfied with the gifts God gives us, we are still to eagerly desire the gifts of the Spirit, especially the higher gifts. Paul goes on to describe the higher gifts. In 1 Corinthians 14:1 he encourages everyone to seek the gift of prophecy to build up the church. Not everyone will be called to become an apostle, prophet, or teacher, nor will we all be gifted in miracles or administration. Of one thing we can be certain: God has gifts for us to use in building up the body of Christ.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Are some of the gifts better than others? (No, one gift is not better than another, but some are more desirable because they build up the church. Paul encourages us to eagerly desire the greater gifts. In 1 Corinthians 14:1 Paul identifies prophecy as desirable because it builds up the church. Later, in 1 Corinthians 14:26-28, Paul teaches that, when interpreted, tongues are also for the strengthening of the church.)

How does God's plan for the gifts keep the church united? (Since everyone is gifted differently, we all need each other.)

PRAY:

Pray that God would pour out His Spirit and His gifts on each member of your family. Take time to pray for each one by name.



**FRIDAY
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS**

THE STORY: HOSEA 2:18-20

Hosea foresaw a day when God would betroth Himself to His people forever. This betrothal would be in righteousness, justice, love, and compassion. One day we, the church - the bride of Christ - will join Him at the wedding supper of the Lamb (see Revelation 19:7).

TALK ABOUT IT:

Who does the bride refer to in the Bible? (The bride is the church.)

Who is the bridegroom? (Jesus is the bridegroom.)

What else do you see in the Hosea passage that points forward to Christ? (Hosea talks about a new covenant, which will result in the end of violence and death - a reference to the end of the curse from the Fall. That covenant is the new covenant in Christ's blood.)

PRAY:

Thank the Lord for sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sins that we might become His bride.