

1 Corinthians: The Body of Christ vs. A Body in Crisis
New Pilgrim Baptist Church Bible Study
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Unity over the Gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12-14)
“One Body, Spirit, but Many Gifts” Part 1 (1 Cor 12:1-3)

Contextualization

After Paul explored the table of supernatural meeting, he begins discussing the gifts of the Spirit which were present in the church. These were assumed, that is, people had supernatural encounters within the congregation. This, in part, is why many became believers in Jesus in the first place. In our modern, skeptical society, we reject the miraculous *a priori* but this was neither the belief or the *experience* of early believers in Jesus. The very beginning of the church was with a miracle, the resurrection of Jesus. They continued then and unto this day. As was evident in the book of Acts, God manifested his power through his people. In doing so in Corinth, confusion erupted because the presence of the miraculous does not disallow the possibility of chaos. Paul had to give instructions on how to **regulate** the gifts of the Spirit in the life of the church.

- **Spiritual gifts require examination within a spiritual context (v. 1)**

To fully understand the New Testament we must remember the ancients thought that spirits were everywhere, and they are. If we approach any part of the Bible with the mindset that materiality is all there is, we will misunderstand the Scripture. Paul was speaking to people who fully believed in the existence of a world outside of this one with which we have ready access. Thus, just as we have to examine the nature of this world, we must examine the nature of that world. Just as there are things that are good and bad about this world, there are things good and bad about that world. Taking in or getting acquainted with the wrong kinds of things in that world, will always lead to destruction. We must be careful. We must not be ignorant.

- **Idols spoke and still speak (12:2)**

People who believed spirits (gods) were everywhere wanted to do whatever they could to appease them. Those who wanted to appease them also yielded to them as their vessels. This is why whole religious systems with actions were developed because people wanted the gods to like them to obtain their favor. The Corinthians were used to allowing spirits to lead them in various actions. We, today, still allow spirits (demons) to whisper in our ear to guide our actions. Our natural inclination is to yield to demonic influence, this is why following God is so hard.

- **We are no longer led by demons; we are led by the Spirit of God (12:3)**

You cannot follow the leadership of spirits against Christ and hope that, at some point, you will not curse or oppose Christ. The Spirit of God moves upon us to confess Jesus Christ. Through following the Spirit of God, we are empowered by Christ to do the work of the Lord. Not just in what we say, verbally, but our lives will testify to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.