

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, One Spirit, but Many Gifts” Part 1 (1 Cor 12:4-7)

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.

- **The Gifts of the Spirit are still Operational**

Today, many Christians buy into the belief that God is no longer working miracles through people. They are called cessationists. They hold that God placed a cessation on the operations of the gifts of the Spirit. They ended when the New Testament was completed.

The problem with this position is that there is literally NO Scripture to justify this belief. Also, we still see the gifts of the Spirit in operation, despite many believers sanctioning unbelief in the power of the Spirit.

- **Different Powers but the Same Source (vv. 4-6)**

Every believer in Jesus is given the Spirit. Therefore, every believer is given evidence of the Spirit's presence. Therefore, every believer has powers given from heaven. Paul uses a term to suggest there are “varieties” or “divisions” to discuss the imparted power given to every believer. These gifts, services, and powers are given by the same Spirit, Lord, and God. Paul speaks of the differences within the church's abilities while speaking of God as three persons, unity in diversity. We have differences but all from the same source.

- **The Empowerment of the Spirit is meant to Benefit the Entire Church (v. 7)**

Each person is given a gift that proves God's presence in his or her life. That is, there is something miraculous available to all believers in one way or another. People should be able to see the presence of the Spirit in us. Not something natural, that can be picked up every day. Something spiritual, dynamic, beyond human ability, should be available for every person in Christ.

God gives gifts not for our personal benefits but to benefit the entire church. As we explore the gifts from heaven, we will see the ways in which the gifts are given so that all people are made better, taken deeper, and are edified. The gifts of the Spirit cause the people of God to grow closer to Christ.

Since they are given by God, then the gifts must be aligned with Christ. No person is synonymous with their gifts. When we think of the gifts as our personal property, abuse is inevitable.