

1 Corinthians 12  
(Ignorance Concerning Spiritual Gifts)

1. Review

**1-3**

1. Though idols are ineffective in themselves (10:19-22), behind them lay powerful demonic forces. However, that is now incompatible with their new life in the Spirit.
2. “Jesus be cursed”
  - a. We do not know what specific situation Paul is talking about.
    - i. It could simply be reclining in idol temples and participating in eating with them.
      1. Syncretism
    - b. Pliny the younger and the early Christians.
3. Paul reminds them someone who does not have the Holy Spirit cannot understand and receive the things of God. In fact, he has no capacity to do so. So, they should not judge one another on the basis one whether they have a certain spiritual gift. Confessing Christ is what is important not what if you have a certain spiritual gift.

**4-11**

1. Paul describes the gifts that they have received as “gifts of grace”.
2. This list is illustrative not exhaustive.
3. Paul does this cool thing where he stresses the variety of gifts given to the Corinthians (he names 9) but at the same time stresses the unity (the same Spirit).
  - a. Eph 4:3-7, “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all, and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”
4. Notice how Paul names the Trinity in verses 4-6 and at the same time uses them interchangeably for who gives the gifts.

- a. Thus, the triune God gives to, serves through, and works through the believer.
- b. However, we can also make distinctions:
  - i. The Holy Spirit is seen as having a prominent role as the source of spiritual gifts or grace-gifts.
  - ii. The Lord Jesus is seen as the one who inspires Christian service.
    1. He who came “not to be served but to serve”.
  - iii. The Father who is unceasingly at work in sustaining His creation should be seen as the one who works “all things in all”.
- c. Nevertheless, all of these gifts should be used to serve one another and glorify God.

## 12-31

1. Baptism is the most basic foundation of church’s unity.
2. Paul is hammering home this unity with constantly using “all” and “one”.
3. “Inferior” vs “superior” members of the body.
  - a. “Every member cannot have the same function, and therefore there must be higher and lower gifts. But pride and discontent are quite out of place, for they are not only the outcome of selfishness, but also rebellion against God’s will. This has two points; it was not our fellow-men who placed us in an inferior position, but God; and He did it, not please us or our fellows, but in accordance with His will, which must be right. Who is so disloyal as to gain-say what God willed to arrange?”
4. How can one “earnestly desire” something if it is a gift?