

## I Corinthians, Chapter 12 - Handout # 8

Chapters 12 to 14 will deal with spiritual gifts. Apparently, the Corinthians had a wrong idea about the gifts given by God, giving priority to one gift in particular: the gift of tongues. In pagan worship at Corinth, tongues, ecstatic utterances, were very common.

v. 1-3, Paul needed to remind the Corinthians that they had been under the influence of pagan practices, dumb idols, which had “carried them away” and they were still being influenced thus. There might have been those that accepted the deity of Jesus but denied his humanity. Those that thought this way said “Jesus is accursed”, but those who spoke by the Holy Ghost were able to say Jesus (and all that he is) is Lord. A man’s recognition and receiving of Christ is by the Holy Ghost.

v.4-6, Many kinds of gifts, but all coming from the same source—God. Notice the presence of all the personalities of the Trinity (Spirit, Lord, God). Different kinds of special abilities, different kinds of service (administrations), different ways God works in our lives (operations), yet its all from the same source—the Lord.

v.7-10, These are just some of the gifts the Lord gives to believers for the edification of the church and to bring Him glory. Word of wisdom (wise application of divine truth, being and nature of God), word of knowledge (truth, knowledge of God and His word, facts revealed by Holy Spirit, ); faith, to believe God for wonders; gifts (plural) of healing; working of miracles; prophecy, communication of message from God, declaring the Word and truth of the Lord, sometimes communicating knowledge of future events; discerning spirits, distinguishing that which comes from God and that which does not, especially in the messages spoken and doctrines taught; tongues and interpretation of tongues, ability to speak in another language not previously learned, and the ability to understand a language not previously learned. In this category we would place unknown tongues, tongues not spoken on earth. Paul lists tongues last, on purpose.

v.12 -31, The unity of the body (as in Ephesians 4:4-16) is put forth. The body of Christ, his church, is made of many members. Each member has its unique function in the body, for the benefit of the body, to enable the body, to edify the body. It works just like our human bodies. We are not all just an ear, or an eye, or a nose, for then some function would be lacking. God distributes the gifts to individuals for the good of the body. It is God that makes the decision who will have what; it is His sovereign decision. We should never be jealous or covetous of another’s gift.

v.20-26, we are one body, and must not belittle another’s gift, and must not belittle our gift. Like a human body, each member is interdependent upon the other. We cannot declare to someone “I know longer need you”, and neither should we say “they no longer need me”. Some parts are high profile, and some are in the background, but all are honored as part of the body. There should be no divisions or cliques. One part suffers, we all suffer. One part rejoices, we all rejoice. Desire gifts that best benefit the body, not just showy.