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Grateful for Spiritual Gifts!

Truth About God: God gives spiritual gifts to benefit the church.
Truth For My Life: I will pursue spiritual gifts.
Lesson Text: 1 Corinthians 12
Key Passage: 1 Corinthians 12:31 - But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Paul's letter to the church at Corinth, intended them to be wise rather than "ignorant" concerning being used in the various gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1). It provides a basis for understanding all spiritual gifts: All are subject to God's Spirit, and all serve to glorify the Lord Jesus. We receive various spiritual gifts for the collective benefit of the church. Some **gifts involve revelation** or a glimpse into God's perspective: word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and discerning of spirits. The **gifts of power** go beyond words: gift of faith, gift of healing, and working of miracles. Through the **vocal gifts**, God communicates a message through a human speaker: gift of prophecy, diverse kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

Paul repeatedly urged the church to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, specifically prophecy, and the edification of the church. We may feel reservations about operating in the gifts of the Spirit: fear of what others will think, fear of missing the mark, or fear of public attention. Our hesitations can cause the church to miss out on the miraculous. Considering one another's needs. We should earnestly desire to fulfill our unique role. Listen for God and follow peace as He leads you to minister to His people through spiritual gifts.

Once we are filled with the Spirit, we can expect God to use us in at least one of the spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12. There is no biblical record that one person possesses all gifts, but the gifts are distributed throughout the body according to the will of God (v. 11). God's Spirit enables all those various gifts, administrations, and operations; it is all from the one and only Lord God (vv. 4-6). God's power is rightly understood in His oneness. Because the Spirit is the source, spiritual gifts consistently exceed our ability to know (revelation gifts), speak (vocal gifts), and act (power gifts). **Because one Spirit is at work, the diversity of gifts in diverse people works like a symphony, making a beautiful melody to glorify God**.

This new kind of unity—people from different backgrounds and even languages—is only possible through the gospel. The new birth through baptism into one body and receiving the Spirit invites us into His family. Paul also used the illustration of a physical body to represent the differences within the church. The human body has many "members"—limbs, organs, and extremities. Even members which seem weak or are hidden are necessary. **A church with great revelation and no healing is still wounded**. A church with power but no prophetic word is aimless. **A vocal church without understanding is disruptive**. We rely on the Spirit, trust one another, and acknowledge each other's gifts.

We do not simply choose our church like choosing a team in gym class. We do not assemble our ideal people together. God joined the body together so there would be no division and we would care for one another (vv. 24-25). Jesus' natural body was broken so His representative body, the church, could be whole. What grace! The disconnected are threatened when others are elevated; the connected bring honor to one, bringing honor to all. While we acknowledge our differences, we work together as one, extending the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world.

At the forefront of every conversation about giftedness is an unavoidable truth: **We cannot be members of Christ without being members of His body (v. 27)**. Thus, 1 Corinthians 12 concludes with another reference to roles of administration and spiritual gifts. Apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, those with the gift of tongues, and interpreters are representative of the varied callings God has bestowed.

In our world, many march to the beat of their own drum. However, the sound of victory is a thousand feet falling in one motion. **When we forsake independence and embrace interdependence, we can face the greatest odds with absolute resolution**. Our strength is not in our individual giftedness, but in our unified march forward. Unity in the church does not mean we all occupy the same role, yet we are all attuned to the same sound, the voice of the Spirit. **Today we are called to move at His pace and respond to His call**.