

I Corinthians 12

In the age of the Church, the one Body of Christ, the wonderful age of grace, one section of Scripture that is of paramount importance to believers are the Church epistles. These epistles, written by revelation by the Apostle Paul, are written TO the Church. Other parts of God's Word may be for our learning, but these epistles are directly to us. When considering the topic of "walking by the spirit" and the manifestations of the spirit, I Corinthians 12, 13 and 14 are of fundamental importance. So, this morning, I would like to read I Corinthians 12 with you. The balance of chapters 13 and 14 can be looked at in the future. Let's begin in I Corinthians chapter 1.

I Corinthians 1:1,2.

Paul was called an apostle by the will of God. It was not something that he determined by himself or that was done by any religious body. This epistle is addressed to the church of God at Corinth and to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus and to all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord regardless of where they are located. So even though some of the situations that are addressed in this reproof epistle (for that is what it is) are particular to the group at Corinth, the reproof that is addressed is beneficial to all believers everywhere.

I Corinthians 12:1.

The first thing that we notice about this verse, at least in the KJV, is that the word "gifts" is in italic print. This tells us that there is no corresponding word for "gifts" in the Greek texts from which this was translated. The word "gifts" was added by the translators and editors to make the verse more readable and clearer in their opinion. The word that is translated "spiritual" is the word *pneumatikos*, "things determined by, concerning, proceeding from or related to the spirit". Perhaps most simply "spiritual things" or "spiritual matters".

When we read I Corinthians, the issues addressed up to this point are not matters of the spiritual realm, but earthly or carnal. There are issues of division among believers; issues dealing with sexual immorality; questions regarding food offered to idols and marriage issues. Now, finally, here in chapter 12, Paul is getting to

spiritual matters. He writes that he does not want them (us) to be ignorant. If we are not going to be ignorant, then we need information, instruction and teaching and that is what Paul proceeds to give.

I Corinthians 12:2.

No one can ever go beyond what they are taught. You cannot believe more than you know. You cannot know more than you have been taught or exposed to. The church in Corinth (and many of the churches specifically addressed in the Church epistles) were primarily of Gentile background. We can see this when we read the record in Acts 18:1 – 17 where Paul initially goes to Corinth. Being Gentiles, they would have had little, if any, background with the Hebrew scriptures, the Old Testament.

I Corinthians 12:3.

Speaking by the spirit of God in this verse is referring to speaking in tongues. And no one who is speaking in tongues is calling Jesus accursed. We can say that this speaking by the spirit of God is speaking in tongues because the verse implies that what is being said is not understood. And no one can say that he has made Jesus Lord except by speaking in tongues. Anyone could say those words, but the only real proof that you have made him lord is to speak in tongues.

I Corinthians 12:4 – 6.

In the Body of Christ, there is a diversity of capacities, abilities and interests. There are diversities of administrations; this is the word diakonia in the texts. It means ways of serving, human to human, on a horizontal level. There are diversities of effects produced by the different ways of serving by those with differing abilities. We are not all the same in the Body of Christ – we all have the same standing as sons and daughters of God, but we are all different in what we do for God.

Romans 12:4 – 8.

We are all members of one Body but all of us have different functions in that Body. This is what is being expanded upon in I Corinthians 12.

I Corinthians 12:7.

The word “But” sets this into contrast with what has just been said. With all the diversity of abilities and gifts; with all of the different or diverse ways of serving; with all the differences or diversity in the effects produced, the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man. It is something that is common to every believer. And this manifestation of the spirit is given to everyone to profit withal. Whatever your gifts, whatever your way of serving, whatever effects are produced, they will be brought to full fruition when the manifestations of the spirit are in evidence in one’s life.

I Corinthians 12:8 – 10.

Grammatically, these verses could be enclosed in parentheses. In verse 7, we learned that the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit. Now verses 8 – 10 begin to enumerate the various ways the manifestation of the spirit is of profit.

I Corinthians 12:11.

The one and selfsame spirit, the gift of holy spirit, energizes all of these in each person individually as that person wills.

I Corinthians 12:12,13.

There is One Body and many members, but it is One Body. Not every member is the same as the other members but every member has the same gift, the gift from the Giver, the gift of holy spirit.

I Corinthians 12:14 – 17.

No one member of the Body can be self-disparaging because it is not like some other member. Every member is necessary and valuable. If we were all the same and all doing the same things, we would miss out on so much.

I Corinthians 12:18 – 20.

Remember what we read in I Corinthians 1:1. Paul was an apostle by the will of God. God has set every member in the Body as it has pleased Him. That includes you and me.

I Corinthians 12:21 – 27.

We can never take the position that we don't need other members of the One Body. God's will is clearly stated in verse 25; "no schism" or division and that the members have the same concern one for another.

I Corinthians 12:28 – 30.

Remember that this epistle is reproof and correction for not adhering to the teaching of Paul (by revelation) that is revealed in Romans. We read the passage in Romans 12:4 – 8. We don't see everybody in the Church all doing the same thing or acting alike. People will evidence diverse abilities, diverse ways of serving and produce diverse effects because of their capacities, interests, concerns and believing.

I Corinthians 12:31.

The more excellent way is in the 13th chapter and that will be a teaching for another day.