

Tommy Meador / General

1 Corinthians / 1 Corinthians 12:1–31

Introduction

- Trey and Logan in the kayak - two very different people yet two very gifted people and both very valuable to the life of our church.
- Trey and Logan aren't the only people in our church who are different - We're a church full of people who are all very different yet at the same time very gifted.
- It might be easy to look around a church like ours and feel like you don't belong. We're large. Maybe you're more introverted and have a hard time making friends. Maybe you have some past failures and you wonder if you'll be judged. Maybe you have experienced some church hurt.
- The church should never be a place where you feel like you don't belong. You should feel more at home in the local church than anywhere else on the planet.
- While the church is a place for you to belong, the church is more than a place for you to belong. It's a place for you to serve because you join the local church to use the gifts God has given you to help the church fulfill her mission.
- A powerful passage of Scripture that reminds us that God has gifted us to serve. Think what God's church could accomplish if we all used the gifts God has given us to serve His church. Two truths in this passage to help us serve God in His church.

You will find much joy when you serve out of your spiritual giftedness.

- Church at Corinth was fascinated with the spiritual giftedness. Not only fascinated by spiritual giftedness, but divided over spiritual giftedness. Those who seemed more gifted favored over those who seemed less gifted. Paul wants to correct the way they think about spiritual gifts.
- vs. 2-3 - No spiritual power in the idols that they used to follow. No power in the religions that said “Jesus is cursed.” But there is power in the confession that “Jesus is Lord...” In that culture, those were more than mere words. To say “Jesus is Lord” is to declare allegiance to Jesus, and you will not declare allegiance to Jesus unless your eyes have been opened to the truth about Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit, who opened your eyes to the truth about Jesus, now lives in you, and He has gifted you. Note vs. 4-6 are Trinitarian. Three persons - distinct - yet one God at work to bring about His purpose.
- Unity in diversity within the Trinity and unity within diversity within the church. This was a big deal - think back to [1 Corinthians 11](#) - factions over social class. Wealthy Christians not waiting on poor Christians to eat. Now, Paul reminding them that they are one, and those poor Christians are spiritually gifted just like the wealthy Christians.
- The Spirit of God has given a manifestation (gift) to each person for the common good (vs. 7).
- vs. 8-11 - Paul gives a list of spiritual gifts. He doesn't list all the spiritual gifts. Several lists of gifts in NT: [Romans 12:3-8](#), [Ephesians 4:11-13](#), and [1 Peter 4:10-11](#). NO full list of gifts.
- A spiritual gift is not the same as a natural ability although it may be related to a natural ability (e.g., preaching may be related to a natural ability to speak publicly.) Sometimes, not related at all.

- A spiritual gift is given to you after you come to faith in Jesus. You may have more than one spiritual gift, but likely you have one dominant gift.
- Many of the gifts are things that all Christians should do or be (e.g., faith, wisdom, evangelism), but some are more “gifted” in these areas.
- The gifts Paul mentions: wisdom is the ability to take Scripture and apply it to every day life. Faith is the gift of being able to trust God and do what He calls you to do without hesitation. Knowledge is the ability to gain deep insights into spiritual truths (someone who is able to understand Scripture well). Prophecy is the gift of being able to speak truth very directly into someone’s life. Distinguishing the spirits is the ability to discern what’s of God and what’s not.
- Paul also talks about miracles, healings, tongues, and interpreting tongues. As the church was established, these gifts were prevalent. We’ll talk about tongues in detail in [1 Corinthians 14](#). I believe all the gifts are still active today, but maybe not as prevalent as they were when the church was being established.
- The point Paul is making is that every follower of Jesus is spiritually gifted.
- You will find much joy when you serve the Lord out of your spiritual giftedness. Maybe your spiritual giftedness is not one of these that Paul mentions in these verses. Maybe it’s one found in 27-30: teaching, service, leadership... Or, hospitality, generosity, etc. You’re going to find much fulfillment in ministry when you are serving God with the gift that He has given you.
- You will probably be frustrated if you are not serving out of your spiritual giftedness. If your spiritual giftedness is not teaching, then you might be frustrated if you are leading a weekly in-depth Bible study.
- How do you discover your spiritual gift? Serve - The more you engage yourself in ministry the more you discover how God has wired you.

Where do you serve? Maybe begin by where you see the most need and the most potential for Gospel impact.

- As you serve, ask three questions that may help you discover your spiritual gift:
- **What am I passionate about?** In-depth Bible knowledge? Missions? Working with children/teenagers? Seeing people make wise choices?
- **What am I good at?** Your natural ability may be related to your spiritual giftedness. Good at making people feel welcome? Spiritual gift of hospitality?
- **What do people see in me?** What do people affirm in you? When do you hear people say things like, “God used you in my life when...”
- You cannot use a lack of giftedness as an excuse not to serve. E.g., I’m not good at teaching doesn’t excuse you from making disciples. Or, I don’t know my giftedness, etc.

You will find much joy when you are connected to the local church.

- The local church is the place where we collectively use our spiritual gifts for the mission of God.
- vs. 12-24 - continued focus on unity in diversity. AND everyone in the local church is significant.
- The body is a wonderful metaphor for the church because the body reminds us of how the church is interdependent upon every member.
- How we treat each other in the church should be vastly different than how the world treats each other. The world divides over social status, education, wealth, race, gender/sex, etc. The world competes against each other.

- Within the church, we don't divide. We unite. We don't compete, we complement. The Spirit has made us one (vs. 13). Within the church, we realize that we're not effective if we're not all using the gifts God has given us (vs. 14-16).
- vs. 18-19 - We shouldn't be jealous of others spiritual gifts, and we should embrace our own giftedness because we know that God has arranged the body just as He desires.
- Vs. 21-24 - Every part important - even the parts that our "less honorable" (private parts) we treat with great honor by clothing in modesty.
- vs. 25 -26 - When we are united and using our spiritual giftedness not only do we accomplish the mission more effectively, we also grow in our care for each other.
- vs. 27 - 31 - Paul lists gives more spiritual gifts, but he calls us to desire the greater gifts - the gifts that most build up the church when the church meets together. (Fascination in Corinth with speaking in tongues - that was not the greater gift they needed to seek after.)
- There's joy when you serve the Lord with your spiritual giftedness, and there's joy when you are connected to the local church. We need the church!
- **You need the church for your spiritual growth.** I don't know any mature Christians who are not a part of a local church. God saved you to belong to Himself and to His people, and you grow best when you are connected to God's people. You grow when you learn from others who have different spiritual gifts than you do. You grow when you are in a body that loves you and holds you accountable.
- **You need the church so you can be well cared for.** You long for community. You long for people to be with you when you are hurting or

to help you overcome your struggles. It's hard to be cared for if you don't commit to a church and put yourself in relationship with other believers.

- **You need the church to keep you focused on the mission.** The church is a place of care and a place of training to launch you into God's mission. Do you resist the training? Do you resist discipleship? Without being a part of a local church that is focused
- We express our commitment to this local body through church membership. Membership in a local church matters because it's our way of saying, "I'm committing to this local church to use my spiritual gifts in this congregation and I'm willing to care for others and open myself to the care of others." Church membership keeps us from church hopping and living as independent Christians instead of interdependent Christians.
- How can you be a blessing to your local church?
- **Stop robbing the church by withholding your giftedness.** In most churches 20% of the people do 80% of the work. I think we do a little better than that, but the fact of the matter is that I see a lot of the same faces serving in a variety of ministries, and I see many faces here that I have yet to see serve in ministry. I'm looking at a room full of untapped potential for Kingdom effectiveness. The reality is that some have become really good at taking from the church without giving to the local church.
- **Give the church your best and not your leftovers.** It's a joy to serve the local church when you understand what Jesus has done for you and you serve out of the gifts God has given you. I get it. We're all busy. Many of you are faithfully serving and giving your best each week. But, some of you only participate in the life of the church when it's convenient or when nothing else is going on. What if you made a commitment to serve in your local church before you made a commitment to any of your other extra activities that eat up so much of your time?

- **Make a commitment to affirm someone every week.** Some of the most powerful words you can say to someone are, “I see God using you...” Think about all of our volunteers who work with our children. Have you affirmed them? What about our LCG leaders? Discipleship group leaders? Our guest service volunteers? That person who you know is struggling to be here, but is here faithfully. Have you affirmed her?
- God desires for you to belong - to belong to His family so He could use you for His purpose. Do you belong to Him? God loves you so much that He sent His Son for you ([John 3:16](#)). Jesus lived His life for you, died for you, and rose again for you so that your sins could be forgiven and you could be brought into His family. This morning, repent and believe so you might be brought into a relationship with Him.