

# Light Reading/Deep Reading of the Bible

## 1 Corinthians chapter 12

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What are spiritual gifts, and how do I know what my spiritual gifts are

Spiritual gifts are special abilities or graces given by the Holy Spirit to believers to serve God, edify the church, preach the gospel, and glorify God. According to 1 Corinthians 12, these gifts are diverse and include wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophetic preaching, discerning spirits, tongues, and interpreting tongues (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:4–11). Other scriptures such as Romans 12:6-8 and Ephesians 4:11-12 also refer to other gifts, such as teaching, service, almsgiving, mercy, leadership, apostles, prophets, etc. The purpose of these gifts is not to show off personally, but to serve the church and others and to promote the unity and growth of the body of Christ.

How do you know your spiritual gifts? Discovering your spiritual gifts is a process of spiritual inquiry that requires prayer, observation, and practice. Pray for God's Guidance Pray to God for wisdom and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your gifts. Ask yourself, "What is God's plan for my life? How can I serve Him and others?" Be humble and willing to accept whatever gift God has given you. Study the Bible to Understand Gifts Read 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:3–8, Ephesians 4:11–16, and other scriptures to familiarize yourself with the characteristics of different gifts. Notice which gifts are described in a way that matches your abilities and passions. Observe your abilities and passions Reflect on what you're good at: Are you particularly productive or passionate about certain areas? For example, do you enjoy teaching, encouraging others, ministering to those in need, or organizing events? Pay attention to how others respond to your ministry: When you do something, do you often hear people say that your ministry is helpful or moving? Think about what makes you feel joy: Spiritual gifts are often connected to

the joy and fulfillment of your heart. Participate in Church Ministry, Practice Exploration Try to participate in different services of the church or fellowship, such as teaching, hospitality, prayer leadership, care, administrative support, etc. Look for areas in ministry that you feel comfortable with or can effectively help others. Gifts are often manifested in actual participation. Seek feedback from others Ask pastors, spiritual mentors, or close Christian friends if they have observed that you are particularly gifted in some way. Affirmations from others may help you confirm God's work in you. Confirm with a combination of prayer and practice. Keep an open mind Spiritual gifts may change over time and as needed, and God may give you new gifts at different stages. Don't limit yourself to a "visible" gift (such as a tongue or miracle), but accept the unique calling God has given you. Remember 1 Corinthians 12:31-13 that love is the greatest gift, and all gifts should be used with love.

First Corinthians 12 deals primarily with the gift of the Holy Spirit and the unity of the church as the body of Christ. Paul emphasized the many gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophetic preaching, discerning spirits, and interpreting tongues and tongues. These gifts, though different, all come from the same Holy Spirit and are intended to edify the church and serve the common good. Paul uses the analogy of the body to illustrate that the church is the body of Christ and that believers are different members of the body. Each member (believer) has a different function, but all are indispensable and need to be matched with each other. Regardless of status, all members should respect each other, share in the joy and suffering, and maintain unity. Paul lists the different offices in the church, such as apostle, prophet, teacher, etc., and points out that these gifts are in order, but more important is the pursuit of love (lead to chapter 13). He encouraged believers to seek greater gifts, but emphasized that love was paramount. This chapter emphasizes the diversity and unity of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the interdependence of the parts of the church like a body, and the use of gifts with love as the supreme principle for the edification of the whole.

We pray

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for choosing me to be a citizen of your kingdom. How wonderful is Your grace, and everything You give is for the building of the church and the glory of Your name. Lord, I long to know more about You and to live out Your calling in my life.

Today, I humbly come to You and ask You to raise up the spiritual gifts within me Personally. Lord, do not let your talents be buried, nor will inertia, fear, or self-limitation keep me from entering the plan You have prepared for me. May the Holy Spirit Himself fill me and guide me so that I can recognize and use Your gifts to serve others, edify the Church, and manifest Your glory.

Whether it's teaching, mercy, exhortation, healing, faith, wisdom, discernment, or other spiritual gifts, Lord, pour out on me according to your heart. Let me not live for myself, but set myself up for Your kingdom as a vessel of Your usefulness.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

### The Use of Spiritual Gifts

**12** Now about the spiritual *gifts* [the special endowments given by the Holy Spirit], brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup> You know that when you were pagans, *you were* led off after speechless idols; however you were led off [whether by impulse or habit]. <sup>3</sup> Therefore I want you to know that no one speaking by the [power and influence of the] Spirit of God can say, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is [my] Lord,” except by [the power and influence of] the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup> Now there are [distinctive] varieties of *spiritual* gifts [special abilities given by the grace and extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit operating in believers], but it is the same Spirit [who grants them and empowers believers]. <sup>5</sup> And there are [distinctive] varieties of ministries *and* service, but it is the same Lord [who is served]. <sup>6</sup> And there are [distinctive] ways of working [to accomplish things], but it is the same God who produces all things in all *believers* [inspiring, energizing, and empowering them]. <sup>7</sup> But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit [the spiritual illumination and the enabling of the Holy Spirit] for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one is given through the [Holy] Spirit [the power to speak] the message of wisdom, and to another [the power to express] the word of knowledge *and* understanding according to the same Spirit; <sup>9</sup> to another [wonder-working] faith [is given] by the same [Holy] Spirit, and to another the [extraordinary] gifts of healings by the one Spirit; <sup>10</sup> and to another the working of <sup>[a]</sup>miracles, and to another prophecy [foretelling the future, speaking a new message from God to the people], and to another discernment of spirits [the ability to distinguish sound, godly doctrine from the deceptive doctrine of man-made religions and cults], to another *various* kinds of [unknown] tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these things [the gifts, the achievements, the abilities, the empowering] are brought about by one and the same [Holy] Spirit, distributing to each one individually just as He chooses.

<sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts, though many, form [only] one body, so <sup>[b]</sup>it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For by one [Holy] Spirit we were all baptized into one body, [spiritually transformed—united together] whether Jews or Greeks (Gentiles), slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one [Holy] Spirit [since the same Holy Spirit fills each life].

<sup>14</sup> For the [human] body does not consist of one part, but of many [limbs and organs]. <sup>15</sup> If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not *a part* of the body,” is it not on the contrary still *a part* of the body? <sup>16</sup> If the ear says, “Because I am not an eye, I am not *a part* of the body,” is it not on the contrary still *a part* of the body? <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole [body] were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup> But now [as things really are], God has placed *and* arranged the parts in the body, each one of them, just as He willed *and* saw fit [with the best balance of function]. <sup>19</sup> If they all were a single *organ*, where would [the rest of] the body be? <sup>20</sup> But now [as things really are] there are many parts [different limbs and organs], but a single body. <sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” <sup>22</sup> But quite the contrary, the parts of the

body that seem to be weaker are [absolutely] necessary; <sup>23</sup> and as for those *parts* of the body which we consider less honorable, these we treat with greater honor; and our less presentable parts are treated with greater modesty, <sup>24</sup> while our more presentable parts do not require it. But God has combined the [whole] body, giving greater honor to that part which lacks it, <sup>25</sup> so that there would be no division *or* discord in the body [that is, lack of adaptation of the parts to each other], but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. <sup>26</sup> And if one member suffers, all the parts share the suffering; if one member is honored, all rejoice with it.

<sup>27</sup> Now you [collectively] are Christ's body, and individually [you are] members of it [each with his own special purpose and function]. <sup>28</sup> So God has appointed *and* placed in the church [for His own use]: first apostles [chosen by Christ], second prophets [those who foretell the future, those who speak a new message from God to the people], third teachers, then those who work miracles, then those with the gifts of healings, the helpers, the administrators, and speakers in *various* kinds of [unknown] tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> But earnestly desire *and* strive for the greater gifts [if acquiring them is going to be your goal].

And yet I will show you a still more excellent way [one of the choicest graces and the highest of them all: unselfish love].

## 1. Overview of 1 Corinthians Chapter 12

In this chapter, the Apostle Paul teaches the Corinthian church about **spiritual gifts** and the importance of **unity in the body of Christ**. He emphasizes that though believers are given different gifts, all are from the same Spirit and meant for the **common good** of the church.

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### ◆ Verses 1–11: The Source and Diversity of Spiritual Gifts

Paul explains that **spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit**, and though they vary from person to person, **they all serve one purpose: building up the church**.

Examples of spiritual gifts mentioned:

- Wisdom
- Knowledge
- Faith
- Healing
- Miracles
- Prophecy

- Discernment of spirits
- Speaking in tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

**Key Verse:**

"All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines." (1 Corinthians 12:11)

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◆ **Verses 12–27: The Church as One Body with Many Members**

Paul uses the **metaphor of the human body** to describe the church:

- Just as the body has many parts (hands, feet, eyes, ears), **so does the church**;
- No part is more important than another;
- Every believer, regardless of role or gift, is essential;
- If one part suffers, all suffer. If one is honored, all rejoice.

**Key Verse:**

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:27)

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◆ **Verses 28–31: God-Appointed Roles in the Church**

Paul lists some of the **roles and gifts** God has placed in the church:

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Teachers
- Miracle workers
- Healers
- Helpers
- Leaders
- Tongues

He ends by encouraging believers to "**eagerly desire the greater gifts**", leading into Chapter 13 — the famous chapter on **love**.

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## ✝ 2. Theological Influence of 1 Corinthians 12

### ✔ A. The Sovereignty of the Holy Spirit

This chapter shows that **God is the one who chooses which gift to give to whom**, reinforcing the idea that no one can boast or feel inferior based on their gift.

### ✔ B. Unity in Diversity

A key theological concept: though the church is made up of diverse individuals with different functions, **all are equally valuable**. This supports **unity within the church** and mutual respect.

### ✔ C. Gifts Are for the Church, Not Self

Spiritual gifts are not given for self-glory or private use, but for the **edification of the whole church**.

### ✔ D. Lays the Foundation for Love

Paul sets up Chapter 13 by saying that **love is greater than all gifts**. This reminds us that **gifts are temporary**, but **love is eternal**.

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### 🙏 Spiritual Reflection:

- Have you discovered your spiritual gift?
- Are you using it to serve others in the body of Christ?
- Do you honor and support others whose gifts are different from yours?
- Do you operate your gift with **love** at the center?