

Studies in 1 Corinthians

Lesson XXXI: Spiritual Gifts Then and Now

TEXT: 1 Cor. 12:1-11 (NASV)

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.

2 You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.

3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. **5** And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. **6** There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.

7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. **8** For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; **9** to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. **11** but one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Paul brings up the pagan past of the Corinthians because he...
 - a. *wants to remind them that they are/were hopeless losers.*
 - b. *has a tendency to go off on tangents.*
 - c. *doesn't want them to be naive about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as they were when they followed idols.*

2. Compare verse 3 with Jesus' words in Matthew 7:21. Do you think Paul has in mind a perfunctory acknowledgement of Jesus or a genuine confession leading to a changed life (as in Romans 10:8-13)?
3. The New Testament includes at least six distinct lists of the spiritual gifts. Compare and contrast the following passages:
 - 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28, 29-30
 - Romans 12:4-8
 - Ephesians 4:11-13
 - 1 Peter 4:10-11.
4. What was the primary purpose of the miraculous sign gifts, within the context of the first century church? (see Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:2-4)

A Few Basic Reminders

- Every passage of the Bible should be understood in its original context.
 - ◆ When was it written?
 - ◆ Who wrote it?
 - ◆ Why was it written?
 - ◆ What is the larger context of the paragraph, chapter, book?
 - ◆ What issues does it address?
 - ◆ Why would this be important to the people who received it?
- Always compare scripture with scripture and accept the interpretation that makes the most sense of all the data.
- Use the clear, plain passages to understand the difficult passages.
- Try to identify the underlying principle or lesson of the passage (the “point”)