

Journey Through the New Testament

I Corinthians 12 – 16

Series: Body Language

“The Spirit Moves a Willing Body”

Introduction

The church in Corinth was the most gifted and the most troubled church that Paul dealt with. His profound teaching reached not only the ancient church, but all Christian churches who have existed since then. Paul emphasized that the church is diverse since believers have various gifts but it remains one in Christ. As each member does their part for the common good, the Spirit enlivens the body to accomplish the work of God without division or judgment. As we allow the Spirit to equip us and move us into ministry, the work of the Body—the church—is accomplished.

Opening Prayer

O Lord, we often fail to see the ways that you have gifted us to serve. We doubt that we have much to offer. We are afraid to step out and use the gifts that you have instilled within us. Grant us courage to serve in the ways that you have equipped us. Forgive our pride and our fear as we strive to be the body of Christ so that others may know your love and grace. Amen.

Bible Study I Corinthians 12, selected verses (CEV)

What?

1. Since Jesus' physical body is no longer present, who is to be the body of Christ in the world now? (v. 27)
2. Where do spiritual gifts come from? (v. 28, also 12:11)
3. Read 12:1-14. What does this passage teach us about the variety of gifts and how we are to view them?
4. What is the purpose of the various gifts that the spirit gives to believers? (v. 12:7)
5. How do believers become “one body?” (v. 12-13)
6. Who is the “head” of the body? See Colossians 1:18

Definition of Spiritual Gift

A divine, supernatural ability given by God to enable a Christian to serve and to minister—a tool for ministry that is given by God. (Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts, Kenneth Cain Kinghorn)

1. This definition sums up Paul's teaching about spiritual gifts. How can knowing our gifts enable us to become effective disciples?
2. How does knowing our gifts help the entire church in its mission?
3. How does understanding our gifts help us have a sense of worth and value for the ministry of the church?
4. How does knowing our gifts foster unity in the body of Christ?

Discovering Spiritual Gifts Lesson Notes: It is important to discover, develop, and deploy our spiritual gifts so that we grow in our understanding of how God is calling us to serve, become more effective in ministry, and avoid trying to carry out ministry that we are not gifted for. One helpful place to begin is by taking a spiritual gifts inventory. There are many resources available. A helpful inventory can be found at: www.umc.org/whatwebelieve/spiritual-gifts-online-assessment There you will find the assessment, explanation of gifts, and additional resources for further study. It is helpful to work with a group as others are able to affirm the gifts that they see in you as you share this learning together.

Reflection

1. Consider the various ministries of the church. When have you served in an area of ministry and felt capable, equipped, able and passionate? This kind of experience can help you discern your gifts.
2. When have you volunteered for something in the church and felt frustrated, disinterested, and ineffective? How can this help you discover your gifts?
3. How does knowing your gifts free you from guilt and serving out of duty rather than passion and call?
4. What is the difference between "church work" and "the work of the church?"

Spiritual Gifts Lesson Notes: There are various lists of spiritual gifts found in scripture and some variations of how these are compiled. Refer to the following scriptures.

1 Cor 12:8-10 1 Cor. 12:28 1 Cor 12:29-30 Romans 12:5-8 Eph 4:11 1 Peter 4:10-11

Quick List: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophesy, discernment, tongues, interpretation of tongues, teaching, helping, leading, apostles, serving, exhortation, giving, mercy, evangelist, pastor, compassion, administration

Remember: The Spirit Moves a Willing Body!