



Serving by Assignment (1 Corinthians 12:1-11)

- Paul now turns to answering some more questions about spiritual gifts. Paul spends three chapters (12-14) helping the Corinthians understand how to use spiritual gifts and correct the misuse of certain other gifts.
- Christianity is not a spectator sport and God gives every single member of His family a supernatural serving assignment called a grace gift to bless others with.
- Paul shares six things to consider about our part in body of Christ.

① Your grace gift has an indispensable role (12:1)

- God has a strong desire that we not be an agnostic (“*unaware*”) about His grace gifts. We can’t afford to be ignorant about such a vital ministry to the Lord’s body that magnifies Jesus Christ.
- A gift is a God-empowered serving ability that acts as a channel through which the Holy Spirit ministers grace to the Body of Christ for its spiritual benefit.

② Your grace gift has an incorruptible role (12:2-3)

- You cannot cross the divine boundary line God has established without really messing up the portrait of the body of Christ.
- How can anyone discern truth versus error? Paul provides two (negative & positive) incorruptible tests.
 - 1) **The negative test:** You can’t say “*Jesus is accursed*” (v. 3b): If Jesus is misrepresented in any way (who He is or what He does), it will corrupt the portrayal of the body of Christ. The truth of Jesus Christ is not always known by what you see, feel, or experience, or by what works, but it is by what God has said in His Word (John 17:17).
 - 2) **The positive test:** You can’t say “*Jesus is Lord*” except by the Holy Spirit (v. 3b): Anyone can make a confession (Matt 7:22), but a real confession of Jesus will show up in how one lives (Luke 6:46).

③ Your grace gift has an inspirational role (12:4-6)

- Your grace gift will motivate you to understand where your gift came from and how it was designed.
- Grace gifts are given to encourage the unity of the body and unity is caused by the growth of each individual part to make the church healthy and strong (Eph. 4:16)
- We are inspired by the “*variety*” (v. 4, 5, 6): There is a diversity of gifts (abilities to help others grow), ministries (the way your gift will function), and effects (what fruit God will produce)
- We are inspired by the unity (same Spirit, same Lord, same God who is working on behalf of the one body).

④ Your grace gift has an intentional role (12:7)

- Your grace-gift is designed to be “*for the common good*”

- It warns us of the dangers of disuse and misuse
 - Notice the disuse danger ("*but to each one is given*"): No one is left out. Everyone is gifted and each time you exercise your gift, you display a little picture of Jesus Christ and when we all do it together, it fills out His beauty.
 - Notice the misuse danger (it's all "*for the common good*"): Gifts are not for our good or self-edification, but for the spiritual advantage of others.

5 Your grace gift has an individualized role (12:8-10)

- Paul identifies the grace gifts in a list. He lists eight different gifts in v. 8-10, four (of 8) more different gifts in v. 28-30, six (of 7) different gifts in Romans 12:6-8, then two (of 4) different gifts in Eph. 4:11 and Peter has two categories for the gifts (speaking or serving gifts in 1 Peter 4:11) for a total of 20 gifts.
 - When you analyze all the gifts, you notice a few things:
 - Some are foundational gifts (apostles, prophets – Eph. 2:20)
 - Some are temporary and some are permanent (1 Cor. 13:8)
 - Some have some distinguishable differences (Paul uses two words for "*another*". Heteros for another of a different kind and allos which is another of the same kind in verse 8-10).
- 1) Word of Wisdom: The ability to understand and apply biblical truth accurately to a given situation.
 - 2) Word of Knowledge: The ability to communicate the correct meaning of Scripture.
 - 3) Faith: The ability to trust God in the face of extraordinary situations or circumstances.
 - 4) Gifts of Healing: The ability to bring immediate and complete physical healing to others.
 - 5) Effecting of Miracles: The ability to bring supernatural intrusions that transcend or change or violate the laws of nature by God's infinite wisdom & power (like changing water into wine, raising dead people, etc.)
 - 6) Prophecy: The ability to proclaim divine and direct revelation from God that foretells the future or forthtells the will of God on a matter. We'll talk later about its two forms (foretelling/forthtelling)
 - 7) Distinguishing of spirits: The ability to distinguish the spirits between truth and error. The Bible wasn't complete in their day, so they needed those who could discern the truth from error.
 - 8) Kinds of tongues: The ability to speak in other languages that you have never learned.
 - 9) Interpretation of tongues: The ability to interpret accurately the foreign tongues that were spoken and unknown to all who hear except the interpreter.

6 Your grace gift has an inclusionary role (12:11)

- You were not left out when God handed out His grace gifts ("*distributing to each one individually*"): See this also in verse 7, Eph. 4:7; ;1 Peter 4:10; Eph. 4:16
- God is the divine distributor of all grace-gifts ("*just as He wills*"). It not about what you want, but about what He determines for you to have.