



## God's Gift List (1 Corinthians 12:28-31a)

→ The ministry of the body of Christ is important to God as He designed the church to be one body with many members who all have a specific role to play. The Corinthians were struggling as they were drawn and fascinated with certain gifts (tongues) that were flashy. Paul writes to correct their misunderstanding and misapplication of the gifts and ministry.

- ◆ Believers cannot afford to be "*ignorant*" of their serving gifts (v. 1)
- ◆ Believers must make sure Jesus is not misrepresented when using our gifts (v. 2-3)
- ◆ Believers must appreciate how our Triune God (the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit) are all operating in and through the variety of gifts, ministries, and their fruitfulness (v. 4-6)
- ◆ Believers must remember that gifts are given "*for the common good*" of the body (v. 7)
- ◆ Believers must know that not one person is left ungifted, and the Spirit sovereignly decides what gift you receive (v. 11)
- ◆ Believers must see how the church is like a human body with "*many members*" in "*one body*" (v. 12)
- ◆ Believers must know that the Lord uses the Spirit to immerse us ("*baptism*") into "*one body*" despite our ethnic and socioeconomic differences (v. 13)
- ◆ Believers must understand God has designed a vast and all-vital diversity in His body (v. 14-18)
- ◆ Believers must understand our crucial dependency upon each other (v. 19-24)
- ◆ Believers must use their gifts to avoid division and provide "*the same care for one another*" (v. 25-26)
- ◆ Believers must realize that each gift and role matter because together we portray Jesus Christ (v. 27)
- ◆ Believers must recognize God has designed a variety of gifts in order to build up the body of Christ (v. 8-10, 28-30; Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 4:10-11)

→ As Paul concludes chapter 12 (v. 28-31a), he shares three more truths that help correct the misguided thinking the Corinthians held.

### ① God's gifts have priority levels to our function in the body (12:28)

- While all gifts are needed and each one plays a vital role, God gives certain gifts some upper-level significance (apostles, prophets, teachers)
- Again, God reminds us that our role is one that is "*appointed*" (assigned to a particular task)
- Here is Paul's second gift list in chapter 12 (v. 8-10: five repeated and four new ones—apostles, teachers, helps, administration).
  - "*first apostles*" (v. 28; Eph. 4:11): The divine enablement to lay down the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20), plant churches, write Scripture (2 Pet 3:15-16), perform signs, wonders, miracles, healings (2 Cor. 12:12). They had to see the risen Lord (Acts 1:22; 2 Cor. 9:1; 15:9) and be commissioned by Christ (Mk 3:13-16; Acts 1:2; Gal 1:1). There is disagreement whether this gift is still operational
  - "*second prophets*" (v. 28; Eph. 4:11): The divine enablement to lay down the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20), write Scripture (Rom. 16:26), proclaim divine and direct" truth from God (Eph.

3:5) with power and clarity for “*edification and exhortation and consolation*” for believers (1 Cor. 14:3) and used to convict and expose the secrets of the hearts of unbelievers so they bow in worship before God (1 Cor. 14:24-25). They predicted future events (like Agabus-Acts 11:27-30; 21:10-12) and must be “*tested*” (1 Cor. 14:29-33; 1 Thess. 5:21) and “*not despised*” (1 Thess. 5:20). There is disagreement whether this gift is still operational or only operational as one who proclaims God’s completed Word.

- “**third teachers**” (v. 28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11 as “*pastor-teachers*”): The divine enablement to study, explain, and apply God’s truth in such a way that God’s people learn what they are to believe and do.
- “**then miracles**” (v. 28, 10 – “*effecting of miracles*”): The divine enablement to bring supernatural intrusions that transcend or change or violate the laws of nature by God’s infinite wisdom and power (it included casting out demons-Acts 19:12; healings-Acts 3:1-10; raising people from the dead, striking people dead-Acts 5:1-15; causing blindness-Acts 13:11). There is disagreement whether this gift is still operational though God can still do miracles whenever and however He chooses.
- “**gifts of healing**” (v. 9, 28): The divine enablement to bring immediate and complete physical healing to others. The apostles had this gift (Acts 19:11-16). There is disagreement whether this gift is still operational though God can still heal whoever and however He chooses.
- “**helps**” (v. 29): The divine enablement to help those in need. It took the burden off of others and put in on oneself and doesn’t mind serving behind the scenes.
- “**administrations**” (v. 28): The divine enablement to organize, plan, and execute the tasks of ministry that accomplishes the desired mission. It was used of a person who steers or pilots a ship and making sure the cargo and passengers arrived safely.
- “**kinds of tongues**” (v. 10, 28: 13:8; 14:1-40): The divine enablement to speak in foreign languages that have never been learned, but are known and understood by those who understand the language. There is disagreement whether this gift is still operational today.

## ② God’s gifts have personal limits to our function in the body (12:29-30)

- Paul wants us to understand that God doesn’t distribute each gift universally to all members of the body. Each believer is limited to the gift God has given them.
- Paul incorporates a formula with a series of rhetorical questions that require a negative answer. All these questions are related to what Paul was trying to communicate in v. 17.
- Each believer must accept their God-given role and be content with God’s “special gift” (1 Pet 4:10) to each believer.

## ③ God’s gifts have preferred longings to our function in the body (12:31a)

- Paul makes it clear he wants His church to “*earnestly desire the greater gifts*” which initially sounds contradictory until we understand (by the context) what he is meaning.
- Paul is challenging the church to “*earnestly desire the greater gifts*” not to receive a gift you might want (since God has already given the gift He determined that we have – v. 7, 11, 18, 28-“*appointed*”), but focused on valuing the edification influence of the “*greater*” foundational gifts that Paul prioritized in v. 28 (14:3, 4b, 5, 6, 12b, 19, 26, 31, 39)