

**Serving: it's good for you**  
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**1 Corinthians 12: 1-11**  
**August 3rd, 2014**

I'm gonna start off by asking a couple questions, my first question is to the husbands out here, who thinks that they're a pretty good gift giver? ok I see a few hands. now I'm going to ask the wives, put your hand up if your husband could improve in the gift giving area? For some reason I see a lot more hands, I wonder why? If you ask my wife she will tell you that I am not the best gift giver. I like many of you guys out there am also the worst at understanding hints. back when we were dating Sarah would be like oh this looks really cool, and I would be like yeah that is cool, then here birthday would come up and she would realize that I didn't get her the gift that she wanted. So eventually she realized she had to be more obvious with her hints so when we were first married she'd be like hey Steve it's my birthday soon, and I would be like yep, that's coming soon, then she would just be like yeah...and this thing here would be really cool to have. and because I have the intelligence of a doorknob I would still not get her the thing. I have no idea what's wrong with me, I'm unsure if I should get that checked out medically or if that's just a guy thing. I don't know. Anyways right before our anniversary she was like Steve, I want this, so buy it right now. so I go on to amazon and try to get it but I couldn't figure it out and she ended just taking the computer from me and buying it herself. I am sorry, on behalf of all guys, I don't know what's wrong with us, I really don't.

I am a terrible gift giver, unless somebody likes all the same things that I like than I can just buy something that I hope they share with me. Like one year for my brothers birthday he had just got a sega dreamcast, for the younger kids out there this was before the xbox, for the older gamers out there it was after pong and pacman. so I decided what better thing to get my brother than a second controller for the sega so that he could play multiplayer, with his one and only sibling...me. I gave him a gift that he was meant to give to me. And I admit my intentions were completely selfish, I wanted to play. but even though I was being selfish my brother actually ended up having a lot more fun with the games because he had someone to play them with. the gift he was given was way more fun if he shared it. And that's actually a lot like the gifts we're given by God. I want to read 1 corinthians 12: 1-11.

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Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshipping speechless idols. So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

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A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown

languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

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There are several things I want to pull out from that passage:

1. My first main point is that everybody has a gift and it is so special: I want to highlight again verse 7 “A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.” one of the first things I want to remind you about is that God didn’t forget you when he was handing out the gifts. I find it shocking and a little sad when I talk with people who either don’t think they have a spiritual gift or they don’t know what it is. Not too long ago I was talking with my mom and she has been a Christian for a long time and one thing she has always done is whenever anybody needed a place to stay for any amount of time she offered up her basement suite for people to live there without charging them any rent. she would do this all throughout my childhood and still to this day. and as I was talking with her recently she was saying how she didn’t know what her spiritual gifts were and I said mom, don’t you think since you’ve welcomed countless people into your home that you might have the gift of hospitality? I can’t remember exactly what she said but essentially she shrugged it off, thinking that hospitality is not all that important.

she was being what 1 corinthians 12: 15 calls a foot, (mom, I’m sorry if your listening to this online but this is what the bible says, I think your a wonderful mom, it’s just Paul who’s calling you a foot.) and what that verse says is: the foot says, “I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,” now, that’s really unfortunate, from an outside perspective it’s easy to see that the foot is very important, the foot actually does most of the work, but the hand, they get all the credit. We have this problem too. Often we think that our gifts are not that special because they’re behind the scenes or whatever, that is sad.

I think that a lot of us can be like the foot and the reason why is we’re used to ourselves. what I mean by that is the things that we are good at we automatically assume that those must be really easy things or that everybody is good at them. and then sometimes you can get into the mindset that other people’s gifts are so much better than yours and God didn’t make you as good as he made other people.

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this is what it says in 1 corinthians 12: 14-17

“Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, “I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,” that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, “I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,” would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?”

just because we’re not like someone else doesn’t mean were not important, if everyone was like me...well I’m not get into that, it would be a disaster. we all have to work together for a mission and we are all important, and we all have different gifts.

I had the privilege to work with Leora over this summer for Island adventure camp as well as a youth discipleship group that we started. Whenever I work with Leora I’m always amazed at what she thinks of, when we plan things she is saying we’ll need to bring this and that and email out this information to these people and I am just sitting there amazed at all the details she thinks of. and I’m just thinking I thought we were just going to go do stuff and hang out, but she thought of so much more. I have to fight jealousy in those times cuz sometimes I think if only I

were more detailed I would be able to be such a better Christian and Pastor. I have to remind myself that that is wrong thinking, if I were more detailed I would be less adaptable, I would maybe be less compassionate. God gave me the specific gifts that I have to use them in a way that can have an awesome impact in this world.

And you all have your own gifts, if you don't know what they are, ask someone really close to you, whether it's a spouse or a parent or a really close friend, they will be able to tell you probably better than a spiritual gift test. And almost always when people find out what their gifts are the like yeah, well everybody has that gift, it's not that special, NO! God gave you that gift for something very special, embrace it! and when you know what that gift is, and you know that it is special you get to the exciting part which is my second point for today:

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2. These gifts are best when they are given regularly

In verse 4-6 we see that the gifts we are given are closely related to serving.

"there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us."

we're given gifts so that we can serve! On the last day of youth group in June we had almost 100 kids there and I asked who was volunteering at a camp all summer and there were well over 30, then there are kids who are helping out at island adventure camp, there were other students in youth who got involved in a youth discipleship program that Leora and I were doing, so many of our students are using their gifts to serve God. Over the past couple weeks I was able to talk to a bunch of those students and I was so excited that I was able to see what I saw.

I was able to go over to homewood on one of my days off because we have a lot of CIT's there for those of you who don't know that stands for counsellor in training. We have a lot of kids at that camp and I headed over there and I got there just as everyone was finishing up breakfast. So there they all are shoving as food down their faces as possible cuz they got a long day of work ahead of them. they saw me coming in and they were excited, the first thing I noticed was that one of them over the summer acquired the worst dreads I had ever seen in my life. But I say hi to everybody and as soon as everyone was done breakfast they all went off to work in different areas of the camp.

One group of them was cleaning the bathrooms which my goodness that doesn't sound fun. I was walking around with one of our students and as we were cleaning the bathrooms he was telling me story after story of how he has been able to worship God with the CIT's throughout the summer, God has given the gift of being able to sing and play music and he is able to use that at camp. God has also used him as he's been serving as a counsellor and that it has been a huge blessing that instead of getting a summer job and buying the things that he might want that he gets to work for free and allow God to use him at camp, it was amazing.

After a little while I couldn't handle cleaning the bathrooms anymore so I moved on to the dish/cleanup crew. and what this group does is wash all the dishes after every meal and they clean up the area where everybody eats. this is a job that can very easily become mundane, it can be boring, but it wasn't at all. They had music blasting they were dancing as they were sweeping the floors, this looked like fun. this makes me think of Galatians 5:13

"For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love."

Serving God is not a chore, rather, because we're free, we get to serve. that is what our youth discovered at camp homewood and I know that some of you found that here as well. you have discovered that through serving you discover the freedom that you have. and I want you all to know this truth because it will bring you so much joy.

So after I was done with the dancing clean up crew I went on to the work crew, and I know I look like I work out everyday, but you might be surprised that I don't do a lot of manual labor. And I want to say right now i respect all of you guys and girls who do because that's tough work. So the work crew was out there and they were stacking wood and chopping wood. So at first I thought this was awesome you get a big giant axe and you get to chop wood that sounds like fun. Well, the novelty of that runs out pretty quick. After a few chops your just tired and sweaty. Once again the students who were serving absolutely floored me. they're tired, they're exhausted but their not complaining, they're having fun, their making games out of the work. The girls there were swinging an axe that probably weighed more than they did and they were tired but they were trying their best. God may have not gifted me and some of the other CIT's in the area of manual labor but we were willing to be stretched and do something that we weren't comfortable with which was really cool.

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without knowing it they were following scripture in collossians 3: 23-24 which says:

“Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.”

They were serving Christ as they were chopping that wood.

I want to highlight one more story of how God is working in one of our students who isn't at camp this summer. We have another student who had plans to go to camp this summer, but those weren't God's plans and he ended up staying in town. But instead of getting bitter and instead of complaining he got involved in children's ministry, in youth discipleship, he helped out at island adventure camp. This is another example of how God wants us to serve, but sometimes in a different way than we might think. Our plans are not always God's plans. God wants us to serve but he might have a place for you that you didn't think you wanted, and you won't know until you open up and allow God to move you.

those are just a few but there are even more stories of how God is using our congregation in the gifts that he has given them. I was able to help out with Island adventure Camp and I have no idea how many volunteers were there but I got excited seeing everybody use their gifts, there were people leading small groups, there were people leading crafts and games, there were people in the kitchen, which thank goodness it wasn't me, God hasn't blessed me in that area. God has not blessed me in the kitchen area. but we had great food and a great time. We saw so many people using their gifts that God gave them and it was fun.

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The third point I have is that it's better to give than receive. Yes this is cliché but you're going to get much more joy regularly using your gifts and being stretched than you ever would just knowing that you're good at something.

“psalm 100: 1-2 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

Serve the Lord with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!”

God doesn't need us to use our gifts for him, but with serving comes gladness. God has the power to do anything without us. But he has a plan for this world and he wants us to be part of it and that is awesome. it's like this, a little while ago I went out fishing, and I caught this bad boy right here.

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Now I could tell you about how awesome of a fisher I am, but I would be lying, the truth is that I have no idea how to fish. So how did I catch this awesome fish? well, I went out with a guide and he had this machine thing that had a bunch of dots on it, it didn't make any sense to me but he was able to look at that thing and find out where the fish were, he took us to the best spot according to the machine, he set out the lines, i sat there eating timbits, when there was a bite he went and set the hook I then finished eating my timbits and then gave me the rod and I reeled it in. I had a great time. Now, something tells me that my guide probably didn't need my help, I'm not sure but I think he could have reeled it in himself. but he let me be part of the fun.

God does that too, he may not need you, but he'll let you be part of the fun, he wants you to use your gifts so that you can be part of his work here. And I want to close this morning by letting you know that if you're not using your gifts, and if you're not serving, we'll figure out a way to make ministry happen without you. We're missing out a little bit by not having you, but if you're not involved you're the one who's missing out, I want you to see the joy that serving brings. We have a lot of ministries in our church I know Leora always needs people in Christ kids, If you're passionate about God and about youth I want you to be part of what we're doing in youth ministry. if you don't know where you can get involved please talk with our staff we want you to serve because we want what's best for you.

I want to close with 1 corinthians 12: 27

"All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it."

everyone here makes the body, and if your not involved we're missing you, and you're missing out.

closing prayer.