

Spiritual Gifts

Session 1 - 1Corinthians 12

Why Spiritual Gifts?

Are you aware of spiritual gifts? If so, what do you understand the purpose is of such gifts? What might your gifts be?

1. In his book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren says this:

'Knowing your purpose [in life] gives meaning to your life.'

'Knowing your purpose simplifies your life.'

'Knowing your purpose prepares you for eternity.'

Read Ephesians 2:8-10

What does Ephesians 2:8-10 tell you about your life as a Christian?

How conscious are you about the above statements of why God has created you?

Read Ephesians 2:1-3. What does this tell us about how our lives began and compare this with how Paul describes how our lives were originally designed to be in v.8-10.

2. Describe how members of a non-church organization (social group, business group, club, school, team etc., perhaps one you have belonged to,) relate to one another. How do the different members contribute (or not contribute) to the group?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-3 as the Apostle Paul begins his discussion of spiritual gifts.

What is Paul's first statement to us about spiritual gifts? What do you think this means for those of us who are Christians?

See also 1 Corinthians 14:1; 1 Timothy 4:14-15; and 1 Peter 4:10

What are each of these verses confirming? Why is this important?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7. Here Paul gives us more information about spiritual gifts:

In these verses, 4-6, Paul basically repeats himself three times: What are the two things he repeats 3x about spiritual gifts?

In Hebrew, anything repeated 3 times indicates that what is being said is of ultimate importance. What then is the implication of this repetition of what Paul is saying to us about our church and how we should do ministry in our church?

(We will discuss the list of spiritual gifts in a later meeting. For now we will look at other characteristics of what these gifts are to better understand the specific gifts that are given to us)

5. Read 1 Corinthians 12:11. Paul re-iterates a most important and imperative aspect of these gifts, which he has referenced in v.6:

What does Paul say about the gifts in this verse and why this is so important for us to understand?

One Body with Many Members

6. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. Paul's body analogy:

In Paul's body analogy, how do the various parts of our physical bodies function in relation to one another?

What would happen if one part of our bodies were able to say to another part, 'I don't need you?' What would be lost in our functioning as one body?

How does this analogy apply to the church?

What does Paul say is the overall purpose for the way God has composed our bodies? v.24b,25.

In what way is Paul's analogy of the Gifts a solution for our personal feelings of inferiority or superiority in the Body of Christ? Could this help us in terms of other areas of life and our overall attitude in life?

7. Read 1 Corinthians 12:27-31. Paul then applies his body analogy to the role of spiritual gifts in the life of Christ's body, the Church:

What do you think Paul means when he says in v.27, '...you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it?'

The Church at Corinth had some major divisive issues within the congregation. Some were putting a greater priority on two or three of the gifts, and even feeling superior to other church members who did not have these gifts. Paul wanted them to have a realistic understanding of how God intended the gifts to be used within the congregation, as well as their relationships with other church members.

If a church valued some gifts over others, what issues could that create in the church.

Paul says that not everyone has the exact same gifts. How would it look if members of the church did have all the same gift?

8. After studying this passage of 1 Corinthians 12, has your understanding of the role of spiritual gifts changed? If so, in what way?

Conclusion: Read 1 Peter 2:9 -10

In what ways does this verse affirm who we are now in Christ?

Assignment: A question from Rick Warren to consider over the next week

"What is holding me back from accepting God's call to serve Him?"

Closing Prayer