

A&P Home Church | Weekly Study

1 Corinthians Chapters 11-12

Weekly Memory Verse:

For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup you are
announcing the Lord's death **until He comes again**.

1 Corinthians 11:26

BOOK SUMMARY:

First Corinthians is one of the more practical books of the New Testament. Paul writes to a church immersed in a city associated with trade, but also with corruption and immorality. These believers are struggling to properly apply spiritual gifts and to resist the ungodly practices of the surrounding culture. Paul's letter gives instructions for real-life concerns such as marriage and spirituality. He also deals with the importance of unity and gives one of the Bible's more well-known descriptions of love in chapter 13.

CHAPTER 11 SUMMARY:

After concluding his teaching on meat offered to idols, Paul turns to two issues the church in Corinth was getting wrong. The first was head coverings when praying or prophesying in their meetings. Differences between men and women in that regard are because of both spiritual and social reasons. Paul also corrects the disastrous way in which they were practicing the observance of the Lord's Supper. They were dishonoring Christ's sacrifice for sin as well as the poor in the body of Christ, the church. Despite having more to say on communion, Paul will move on to the topic of spiritual gifts in chapter 12.

CHAPTER 12 SUMMARY:

After tackling the issues of head coverings for women and the Lord's Supper in the previous chapter, Paul moves to the issue of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. Paul insists that the display of spiritual gifts does not make one believer more spiritual or important than another. Every believer in Jesus has the Spirit, and the Spirit gives to every believer one or more spiritual gifts. The gifts are given for the common good, and the church is like a human body. Each gifted function in the church represents a body part, and all the parts are essential. This sets up a description of love, as defined from a Christian viewpoint, and famously recorded in chapter 13.

Throughout the week continue to practice reciting the memory verse over & over, discuss it's meaning, look through the scriptures, think through the questions, and apply the Word to your life. We will discuss and answer questions on the YouTube Live on Saturday at 12 EST. Email any questions during the week to aphomechurch@gmail.com.

MONDAY

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul tackles two issues that needed correction in the Corinthian church: head coverings for women and how to observe the Lord's Supper together. Paul begins by praising the Corinthian believers for remembering his teaching and maintaining the traditions he taught them when he lived among them (1 Corinthians 11:1-2).

What he addresses in this chapter, though, are two traditions about which he has heard negative reports. These are teachings the believers in Corinth were not maintaining well. The first had to do with head coverings for women who were praying and prophesying in the public worship gatherings.

Apparently, nearly all women wore head coverings in public during this era. This included Jewish, pagan, and Christian women. Women seen without head coverings may have been considered morally loose or sexually available. **This was a matter of cultural assumptions;** people of Paul's era would have reacted to a woman with an uncovered head much the same way modern people might to a woman wearing extremely revealing clothes. Paul received a report that some of the women in the Corinthian church were not wearing head coverings while praying or prophesying during their gatherings.

To address this, Paul builds a connection between what men and women do with their actual heads and those who are their metaphorical "heads" or representatives. This parallels the cultural concepts of what a woman's un-covered head meant to the society of the ancient world. He writes that Christ is the head of every man, husbands are the head of their wives, and God is the head of Christ. Paul seems less interested in talking about the authority of these "heads" than about what each of us can do to honor or shame them. A man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, who is Christ. Paul may have had in mind the Roman practice of men pulling a part of their robes over their head during worship of their gods. Christian men must not do the same (1 Corinthians 11:3-4).

Let's explore this further with this Q+A from Got Questions:

Question: "What does the Bible say about wearing hats in church?"

Answer: In Western culture, it has always been considered rude or disrespectful for a man to wear a hat inside a building, including a church building. Even a generation ago, when men commonly

wore hats, the headgear was removed indoors, or even outdoors in the presence of a woman. In contrast, women's hats have long been a standard part of a stylish or formal outfit, and wearing a hat indoors is acceptable for a woman.

This cultural tradition most likely has its roots in the Bible itself. The apostle Paul talks to the Corinthian church about this matter, saying, “A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God” (1 Corinthians 11:7). A few verses later, he says, “Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him?” (1 Corinthians 11:14). In verse 14 Paul is speaking specifically of “long hair,” rather than hats, but both are considered a “covering” for the head. Most modern churches would not consider long hair on a man to be disrespectful; nevertheless, this passage calls it a disgrace because long hair is inherently feminine. Since “long” is a relative description, we apply this according to the culture in which one lives. In the Corinthian culture, for men to wear any kind of head covering in church was for them to take on the role of the women, which is not the order God designed for spiritual headship (1 Corinthians 11:3).

Women have worn hats in church for centuries and still do so without it being considered disrespectful. Again, this goes back to the biblical idea of head coverings (probably veils) being used as an outward, cultural symbol of an inward attitude. However, nowhere in the Bible does it say women *must* wear hats or veils or *kapps* in church. The passages in 1 Corinthians 11 that seem to suggest women ought to have a head covering in church are better interpreted as a mandate for women to follow cultural norms, to show respect for one’s husband, and to maintain a distinctly feminine appearance. Many Bible scholars believe the only required covering for the woman is her hair (1

Corinthians 11:15). In either case, it’s difficult to be dogmatic about this passage. Some scholars say this passage is one of the most difficult in the whole New Testament to thoroughly understand.

What is important is that we are communicating Christian principles within the culture in which we live. It is traditional in Western culture for a man to take off his hat when entering a building or saluting the flag (with the exception of uniformed members of the military). Christians living in Western cultures should be aware of that tradition and show due respect in the customary way. During the playing of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” a civilian taking off his hat communicates respect (to the flag); during a church service, it communicates respect (to God). Similarly, in Eastern cultures, it is respectful to take off one’s shoes when entering a home or place of worship; Christians living in Eastern cultures should follow that custom, even if there is nothing in the Bible that specifically commands it.

Taking off one’s hat in church is simply a cultural way for a man to show respect and honor to God. Rather than bucking tradition and “doing our own thing,” we should usually follow the cultural rules, being careful to communicate respect for God in every way possible.

It is certain that God is much more interested in the posture of the heart than any outward appearance (1 Samuel 16:7). Any woman is capable of wearing elaborate head coverings without having any genuine reverence for God’s established order of authority. But godly

women who recognize that submission toward their husbands is as submission to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22) are the women God is pleased with. Whatever we do, motive is important. Whether or not a woman chooses to wear a head covering, let it be done with a genuine spirit of thanks to God in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17).

Of course, it is possible for a man to wear a baseball cap in church and yet have a heart full of reverence and awe for the Lord. And it is also possible for a man to remove his hat in church yet disdain God in his soul. God sees the heart. But the issue, sometimes, is what our actions communicate to others; people cannot see our hearts, so we must often show them our respect by what we *do*.

Many stop here to argue over head coverings and hair length- but as Jesus always did, let us look to the heart of the matter.

Do you properly understand the Biblical set up of order in the family? In your home- is the Biblical order properly in place, or is that an area where you're lacking? Is the wife in submission to the husband? The husband to the Lord? The children to the parents? Where do you need to seek guidance and correction here?

TUESDAY

Women, on the other hand, dishonor their head, or husband, by praying or prophesying in the worship service with their own head uncovered. The normal covering may have involved a hood built into a woman's robe or a type of veil. Perhaps these Christian women felt their freedom in Christ entitled them to worship without their heads covered. They might have seen the worship meeting as a private space, so they didn't need to treat church gatherings as public events. They might even have been deliberately countering the expectations of that culture. We don't know. Paul insisted they must keep their head coverings on (1 Corinthians 11:5-6).

Man should not cover his head because he is the glory of God, Paul wrote. Woman—or wives—are the glory of man—or husbands—and so they should cover their heads to keep that glory for them alone. The principle here, again, is parallel to the idea of someone wearing sexually-suggestive clothing in a modern setting. Such style sends signals which conflict with the purpose of the worship service. This restriction—so far as literal head coverings go—is unique to cultures

Question: "Should Christian women wear head coverings?"

Answer: 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 addresses the issue of women and head coverings. The context of the entire passage of 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 is submission to the God-given order and "chain of command." A "covering" on a woman's head is used as an illustration of the order, headship, and the authority of God. The key verse of this passage is 1 Corinthians 11:3 **"But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."** The implications of this verse are found in the rest of the passage. The order is: God the Father, God the Son, the man or husband, and the woman or wife. The veil or covering on the head of a believing Corinthian wife showed that she was under the authority of her husband, and therefore under submission to God.

Within this passage is also verse 10: "For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels." Why is that important to angels? The relationship of God with men is something that angels watch and learn from (1 Peter 1:12). Therefore, a woman's submission to God's delegated authority over her is an example to angels. The holy angels, who are in perfect and total submission to God, expect that we, as followers of Christ, be the same.

This covering not only means a cloth but also can refer to a woman's hair length. How can we say that? We must take this

verse in the context or the setting in which it is presented. "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering" (1 Corinthians 11:14-15). Therefore, in the context of this passage, a woman who is wearing her hair longer marks herself out distinctively as a woman and not a man. **The Apostle Paul is saying here that in the Corinthian culture, when a wife's hair was longer than her husband's, it showed her submission to his headship.** The roles of the male and female are designed by God to portray a profound spiritual lesson, that is of submission to the will and the order of God.

But why is hair an issue in this passage? The apostle Paul is addressing an issue related to the Corinthian culture that was being allowed to disrupt the church. For a woman to have a shaved head was a disgrace (and, in Jewish thinking, a sign of mourning, Deuteronomy 21:12). Her hair was her "glory" (1 Corinthians 11:15). In the Corinthian culture, women normally wore a head covering as a symbol of their submission to their husbands. Paul affirms the rightness of following that cultural mandate—to dispense with the head coverings on women would send the entirely wrong signal to the culture at large. In fact, Paul says that, if a Christian woman refuses her head covering, she might as well shave her hair off, too (verse 6). A woman who refused to wear a covering in that culture was basically saying, **"I refuse to submit to God's**

order.” Therefore, the apostle Paul is teaching the Corinthians that hair length or the wearing of a “covering” by the woman was an outward indication of a heart attitude of submission to God and to His established authority.

God's order is that the husband is the head of the wife as God is the head of Christ, but there is no inequality or inferiority implied. God and Christ are equal and united, just as the husband and the wife are one. This is not a passage that teaches the woman is inferior to man or that she should be submissive to every man. It is teaching God's order and spiritual headship in the marriage relationship. In the Corinthian culture, a woman who covered her head during worship or when she was in public displayed her submission to authority.

In today's culture, we no longer view a woman's wearing of a head covering as a

Have you ever wondered about head coverings? Maybe you choose to wear one, maybe your long hair suffices as your covering- this is between you and the Lord.

But looking to the heart of the matter- are you in submission to God's order? Or are there things of this day and age- of this culture- that you allow to rule instead?

Reflect below- **how are you submitting to the Lord and His order, his ways? Where are you lacking in obedience?**

sign of submission. In most modern societies, scarves and hats are fashion accessories. A woman has the choice to wear a head covering if she views it as a sign of her submission to the authority of her husband. **However, it is a personal choice and not something that should be used to judge spirituality.** *The real issue here is the heart attitude of obedience to God's authority and submission to His established order “as to the LORD” (Ephesians 5:22).* God is far more concerned with an attitude of submission than an outward display of submission via a head covering.

First Timothy 2:9-10, **“I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.”**

Remember to consider **all** areas of your life- from the way you *dress* to the words you *speak*; how you treat *strangers* and how you treat your own *family*; the things you *watch* and *listen* to; the focus on YOUR goals, YOUR dreams, YOUR desires; where you spend your *time* and where you spend your *money*.

WEDNESDAY

The second issue Paul addresses is the Corinthian practice of communion. In short, it was a disaster. The church would gather together, with each person bringing his or her own food and eating it as soon as they arrived. The wealthy would overeat, with some getting drunk. The poor would look on, hungry and feeling humiliated. Rather than treating it as a solemn, reflective, unifying time, the Corinthians were using the Lord's Supper as a party. Paul expresses his shock with a phrase most commonly translated into English as "**What?!**" (1 Corinthians 11:17–22)

Paul then explains his understanding of communion, based on knowledge he claims to have "from the Lord." Many interpreters suggest Paul to mean he obtained this information through a direct revelation from Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

Scripture then warns the Corinthians that consequences for taking part in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner are

incredibly high. To eat the bread that represents Christ's body and drink the cup that represents His blood without first examining oneself for sinful attitudes toward Christ and other people invites God's judgment. Those who approach the Lord's Supper should not treat it like any other meal. It's a time for sober reflection on Christ's sacrifice for our sin. It's also an opportunity to be unified as the body of Christ, the church, while taking in the broken body of Christ, the bread, together (1 Corinthians 11:27–29).

God's judgment for failing to do this is severe, Paul warns. Some of the Corinthians were weak and sick because of this. Others had already died. God's judgment of Christians does not bring loss of salvation. Instead, it is the loving discipline of the Father for His children. The better approach is to treat the Lord's Supper with patience and reflection, "wait[ing] for one another" in a spirit of unity (1 Corinthians 11:30–34).

Communion is an area that many have confusion with- between what scripture states and how we know it as the tradition we are used to in our church culture. This is a very important topic that we will be addressing soon, Lord willing, in a video for you all!

We'll look through some information on this topic and we suggest you read through the scriptures, discuss as a family, and weigh these things in prayer.

Question: "How often should the Lord's Supper / Communion be observed?"

Answer: The Bible nowhere instructs us how often we should take communion. First Corinthians 11:23–26 records the following instructions for communion: “The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” This passage gives all the instructions we need to perform the rite of communion and to understand the significance of what we are doing.

The bread that Jesus broke represents His body that was broken on the cross for us. The cup represents the blood He shed on our behalf, sealing a covenant between Him and us. Each time we observe the ordinance of communion, we are not only remembering what He did for us, but we are “showing” it as well to all who watch and all who participate. Communion is a beautiful picture of what happened at the cross, what it means, and how it impacts our lives as believers.

It would seem that, since we take the Lord’s Supper to remember Christ’s death, we should take it fairly often. Some churches have a monthly Lord’s Supper service; others do it bi-monthly; others weekly. Since the Bible does not give us specific instruction as to frequency, there is some latitude in how often a church should observe the Lord’s Supper. It should be often enough to renew focus on Christ, without being so often that it becomes routine. In any case, it’s not the frequency that matters but the heart attitude of those who participate. We should partake with reverence, love, and a deep sense of gratitude for the Lord Jesus, who was willing to die on the cross to take upon Himself our sins.

Question: "Is it acceptable to have communion outside of the church? Can communion be observed with family at home, at a gathering of Christian friends, in private, etc.?"

Answer: Communion services, also known as the Lord’s Supper, are usually held in churches during the worship services. For the early church, however, worship services were in homes. The church in Jerusalem met in the home of Mary (Acts 12:12), in Philippi in the home of Lydia (Acts 16:40), and in Ephesus in the home of Aquila and Priscilla (1 Corinthians 16:19). In Colossae the church met in the home of Philemon (Philemon 2). As we learn from Acts 2, the early church met regularly for the apostles’ teaching, prayer, fellowship and “the breaking of bread,” commonly understood to be communion (Acts 2:42).

However, Scripture does not designate where the communion service must be held. It has been served in hospitals and nursing homes for ill patients. Missionaries on the field have served communion to believers where no churches have yet been established. Some families perform their own communion service on special occasions such as Christmas Eve. Our Lord, in commemorating the Passover with the disciples in the upper room, instituted

the first communion service. The only instructions we have regarding the process of the rite come from Jesus' own words to "do this in remembrance of me" **until He comes** (1 Corinthians 11:24-26). This passage gives all the instructions we need to perform the rite of communion and to understand the significance of what we are doing.

It was after Pentecost when the church was established that communion was regularly served in church settings and considered to be an ordinance of the church. As such, the recognized church leadership administered the service. But there is no biblical reason why the Lord's Supper cannot be administered in homes among friends and family, in a home church setting, or anywhere else. **The important thing is not location, but the remembrance of the body and blood of Christ, whereby we are saved.**

Have you ever had communion before?
When was the last time?

Share- to the best of your knowledge-
what you feel communion is and how you
understand it is to be done:

THURSDAY

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul describes how and why God gives spiritual gifts to Christians. He seems to continue answering issues raised in a previous letter from the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 7:1). From the context, believers in Corinth seem to have been asking why some Christians were given spiritual gifts while others seemed not to be "spiritual ones." It's possible that some in Corinth had been demonstrating obvious supernatural power through speaking in tongues, for instance, while others lacked this ability.

Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts in this chapter shows how off-base this thinking is. He begins by saying he doesn't want them to be uninformed. Every Christian is spiritual, or one of the "spiritual ones," because every Christian has the Holy Spirit. Only those with the Holy Spirit can truthfully and sincerely say "Jesus is Lord," and every believer can say that (1 Corinthians 12:1–3).

Spiritual gifts, acts of service, and other godly activities come in a wide variety. What they have in common is that each one comes from the same Holy Spirit. Each one is given to be used in service to the same Lord Jesus. Each one is possible only through the power of the same God the Father. In other words, these spiritual gifts are not about the people who use them; they are ultimately about God and His purposes.

In addition, spiritual gifts are given to every Christian, and they are given for the purpose of serving other Christians. They are given for the common good and not to bring status and respect to one believer and not another. A spiritual gift is the supernatural ability to serve the church in a way that someone could not do in mere human strength (1 Corinthians 12:4–7).

Paul begins by listing nine of them, emphasizing that one is given to one believer while another is given to a different person. Nobody receives every single gift, but everyone receives at least one of them. These first nine gifts are often called the sign gifts or confirmation gifts. Many Christian groups and teachers believe these gifts were commonly given by the spirit during the time of the apostles and before the New Testament was established. Their purpose was to confirm that God's power was behind the message of the gospel. Other Christian groups and teachers understand these gifts to continue to be given to Christians by the Spirit in large numbers even today.

These gifts include the word of wisdom and word of knowledge, along with faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning between spirits, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. These gifts were likely on display in Corinth. Paul emphasizes that the Spirit decides who to give each gift to. This means the gifts are not earned or acquired by the effort of those who receive them (1 Corinthians 12:8–11).

That means, of course, that having one spiritual gift or another should not cause anyone to be thought of as more spiritual or important than another. Instead, Paul urged the Corinthians to think of their church, and the worldwide church in general, as a kind of body. A human body is just one thing, one organism, but it is made up of many different parts, all with different functions. In the same way, the church is made up of many believers, all connected by the Holy Spirit in them, and it is just one thing: Christ's body on earth (1 Corinthians 12:12–13).

It would be ridiculous for body parts to declare they were quitting the body because they can't be another part. It would be equally silly for any body part to say it doesn't need the other parts. Christians, too, should discover how essential their role in Christ's body really is, as well as learning to value how needed every other function is. Even those parts thought of as "less honorable" are given special care and honor, because we instinctively know how important they are! The same ought to apply to how Christians treat each other as we use and encourage spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:14-27).

This topic can be very controversial as there is much division and skewed teaching on this topic. We will look at scripture to see what we can find as we grow in understanding from God's word.

Have you studied into this topic much before? Do you know what spiritual gift you feel you might have- refer back to the list given by Paul in Verses 7-11. Below are those verses from the NLT translation which I believe words them well and in a way to really think over:

7A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. 8To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. 9The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 10He 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. 11It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

Question: "Spiritual gifts survey - what are the different spiritual gifts the Bible mentions?"

Answer: In God's great gift of salvation, we have a number of benefits and responsibilities. Most Christians are quick to point out the personal benefits we receive with our salvation, but we are a little slower to focus on the responsibilities that come with it. When people speak of spiritual gifts, the focus is often on questions like, "Do you know what your spiritual gift is?" or "Have you taken a spiritual gifts assessment?" While the knowledge of one's gifting can be beneficial, we often lose sight of God's design in these matters. Yes, the particular gifts of the Spirit are benefits to each believer, but they come with great responsibilities.

Before we survey the spiritual gifts, we will look at two Greek words used to describe the gifts of the Spirit: *pneumatika* refers to their source, the Holy Spirit (*pneuma*) of God; and *charismata* refers to the fact that they are granted as an act of God's grace (*charis*). Since

the spiritual gifts are given by grace, they are not based on our worthiness or personal abilities but on God's sovereign choice. Since they are given by the Spirit of God, the gifts are a part of the new life granted to us in Christ and may be drastically different from our perceived capabilities or desires prior to salvation. A brief examination of three key texts (Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; 1 Peter 4:10–11) will show us God's design regarding His gifts.

One of the first things that becomes clear in these passages is the diversity of the gifts. Paul's survey of spiritual gifts in Romans 12 includes different gifts than what are found in 1 Corinthians 12. And when Peter spoke of the spiritual gifts in 1 Peter 4:10–11, he didn't even bother specifying them but rather listed broad categories of the types of gifts God gives. Among the gifts listed in the Bible are prophecy, ministry, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, showing mercy, speaking in languages, and interpreting languages. Whatever the specific use of each gift was, they each fit together as the parts of the body work together to make a functional whole (Romans 12:5).

In putting together a complete survey of the spiritual gifts, one must attempt to quantify and define the gifts. Romans 12 lists at least seven gifts, and 1 Corinthians 12 lists nine. There is some overlap in these lists, and there are certainly indications that there are more gifts than are itemized.

Here is a brief spiritual gifts survey from Dr. Larry Gilbert (modified from "How Many Spiritual Gifts Are There?"):

1. Miraculous Gifts

- Apostle (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11)
- Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30)
- Interpretation (1 Corinthians 12:10, 30)
- Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28)
- Healing (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28)

2. Enabling Gifts

- Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9)
- Discernment (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- Wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8)
- Knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8)

3. Team Gifts

- Evangelism: passionately leading others to the saving knowledge of Christ (Ephesians 4:11)
- Prophecy: boldly and fearlessly proclaiming God's truth (Romans 12:6; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28)
- Teaching: making clear the truth of God's Word with simplicity and accuracy (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28)

- Exhortation: motivating others to action, application, and purpose (Romans 12:8)
- Shepherding: overseeing, training, feeding, coaching/leading (Ephesians 4:11)
- Serving: providing practical help both physically and spiritually (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28)
- Mercy-showing: identifying with and comforting those in need (Romans 12:8)
- Giving: releasing material resources to further the work of the Church (Romans 12:8)
- Administration: organizing, administering, promoting, leading (Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12:28)

In 1 Peter 4:9–11, Peter gives us two groups of Team Gifts:

1. “Speaking” gifts. Those who have the speaking gifts are Evangelists, Prophets, Teachers, Exhorters, and Shepherds.
2. “Ministering” gifts, or support gifts. Ministers are not kings but “king-makers.” These people are happy to work behind the scenes supporting the ones who have the speaking gifts. Ministering gifts include Shepherds, Mercy-Showers, Servers, Givers, and Administrators.

The Bible says we are given spiritual gifts for a purpose. In Romans 12:8 we are told to use the various gifts according to the character of God and His revealed will “with simplicity . . . with diligence . . . with cheerfulness.” In 1 Corinthians 12:25 we are told that these gifts were given “so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.” In 1 Peter 4:11 the purpose of the gifts is “that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.”

Question: "How do I identify my spiritual gift?"

Answer: There is no magic formula or definitive test that can tell us exactly what our spiritual gifts are. The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts as He determines (1 Corinthians 12:7–11). A common problem for Christians is the temptation to get so caught up in our spiritual gift that we only seek to serve God in the area in which we feel we have been gifted. **That is not how the spiritual gifts work.** God calls us to obediently serve Him in all things. He will equip us with whatever gift or gifts we need to accomplish the task He has called us to.

Identifying our spiritual giftedness can be accomplished in various ways. Spiritual gift tests or inventories, while not to be fully relied upon, can definitely help us understand where our gifting **might** be. Confirmation from others also gives light to our spiritual giftedness. Other people who see us serving the Lord can often identify a spiritual gift in us that we might take for granted or not recognize. Prayer is also important. The one person who knows exactly how we are spiritually gifted is the gift-giver Himself—the Holy Spirit. We

can ask God to show us how we are gifted in order to better use our spiritual gifts for His glory.

Yes, God calls some to be teachers and gives them the gift of teaching. God calls some to be servants and blesses them with the gift of helps. However, specifically knowing our spiritual gift does not excuse us from serving God in areas outside our gifting. Is it beneficial to know what spiritual gift(s) God has given us? Of course it is. Is it wrong to focus so much on spiritual gifts that we miss other opportunities to serve God? Yes. If we are dedicated to being used by God, He will equip us with the spiritual gifts we need.

Share your reflections, and follow up questions, on this topic- and your potential “gifts” below:

(You can always reach out to Brandon & Travis for immediate questions- we will discuss on the Saturday YouTube LIVE too!)

[illegible]

FRIDAY

Paul concludes, though, by saying that, at least in Corinth, the first, second, and third most essential gifted positions were apostle, prophet, and teacher. This seems to suggest that those are the roles most impactful, or at least the most potent, in fulfilling the church's role. As Paul has stated in this chapter, however, those gifts cannot be effective unless the other members of the body are being honored, and being active (1 Corinthians 12:28-31).

Paul ends this section with an intent to show "a more excellent way." This leads into one of the most famous passages in all of Scripture, a depiction of Christian love as God intended it to be.

A prominent issue that we see within the church today is disagreement in certain spiritual gifts ceasing- and some still being active. We see many in the “word of faith” movement, and other heretical sects, that misuse the scriptures and twist

them for their own pursuit of wealth and power. Let's look into one topic today:

Question: "What does it mean that tongues will cease?"

Answer: First Corinthians 13:8–10: “Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.” In the KJV, the tongues “will cease.” In other words, at some point after Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, the gift of tongues would no longer be in use.

First Corinthians 12–14 is all about the proper use of spiritual gifts. Paul writes to the Corinthian church to correct the improper use of some gifts and the improper emphasis they put on certain of the more “spectacular” gifts. Right in the middle of his discussion, he speaks about the superior quality of love. Even though the Corinthian church was very gifted, they were not using their gifts in love for each other. Paul goes on to say that all of the various gifts will one day cease to function, but love will never fail. The question that many struggle with is just when these gifts will cease. Paul gives the answer in the text: “when completeness comes” (1 Corinthians 13:10).

The next question, of course, is what is the “completeness” or “the perfect” (NASB)? Essentially, there are two views:

One view, often called the “cessationist” view, is that the sign gifts were only in operation during the apostolic era to give special revelation until the completion of the New Testament. Before early Christians had the whole New Testament, they had to rely on words of knowledge, prophecy, and tongues to give them the full revelation of God. Once the church had possession of the full New Testament (the completeness), these gifts faded away as unnecessary. Faith, hope, and love continue to be in operation.

Often, the cessationist view will point out that the words used for the cessation of knowledge and prophecy are in the passive voice, indicating that they will be stopped by an outside force. However, the verb used for the cessation of tongues is in the middle voice, which indicates that they will cease “of themselves.” This is usually seen as further proof that tongues were temporary and would eventually pass away on their own. Regardless of the strength of this argument, the grammatical analysis leaves something out. Some verbs normally take the middle voice, and the verb translated “be stilled” in the NIV is one of them; therefore, there is no particular significance to the change from passive to middle voice in this passage. In Luke 8:24 the storm is “stilled” (same word and voice); however, it is clear that Jesus actively stilled the storm.

Cessationists also point out that, if tongues, prophecy, and knowledge continue, this continuing revelation would in effect be adding to Scripture. However, most continuationists (who hold to the current exercise of these gifts) do not view their

revelations as being on par with Scripture but more like the “leading of the Spirit.” Many cessationists feel God led them to do something or “told” them to do something. They would maintain that this was some sort of communication from God but would never place it on par with Scripture.

The other primary view is that the “completeness” is the eternal state. At that time there will be no more need for the miraculous gifts such as tongues because we will know everything fully. This view points to verse 12 as further describing the “completeness”: “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” This can hardly refer to the completion of the New Testament canon. Paul’s point seems to be that tongues, prophecy, and words of knowledge will be unnecessary when we enter the eternal state.

The continuationist position does not preclude the possibility that the need for the more miraculous gifts might ebb and flow according to the need or wane with the completion of the canon; rather, it simply does not clearly state that these gifts will stop when the canon is complete. There are good historical and theological arguments for the cessationist position, but they are not necessarily supported by 1 Corinthians 13:8. Likewise, the verse cannot be used as an endorsement of any and all claims of continuationists today. Paul spends three chapters on the misuse of the sign gifts, and many of the same abuses are committed today by those who claim to exercise tongues.

In addition....

Question: “What is the spiritual gift of interpreting tongues?”

Answer: Along with the gift of speaking in tongues is another spiritual gift mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10—the gift of interpreting tongues. The gift of interpreting tongues is the ability to translate a foreign language into the language of the hearers. The gift of interpreting tongues is a separate gift, but it seems to have been used in conjunction with the gift of speaking in tongues.

The gift of tongues was the supernatural ability to speak a foreign language that the tongues-speaker had never learned. We see this gift in use in Acts 2:4–12, as the Jews in Jerusalem heard the gospel preached in a wide variety of languages. A person with the gift of interpreting tongues, then, could understand what a tongues-speaker was saying even though he did not know the language being spoken. This lack of prior knowledge of a language is what distinguishes the spiritual gift from the natural gift of being able to understand and speak a variety of languages. The tongues-interpreter would hear the tongues-speaker and then communicate the message to anyone present who could not understand the language. The goal was that all could understand and benefit from the truth being spoken. According to the apostle Paul, and in agreement with the tongues described in Acts, the gift of tongues was meant to communicate God’s message directly to another person in his or her native language. Of course, if those present could not understand the language being spoken, the tongues were useless—and that’s what made the

tongues-interpreter, or tongues-translator, necessary. The goal was the edification of the church (1 Corinthians 14:5, 12).

One of the problems in the church of Corinth was that tongues-speakers were speaking out in the service, exercising their gift of tongues *with no interpreter and with no one present who spoke that language*. The result was that the tongues-speaker was commanding attention, but his words were meaningless, since no one could understand him. Paul strongly advised that all use of tongues in the church must be interpreted: “In the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue” (1 Corinthians 14:19). There was no benefit to other church members in hearing something they could not understand. Exercising the gift of tongues in church, simply for the sake of showing everyone that you had the gift, was conceited and unprofitable. Paul told the Corinthians that, if two or three tongues-speakers wanted to speak in a meeting, then a spiritually gifted tongues-interpreter must also be present. In fact, “if there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God” (1 Corinthians 14:28).

The temporal nature of the gift of tongues implies that the gift of interpretation of tongues was also of a temporal nature. If the gift of speaking in tongues were active in the church today, it would be performed in agreement with Scripture. It would be a real and intelligible language (1 Corinthians 14:10). It would be for the purpose of communicating God’s Word to a person of another language (Acts 2:6–12), and it would be done “in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Corinthians 14:40), “for God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people” (1 Corinthians 14:33).

or always feel free to email them any time! aphomechurch@gmail.com

What have you learned this week?

What are some questions you still have after this week’s study? Join us on YouTube Live Saturday at 12 EST to ask-



*But now let
me show you
a way of life
that is best
of all.*

**1
Corinthians
12:31b**

.... Tune in on Sunday!