Grace Baptist Church/Crossroads International Church/CIC again Dr. Rick Griffith

17 Jan 1999/17 Aug 2008 / 24 Feb 13 Message #16 of 24

NIV 35 Minutes

**Unwrapping Your Gifts**

Title

***1 Corinthians 12:1-6***

**Topic:** Spiritual Gifts

**Subject:** Where should we begin studying gifts?

**Complement:** Gifts praise the triune God—not us!

**Purpose:** The listeners will be prepared to understand more details about gifts in the next few sermons by understanding some of the basics, especially that gifts are given to praise God rather than self.

**Attribute:** We worship our Triune God

# Introduction

### A pastor, Boy Scout, and IT expert once were the only passengers on a small plane. The pilot came back to the cabin and announced that the plane was going down but there were only 3 parachutes and 4 people. The pilot added, “I should have one of the parachutes because I have a wife and 3 small children.” So he took one and jumped.

Plane

#### The IT whiz spoke up next: “I should have one of the parachutes because I am the smartest man in the world and everyone needs me.” So he took one and jumped.

#### At this point the pastor turned to the young Scout. With a sad smile he said, “You are young and I have lived a long life, so you take the last parachute and I’ll go down with the plane.”

#### The Boy Scout said, “Relax, Reverend, the smartest man in the world just picked up my backpack and jumped!”

#### Thus the proverb is true: “Pride goeth before destruction—and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

• Pride

### People—and churches—too often get the idea that “it’s all about me.”

“Me”

#### I like that story because it’s a great reminder that it’s *not* about me—or even us.

#### Ultimately, all sin stems from pride—and churches can get proud over their size, worship, friendliness, music, teaching, small groups, money—or whatever.

#### Today pride is often over whether a church is charismatic or non-charismatic.

“Us”

##### This movement began in 1901 with Pentecostal churches speaking what they considered the biblical gift of tongues (speaking a language never learned).

1960

1901

##### It spread to mainline churches in 1960 under Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett.

##### In 1985 a saxophonist named John Wimber spread it into evangelical and Bible churches, including many Baptist, EFC, and now some Brethren groups.

1985

##### Now the growth is simply amazing—and spiritual gifts are probably the most controversial of issues in the church today.

Graph

### Spiritual gifts were also one of the most controversial issues at the church of Corinth.

1 Cor

#### The issue of divisions took 4 chapters (1–4).

#### Food offered to idols comprised 3 chapters (8–10).

#### But now gifts also take 3 of the 4 chapters on worship (12–14).

### We need to study gifts for several reasons.

Intro

#### We’re studying through 1 Corinthians with today being message 16 of 24.

#### This issue relates to the public worship of the church, which is the only activity we all do together each week.

#### As already noted, the gifts issue is causing much confusion today.

#### Here is where we find out our own individual contribution to Christ’s work.

#### This is a community issue more than an individual one—it relates to how we all fit into the body of Christ.

### Intro MPI: But where should we begin studying gifts? Let’s start where Paul does in 1 Corinthians 12. He says in the first three verses that…

Begin

# I. Understanding gifts begins with seeing Christ as God (1-3).

MP

#  [We’ll be very ignorant of these abilities unless we first see the deity of Jesus.]

1-3

## Don’t be ignorant of your God-given abilities by using them to praise yourself (1).

### Paul wanted the church to know first of all that gifts are not “about them,” but about Christ as Lord and God!

Black

### How were the Corinthians ignorant of gifts?

#### Corinth was a center of pagan mystery religions where people worked themselves to frenzy in their worship. This didn’t help anyone––not even the individual.

#### Paul was concerned that the Corinthian believers were getting caught up in the same pagan practice—participation for self-edification. In a word, pride.

Issues

(Today we’ll answer some key detective questions on gifts from this chapter…)

### First, what *are* spiritual gifts? Grudem says it is “any ability… for any ministry.”

Defs

#### Charles Ryrie says a spiritual gift is “a God-given ability for service.”

Ryrie

#### Another calls them “a spiritual capacity for development.”

#### Perhaps it’s helpful to see what spiritual gifts are *not.*

##### Gifts are not a place of service: The gift is the *ability*—not *where* that ability is used. There is no “gift of ministering in Thailand.”

• place

NOT

##### Gifts are not an age group ministry: Spiritual gifts are not abilities working with certain age groups. It's the ability, not *who* benefits from it! (There’s no gift of working with young people, Cantonese, or Hokkien.)

• age

##### Gifts are not natural talents, which even unbelievers have: There’s no gift of music noted in the NT. Often non-Christians are better than believers in terms of their talents, but they don’t use these abilities to build up the church.

• talent

• Word

##### I take a conservative view of calling them gifts only if they are in the Bible.

### What are some examples of the gifts? They are like parts of the human body.

Parts

#### Interestingly, 13 of the 18 gifts noted in Scripture are in this chapter.

Chart

#### Nine are noted in verses 8-10.

• 8-10

#### Verses 28 adds four more: apostleship, teaching, helping, and administration.

• 28

#### The other five missing are in two other passages:

##### Romans 12:6-8 also adds encouraging, giving, and showing mercy.

• Rom 12

##### Ephesians 4:11 adds evangelists and pastor-teachers. (Many see these as persons rather than gifts, but I think these are people who have these gifts.)

• Eph 4

#### Add them together and that’s the biblical list. We don’t have time to look into them all today, so my messages in the next few weeks will explain what they are.

• 18 total

#### Since none of these lists are complete, many think that putting them together isn’t complete either—that more exist beyond those noted in Scripture.

##### But since we have 18 to study that we *know* are gifts, let’s spend our time addressing the Bible rather than speculation.

##### One author (C. Peter Wagner) even adds the gift of remembering names! He counts 27 gifts, then adds, “I do not doubt that there are even more than 27 of them. Some might want to add the gift of music and make it 28 or craftsmanship and make it 29. I ran into another gift recently which might be called the 'gift of names.' Jerry Falwell, pastor of the renowned Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, is extraordinary in many ways. But one of them is that he knows the names of most of his 16,000 members! In fact, he can speak in another city, meet people afterwards, go back a year later, and remember the majority of the people by name. He himself says, 'I have to give God the credit for this... It's a gift from God'"

Black

##### In the end, whether the ability is called a spiritual gift or not is *not* as important as whether we use these abilities God has given us.

### Does every Christian have a gift?

Me?
Gifted?

#### Yes! This is clearly taught in verses 7, 11, and 18.

All gifted

• 7
• 11

• 18

#### Every Christian (and only a Christian) has a spiritual gift.

#### That means *you* have a special gift given by God, even though you may not have unwrapped it yet! Isn’t that exciting?

Unwrap yet?

### When do we receive our spiritual gifts?

When?

#### This must be deduced from verses 7, 11, and 18.

7, 11, 18

#### These verses say every Christian has a gift, so they must be received at salvation.

• At salv

#### It’s like a baby. I remember when our first son was born. Kurt came fully equipped! Eyes, hands, legs, and belly button... Yet his eyes couldn’t focus, he couldn’t control his hands, the legs seemed useless the first few months, and I’m still trying to figure out what the belly button is good for!

baby

Black

#### When you trusted Christ, the Spirit gave you an ability to use for Him. But you were a *baby* in Christ—equipped but ignorant and unskilled in what you can do.

#### Maybe a computer provides another analogy. You buy that computer with all the gadgets, but it takes years to understand and use all that it can do.

computer

(Let’s get back to verse 2. How do the idols in verse 2 relate to gifts? The idea here is that…)

1-3

## Idols say nothing but gifted persons praise Christ as God (2-3).

### Some of us here used to follow idols that couldn’t speak at all (2).

#### I’ve heard some of your stories how you were bound by joss sticks and the like.

Joss sticks

#### A grandma on the other side of our semi-D had this problem. Once water flooded both of our homes—then the rain came the next day. As the water rose, I went out to try to prevent flooding again. She was in overdrive with her joss sticks on the porch “influenced and led away to mute idols.” I put boards up to divert the rain!

### But now the Holy Spirit leads us—and He affirms Christ’s deity (3).

#### The caution in verses 2-3 is against assuming that all manifestations that look like spiritual gifts are from God. Satan is a master counterfeiter. The gifts can be and are counterfeited by many present sects and religions. And one way to test if they’re real is if they acknowledge Christ as God.

Throne

#### In the first century the Christians were forced to acknowledge the emperor as deity or else they would be killed. Paul said that to succumb to this was to deny the deity of Christ and deny the Spirit’s leading in their lives. Same today.

MP

(So verses 1-3 tell us that understanding spiritual gifts begins with seeing Christ as God. In the next three verses we see that actually the whole Trinity is involved. Verses 4-6 note that…)

# II. Our different gifts are united in the triune God (4-6).

MP

#  [As we have different gifts but are one body, so God is three persons united into one God.]

## Notice the repetition here: “different… same… different… same… different… same…” The idea is twofold, I think:

4-6

### First, let’s not get the idea that since we have different gifts, we therefore have a different *source* of gifts. No, the Source is the same!

### Verses 4-6 also note that each member of the Trinity has a unique role concerning gifts.

## God the Spirit gives us our different gifts (4).

Gives

### What is meant by “gift” here?

Black

#### A gift, of course, is something you receive that you haven’t earned.

#### We used to say, “Wow! She is a *gifted* pianist” or “That artist is really *gifted*.” But people don’t like to say that any more—maybe because it implies that the ability is *received* rather than earned—you can’t work of a gift. Now I hear more often, “She is an accomplished musician” so that she can take credit for her abilities. Yet ultimately all abilities come from God!

#### The word for “gift” here is *charisma.*

Charisma

##### And the root of this word is *charis*, which means “grace.” Every gift is a grace gift! Every gift is because of God’s grace!

• charis

##### A related root is *chara*, meaning “joy.” We experience joy in using our gifts for Christ. If you hate to do it, it’s not your gift!

### So who gives spiritual gifts? The Holy Spirit does (vv. 4, 7-9, 11, 18).

Gives

#### And why are these abilities referred to as “spiritual”?

• spiritual

#### I think it’s because the Spirit of God gives every one of them.

### So the Spirit gives them, but who decides *which* gift each person should have?

Black

#### The Holy Spirit decides which gift we receive (vv. 11, 18).

#### This is an extremely important teaching. Why? Millions of Christians seek the gift *they* want to have. And often they end up asking for the least important of the gifts—particularly tongues, which verse 28 says is the least important gift of all.

(So the Spirit gives and decides the gifts, but what about Jesus Christ’s role?)

Who?

## God the Son appoints our different ministries (places) where to use the spiritual gifts (5).

MINISTRIES

### Where are the spiritual gifts to be used? Christ shows us where these ministries are to be exercised in the church (that’s "for the common good," as in v. 7).

diakonia

### Of course, this ultimately equips the church for effective witness to the world (Eph. 4:11 mentions evangelists, who use their gifts among non-Christians).

### In other words, who called you to minister here at CIC? None other than Jesus Christ Himself! If you haven’t felt special yet today, this ought to make you feel really important! The Lord Himself has called you! Finally…

Black

##  God the Father empowers us to use our spiritual gifts (6).

EMPOWERS

### What does “different kinds of working” mean? The word here is *energematon*, from which we get our English word “energy.” The Father shows His power in our lives through our gifts and gets the credit for the results.

energy

### I have seen this in my own life. When I was a boy, the profession I said I would never do was to be a teacher—and the thought of being a preacher never even crossed my mind! I was too shy and *hated* being in front of people. But God has completely changed this, giving me the power to do this.

Black

(So what are these six verses telling us? The question we began with was…)

# Conclusion

### Where should we begin studying gifts? Know that…Gifts praise the triune God—not us (M.I.)! No room for pride here! It’s not about you—or me. It’s about God!

Key Idea

MP Diagram

### The Spirit gives the gifts, the Son appoints where we should minister, and the Father empowers us to use our gifts effectively. All the glory should go to Him!

MPs listed

### Now where there’s power, there are also dangers, so we need some warnings!

Dangers

### The same is true of the spiritual gifts. So as we embark on these weeks of studying the gifts, here are four dangers of this study up-front. Here’s your warning label, OK?

#### WARNING #1: Don’t think gifts are more important than fruit of the Holy Spirit.

1 fruit

##### Galatians 5:22-23 says the Spirit most of all wants to produce in us love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Flower

##### "Doing" shouldn’t replace "being."

• being

##### "Service" shouldn’t replace "character."

#### WARNING #2: Don’t always reject opportunities to serve in "non-gifted" areas because you don't have a particular gift

2 non-gifted

##### This is the problem of “Oh, I can’t share Christ—my gift is faith!”

Cartoon

##### I find it instructive that Paul told Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist” in 2 Timothy 4:5, even though Timothy was serving in a pastoral capacity.

#### WARNING #3: Never think that spiritual gifts are rewards for service, for holiness, for sincerity, for maturity, or for anything else!

3 rewards

#### WARNING #4: Don’t confuse spiritual gifts with spirituality. The Corinthian church had every gift (according to 1:7) but they also the most problems of any New Testament church! There’s no connection between gifts and godliness!

• 4 spirituality

### As we keep these things in mind, we will become all the more that God wants us to be—and we’ll enjoy serving Him more!

Black

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### Paul indicates his major divisions in the book with the words, “Now concerning…”

### In 7:1 he wrote concerning marriage, then beginning in 8:1 he told them a lot about food offered to idols. Although in 11:1 he doesn’t use the words “Now concerning…”, he does seem to switch subjects in chapter 11 to discuss the public worship of the church. The last two messages have also addressed the public worship of the church—in proper male-female roles and in the Lord’s Supper.

# Purpose Why is this passage in the Bible?

### Now chapters 12–14 discuss a key truth about spiritual gifts: Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities for the benefit of other believers—so we shouldn’t be using them for our own benefit.

# Background What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### Corinth was a center of pagan mystery religions—characterized by people who worked themselves up in a frenzy in their so-called worship. This wasn’t designed to help anyone but the individual himself or herself.

### Paul is concerned that the Corinthian believers are getting caught up in the same pagan practice—participation for self-edification.

# Questions

### What’s the significance of the “Now about…”?

### What are spiritual gifts?

#### What is meant by “gifts”?

#### What is meant by “gifts”? (optional)

##### Actually, the word “gifts” doesn’t appear here in verse 1.

##### The word here literally means simply “spirituals,” so it could be translated “spiritual things” or “spiritual persons” or “spiritual gifts.”

#### Why are these abilities called “spiritual” abilities?

#### What are some examples of these gifts? (13 of the 18 noted in Scripture are in this chapter)

#### How are gifts different from talents?

### Why didn’t Paul want the church to be ignorant about spiritual gifts? This is because sometimes a little knowledge is worse than no knowledge at all!

### How do the idols in verse 2 relate to gifts?

### How does the cursing and blessing of verse 3 fit into the context?

### What’s the significance of verses 4-6 noting the Trinity?

### What’s unique about the Spirit and different kinds of gifts (v. 4)?

### What’s unique about the Son and different kinds of service (v. 5)?

### What’s unique about the Father and different kinds of working (v. 6)?

### What does “different kinds of working” mean?

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Spiritual gifts are abilities God gives for the benefit of other believers.

# Possible Illustrations

Lately I’ve been thinking about gifts a lot: Christmas gifts, birthday gifts for me, my son, my brother, my Mom, and my Dad—all of whom have had birthdays in the past month.

We used to say, “Wow! Shirley is a gifted pianist” or “That artist is really gifted.” I’ve noticed that people don’t like to say that any more—maybe because it implies that this is something which is received rather than earned—you can’t work of a gift. Nowadays I hear more often, “She is an accomplished musician” so that she can take credit for her abilities. Yet ultimately all abilities come from God!

### How do people categorize churches today? If someone asked you about your church, what do you say?

#### Sometimes we give the name: “Oh, I go to Grace Baptist Church.”

#### Other times I tell people the location where the church meets—“Oh, we worship near Aljunied Road on Mattar Street.”

#### But how about distinguishing ourselves by what we believe?

### [Spiritual gifts is probably the most controversial issue in the church today.]

#### Churches used to be distinguished on their view of Christ—as Arian or Augustinian.

#### Then churches became differentiated on their view of man—Augustinian or Pelagian.

#### Next came two types of churches relating to salvation—as Calvinistic or Arminian.

#### Then churches were separated into types of church government—episcopal, presbyterian, or congregational.

#### This led to denominational distinctions—Methodist, Baptist, etc.

#### But now churches are more often deemed charismatic or non-charismatic.

##### This movement began in 1901 with the Holiness churches.

##### Then it expanded to mainline churches in 1960 under the Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett.

##### And since about 1985 through a saxophonist named John Wimber it has entered the evangelical and Bible churches, including many Baptist churches, EFC, and now some Brethren groups.

##### At any rate, spiritual gifts is probably the most controversial issue in the church today.

**Unwrapping Your Gifts**

***1 Corinthians 12:1-6***

**Exegetical Outline**

# *Exegetical Idea:* The importance of the Corinthian’s diverse spiritual gifts was seen in their praise of the united but triune God.

# I. Understanding spiritual gifts begins with seeing Christ as God (1-3).

## Paul didn’t want the Corinthians to show ignorance of their God-given abilities [by praising self] (1).

## Whereas idols can say nothing, Corinthian Christians with spiritual gifts praise Christ as God (2-3).

### They used to follow idols that couldn’t speak at all (2).

### Now they followed the Holy Spirit who affirmed the deity of Christ (3).

# II. The diversity of the spiritual gifts is united in the triune God (4-6).

## God the Spirit gives the various types of spiritual gifts (4).

## God the Son appoints the various places the spiritual gifts are used (5).

## God the Father gives the power to use the spiritual gifts (6).

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Spiritual gifts are controversial today—and also at Corinth.

### Where should we begin studying gifts?

# I. Understanding gifts begins with seeing Christ as God (1-3).

## Don’t be ignorant of your God-given abilities by using them to praise yourself (1).

## Idols say nothing but gifted persons praise Christ as God (2-3).

# II. Our different gifts are united in the triune God (4-6).

## God the Spirit gives us our different gifts (4).

## God the Son appoints our different ministries to use the spiritual gifts (5).

## God the Father empowers us to use our spiritual gifts (6).

# Conclusion

### Gifts begin with praising the triune God—not us (M.I.)!

### Dangers of studying gifts:

#### WARNING #1: Don’t think gifts are more important than fruit of the Holy Spirit.

1 fruit

#### WARNING #2: Don’t always reject opportunities to serve in "non-gifted" areas because you don't have a particular gift

2 non-gifted

#### WARNING #3: Never think that spiritual gifts are rewards for service, for holiness, for sincerity, for maturity, or for anything else!

3 rewards

#### WARNING #4: Don’t confuse spiritual gifts with spirituality.

4 spirituality

# Introduction

### Spiritual gifts are controversial today—and also at Corinth.

### Where should we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ studying gifts?

# I. Understanding gifts begins with seeing Christ as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1-3).

## Don’t be ignorant of your God-given abilities by using them to praise yourself (1).

## Idols say nothing but gifted persons praise Christ as God (2-3).

# II. Our different gifts are united in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God (4-6).

## God the Spirit \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us our different gifts (4).

## God the Son \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our different ministries to use the spiritual gifts (5).

## God the Father \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us to use our spiritual gifts (6).

# Conclusion

### Gifts begin with praising the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God—not us (M.I.)!

### Dangers of studying gifts:

#### WARNING #1: Don’t think \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are more important than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit.

#### WARNING #2: Don’t always \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ opportunities to serve in "\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ " areas because you don't have a particular gift

#### WARNING #3: Never think that spiritual gifts are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for service, for holiness, for sincerity, for maturity, or for anything else!

#### WARNING #4: Don’t confuse spiritual gifts with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Rick Griffith**

24 February 2013

*Message 16 of 24 in “Becoming Who We Are” 1 Corinthians Series*

**Unwrapping Your Gifts**

***1 Corinthians 12:1-6***

# Introduction

### Too often we believe “It’s all about me (or us).”

### Three “waves” of experiences prove this:

#### Pentecostal (1901): Holiness churches

#### Charismatic (1960): Mainline denominations

#### Third Wave (1985): Evangelical churches

### Where should we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ studying gifts?

# I. Understanding gifts begins with seeing Christ as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1-3).

## Don’t be ignorant of your God-given abilities by using them to praise yourself (1).

### What are spiritual gifts?



### What are *examples* of spiritual gifts?

### Does every Christian have a gift?

### When do we receive spiritual gifts?

## Idols say nothing but gifted persons praise Christ as God (2-3).

# trinity diagramII. Our different gifts are united in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God (4-6).

## God the Spirit \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us our different gifts (4).

### What is meant by *charisma*?

### Who gives the gifts (12:4, 7-9, 11, 18)?

### Who decides which gift each person should have (12:11, 18)?

## God the Son \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our different ministries to use the spiritual gifts (5).

## God the Father \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us to use our spiritual gifts (6).

# Conclusion

### Gifts begin with praising the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God—not us (Main Idea)!

### Dangers of studying gifts:

#### WARNING #1: Don’t think \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are more important than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit.

#### WARNING #2: Don’t always \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ opportunities to serve in "\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ " areas because you don't have a particular gift

#### WARNING #3: Never think that spiritual gifts are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for service, for holiness, for sincerity, for maturity, or for anything else!

#### WARNING #4: Don’t confuse spiritual gifts with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Thought Questions**

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12 aloud. List as many ways as you can where Paul seeks to help the Corinthians put their focus on God rather than themselves in relation to the gifts.

Text

1. How does the Trinity illustrate important truths about spiritual gifts?

Text

1. What do you think your spiritual gift is? How do you think God want you to glorify Him through it?

Text