

The Function of the Unction

Chapter 6

Audio Lesson: New Testament #49



Objective: To understand Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts and how the body of Christ should function in unity.



Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. . . . There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

—1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-6

Be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

—1 Corinthians 14:39-40

After the long corrective section of 1 Corinthians, chapter 12 begins the constructive section of Paul's letter. In this chapter, we learn two opposite but complementary principles. First, we learn about the diversity of gifted believers because they have different clusters of spiritual gifts. If two of us are exactly alike, one of us is unnecessary. All the gifted saints in a local church are necessary. All the members are not gifted with the same gift — some are teachers, others are prophets, still others are discerning; some have administrative gifts and some have the gifts of service. A Spirit-filled church will have in its body a wide range of people who are blessed with different spiritual gifts, which are under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 14 demonstrates what happens when a church elevates one gift above another, specifically the gift of tongues. In Corinth, those who spoke in tongues considered themselves superior to those who did not speak in tongues. They elevated that gift as the evidence of the new birth, rather than as one of many spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit can bestow on a believer. But our spiritual gifts are to be used for the edification of the body of Christ, not its division. They are given to promote unity within the diversity of gifts and ministries.

1. True or false? Even though the Corinthians had a lot of problems, Paul considered them to be spiritual people who were set apart to God.
2. True or false? The Holy Spirit gives gifts to believers so they can minister and bear fruit.
3. True or false? God works in different ways through different people.
4. True or false? Speaking in tongues proves that you are a Christian



Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. Which of the following are characteristics of a Spirit-filled church? (choose all that apply)
 - a. Diversity
 - b. Unity
 - c. Uniformity
 - d. Perfection

6. To what does Paul compare a Spirit-filled church operating with a diversity of gifts?
 - a. A hand
 - b. A vineyard
 - c. A business
 - d. A body

7. To whom does the Holy Spirit give gifts?
 - a. Every believer
 - b. To those who ask diligently in prayer
 - c. Mature Christians
 - d. Those who attend church every Sunday and give enough offerings

8. According to Paul, how should those who have spoken in tongues view those who do not?
 - a. They should assume that those who have not spoken in tongues are not Christians.
 - b. They should realize that they are more spiritual than those who have not spoken in tongues.
 - c. They should remember that everyone has different gifts, and none are more important than the others.
 - d. They should realize that speaking in tongues is a sign of immaturity.

9. Which of the following is an appropriate approach to understanding the Holy Spirit's work?
 - a. Being ignorant of His work because no one can really know how He functions
 - b. Ignoring His work because it is too controversial
 - c. Searching the scriptures and seeking wisdom about His work
 - d. Imitating His work just to prove that we are accepted by Him

10. Which spiritual attribute should always accompany our use of spiritual gifts?
- a. Zeal
 - b. Love
 - c. Pride
 - d. Competition
11. What does Paul mean by doing all things “in order” in the assembly of believers?
- a. Worship services should always follow a very specific plan.
 - b. Church leadership should always be structured in a very clear hierarchy.
 - c. People should never speak in tongues at church because that is disruptive.
 - d. Everything should be done in a way that edifies others.
12. According to Paul, if someone speaks in tongues in a service, what are the Biblical guidelines?
- a. All should speak at the same time.
 - b. Only one or two should speak
 - c. There must always be an interpreter
 - d. It must be orderly and for the edification of the church.



In what ways have you seen God’s people work together as one body? What gifts do you believe you have to offer to the body?



Thank God for His plan of using all of His people to minister to each other and for giving everyone spiritual gifts to use. Ask Him to help you discover and develop all the gifts He has given you.



Going Deeper

1. Based upon chapter 12, explain and apply the differences between the miracle work of the Holy Spirit within us and His miraculous work upon us. _____

2. According to Galatians 5: 16-23, the evidence of His work in us is what Paul calls “the fruit of the Spirit.” What is the evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit upon us according to chapter 12, and how can we apply that personally? _____

3. Based on the early part of chapter 12, identify and apply five wrong positions about the function of the Holy Spirit as Paul describes it. _____

4. Who are the God-appointed recipients of the Holy Spirit’s blessings of spiritual gifts? Why is the phrase “who have His miracle working within them and upon them” important? _____

5. Does God give spiritual gifts to please the Church, those who receive the gifts, or unbelievers? Explain. _____

6. How can you take your own or another believer’s spiritual gift inventory? _____

7. Explain how you need believers in your Church who have spiritual gifts you do not have, and how they need you. _____
