

1 Corinthians - Week 12

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2022



Summary

Paul knew and reminded Corinth, and is reminding us: the gifts matter, the functionality matters, and unity matters - not so we can declare our giftedness greater than the next person or that we can argue our view of tongues, prophecy or any other gift louder or more effectively, but that we bring all our gifts, our skills, our abilities, to this place and to our community to proclaim the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

Scripture - 1 Corinthians 14

The church in Corinth was not only abusing the gifts, but was also bringing great levels of confusion in how they were using these gifts. As we have read throughout this book, they wrestled with many areas of sin such as immorality, corruption, idol worship in many forms, temples for false gods, and were also immersed in a culture of false religions and worship. Many in the church of Corinth would have practiced these things prior to knowing Christ and it is now bleeding over into the church. This set the stage for a lot of confusion and in this gifting became confusing as well and more of a place to brag rather than to edify the church and do build up fellow believers.

Paul spends all of 13 explaining why love is the more excellent way, and in 14 reminds us that the gifts we receive from God are for equipping, training, and maturing, in a spirit of unity.

Chapter 14 opens up in verse one with, "Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy." Notice that the call in verse one is to pursue love and then desire gifting, NOT the other way around. We are not called to pursue the gifts, but rather to pursue the love that has been greatly detailed through chapter 13. Our job is to pursue love...it is the Lord's job to distribute the gift(s) that He desires to give (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). The purpose of the gifts (regardless which gift) is to edify (build up) and mature the church to glorify God in serving others.

Key Terms

Edification: (from vs. 14:26); Greek word "oikodome" (oy-kod-om-ay); the architecture of a building; the act of building or building up; the act of one who promotes another's growth in Christian wisdom, piety, happiness, and holiness

Key Thoughts

1 Corinthians, while packed with difficult themes and areas to walk through, is about drawing the church back to Jesus Christ; his life, death, and resurrection, and then protecting that message with unity of purpose. Unity around the person and the gospel of Jesus Christ is essential to fulfilling God's purpose in and through the church.

Whether it be through a gift of tongues, prophecy, discernment, preaching, sharing our faith, service, mercy; if it cause confusion, then carefully, cautiously examine the source, the background, the motive, but if it brings conviction, then we can believe it is from God's word, led by the Holy Spirit to bring change out in our lives.

So church, why does it matter that we come to a discussion on tongues, prophecy, gifts, mercy, preaching, etc., and we conduct ourselves with unity and purpose? To proclaim the truth of God to an unsaved world

One simple test we can funnel both a prophetic word or moment of speaking in tongues through is: Does this move of the Holy Spirit bring conviction or confusion?

When the truth of God is proclaimed it brings conviction of sin. When the truth of God is proclaimed it calls for accountability. When the truth of God is proclaimed it reveals the secrets of our hearts. When the truth of God is proclaimed it brings a person to their knees to worship God.

Pursue love - REMINDER - the more excellent way - before you get into a fight over these gifts, LOVE!!!

Reflect & Respond

Why does this discussion of gifts, love, truth, and unity matter?

Where are you currently working to help edify and build up the church and others? Where might you be creating divisions? Creating conviction or confusion?

The Corinthian church was taking great pride in the gifts of prophecy and tongues and in this there was great abuse of these gifts leading to divisions. Is there any place in your life (gifting or not) where you are taking great pride in something that is causing division or confusion?

What can you do to turn this into a work of unity, edification, and building up?

