LESSON THIRTEEN

Built Different

"A Disciple is Gifted"

SCRIPTURE | 1 Corinthians 12:1–31

MEMORY VERSE

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT

Built different: disciples are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the church.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM

Discipleship Distinctive: Gifts of the Spirit

GROUP TIME

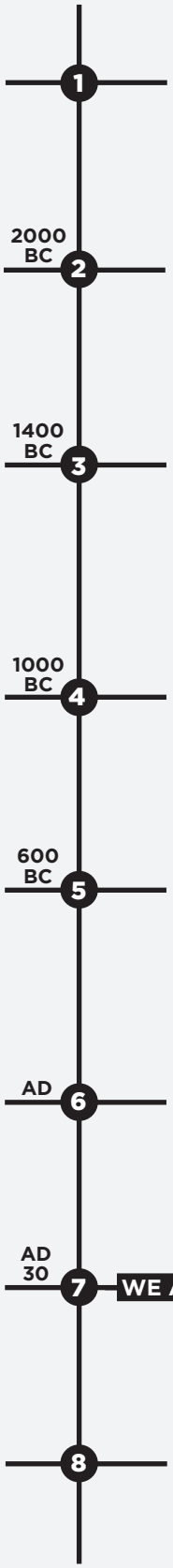
5 minutes	**Welcome**
5–10 minutes	**Attention Grabber**
10 minutes	**Story / Context**
25 minutes	**Discussion**
5–10 minutes	**Closing & Prayer**

PRAYER FOCUS

- **Into the Breach** – Pray for our discipleship initiative. We started 21 Days of Prayer last week and are two weeks away from Commitment Weekend. Pray for yourself, that you would hear what God has for you. Pray that the Lakepointe Church family would join God in the moment we have to impact generations.

BEGIN this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of his Word, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your study.

GOD'S STORY TIMELINE



1. God Creates the World and Promises a Rescuer *(Genesis 1-11)*
God created everything good and placed humans in a garden to live in close relationship with Him. But Adam and Eve chose to trust themselves instead of God, and sin entered the world. Relationships, creation, even our connection to God was broken. Yet even in judgment, God promised that one day, a descendant of Eve would crush the serpent and bring healing.
+This points to Jesus as the promised Rescuer who defeats sin, Satan, and death.

2. God Calls a Family and Makes a Promise *(Genesis 12-50)*
God chose a man named Abram (later Abraham) and gave a covenant to him: that he would have a large family, receive a land, and be a blessing to all nations. Though Abraham and his descendants were deeply flawed, God continued His promise through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
+This points to Jesus as the true offspring of Abraham, through whom all nations are fully blessed.

3. God Rescues His People and Forms a Redeemed Nation *(Exodus-Deuteronomy)*
Generations later, Abraham's descendants were enslaved in Egypt. God raised up Moses to rescue them from oppression and slavery. God called His people into a relationship with Himself. He made a covenant with them, gave them the law, and instructed them in worship. He was forming a people who would live differently and show the world what it looked like to belong to Him.
+This points to Jesus as the greater Moses, who rescues us from slavery to sin and writes God's law on our hearts.

4. God Gives a Home and Promises a King *(Joshua-2 Chronicles)*
God brought His people into the promised land under Joshua's leadership. Over time, they asked for a king like the other nations. It was a disaster. But God graciously gave them David, with whom he made another covenant: one of David's descendants would rule forever. Solomon built the temple, but after his death, the kingdom split into two and began spiraling into idolatry and injustice again.
+This points to Jesus as the forever King from David's line, who reigns with justice and peace.

5. God Removes His People and Reminds Them of His Promise *(Ezra-Nehemiah)*
Because of their rebellion, God allowed His people to be conquered and taken into exile. First, it was the Northern Kingdom, Israel (to Assyria), then the Southern Kingdom, Judah (to Babylon). The temple was destroyed, and the glory of the kingdom faded. Yet God continued to speak through the prophets, reminding the people of His promise to restore them, give them new hearts, and send a Rescuer.
+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the new covenant, restores hearts, and fulfills every prophecy.

6. God Sends His Son and Fulfills His Promise *(Matthew-John)*
At just the right time, God sent Jesus into the world—born of a virgin, fully God and fully man. He perfectly obeyed the law, pointed us to the Father, and laid down His life as a sacrifice for our sins. On the third day, He rose again, proving that He is the Savior, the King, and the fulfillment of every covenant promise God has ever made.
+Jesus is the center of the story—all of Scripture leads to Him.

7. God Sends His Spirit and Builds His Church *(Acts-Jude)*
After rising from the dead, Jesus ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to empower His followers. The early Church spread the good news of Jesus across the Roman world—planting churches, welcoming both Jews and Gentiles, and learning to live as God's new covenant people. Though imperfect, the Church carries Jesus' mission forward today.
+This points to Jesus as the risen King who gives the Spirit to dwell in us and send us on mission.

8. God Restores All Things and Dwells with His People *(Revelation)*
The story isn't over. One day Jesus will return to judge evil and make all things new. There will be a new heaven and new earth, where God's people from every tribe and nation will live with Him forever. There will be no more pain, no more death, and no more sin—just joy, justice, and unbroken peace.
+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the story to its perfect and eternal culmination.

1 GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

LEADER TIP

To grab your participants' attention, start your lesson by telling a story related to the lesson's main idea. We have provided you with three options in this section, but feel free to develop your own.

OPTION 1: LITTLE SHIPS OF DUNKIRK

In 1940 hundreds of thousands of Allied soldiers were trapped near Dunkirk, France. Large military ships could not reach every soldier on the beaches, so a call went out for smaller civilian boats to help. Fishing boats, lifeboats, pleasure boats, ferries, and other vessels crossed the English Channel or helped ferry soldiers from the shallow beaches to larger ships waiting offshore.

The boats were not the same size, and they were not built for the same purpose. Some carried many people. Some carried only a few. Some made the dangerous crossing themselves, while others served closer to shore. But each one had a meaningful role in the rescue. The mission required different vessels doing different work for the same purpose.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *How were different kinds of boats used at Dunkirk?*
- *How can a common mission help people accept different abilities?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
The Little Ships of Dunkirk remind us that different roles can serve one shared purpose. In 1 Corinthians 12:1–31, Paul taught that the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different disciples for the good of the whole church. Disciples are built different because they are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the church.

OPTION 2: NEHEMIAH AND REBUILDING THE WALL

In Nehemiah 3, the people of Jerusalem rebuilt the wall section by section. The chapter lists priests, rulers, goldsmiths, perfume makers, merchants, families, and even Shallum's daughters joining the work. Some repaired gates. Some rebuilt walls. Some worked near their own homes. Not everyone had the same role, but the whole city was strengthened because different people gave themselves to the same work.

Nehemiah 3 can feel like a long list of names, but that is part of the point. God's work was not carried by one gifted person. The wall was rebuilt because many people took responsibility for the part in front of them. Each section mattered because the whole wall mattered.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Have you experienced a team effort when a lot of different people pitched in? What was that like?*
- *What happens when everyone waits for someone else to do the work?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
The rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall reminds us that God's people are strengthened when each person does their part. In 1 Corinthians 12:1–31, Paul taught that the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different disciples for the good of the whole church. Disciples are built different because they are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the church.

OPTION 3: THE PIT CREW

After a NASCAR race, drivers often talk in terms of "we." They may be the one sitting behind the wheel, the one whose name is on the car, and the one most visible to the crowd, but the race depends on far more than the driver. A pit crew changes tires, fuels the car, makes adjustments, and solves problems in seconds. Engineers, mechanics, spotters, crew chiefs, and support staff all play vital roles in the driver's success.

That is why "we" makes sense. The driver may be the face people recognize, but the race is a team effort. Different people bring different skills for one shared purpose. If one role breaks down, the whole team feels it. The most visible role is not the only meaningful role.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *What different roles are needed for a race team to succeed? What roles are needed within a church? Think beyond the church staff.*
- *Have you ever known a successful person? Who were the people behind the scenes that helped them become successful?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
A pit crew reminds us that different roles can serve one shared purpose. In 1 Corinthians 12:1–31, Paul taught that the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different disciples for the good of the whole church. Disciples are built different because they are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the church.

2 SET THE STAGE

LEADER TIP

This section provides the historical, cultural, and literary context needed to properly interpret and apply the text.

OUTLINE

I. Greetings and Thanksgiving (1:1–9)
II. Problems in the church (1:10–6:20)
  A. Divisions and factions (1:10–4:21)
  B. Gross immorality (5:1–13)
  C. Litigation before pagan courts (6:1–11)
  D. Fornication with prostitutes (6:12–20)
III. Replies to questions from the Corinthians (7:1–14:40)
  A. Questions about marriage (7:1–40)
  B. Limitations of Christian liberty (8:1–11:1)
  C. Veiling of women in public worship (11:2–16)
  D. Disorderly behavior at the Lord's Supper (11:17–34)
  E. Exercise of spiritual gifts (12:1–14:40)
IV. The Resurrection of the Body (15:1–58)
  A. Centrality of Christ's resurrection (15:1–20)
  B. Sequence of resurrection events (15:21–28)
  C. The resurrection and suffering (15:29–34)
  D. Nature of the resurrection body (15:35–49)
  E. The believer's victory over death (15:50–58)
V. Conclusion (16:1–24)
  A. Collection for the believers at Jerusalem (16:1–4)
  B. Paul's plans for visiting Corinth (16:5–9)
  C. Exhortations, instructions, and salutations (16:10–24)[1]

CONTEXT

After correcting problems in the Corinthians' gathered worship, Paul addressed spiritual gifts. The Corinthians were not lacking in spiritual activity, but they needed to understand that gifts come from the Holy Spirit and are given for the common good. Spiritual gifts are not trophies of personal importance, signs of superiority, or reasons for comparison. The same Spirit gives different gifts to different disciples and places each person within the body as He chooses. No disciple has every gift, and no disciple is unnecessary. The church is one body with many parts, and each part has a meaningful role. Disciples are built different because they are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the church.

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS

We measure worth by comparison, visibility, and personal importance. We envy the gifts of others, compete for recognition, overlook the gifts God has given us, and use what we have for ourselves rather than for the good of the others or the church.

[1] F. Alan Tomlinson, "1 Corinthians," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1811.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

Jesus gave Himself to make many people one body in Him. Through His death and resurrection, He frees us from striving for importance and gives every disciple a meaningful place in His church. By the Holy Spirit, God gives gifts as expressions of grace, not as rewards for status. Because we belong to Christ, we receive what God has given us with humility and use it to build up His people.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM: DISCIPLESHIP DISTINCTIVE: GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Gifts of the Spirit are abilities, ministries, and expressions of grace given by the Holy Spirit to build up the church. They are not personality badges, spiritual rankings, or proof that one disciple matters more than another. The Spirit gives different gifts to different people to accomplish God's mission. The church is a diverse body, not a crowd of identical parts. Every disciple needs the grace God gives through others, and every disciple has something to contribute for the good of the body.

This distinctive helps disciples receive their gifts with humility and use them with love. Some gifts may be public while others are behind the scenes. Whether practical, relational, or easily overlooked, spiritual gifts are never given for self-display. They are given so needs are met, faith is strengthened, the gospel is served, and Christ's body is built up in maturity. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul reminded the Corinthians that the same Spirit gives many gifts for the common good. Disciples are built different because they are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the church.

3 LOOK AT THE BOOK

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find exercises you can use to lead your group through Observation, Interpretation, and Application. As the leader, work through all the exercises below to ensure you understand the text well.

1 Corinthians 12:1–3 The section opens with Paul addressing "the gifts of the Spirit" (v. 1). The Corinthians were spiritually active, but activity alone did not mean they were spiritually healthy. Paul did not want them to be "uninformed," because misunderstanding spiritual gifts can easily lead to pride, confusion, comparison, and disorder in the church.

Verse 2 reminded them of their past: "When you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols." Before Christ, many of the Corinthians had been shaped by pagan worship. That background matters because they may have associated dramatic spiritual experiences with power or status. Paul redirected their attention. The true work of the Holy Spirit is not measured first by what looks impressive; it is measured by allegiance to Jesus.

That is the point of verse 3. No one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. Paul was not saying a person is saved merely by pronouncing the words. He was saying the Spirit's work honors Jesus as Lord. Any claim to spiritual power that dishonors Christ is false, no matter how impressive it appears. The first test of spiritual gifting is not visibility, intensity, or public impact. It is whether the gift honors and submits to the lordship of Jesus.

1 Corinthians 12:4–11 Verses 4–6 form the theological center of Paul's teaching on gifts: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit"; "different kinds of service, but the same Lord"; "different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work." Paul emphasized both variety and unity. The gifts differ, but the source is one God, the triune God. This means differences in the church are not a problem to solve; they are part of God's design.

The language shifts slightly in these verses. Paul spoke of gifts, service, and working. Gifts are not merely abilities someone possesses. They are expressions of God's grace given for ministry. They become service when they are used for others. They are effective because God is at work through them. This keeps disciples from two errors— boasting as though our gifts came from us and dismissing our gifts as though God is not working through them.

Verse 7 gives the purpose: "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." This is one of the most important sentences in the chapter. Spiritual gifts are given to each believer, but they are not given merely for the individual believer. They are given for the good of the body. The Spirit gives gifts so the church is strengthened, needs are met, faith is encouraged, and Christ is honored.

Paul then listed several gifts: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, different kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues (vv. 8–10). This list should not be treated as a ranking of importance. Paul's emphasis is not that one gift makes a person more spiritual than another. His emphasis is that the same Spirit gives a variety of gifts.

Verse 11 makes this clear: “All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.” The Spirit is not random, and the church is not self-assembled. God gives gifts intentionally. This means disciples receive their gifts with humility and trust, not demanding someone else’s gift and not despising the gift God has given us. The Spirit knows what the body needs.

1 Corinthians 12:12–13 In verses 12–13, Paul introduced the body metaphor. A body is one unit, but it has many parts. The parts are many, but they still belong to one body. Paul applied that picture to Christ. The church is not a loose collection of individuals who happen to share religious beliefs. The church is the body of Christ, joined together by the Spirit.

Verse 13 explains how believers become part of this one body: “For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body.” Paul named Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free. These were real social and ethnic divisions in the ancient world. In Christ, those divisions did not disappear as though people had no background, but they no longer determined worth, belonging, or limitation. All believers are brought into one body by the same Spirit.

This matters for spiritual gifts because gifts are not given to isolated individuals for private importance. They are given to members of a body. A hand, foot, eye, or ear only makes sense in relation to the whole. In the same way, a disciple’s gift is meant to serve the church, not separate that disciple from the church.

1 Corinthians 12:14–20 Paul now used the body metaphor to speak to those who might feel unnecessary. “Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many” (v. 14). The foot should not say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body” (v. 15). The ear should not say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body” (v. 16). Paul was addressing the insecurity that comes from comparison.

Some believers may look at more visible gifts and conclude that their own contribution does not matter. Paul explained how foolish that would be. If the whole body were an eye, there would be no hearing. If the whole body were an ear, there would be no sense of smell (v. 17). A body made of one part would be unhealthy. Uniformity would not make the church stronger. It would make the church incomplete.

Verse 18 is crucial: “But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.” A disciple’s place in the body is not an accident. God has arranged His people according to His wisdom. This does not mean every person is locked forever into one ministry role. It means no disciple should conclude, “I do not matter because I am not like someone else.” The Spirit gives different gifts because the body needs different parts.

1 Corinthians 12:21–26 If verses 14–20 correct insecurity, verses 21–26 correct superiority. “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’” (v. 21). More visible or seemingly stronger members of the body must not treat others as unnecessary. In the church, no gift gives someone permission to despise another believer.

Paul went further in verses 22–24. The parts that seem weaker are indispensable, and the parts that seem less honorable are treated with

special honor. The human body instinctively protects and cares for vulnerable or less visible parts. Paul used that image to show how the church should function. The members who seem less prominent are not less valuable. Often, the body depends on parts that receive the least attention.

God has arranged the body this way "so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other" (v. 25). Spiritual gifts are not meant to create a culture of ranking. They are meant to create mutual care. The giftedness of one disciple should never become a reason for another disciple to feel disposable.

Verse 26 gives a beautiful picture of shared life: "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." The body of Christ is meant to share both pain and honor. Biblical community is not competition. It is shared belonging. When one member suffers, the body moves toward them. When one member is honored, the body rejoices instead of becoming jealous.

1 Corinthians 12:27–31 Verse 27 brings the metaphor directly to the Corinthians: "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." Paul wanted every disciple to see both truths. The church is one body, and each believer has a part. The body needs unity, and the body needs variety.

Paul then named several roles and gifts God has appointed in the church: apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healing, helping, guidance, and different kinds of tongues (v. 28). The order likely reflects the foundational importance of certain ministries, especially apostles and prophets, but the larger point remains the same: God appoints different gifts for the life and health of the church.

The questions in verses 29–30 expect the answer no. Are all apostles? No. Are all prophets? No. Are all teachers? No. Do all work miracles? No. Do all speak in tongues? No. Do all interpret? No. Paul was dismantling the idea that one gift proves spiritual importance or should be expected of every believer. The Spirit does not make every disciple the same. He gives what the body needs.

Verse 31 says, "Now eagerly desire the greater gifts." In context, the "greater" gifts are not the gifts that make a person look impressive but the gifts that build up the church. This prepares the way for 1 Corinthians 13, where Paul will show that even the most remarkable gifts are empty without love.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:1–34

12 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not
want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans,
somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. 3
Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit
of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord,"
except by the Holy Spirit.

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.
5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are
different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the
same God at work.

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the
common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message
of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the
same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of
healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another
prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking
in different kinds of tongues, r and to still another the interpretation of
tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he
distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts
form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one
Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—
and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not
made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong
to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.
16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong
to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.
17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be?
If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18
But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just
as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the
body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head
cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those
parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the
parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And
the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24
while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put
the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25
so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should
have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part
suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of
it. 28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second
prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping,
of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are
all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts
of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 Now eagerly
desire the greater gifts.[2]

[2] *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Corinthians 12:1–31.

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people to discuss the Observation and Interpretation questions.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: SOURCE AND PURPOSE

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1–11. What is the source of spiritual gifts? What is their purpose?

Suggested Response: Paul said God is the source of spiritual gifts, specifically by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The gifts from the Spirit are for the common good. The context is the Corinthian church, so the common good is understood to refer to the church, or body of believers. This becomes clearer in the second part of the chapter.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: ONE BODY WITH MANY PARTS

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–20. What analogy did Paul use to describe the church?

Suggested Response: Paul compared the church to a body. A body is one thing, but it has many parts that make it work. Paul said believers were all baptized by one Spirit to form one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free. He said the body is not made up of one part but many. The foot should not say it does not belong because it is not a hand, and the ear should not say it does not belong because it is not an eye. Paul said God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: EVERY PART MATTERS

Read 1 Corinthians 12:21–31. Did Paul say there is a hierarchy of parts in the body? Explain. What connection is there between the analogy of the body and spiritual gifts?

Suggested Response: No, Paul did not say there was a hierarchy of parts of the body. Rather, he explained that all parts of the body are necessary. He said the parts that seem weaker are indispensable, and the parts that are treated with less honor should receive special honor. Paul said because God has put the body together, there should be no division and the parts should have equal concern for one another. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Paul connected the analogy of the body to the church, saying the church is the body of Christ, and each person is part of it. He listed gifts and roles God has placed in the church, including apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healing, helping, guidance, tongues, and interpretation.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: GIFTS FROM GOD TO SERVE PEOPLE

In 1 Corinthians 12:1–11, why did Paul emphasize the source and purpose of spiritual gifts?

Suggested Response: Paul was helping the Corinthians understand that spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit and are given for the common good. This was a different way of thinking than the Corinthians currently had. Gifts are not signs of personal importance or spiritual superiority. The same Spirit gives different gifts, the same Lord is served through those gifts, and the same God is at work in all of them. This means no disciple should boast in their gift, and no disciple should dismiss what God has given them. Spiritual gifts are expressions of God's grace meant to strengthen the church.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: THE DIFFERENT PARTS BELONG TO ONE BODY

In 1 Corinthians 12:12–20, Paul emphasized that the body is one unity made up of many different parts that are all important. How does this help people who think they don't matter?

Suggested Response: Paul showed that difference does not mean lesser value. A foot is not less a part of the body because it is not a hand, and an ear is not less a part of the body because it is not an eye. In the same way, disciples should not measure their place in the church by comparing themselves to others. God has arranged the body with many different parts because the church needs many different gifts. Every disciple has a meaningful role because God has placed each person in the body as He chooses.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: THE BODY NEEDS EVERY PART

In 1 Corinthians 12:21–31, how do Paul's words challenge people who think they are more important than others?

Suggested Response: Paul taught that the most visible gifts are not the only important gifts. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you." And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you." The parts that seem weaker are still indispensable. God gives special concern and honor so there will be no division in the body. Spiritual gifts are not meant to create competition or ranking. They are given so disciples care for one another, suffer with one another, rejoice with one another, and build up the church together. Disciples are built different because they are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the church.

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find questions to choose from that will help your group consider how God calls them to respond to the text. Help your group set measurable action steps.

Leaders – share your story with your group. It takes 3-5 minutes. You are modeling this for your group, so follow the guidelines. (Click here for the guidelines).

Challenge – group people into 2's or 3's and have them prepare to share their story with each other next week. Set aside 15-20 minutes of your group time for this.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

QUESTION 1: Paul said the Spirit gives gifts for the common good. How have you seen someone use a spiritual gift to build up the church?

Suggested Response: God is intentionally building up His church through different people with different gifts. Some gifts are visible and some are quieter, but every gift given by the Spirit has purpose.

As your group responds, use follow-up questions to guide below surface-level responses. Encourage transparent responses.

QUESTION 2: What is one way God has gifted you to build up the church?

Suggested Response: God may have given me the ability to encourage, serve, teach, lead, show mercy, give generously, pray faithfully, help practically, welcome others, or notice needs. I may not always think of these as spiritual contributions, but Paul taught that every part of the body matters.

Note: it is common for believers to be shy (verbalized as humble) about sharing the gift God has given them. It is not prideful to acknowledge the gifts of the Spirit.

QUESTION 3: How are you using your gift to build up the church? If you are not, what is holding you back?

Suggested Response: Responses will vary. The key is to help people identify how they are a vital part of God's work in the church at Lakepointe.

I may hold back because of lack of awareness of my spiritual gift, insecurity, comparison, fear of failure, busyness, past hurt, pride, or the belief that someone else is more qualified. Paul reminds me that God has placed each part in the body on purpose. I do not have to have every gift to use the gift God has given me. Here is a spiritual gift assessment that can be used as a starting point: (https://my.lakepointe.church/spiritualgifts). A great next step is to register for Serve Now to learn more: https://lakepointe.church/serve/

QUESTION 4: Paul was clear that no one chooses their gift. Which gift do you wish you had? Why?

Suggested Response: I may compare my gifts, influence, visibility, knowledge, leadership, service, or opportunities with someone else's. Comparison can make me either proud or discouraged. Paul reminds me that the Spirit gives different gifts to different disciples, and God places each person in the body as He chooses.

QUESTION 5: Whose gift and contribution to the church do you need to value more intentionally?

Suggested Response: I may need to value people whose gifts are different than mine, less visible than mine, or easier for me to overlook. This could include people who serve behind the scenes, care for children, pray faithfully, set up rooms, show hospitality, lead quietly, or

encourage others. The church is stronger when we honor the gifts God gives through different people.

QUESTION 6: Paul said if one part suffers, every part suffers, and if one part is honored, every part rejoices. How can you practice that kind of shared life?

Suggested Response: I can pay attention when someone is hurting, pray with them, help carry a burden, celebrate when someone else is honored, and refuse to treat another person's pain or joy as disconnected from me. In the body of Christ, we are not competitors. We belong to one another.

QUESTION 7: How can our group help one another discover and use our gifts for the good of the church?

Suggested Response: A spiritual gift assessment (https://my.lakepointe.church/spiritualgifts) is a great first step that can be followed by registering for Serve Now (https://lakepointe.church/serve/) to begin taking steps into using our gifts for the good of the church. Consider taking a spiritual gift assessment together and discussing it together. Consider attending Serve Now together too! Disciples are built different because they are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the church.

4 CHALLENGE

LEADER TIP

End your study time with one final challenge and prayer. Your final challenge should pull together everything you covered in this lesson and call your participants to action.

Disciples are built different because they are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the church. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul reminded us that no disciple has every gift, and no disciple is unnecessary. The church is one body with many parts, and God has arranged the body with wisdom and purpose.

This week consider how God may be calling you to strengthen His church.

- What gift, ability, experience, or opportunity has God given you for the good of others?
- Where are you tempted to compare your role with someone else's instead of receiving your place with gratitude?
- Who in the body of Christ do you need to honor, encourage, or thank for the way God works through them?

The Spirit does not give gifts so we can compete for importance. He gives gifts so the church can be built up in love. When every part receives God's grace with humility and uses it faithfully, the body grows stronger and Christ is honored.

Let's pray.