

Avoid Complacency: Serve the Body with Spiritual Gifts (Pt. 2) - 1 Corinthians 12:18-31

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[0:00] Well, what a great time we've already had this service. I am so built up and encouraged and exhorted.

So I just want to say, Doug wherever you are, I don't know where he slipped off to, raise your hand, Doug, are you in here? He's back there. Okay. Doug, that was so encouraging. Thank you so much for sharing.

Doug, if you don't know, self-proclaims this but I affirm it, other people have affirmed it. He has the gift of exaltation and man, can you feel that gift of exhortation as he encourages us?

I just feel built up by his meditation. So thank you, Doug, for serving the body with your gifts. Well, we are right smack dab in the middle of 1 Corinthians chapter 12. I'm excited to wrap up the chapter and wrap up the topic of spiritual gifts as it pertains to this chapter.

We're going to revisit it again in 13 and in 14 as Paul does. But the overview, the laying the foundations, if you will, of this doctrine of spiritual gifts is what we're going to finish as we look at the rest of chapter 12.

[1:06] So I'm going to go ahead and read 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verses, excuse me, 12 to 31, if you'd follow along with me. It's fairly big section, so let's read this together.

This is God's word that says this, for just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in one spirit, we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and we're all made to drink of one spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

If the foot should say because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body. That would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body.

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? As it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose.

[2:11] If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. That I cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you.

Nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. And on those parts of the body that we think less honorable, we bestow the greater honor.

And our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it.

That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together.

If one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

[3:26] Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues?

Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you still a more excellent way. Would you pray with me? Lord, we are so encouraged this morning by Your Holy Spirit, Lord, that we get to sing together as a body, be encouraged together as a body through the taking of communion.

And now Lord, we get to be exhorted together, built up together as a body and individually members of it. Through Your Word, God.

Give us ears to hear this morning and a heart that responds in gratitude. And may that gratitude lead us to action.

[4 : 32] May that gratitude lead us to a place where we identify the ways in which You have graciously gifted us. And we would fulfill our calling and our responsibility to the rest of the body.

Thank You for Your grace in all things, Amen. Well, if you don't know me very well, I am a huge baseball fan.

I love baseball. It's actually one of the things in my life that I have to make sure I regulate or check that I'm not partaking of it or absorbing it too much.

I watch as many Dodger games as I can. I love to play catch in the backyard. I love to play wiffle ball, any chance I get to hit a ball with the bat is one of my most favorite things.

So naturally, this leads to me watching a lot of baseball. And when I was younger, it led to me playing a lot of baseball. I want to share something with you really quick. And this is one of my dad's all-time favorite stories.

[5 : 34] I'm going to try and share it quickly here. But in baseball, there's a lot of different positions. There's a lot of different fielding positions. You have a first baseman, a second baseman, a third baseman.

I right field. I left field. I catcher. I pitcher. You have a bunch of different roles on the field. And here's the thing. My dad, my dad's a coach. He's been a basketball coach for about 30 years now.

And he taught us baseball. He coached us in baseball. And we were all young. Me and my three other brothers. And we played on his team. And he was our coach, our manager. And he always knew what his sons were best gifted in.

And for Scott, he was a great pitcher because he had really good accuracy. For Jeff, he was a really good infielder because he could move quickly. And for Chad, he could hit the ball. But for Eric, you can throw really far.

That's pretty much all you can do. I embraced that. I loved that. It was my claim to fame, the fact that I could throw the ball further than my oldest brother.

[6 : 33] So where did I get put? Left field. Outfield. Very good. You guys, look at that. Baseball IQ is up in this church. I'm proud of you guys. All right. Outfield. You earned left field, Eric.

And a lot of people, especially in younger ages of baseball stages, look at the outfield as where they put the people that aren't really that good. Just go out there and shag the ball, right?

Not so for this guy. Outfield was the best. That means I could make diving plays. That means I could track down balls and throw it as far as hard as I could, even if it wasn't accurate.

It was my dream. I loved outfield. So balls would get hit to me way out there. And I grab it. And I turn. And I just huck it. And half the time it'd be on the money. Half the time it would be 15 feet wide. But the point is I would get it into the infield. My dad knew that. And little league just get it into the infield, right? OK. So there's one time in practice that my dad's hitting fly balls out to center field.

[7 : 28] And the point is to hit the cut off man from the outfield. And the cutoff man would turn. And then throw it into the catch you would catch. And then give the ball back to my dad. And he hit another one out the outfield and switched out the lines. Well, my dad takes the ball.

Eric, oh, Eric's up. OK. So he hits it further than he normally would. I run back and I catch it. And right as I go to catch the ball, one of my dad's good friends is at the baseball park with his son. He says, hey, Brian, hey, what's up, Dave?

And they start talking. And he walks away for a little bit. I didn't know this. But I was a little eight-year-old and, man, I was ready to show off my arm. You never, ever, ever skip the cutoff man. Well, not this time. I catch the ball. And I look. And I said, I could hit the cut. I could hit the catcher. And I take four crow hops and let this ball fly.

It hits my dad on the fly. This is a hard baseball right in the ear. He said it's one of the worst pains of his entire life. And it hits him. And he just brushes it off.

[8 : 26] And he goes, duty OK? He goes, I'm fine. It's totally fine. Anyway, he looks around eventually and looks back at me. Everyone's pointing at me.

And my dad says to this day, I knew exactly who it was. You wanted to show off your big arm, didn't you, Eric? Well, next year I played in a club team.

I had a new coach. My dad probably didn't want to coach me anymore after that. I have a new coach. I'm playing in the club team. It's a little more serious. The stakes are higher. We're trying to win games. And I'm in the outfield like I normally am.

And I play out there. And it's great. And there's one game that we need a pitcher. And I've never pitched in my entire life. Again, I can throw hard, but I have no accuracy. OK, you see where this is going.

So my coach says, we need a pitcher. Eric, do you want to just fill in? We just need an inning. Just go up there and just throw it over the plate. It's all you need to do. OK, coach. So I take that ball.

[9 : 20] And I start throwing. High speed. Nothing's accurate. I literally threw 12 balls in a row, loaded the bases.

Three walks. Coach comes out, takes the ball, go back to the outfield. So I go to the outfield.

Another guy comes in, who's a good pitcher?

And he strikes the first guy out, strikes the second guy out. Two outs. He's going to get me out of my mess that I created, because I was pitching when I ought not have been. And he throws the pitcher right down the middle.

And he, the batter, clobbers it. And I will say, I was a pretty good outfielder. I start running back on this ball. And I make a diving catch. And I catch it, inning over.

I go back in. My manager pulls me aside and says, great catch. But you will never pitch again. Why do I share that story?

[10 : 20] What we're going to see in the rest of this chapter is that Paul realizes a few things for the Corinthians, because they are incapable of realizing it themselves.

And it's this, that he uses an illustration of a human body. And he says this, the human body is composed of many parts in order that it would operate at full capacity.

If your liver doesn't do its job, you die. If your heart doesn't do its job, you die. If your hand doesn't do its job, you may not die, but you're not going to be able to do as much as you could. If your legs don't do their jobs, well, you're not going anywhere.

This is kind of the point he's getting at. And here's the point for Paul. Corinthians, you are one body, but many parts.

I like to think of it in terms of baseball. This is the way my brain automatically goes, and it says this, it's like a sports team that if the left field doesn't do its job, the ball will get hit and the runners will keep running.

[11 : 25] If the pitcher doesn't do his job to throw the pitches over the strike zone and strike out the batters, well, we're going to get scored on a lot. If the batters don't do their job of getting hits, well, we're not going to score.

We have to all do our part in order for the team to succeed. And for Paul, the illustration is every part of the body must do their job in order for the body to function at full capacity.

I want to speak really quickly. I want to tag on to what Doug just mentioned, but the word gift, we talk about spiritual gifts, is the word charismatic or charisma.

In other words, grace. And as we talk about the body this morning, I want to make sure that I don't miss an opportunity for anyone in here who, even though you may physically be here, spiritually you may not be part of a body or the body of Christ.

Spiritual gifts, spiritual grace, manifestations of grace that have been given is literally what the word gift means. As Doug just read in Ephesians 2, 8, and 9, for it is by grace you have been saved through faith.

[12 : 46] In other words, grace is the method by which we come into faith, enter into the body, and grace is the gift that is given that we would use in the body.

And there may only be one person, maybe two, there might be none, maybe someone just needs to hear it again, but the gospel of Jesus Christ is the most important teaching of Scripture.

And as we talk about spiritual gifts, spiritual manifestations of His grace to the saved believer in the body, which is what spiritual gifts are, we cannot skip the saving grace that brings you into the body.

You may be here today and you may say, I don't know if I'm part of the body. I don't know if I've ever believed. That means that you're a free agent. You're not part of a team. You're on your own.

You need to join a team.

And the free agent doesn't have teammates, doesn't have someone to help them in the game, in the fight, doesn't have someone to help round out their rough edges, their missing parts.

[14:07] So I'm just going to say really clearly that if you do not know Jesus Christ, embrace the grace that He has for you. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Confess Him as Lord. Believe in His life, death, and resurrection. Receive saving grace, the grace that we don't deserve that cleanses us completely of sin and death and brings us into new life, back into right relationship with God.

Receive that grace this morning. We need you and we want you here. So with that in mind, we need to learn this morning as Paul is going to taught the Corinthians that we need to be team players in the body of Christ.

That yes, we've all been given individual gifts. We're going to talk about all the different types of gifts and what Paul lays out in all of his theology and writings. But the most important thing is that every single member matters in the body of Christ.

And every team has parts and players and you are a part and a player in the greater picture. And you are needed in the church.

[15:24] So let's look at a few things here. First, the Holy Spirit unites all believers into one body of Christ. This is what Paul says in verse 12 and 13. Let's read it again. For just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in one spirit, we were all baptized into one body. Jews or Greeks, slaves are free and all were made to drink of one spirit.

So as Paul's about to enter into a dialogue on the diversity of gifts and the differences between all of us, he wants to found for the Corinthians and for us, establish something before he goes into the different parts.

He wants to establish this, that you were saved by the Holy Spirit through his indwelling. But so were they and so were they and so were they and so were they.

We're all saved by the same Holy Spirit, which means that we're baptized into one body and we're all made to drink of one spirit. In other words, we partake then of the same spirit.

[16:29] So the foundation for understanding the different types of gifts is that we're unified under the same mantle. Secondly, God has masterfully ordered gifted, excuse me, masterfully ordered gifted members in the body.

Look with me at three different verses from this section. Verse 18, see what it says. But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose.

You hear that? God arranged the members in the body. Look at verse 24. Next section, Paul says this, which are more presentable parts do not require, but God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it.

God has so composed the body, similar language. Then verse 28, this is what Paul says, and God has appointed in the church first, then he goes on to list a bunch of gifts.

But the whole point, God has appointed three terms here that point to the sovereignty of God's elective choice and grand purpose and design to take you and give you gifts.

[17:41] And after he's given you gifts through the Holy Spirit, he's then placed you specifically in a part of service in the church. This is a beautiful thing.

He's a masterfully ordered gifted members in the body. You have been gifted the gifts you've been given for a reason. And you've been placed in the body for a reason.

It's a beautiful thing that God does. In these three words here, in these three verses, we all point to a harmonious, selective act of God in which he takes individuals, puts them specifically in an appointed place so that the whole body might harmoniously be built together for the common good of the gospel and the church and all of our collective sanctification.

It's a beautiful thing that Paul says here. God has specifically chosen you for a divine purpose within the body of Christ. Now, as always in Corinth, there are two incorrect mentalities.

There's always incorrect mentalities in this book. But now we're going to see two incorrect mentalities when seeking to practice gifts. Here's the first one. Look with me in verse 14 to 16.

We're going to read these three verses.

[19:04] For the body does not consist of one member, but of many. If the foot should say, because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less part of the body. And if the ear should say, because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less part of the body.

Self-degradation. There's going to be two truths, two instances in which Paul hypothetically speaks on behalf of what he knows the Corinthians may be saying.

You see the quotations in your scripture there, that means Paul's hypothetically speaking as if he were one of the Corinthians, meaning he most likely heard these things in some way, shape, or form.

And there's time with them. So first is self-degradation, producing your own role in the body. Look what the foot says. The foot simply being a symbol of a certain gift in the church, maybe the servers.

So in other words, you could say if the serving people, the serving gifts, should say, because I am not a hand or I'm not a teacher, let's go with, I do not belong to the body.

[20 : 08] So hypothetically, there are Corinthians, and this is definitely happening, based off what we see of the disarray of the church. There's Corinthians in the church that know their gifts, but they're saying this, I don't like my gift very much, and I don't think I fit in the body.

This is a devastating thing. I do not belong to the body, is what Paul hypothetically says.

Self-degradation. I'm a servant, but I think, I think, I don't think I fit here.

What this does is it takes your gift, the Spirit has given you sovereignly and providentially, and it plays it down. It's a way to reduce our own role in the body.

And as we reduce our own role in the body and our expectation of ourselves to fulfill a gift in the body, the body lacks.

Here's a few potential mentalities that many of you maybe have thought before. Maybe not exactly these, but I'm going to integrate some gifts into some potential thoughts that go along with self-degradation.

[21 : 23] Well, teachers are what my church needs, not administrators. We need teachers, and I'm administrative, so. People who can give generously what my church needs right now.

I can't do that, but I can't encourage, but we don't need people to encourage right now. Leaders are who my church needs. Not helpers. I'm a helper.

Mercy ministries are needed in my church, not counseling, and I'm really good at wisdom and knowledge, and I can help people through that, but we need mercy ministry people.

The second of each one of those statements is somebody hypothetically degrading themselves and their gifts because they don't believe they have a role.

The second incorrect mentality is self-absorption, reducing another's role in the body, both devastating things. But let's look at verse 21.

[22 : 23] Here's what Paul says down here. He speaks again hypothetically of a potential person in the church, quotations, that I cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

So let's just say that I is leadership. I'm a leader, and I can set vision, and people follow me, and I'm going to lead us into a place where we're glorifying God.

But to the hand, to the helper, that's a gift, we don't really need you. We need you to get behind and follow me and just do what I do.

Paul is hypothetically speaking of somebody that has looked at someone else in the church and said, you don't really matter. Your gift is kind of a gift. It's cool.

Yeah, you're especially uniquely gifted, but it's not that helpful. Let's do something that actually matters, like teaching. Let's do something that matters, like speaking in tongues, which, oh man, whoever gets first Corinthians 14, you get an entire chapter on tongues and prophecy.

[23 : 25] I think it's Scott. So we're going to, Scott talked more about that. I'll talk a little bit about it. But the whole point is self-absorption in the church looks like this. I am a great, I'm a really, really good giver.

I have sacrificed to give to the church. I give more than other people, and it's my gift to give more with a good heart. And you know what? Because of my giving, we're able to remodel this.

Because of my giving, we're able to buy that. Because of my giving, we're able to send kids to camp. Now, as for the people that are distinguishing of spirits, all you do is just judge everybody in the church, whether they're saying right things or false things.

I'm literally giving stuff so that the church can be advanced. And here you are, sitting back, judging others. That's a really, really easy, subtle way to become self-absorbed.

To see my gifts as more important than other people's gifts. Because I know my gifts. I've seen the fruit of them. Yes, by God's grace, there is fruit that's being produced for my giving.

[24 : 32] But it's turned into this marred piece of self-absorption. When I look at the other person whose gift I don't know, and I don't value it.

That's why Paul says there might be people in the church that say, I have no need of you. I have no need of you. I'm going to go back through those four hypothetical statements in the church today, and we're going to flip it this time.

The person who was self-degrading was the one that said, ah, they don't really need this. Now, they're really the same statements. But now this person that's self-absorbed is the person in the front end. So teachers are what my church needs.

We need teachers. And I can teach the house down. We don't need administrators. People who give generously what my church needs, not those who encourage.

Leaders are who my church needs, not the helpers. Mercy ministries are needed in my church, and that's me, not counseling or knowledge.

[25 : 34] All four of those hypothetical statements have two realities reflected on both ends that are unhelpful or incorrect, according to Paul. And that's this.

You look at your gift, and you say, either the church doesn't need me, or you look at your gift and say, the church doesn't need them. And that's what's happening in Corinth.

On display, the besetting sin in this area for the Corinthians is that they're elevating certain gifts to the place of honor and supremacy and public adoration.

And they're forgetting about and downplaying all of the rest. And the big one for Corinth is definitely tongues. That's the gift that everybody wants.

If you go on stage and you speak in tongues, everyone in the church will go, ooh, ah. And again, that's chapter 14, but it applies here in the point that Paul's building up to is that every gift of the spirit matters deeply.

[26 : 44] But even more important than the fact that every gift matters deeply, the one whom the spirit has gifted matters deeply. Because gifts don't just happen naturally.

There isn't just leadership that happens, and the spirit just goes, boom. And now there's leadership in our church. He uses the members of the body by giving them the gift and then empowering them to do that specific gift.

Let's avoid self-degradation in our gifts, but also self-absorption in our gifts. Remember others in the church and use others, encourage others in what the Lord has gifted them.

Every member matters in the body of Christ. And I really believe that when the primary reasons people leave a church, one of, is because they weren't able to find their place and purpose in the body.

I didn't really find a place where I could serve. Didn't really get connected. I wasn't really able to use my gifts. You ever heard that? It's tragic.

[27 : 51] Why is that? Is that maybe it's because we're unaware of our individual gifts, and so we don't know how to use them? Or maybe people don't think that they have a role in the church. My gift doesn't really matter. Oh, I'm going to go somewhere else.

I know this is idealistic, but man, how cool would it be if every church in Spokane embraced all of the gifts of the spirit, and every church had manifested through the power of the spirit, the gifts of the spirit, in all areas of the church?

Sad that there's churches that are known as teaching churches. There's churches that are known as evangelistic churches. There's churches that are known as mercy churches. The whole church, the whole body of Christ, is called to all of those things simultaneously, and all those things can only happen if we recognize our individual parts and the individual gifts that we've been given in the Holy Spirit.

Amen? So four passages that discuss spiritual gifts. First Peter, first Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, all have a section. And we talked about this a little bit last week, but I want to revisit it, and then we're going to talk about the gifts.

Two main branches of gifts. First with the speaking gifts. So first Peter 4:11, first part A, says, Peter says, whoever speaks is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God, and then you have serving gifts.

[29 : 12] Whoever serves to do as though one who is serving by the strength which God supplies. And again, we talked about last week, and we're just going to capitulate this. This, that Peter is writing on the heels of Paul, a couple years after Paul writes about all the gifts.

So he's on the heels of Paul, and he writes to the believers in Rome, and he says, there's two branches. There's a lot in both branches, and in this letter at least, he doesn't take the time to go into it.

But for Peter, what's important is that you know that there's two types. There's a serving side, and there's a speaking side. We talked a little bit about that last week. But I want to talk quickly to remind us the power of speaking gifts in the church.

Speaking gifts are gifts that involve oration or verbal communication of some sort, either publicly or privately. For the edification of the church, however, here's the thing about speaking gifts.

Look at this verse. Whoever speaks is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God. In other words, the emphasis for the speaking gifts has nothing to do with my words.

[30 : 21] This is empowering, and this is freeing. This is not restrictive. We ought to look speakers. We ought to look at this verse. We ought to say, praise God, that I don't have to conjure up some artificial wisdom or experience based on what I know to help this person.

Praise God that we have the Bible. We have God's word to speak life into others. On his behalf, yes. But as those who are speaking the utterances of God.

It's amazing. This means that each of the gifts of speaking fall into the category of to be practiced in alignment with Scripture and not our own wisdom or words.

And so this is why there's a lot of ideologies and a lot of opinions on what I'm about to say, but this is why, at least at this church, we value expository preaching so much.

What is expository preaching? It's going through the Bible verse by verse, section by section, book by book. Topical preaching has its place. Don't get me wrong, it's important.

[31 : 28] I've also heard it said that if meat and potatoes six out of seven days in the week, you're going to take your family, you're going to eat meat and potatoes at dinner that mom or dad makes. That's expositional teaching.

We're going to look at God's word just for what it is. We're going to expose it. We're going to learn to interpret it and own it and apply it. Topical preaching should maybe be the one night a week that you go out. Okay, let's talk about dating.

Let's talk about discipleship. Let's talk about marriage, whatever it may be, important. We can use scripture to hopefully inform our topical teaching, but this is why expository preaching is so important, because it binds us to God's word.

It doesn't, proper expository teaching doesn't allow for the speaker, the teacher, or the preacher to fabricate something that isn't in God's word. They're bound to the text.

Praise God. So speaking gifts, serving gifts, the thing about both of these categories of gifts is Peter says there's two categories, but Paul doesn't come back around later because he's busy in jail at Rome under house arrest, but he doesn't at any point say, oh yeah, good job, Peter.

[32 : 39] By the way, here are the ones that are speaking. Here are the ones that are serving. So we have to use our best judgment in saying which gifts apply in each arena. For speaking gifts, there's some obvious ones.

There's some that are not as obvious, but for the speaking gifts, I would definitely say wisdom is a speaking gift. Knowledge, prophecy, teaching, exhortation, evangelism, tongues, interpretation of tongues, faith are all speaking gifts.

You're using the words that God has placed in Scripture and in your heart to build up the body. Now the second type is obviously serving, and I love this.

It's the same emphasis as speaking was to be empowered by God's words, serving is to be empowered by God's strength. Both serving and speaking gifts are undergirded by God himself. Just like everything else that we believe in this Bible and this faith, everything is God. It's all God, all of it. We're saved by God, we're sanctified by God, we're filled by God. We are given heaven by God.

[33 : 44] We are brought to the fullness of our faith and glorification someday by God, and we use our spiritual gifts by and through everything, everything God, God, God.

It's all about Jesus. It's all about the Lord. I love that, and he chooses to use us. How amazing is that? Serving gifts.

The strength of God is emphasized. The strength and energy of God is supplied by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. I want to look quickly at Joshua 1.9. This is the verse many of you probably know.

This is what it says, be strong and courageous. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Now here's what's implicit in that verse. As God speaks to Joshua, he says, as you about to go into the promised land and take it, the promise to my people, you need to have strength and courage in order to do this task.

But what is it that the strength and the courage is rooted in? Is it in Joshua's incredible leadership abilities? You can be strong and courageous because you're a good leader.

[34 : 49] Is it in Joshua's incredible devotion to God's word? No, no. Is it in his own skills and abilities on the battlefield and planning, war planning?

No. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. So what is Joshua's strength and courage to be entirely rooted in? God's presence.

The only reason you can have strength and courage in anything I'm going to ask you to do, and there's some crazy stuff in the book of Joshua, is because I'm with you. That's pretty much it. Thank you, Lord.

So as we look at spiritual gifts and serving, we ought to have the same heart, that the Holy Spirit who indwells us and gives us the gifts, the only reason that we can serve with strength is because the Holy Spirit allows us to have strength through his presence.

So what are some of the serving gifts? Well, there's some obvious ones. Helping, serving, administration, I would say giving, healing, miracles, all definitely in the category of serving gifts.

[35 : 48] They're gifts that are to be done with the hands and the feet. It doesn't mean you can't speak, put the chairs away, but don't talk to him about what God's teaching you in your life. Right? It goes vice versa.

If you're a speaker, it doesn't mean that you shouldn't serve. We should do both in some essence, but the gifts that we've been given, we need to be sure to carry them out. But the serving gifts, oftentimes the ones that go behind the scenes, and this is what I love about Paul, look what he says.

It's kind of confusing. It can be confusing, but if you look at verse 22, he says on the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. On those parts of the body that we think less honorable, we dispel the greater honor.

Our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty. Here's not what Paul is saying there.

He's not saying that there are certain gifts that are less desirable. Okay, you have that gift.

He's speaking, ironically, to the Corinthians theology. What he's saying is, well, you guys have done is you've taken some gifts and you said these are the most important ones. These are really important.

[36 : 46] And then you've taken other gifts and you said, those are less honorable. And in the context of the Corinthian church, what branch of gifts were the ones that were being treated as less honorable?

Serving gifts. Everybody wanted to prophesy, speak in tongues, teach all of the big showy on the stage gifts. So what Paul's doing here is he's saying those less honorable gifts that you have so aptly proved through your behavior, we bestow honor on that.

In other words, what he's saying is in your church, the people who are serving behind the scenes are the ones that are not getting recognition for anything they're doing in the body. Those are the ones that we give greater honor to and we lift up together.

And he says, if one member suffers, all suffer together. So if there's people in your church that are not being honored, they're not being seen, they're not being valued and encouraged because they're practicing gifts that we haven't recognized, then they're suffering.

And guess what? You are being recognized. Because they're suffering, you're suffering. And because you're being honored, honor them. Rejoice together is what he says.

[37 : 53] So a couple of notes here. One we must distinguish between unique giftings and common Christian virtues. So all Christians are commanded in Scripture to have faith, to give sacrificially, to serve with gladness, to seek wisdom, to distinguish between spirits of falsehood and truth, to encourage one another and to be an evangelist.

All those are gifts, by way. But we need to distinguish between that which we are called and mandated to do as Christ's followers and that which are specifically giftings. In other words, we're called to have faith in Christ.

Every person has the gift of faith, right? It's not how this is meant to play out. There's a separate distinction for those that have the gift of faith that goes beyond just the common virtue of having faith.

Secondly, some gifts are more role-based, some are more attribute-based, some are more affect-based, and everything that I'm telling you right now, this has come from a giant, spiritual gifts is a very hotly debated topic with lots of different opinions, and I have sought out the council of many people in this church and in other places, Scott, Dr. Vreeland, other people that have helped with a lot of this, so give me some grace here because some of this is really debated, but this is the best that I can do.

But I do believe that some gifts have more role-based functions. So what's a role-based gift? Maybe prophets, apostles, teachers, evangelists, shepherds and pastors, those are roles in the church that are also gifts.

[39 : 14] There's attribute-based gifts, wisdom, knowledge, mercy. These are attributes that I have, but the Spirit is gifted and it's part of my life, and I just live it out. And then there's affect-based gifts, healings, miracles, faith that operate off the assumption that the Lord does something powerfully through your hands.

Third gifts become less effective when we use them incorrectly. Look at verse 31. This is what Paul ends as his pastor, he says, earnestly desire the higher gifts.

Again, he's playing off of their own theology of higher gifts versus lower gifts, and what he says there is basically this. There are higher gifts in your mind, and he's saying, guess what?

I want you to desire the new higher gifts, and he makes a new definition of what the higher gifts are. And this is debated. Some people say he's sarcastically saying, go ahead and pursue your higher gifts, but do it the right way, or the other interpretation, 1 Corinthians 14.

Paul says this, now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues.

[40 : 21] In other words, he's not saying that there are certain gifts that are just better and value, but what he is saying is by greater, he's saying, if a gift is practiced for the edification of the church, it's a greater gift, period.

Done. That's what he's saying. So, bough that definition, and again, this is debated, but off that definition, you could argue that any spiritual gift that's practiced for my own benefit and not for the church's benefit is a lesser gift.

But if you take any gift and you practice this so that the members of the church will be built up, it's a higher gift in Paul's estimation. Love that. Most gifts have short descriptions in scripture.

Really short. So that means that we risk, when we look at these things, at going overboard and saying things we ought not to about the gifts, but that doesn't mean we still shouldn't seek to understand what they all are, and we're going to do that as best we can.

And then lastly, love is not a gift, but it's foundational motive for all gifts. Again, we're going to look at that next week, but check this out. Colossians 3, 12 to 14. You ready for this? Love this.

[41 : 28] Put on, then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another. And if one is to complain against one another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, you must also forgive.

Okay, this list of incredible spiritual fruit and things we should be demonstrating in the church, but listen to this. And above all of these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

In other words, we will have perfect harmony, spiritually, as a result of our gifts, if we all practice them in love.

Every gift practiced in love, which is all for 1 Corinthians 13, but it's another text here. Love ties everything together in perfect harmony. It's the glue that sticks all the gifts together perfectly.

So with that, I'm going to go quickly through these. We're just going to look at there are 20 gifts. Probably won't take that long. So Romans 12, 6 to 8 is the first section.

[42 : 35] And in this section, you see the first gift is prophecy. Prophecy, and it's mentioned in Romans in 1 Corinthians. And prophecy, quite simply, is the ability to foretell and foretell the word of God.

Prophets have a serious view of God's truth and are often proclaimers of God's truth and word, possibly even preachers of God's truth and word, and predictors of what might happen based off of God's truth.

In other words, those with the gift of prophecy, historically in the church, as you look back, are the ones that receive a word from the Lord, and they say, OK, Lord, and they speak it to the people. And they might predict something, might foretell something, or they might just say, oh yeah, Lord, we need to know that again. Here's what God has said, one once more. A prophet is a channel through which God speaks to his people.

Second is service, mentioned in Romans 12. Service is the ability to give freely of time and talents in order to meet the needs of others. That's the Greek word service here is used in that context.

[43 : 35] It's sacrificing in order that someone else might have something. Servers are doers within the church. They prefer action as opposed to words. If you are one of those people, praise God for you.

Thank you for being here, because you have to counteract people like me that can't keep my mouth shut. In the right context in the church, I have my role, and I know that. I'm not trying to self-degrade.

But thank you for serving if you are one of those people. Three, teaching. The ability to study, interpret, articulate, and apply scripture to a listening audience. Teachers cause their students to follow Christ more closely by learning his word.

Teachers in the church, essential to the early church, essential to the church today, as the teaching of the church goes, typically, the spiritual temperament of the church follows.

Really important, teaching. Exhortation. The ability to provide encouragement, consolation, and accountability to one another for spiritual well-being.

[44 : 33] Exhorters are marked by their joy and incessant kindness. I mentioned Doug. Does that not sound like Doug if you know him? Incessant kindness, incessant joy. If you have the gift of exhortation, you're likely known in the church, because it's a very joyful, exuberant gift.

Exhortation also doesn't just apply encouragement. To exhort means to build up, and sometimes that means painfully. To build something up takes work.

Fifth is giving, the ability to contribute wealth or material possessions for the furthering of the kingdom of God. Givers have a high view of God's supremacy and providence. Givers are the ones, well, we're all called the give.

Yes, but there are those people and you know who I'm talking about. You mind, you think back in your life, I can think of lots. My grandpa was one of them, where every time there's a need that gets brought up in the church, financially, it seems like they're the first person to say here.

And oftentimes the givers that I know that have the spiritual gift of giving do it without anybody knowing. Doesn't mean that you can't exercise a gift without people knowing, because you should know, because we want to encourage you to say good job and you're giving.

[45 : 40] But givers are ones that can freely give and they're not bound to their wealth and possessions. That's a gift. Leadership. Leadership, the ability to set an example, create and accomplish goals, and motivate a group for the purpose of glorifying God.

Paul has a lot of gifts, but I think one of his main gifts is leadership. He plants churches. He pastors churches. People want to follow him on his missionary journeys, all three.

There's more than three, but the three that we typically think of in Scripture, people join his group all the time. I want to be part of this, and they get on board, because Paul is leading and they want to follow him.

Mercy. The ability to empathize deeply with and assist those who are enduring physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual hardship. Merciful people care intensely for those who are hurting.

This is an amazing gift in the church. If you have the gift of mercy, thank you. This is often the gift that requires much sacrificially from emotionally, spiritually, physically from people, and you are noticed.

[46 : 49] The next section is 1st Corinthians 12. We've been looking at all of this, and I want to compile all this now as we get there, but verse, or excuse me, gift 8 is wisdom. A God-given understanding of the ways of the Lord and how one ought to live a life pleasing to the Lord.

Wise people know and share God's practical truths well. There are people in the body that just have this natural ability to read Scripture, to know it, and then to say, here's what it means, and let me

counsel, let me disciple you.

I typically think of people in my life that have disciplined me over the years, and I think, hey, I have wisdom, and I'm so grateful. Knowledge. Wisdom and knowledge are sometimes conflated, but I think they're a little different.

The words, so wisdom here implies a practical knowledge. The word knowledge here implies more of an intellectual, logical approach to life and a way to assess things in the church and to apply it for God's glory.

So I would say knowledge is the ability to learn well from life experience and rationalize God's truth with logic. Knowledgeable people know much about the world and how to interact with it.

[47 : 49] Really grateful for people with gift of knowledge, and then faith, the ability to believe and trust in the will of God and expect much from God. I would argue, even though I don't know all of you will have to say this, but if you are one of the faithful people that attends the prayer gathering every single Sunday morning at 8 a.m., you may have the gift of faith.

People in your life that you may know, or maybe you yourself that just believe so much of God and trust so much that He is going to do all that we've asked in faith.

This leads them to be prayerful people. I think of people with the gift of faith as the biggest prayer warriors. Thank you for pushing us to believe God.

Gift of healing, used a lot in the book of Acts, used a lot in the apostolic era and today still used.

The gift of healing is a miracle, excuse me, is a supernatural, divinely caused healing of someone who has an ailment.

Okay, now what does this look like in the local church? Are we getting a sticky wick? Oh, he's talking about charismatic gifts. The point of the charismatic gifts is not that we would get divided and that we would look at them and say, well, well, well, the point of the charismatic gifts is that we would look to God for an amazing display of His grace and His power in our lives.

[49 : 17] If you have a charismatic gift, if you have healing, use it for His glory. Tons of stories of people being healed. Miracles, similar to healing, but not quite the same.

Miracles implies more of a power being demonstrated by God through the Holy Spirit supernaturally. You see this one a lot in Acts. So many examples I could point to of miracles happening, but all of it is always tied to God Himself and would offer that as we look to see healings and see miracles in the church, we ought to always remember that a healing or a miracle that is apart from God getting glory and apart from the gospel being proclaimed as the greater cause is worthless.

And this is why healing and miracles are so important, but also so touchy. People profit off of healing and miracles and they say, look what I can do and they make some money, they maybe get a following, but the motivation of healing and miracles every time in the book of Acts is so that the gospel of Christ would be made more gloriously magnified.

Tons. Excuse me, distinguishing spirits. Paul talks about distinguishing spirits. Distinguishing spirits is simply the ability to identify presence of sin, false doctrine, insincerity in the church or in individuals, and distinguishers help expose apostasy, help expose falseness and protect the truth. And if you are one that has distinguishing of spirits, you're typically the ones that we look at and say, well, they're kind of judgmental. And I would caution church against this.

[51 : 02] It can turn into that easily, but we need to lift up those that can spot falsehood. If you are one of the few people over the years that has lovingly come to me and corrected something I've said or loving him to Scott and corrected what he said, we appreciate you and we like being held accountable.

Now, I'm not opening this up to anybody because, again, gifts are important, roles are important. If you don't have distinguishing of spirits, please be careful when you come to correct somebody from false teaching. Seriously.

We all ought to know truth and to be able to see it, but if you have the gift of distinguishing of spirits, not just looking at us and putting the passage in a microscope, but what about people that come into the church and start saying things that aren't biblical?

It's your job to help protect. Next is tongues. Now, there's two interpretations of what tongues could be, and I'm just going to give you these two interpretations. Tongues is real. It's something that happens.

First is that speaking an unintelligible spiritual language. First Corinthians 4-4, here's what Paul says, the one who speaks in a tongue builds himself up, but the one who prophesies builds up the

church.

[52 : 05] In other words, Paul may be suggesting that tongues is something that someone does by themselves to build themselves up, which is, again, not always the point of tongues that all gifts should be to build the church up, but the second interpretation of tongues is the ability to speak in existing language that is not yet been learned by the speaker.

Acts 2, we see the disciples and the early churches fill with the Holy Spirit and they begin to speak in languages, and then people come in and say, how are they speaking their language? So in other words, clearly they're speaking a different language.

And then interpretation of tongues, this is important, and what Paul, Scott talked about that later, but interpretation of tongues is hearing what someone says, and then making sure everybody knows what was said, that way there's not just masses of people that said, I have no idea what's being said right now.

Can you imagine if I started just speaking the rest of this sermon in Swahili? Just, all right, here we go, it didn't tell you anything. Would you be exhorted? Would you be edified? No. Maybe one person that may know Swahili, I don't know.

Helping. The ability to provide assistance to other believers or ministries in their time of need.

Helpers are those who work in the background typically with their church, but they're not helping. So, I think that's a good point.

[53 : 12] Helpers are those who work in the background typically with joyful hearts. Now, the word help here implies deeds of assistance. So, how's it different than serving? Serving and helping are similar. Service is more sacrifice, self-sacrifice in order to make someone's life easier and better.

Helping is more what are the practical things you need help with? I can help with that? You don't know those people, right? Oh, I can do it? Yeah, I can do it. Love that. Love those people. Thank you, thank you, thank you, if you have that.

Next is the administration. The ability to effectively manage task events, administrations in the church, administrations often handle business affairs of the church and provide structure so that the gospel can be proclaimed and the work of ministry can go unhindered.

Imagine Paul's missionary journeys, all the literally, it's close to like 70 different times he makes a stop at a city. You think Paul is just like walking around and you're like, oh, it's good to have Tarsus. Can we get on the boat? I don't know, we'll just get on. No, he has a team with him and I guarantee you there's people that are helping him plan this and figure it out and helping him write letters and take couriers to go to this place or that place.

[54 : 15] That's administration, helping the work of ministry get out and get out powerfully but allowing the speakers and the teachers and the ones that are putting the material out to focus on what they're called to focus on.

Administrators, thank you. And it's someone that has zero ability of administration. Thank you, thank you, thank you. And if some of you have administration but I just want to say a real quick shout out to Becky, to Dale, to Shelley, you guys have no idea how valuable you are.

You make my life and our lives so much better. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. Next is apostleship. The ability to church plant and make disciples.

Now here's the thing about apostles. Paul refers to apostles as those that have seen Christ. So in some sense you could say, well, this gift is no longer here but in some sense you could say, well, the spirit of the gift is still here.

Apostles are those that have a bigger for missions and establishing new bodies of believers. I typically make of missionaries as those that may have the gift of evangelism or apostleship.

Apostles, they desire to see God's word spread.

[55 : 16] Evangelism, similar but a little bit different. The ability to effectively illustrate the gospel message to unbelievers in a winsome and relevant manner. You know these people?

Sometimes I'm like, I should have the gospel really well with that person. Yeah, I'm great. And then other times I'm like, I butchered it and I should be reminded of the stake. Right? But then there's those people that I've been with and done ministry with and they share the gospel and I just sit there and go, I want to believe in this.

Like, save me. That was an incredible presentation. They're able to be relevant and they're able to speak to people's hearts and reach them for Christ. They're known for their passion and joy in sharing the gospel.

Evangelists, so important. And then lastly, shepherds or pastors, that's the same word here. The ability to guide, care, protect and counsel a body of believers compassionately.

Shepherds attend intimately to the well-being of those entrusted to them. Shepherds definitely a role-based gift. It's a position in the church that supplied for the specific purpose of believers being exhorted, cared for and watched over.

[56 : 26] Shepherds. Thank you elders for leading. For meeting regularly, for caring for our body, for teaching and for keeping all of us accountable before the Lord.

Every member matters in the body of Christ. Just went through 20 gifts. I know that was a little long. We just went through a lot of stuff, but if I could have you take away anything from this morning and from even last week, it's this.

You matter. If you are here and you've not yet had the privilege of finding a place or a way to serve. So this last week I'll say it again, we miss you and we need you.

There's a piece of the body that is missing. You are needed. Let's thank the Holy Spirit in prayer for the gifts of the Spirit.

Lord, thank you for today. Thank you that you've uniquely positioned each of us in the body of Christ with a specific role that can be accomplished through a specific gift.

[57 : 43] Lord, I pray that those of us that have the gift of service, gifts of service, excuse me, that we would serve with your strength, that we would encourage this body by building it up, brick by brick through our deeds and acts of love.

And Lord, for those of us that are in the speaking category of me, we build this body brick by brick by the truths that come from your heart and your mouth.

I pray that this would be a church that speaks truth and teaches truth and applies truth that all turns. All in all, Lord, every member of the body, all of us, I pray that you would remind us that we matter deeply, that as the text says that you have specifically placed us all, that the body might be edified. God, teach us what it means to embrace our gifts, teach us what it means to practice gifts, and teach us what it means to edify one another, all through your grace that you freely bestowed on us, even through gifts.

Thank you for your goodness, your mercy. It's in your amazing name. We pray, amen.