

"Share the Work"

Overview



Most of us would like to think that our efforts count for something. Our hope is that the energy we put into the things we do each day really do matter (and maybe in some way make the world a better place).

The good news is that God has called and equipped us to be involved in a great work - nothing less than the building of His Kingdom. It may seem too good to be true but it would appear God has chosen to involve us in the fulfillment of His plans.

The bad news is that it is possible for us to miss out on the great experience of being co-laborers with God. This lesson will explore the manner in which God is going about His great work (and how He invites us to participate with Him).

Getting Started *Using Our Gifts*



1. What was the best job you ever had? What was the worst? What was it that made these jobs the best (and the worst)?
 2. If you could do it all over again, what alternate career would you pursue (assuming for some reason your present career was not an option)?
 3. Is there some aspect of ministry that you have always wanted to try (but have been too afraid to try (or just never had the chance))?
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The Text



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, ¹¹ 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. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

1 Cor. 12:1-31 (NIV)

The Audio (optional)



"Share the Work" - by Kyle Corbin, Sept. 29/19

NOTES: _____

Understanding



1. "It was universally accepted in antiquity that some people, who were in specially close touch with the divine, had special spiritual endowments." ("1 Corinthians" by Leon Morris)

Given the culture of his day, why is Paul starting his teaching on spiritual gifts with verses 1-3? What is he trying to guard against? How are we to discern whether or not a spiritual ability is a valid spiritual gift from God?

2. What do all the gifts have in common (according to verses 4-7)? Why does Paul stress these particular characteristics? (Consider also 1 Cor. 3:1-4)
3. What are the various gifts that Paul lists (vs. 8-10)? How do you understand these gifts operating in the church of today? Is this list of gifts exhaustive (check out Romans 12:4-8)?
4. How does the Body suffer when these gifts are missing? Imagine each gift being missing from a local church and consider the impact of its absence.
5. What aspect of the Christian church is Paul emphasizing in verses 12-13? How might this have been a revolutionary message in Paul's time? Is it still revolutionary today?
6. How are the different parts of the Body of Christ (i.e. the various people with different gifts) supposed to relate to one another (vs. 14-26)? Which are the "weaker" or "less honorable" parts of the Body?
7. What are the "greater gifts" (vs. 31)? Why do you suppose the Corinthians should desire them? What is the "most excellent way" (see chapter 13)? Why is it of the highest importance or value in Paul's mind?

Applying



1. Which of the gifts do you believe you possess? What makes you think you have them? Using Paul's analogy, what part of the body are you in the Body of Christ?
2. Please go to the following website and take the spiritual gifts test. Share the results with the people in your group or with someone you know.

<https://immanuelonline11.ccbapps.com/survey>

NB: A list of definitions of the various spiritual gifts is available for download on the church website (at the same place you will find the sermon for this study). Please note that different people define the various spiritual gifts in different ways. Furthermore a test of this kind is not fool-proof and only serves as an introduction to the discovery of your spiritual gifts. This test also does not include the "miraculous gifts" (like tongues, healing, etc.) which have been controversial and are for study at another time. Please note that your survey results will be sent to the church office.

3. What next steps might you take to test and develop the gifts you have identified as being yours? Where might you serve in order to utilize your gifts? Is there any way in which the use (or non-use) of your gifts might be considered selfish?
4. Do you desire the "greater gifts"? Why or why not? What steps should be taken to follow this directive from verse 31?
5. Is there any way in which you (or the church) have failed to treat all the parts of the Body with equal honor? If so, how might this be corrected?

Memory Verse(s)



Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV)

Extra Resources



- ❖ *"Share the Work"* by Pastor Kyle Corbin ("Immanuel Church" website, Sept. 29, 2019). Pastor Kyle speaks from 1 Corinthians 12 to outline the inter-related design of the Spirit's gifting of people in the Body of Christ.
- ❖ *"Gifts of the Holy Spirit"* by Wayne Grudem (Chapters 52 and 53 of "Systematic Theology" (Zondervan, 1994)). Grudem walks through the various questions surrounding spiritual gifts, including their definition, significance, whether they are all valid for today, etc. A comprehensive treatment of the subject.
- ❖ *"Spiritual Gifts"* by John Piper (Desiring God website, sermon preached March 15, 1981). In this sermon Piper briefly describes the nature purpose, and result of spiritual gifts.