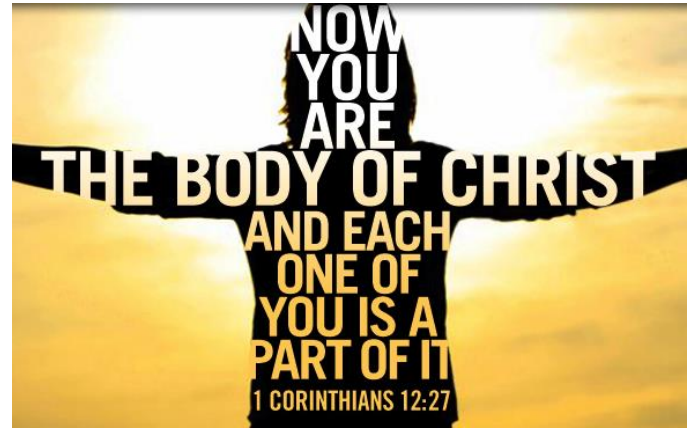


1 Corinthians, Chapter 12

Having discussed good order at public worship and the proper observance of the Lord's Supper, St. Paul proceeds to another point of church order, namely, the nature and use of spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit who leads people to faith in Jesus Christ, also gives them a variety of services for the common good of the church. While by God's order some offices in the church rank higher than others and carry more responsibilities, every member who serves the body of Christ, in whatever capacity, is to be held in honor.

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.



1. Before they became Christians, the Corinthians thought pagan idols were they lords (1 Cor. 12:2). But now they called Jesus Lord. What does verse 3 say about the role of the Holy Spirit regarding your own faith in Jesus?
2. St. Paul now takes up the subject of spiritual gifts as he had been asked about in 1 Cor. 7:1 and 1 Cor. 8:1. A simple definition of a spiritual gift is “an ability given by the Spirit that enables a Christian to serve the Lord and the needs of others in the church.”
 - a. Who receives spiritual gifts?
 - b. Do all who receive spiritual gifts, receive the same gift?
3. The spiritual gift of wisdom enables a Christian to be especially effective in communicating God's wisdom to others. What is this wisdom? (**Consider: 1 Cor. 1:23-24; 2:6-8**)
4. “Knowledge” possibly refers to the ability to communicate effectively the teachings, or doctrines, of the Christian faith. **Read: 1 Timothy 2:4**. For whose benefit does the Holy Spirit give this gift to some Christians?
5. “Faith” (1 Cor. 12:9) does not refer to saving faith, but rather to an extraordinary ability to look to God for help in specific circumstances and to encourage others to do so also. What does Jesus say about such an extraordinary faith in **Matthew 17:19-20**? What do you think Jesus means by “faith, so as to remove mountains” (1 Cor. 13:2)?
6. The gifts mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:9-10 are sometimes considered more “spectacular” gifts. How might one of those gifts be used “for the common good” in Christian congregations today?
7. Under what circumstances might the exercise of even God-given gifts cause trouble in Christian congregations today?

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12-20

8. How would remembering and believing the truths St. Paul illustrates here help eliminate quarreling over spiritual gifts as over cultural, racial, and social distinctions?

9. In 1 Cor. 12:13, St. Paul tells how we all, however different our backgrounds or status in this fallen world, become members of this one body in Christ. In **Galatians 3:26-29**, he even says even more about this. On the basis of that passage, what is the status God has given you as a member of His body?

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:21-31

10. To what behaviors does St. Paul point as he demonstrates that the human body is a unit?

11. The human body feels and acts as a unit. By what actions does the Body of Christ demonstrate that it, too, is a unit?

12. Within the Church, God distributes to individuals the gifts that are needed by the Church as a whole (1 Cor. 12:28-30). Some of these gifts, and the offices in which they are used, are honored by people more than others. How might what Paul has said about our interrelatedness in Christ's body prevent feelings of pride or resentment?

Closing Prayer: (from LSB 497 – Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord, stanza 1)

1. Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord,
With all Your graces now outpoured
On each believer's mind and heart;
Your fervent love to them impart.
Lord, by the brightness of Your light
In holy faith Your Church unite;
From ev'ry land and ev'ry tongue
This to Your praise, O Lord, our God, be sung:
Alleluia, alleluia! Amen.

Sources: God's Word for Today: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 1997), LifeLight: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2007), Luther's Works (CPH, Fortress), Concordia Commentary: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2000)