

YOU ARE CHARISMATIC

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Key Truth:

You are specially equipped by the Holy Spirit
to build up your church family.

In 2009, the Barna Group, a Christian research organization, undertook a study to explore the spiritual gifts that Christians say they have. Here are a few of the findings:

- 68% of Christians say they have heard of spiritual gifts (compared to 71% in 1995 and 72% in 2000).
- 21% of the “spiritual gifts” claimed by the respondents included non-biblical gifts like a sense of humor, singing, health, life, happiness, patience, a job, a house, compromise, premonition, creativity and even clairvoyance!
- 63% of those surveyed who have heard of spiritual gifts have not been able to apply this information to their lives because they either don’t know their gift (15%), say they don’t have a spiritual gift (28%) or claim that spiritual gifts are not biblical (20%).¹

As we continue our series, *The Church: A Gifted Family*, it is my goal to introduce you to spiritual gifts and, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, convince you that you most certainly possess a spiritual gift.

Please turn with me to 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

FROM THE SPIRIT OR THE *spirits*? (1 Corinthians 12:1-3)

Keep in mind that as the Apostle Paul deals with spiritual gifts and their exercise in the public meeting of the church he is doing so with the first generation of the church experiencing spiritual gifts for the first time. Though spiritually infantile (3:1) the Corinthians possessed all the grace-gifts (1:7). Though this was new territory and they were not exercising their spiritual gifts particularly well they had experienced some things in their pre-Christian days that were similar to the grace-gifts. The city of Corinth was a city of pagan temples and worship of the Graeco-Roman gods such as Aphrodite and Apollo. The spiritual power behind this pagan worship and working through its pagan priests were fallen angels, demons. In verse 2 Paul references the pre-Christian experience of the Corinthians who were influenced to worship false gods because of displays of supernatural power especially in the form “ecstatic utterances”; perhaps a priest or worshiper speaking in a manner not wholly of the human realm. We have examples of demons speaking through their human hosts in the synagogue of Capernaum and in the case of the man possessed by Legion (Mark 1:21-28; 5:1-13).

Whatever the case, Paul here gives the Corinthians the test by which to determine if someone is speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit or not.

¹ 1 Corinthians 12:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. ² You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. ³ Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

The way to determine the source of similar appearing spiritual manifestations is the confession of the speaker. Verse 3 describes an earnest confession of faith, not simply verbalizing the words. No one who declares, who insists, that Jesus is accursed is speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the one declaring and insisting Jesus is Lord is speaking by the power of the Spirit.

¹ Walt Russell, *Sustainable Church* (Orange: Quoir, 2016), 27.

This teaches us that not everything supernatural is from the Holy Spirit (Matthew 7:21-23). Everything must be tested and in this case we are taught to test what we are hearing by the confession of the speaker – do they sincerely confess faith in the deity and Lordship of Jesus Christ?

Having thus equipped the Corinthians to discern the source, Paul begins to teach about grace-gifts specifically.

THE FATHER ENERGIZES, THE SON UTILIZES AND THE HOLY SPIRIT DISTRIBUTES GRACE-GIFTS. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

You may have noticed that I've spoken of *spiritual gifts* and *grace-gifts*. *Spiritual* gifts emphasizes the Holy Spirit as the source of the gift. *Grace* gift emphasizes that the gift is another aspect of God's grace given us in Christ. The Greek term is *charisma* and means a gift of grace.

A *charisma* is a grace-gift given you by the Holy Spirit enabling you to uniquely build up your church family.

If you are a Christian, you are a charismatic; you possess a *charisma*. As is emphasized in this passage, the Holy Spirit gives a *charisma* to each and every Christian so that each and every family member can help build up the church family.

In verses 4-6 Paul reveals that each member of the Trinity is involved in grace-gifts.

¹ 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (ESV)

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

The term *varieties* contains two ideas: 1) distributing something and 2) the things distributed being a mix, not all the same. As we will see, the Spirit distributes a variety of grace-gifts to us, not the same gift.

The *varieties of service* refer to various ministries within the church. The term *service* is related to the term for *deacon* and has in view various types of service that meet needs within the church. These include formal ministries of the church and informal ministry that occurs as we care for one another as family. Formal services include the elders, the deacons, men's and women's ministries, youth and children's ministries, meal ministries etc. Informal services include godly counsel given over a cup of coffee, an anonymous financial gift in an envelope, driving someone to a doctor's appointment. A ministry is an act of service that meets a need within the church family and it utilizes any number of the grace-gifts. These ministries, utilizing grace-gifts, constitute the church and its mission under the headship of the Lord Jesus.

The *varieties of activities* is an unfortunate translation in my opinion. The Greek term behind *activities* contains the idea of *the results energized by God's grace*.² In other words it has to do with the level of effect or impact of one's grace-gift. Perhaps an extreme example would be the impact of Billy Graham's or Greg Laurie's gift of evangelism in comparison to the impact of men and women who faithfully share the gospel, but never have a national or international impact. Paul reveals that God the Father determines the effect or impact of our grace-gifts; we're called to simply be faithful whether He entrusts us with large impact or modest impact.

IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN A GRACE-GIFT TO BUILD UP YOUR CHURCH FAMILY (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

To whom are grace-gifts given?

To each and to each one individually.

Are you a born-again Christian trusting in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin and life with God? Then this most certainly includes you and without question you have received a grace-gift.

Who gave this grace-gift to you?

Why did the Holy Spirit give you a grace-gift?

For *the common good* which, in this context, has the church family in view.

So to put it all together:

You are grace-gifted by the Holy Spirit to build up your church family.

Now, as the Apostle Paul revealed in verse 4 there are a variety of grace-gifts and he lists some of the gifts in verses 8-10. These are not all the grace-gifts. The New Testament reveals a total of 19 grace-gifts.

The list I have provided is from Dr. Walt Russell and his seminar on grace-gifts. I appreciate the quality of his scholarship and his even-handed treatment of the grace-gifts.

I highly encourage you to keep this list tucked away in your Bible and to refer to it often both as you seek to discover your grace-gift and you encourage others in their process of discovering their grace-gift.

In closing, if the Barna Group were to take their survey here at Grace I hope they would find that

- 100% of us have heard of grace-gifts.
- 100% of us know there are 19 grace-gifts revealed in the New Testament and that premonition and clairvoyance are not grace-gifts!
- 100% of us will go on to discover and serve according to our grace-gift and experience the joy of serving in our giftedness!

TESTIMONY BY TRACI ADAMS