

DISCUSSION IDEAS
DESIRE THE HIGHER GIFTS

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

February 19th, 2017

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KEY TRUTH:

**EVERY GRACE-GIFT GIVEN US BY THE SPIRIT
IS NECESSARY FOR THE HEALTH OF OUR CHURCH,
AND THE TEACHING GIFTS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR OUR MATURITY.**

♦ **DISCUSSION POINT ONE: GROUND RULES.**

Just to keep us in line with what the Scripture is teaching, let's review a few basic facts.

Who gives the gifts? Review 1 Cor. 12:7-11.

Who gets to have a gift? 1 Cor. 12:7.

Why are the gifts given? 1 Cor. 12:7. Who receives the benefit?

And to keep away from confusion, the skills and talents God has let us develop are not the same as His gifts. These may well dovetail, but a talent is not the same as a grace-gift.

♦ **DISCUSSION POINT TWO: THE METAPHOR, OR PARABLE.**

METAPHOR: A figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance, as in "A mighty fortress is our God." .

PARABLE: A statement or comment that conveys a meaning indirectly by the use of comparison, analogy, or the like.

<http://www.dictionary.com/>

Remember that a metaphor, like a parable, has one central meaning, and we are not to try and read meanings into the fine details.

We need to understand what application the writer was making.

What metaphor is Paul using in 1 Cor. 12:12-26?

What amazing thing has God's Holy Spirit done for us in verses 12-13?

Note that the word "baptism" is not used here to refer to physical water baptism. To what does it refer? (Compare the idea used in 1 Cor. 10:1-4.)

So how does the general idea in this parable help us to understand our relationships within a church?

Discuss the statement: "You are absolutely necessary!"

Is each person supposed to get the same level of attention or honor?

Why, or why not?

Look at what the three priority gifts in vv. 28-29 have in common.

What do these have to do with our understanding of God's Word?

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♦ **DISCUSSION POINT THREE: EARNESTLY DESIRE THE GREATER GIFTS.**

What does THAT mean? (v. 31)

If we still spoke with the old thees and thous we would understand.

Verse 31 is not written to individuals! The words are plural, meaning that the command is given to the (local) church as a group.

So if the whole church is to desire the greater gifts, what does that look like in real life?

Do you pray for God's provision of gifted leaders and teachers?

Do you pray regularly for those who are here?

♦ **FOR MEDITATION:**

Put some thought into what gace-gift God has given to you.

A useful guide is on the next page.

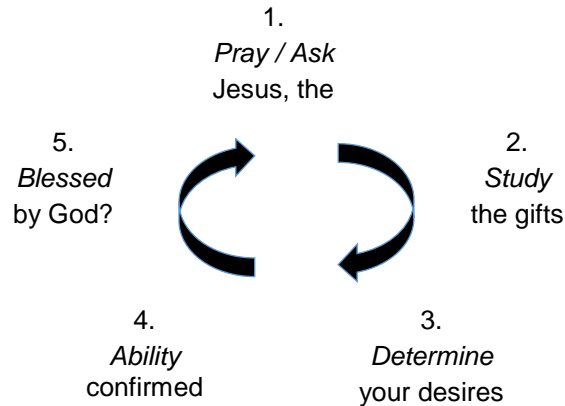
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DISCOVERING OUR GRACE-GIFTS



1. Pray / Ask

Jesus has a vested interest in answering this prayer; He gave the gifts to bless His Bride, the Church. We can be confident Jesus will answer this prayer!

2. Study

We need to know what the gifts are, their purpose and how they might be utilized in various ministries.

3. Determine your desires.

As you study the gifts, which ones appeal to you or strike a cord in your heart? That's a good place to start. It makes sense that, since the Holy Spirit has given you a gift, that gift will become desirable to you.

4. Ability confirmed?

Start serving whether in a formal ministry of the church or an informal ministry through a Home Group or Bible Study where you are intentionally looking for and meeting needs. Over time you will discover those things that really "light your fire" and others in the church family will notice and comment. This is confirmation you're on the right track.

5. Blessed by God?

Most of us are reluctant to say such a thing about ourselves, but it is a legitimate thing for which to look. Are people genuinely helped and built up in their Christian life when I serve in this way? This is closely related to #4.

Is God blessing others through my gift?

Is God blessing me through my gift?

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♦ **FOR PRAYER:**

Our Grace Church Elders: Pray for our elders as they seek how to do their part in God's plan.

Gettises: Pray for the Gettis family as they settle in down in San Jose, Costa Rica, and as David prepares for an intensive six weeks of Spanish Language study starting March 1st. Pray for his brain :-)

Shelter Valley: Continue to uphold the Shelter Valley believers, and the GCC team that serves there. Pray for Scott and Leslie Stevens as Scott heads up this ministry. Pray for continued growth in understanding among those who attend about God's Plan and what it really means to follow Him.

Home Groups: Pray for our home groups.

Pray for the leaders to grow in understanding and skill so that those in each group will truly grow in their walk in the Spirit and in true agape love.

Pray that more folks will take part in a home group and be encouraged as a result.

Pray that each one of us would seek to learn how to use our individual spiritual gift(s) to build up the Body of Christ.

Pearsons: Continue to pray for John and Bobbie Pearson as John completes a living area for his 101 year old mother, and for their son, John Caleb, who is dealing with severe cancer and now considering a possible leg amputation. John Caleb is in Seattle for a medical evaluation. Pray for pain relief and for wisdom. Pray for peace for Bobbie, John and all the family.

Barangonan Island: Let's continue to pray for the Lord's love and power to be seen in Barangonan Island.

Pray for wisdom and encouragement as both Ingvoldestads and Binders prepare to move off the island. Pray for wisdom, clear understanding of God's Word and continued obedience to the Holy Spirit on the part of the island church leaders.

Praise and continued prayer: Continue to uphold the Tagbanwa believers who go to a neighboring island every Friday to teach about God. Pray too for the hearers to respond.

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"Continue to pray for them as there continues to be a solid group listening and interacting with God's Word. We often get to go, and its exciting to see `the body' in action.

"Not only are there teachers, but others go to support and engage this new group who is hearing. If you can believe it, there are even some who catch fish for the families who go so they won't miss a meal!

"Continue to pray for strength and endurance for those who go, as well as understanding for those who hear."

Thank God and uphold in prayer the "TFG" (Time For God) group of children and young folks who meet every day!

Pray with the strong, self-motivated women's group as they study God's Word and grow to be mature believers.

Persecuted Believers:

Let's not forget to uphold our fellow believers around the world who are experiencing real and intense persecution for following Jesus.

THIS WEEK:

1. North Africa: A Christian woman in North Africa has been repeatedly beaten by family members and by religious leaders after her conversion to Christianity. "Safa" has suffered severe bruising and nausea as a result of the beatings. Local mosque leaders have told her that they will continue the beatings, in an attempt to drive out the "Christian demon," until she returns to Islam.

Please uphold Safa in prayer, that she will remain strong in faith and that the beatings will stop. Pray for her testimony to the power of God.

2. India: Dabay Madhi's husband, Pastor Gurumurthi Madhi, was kidnapped and murdered a year and a half ago by a communist guerrilla group. The guerrillas subsequently closed both churches which he led, one of which had 200 members.

Dabay, 24, now struggles to raise their three young children alone. Pray for Dabay, their three children and the pastor's mother, who lives with them.

(By the way, you know, you can still pray effectively even though you may not be able to pronounce their names!!)

3. Church in Syria: Many new house churches have been planted in Syria in the past six years, even in war-torn Aleppo. People from minority groups, fundamentalist Muslim backgrounds and some

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from Christian backgrounds have encountered Jesus for the first time.

Because these are new believers, there is a great need for mature Christian leaders throughout the country.

Pray for those helping develop Christian leaders in Syria and for the faith of the many new believers there.