

1 Corinthians 12:9-31 – Gifts, Unity & Diversity.

- I. Gifts...
- i. The gift of **faith**:

Though faith is an essential part of every Christian's life, the *gift* of **faith** is the unique ability to trust God against all circumstances, as Peter did when he walked out of the boat onto the water (**Matthew 14:22-33**).

- ii. **Gifts of healings**:

This is God's healing power from sicknesses, disorders or disabilities.

- iii. **Working of miracles**:

This describes when the God goes against the known laws of nature.

Gifts of healing and working of miracles often operate in conjunction with the gift of faith; God may prompt someone to believe, pray and go against nature.

- iv. **Prophecy**:

This is the telling-forth of God's message in a particular situation, always in accord with His Word and His current work. Sometimes this has the character of foretelling the future.

- v. **Discerning of Spirits**:

The ability to tell the difference between true and false doctrine, and between what is of the Holy Spirit and what isn't (**Acts 8:18-23 and 16:16-18**).

Satan appears as an angel of light (**2 Corinthians 11:14**).

He deceives with a false, tempting message (**Genesis 2:16-3:5**).

There can be lying spirits in the mouths of prophets (**1 Kings 22:21-23** and **2 Chronicles 18:20-22**).

Satan can speak right after God speaks (**Matthew 16:23**).

Sometimes people who seem to say the right things are really from the devil (**Acts 13:6-12** and **16:16-18**).

Satan can work deceiving miracles (**2 Thessalonians 2:9-10** and **Revelation 13:11-14**).

vi. **The gift of tongues:**

This is a personal language of prayer given by God, whereby the believer can communicate with God beyond the limits of knowledge and understanding (**1 Corinthians 14:14-15**).

vii. The gift of **the interpretation of tongues:**

This gift allows the **gift of tongues** to be of benefit for those other than the speaker, as they are able to hear and agree with the tongue-speaker's words to God.

Here is another reason for unity, and a reason against any sense of superiority regarding the gifts. They are distributed not according to the will of man, but as the Spirit of God wills – as **He wills**.

Mark 16:17-18 - *And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.*

Acts 2:33, 39 - *Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear... For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.*

Luke 11:11-13 - *“If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? “Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”*

II. Unity in Diversity (12-31).

The “body-like” unity of Christians is not a goal to achieve; it is a fact to be recognized. Paul clearly says **we were all baptized into one body**.

Paul uses the brilliant illustration of the human body to relate the working of the community of Christians. Even as every cell in a human body is linked by a common root (a common DNA code), yet the parts of our body (**members**) look different, are treated differently, work differently, and accomplish different purposes. Even so, there is great diversity in the body of Jesus Christ, both in appearance and function, yet each member has a common root and a common goal.

Judge 20:11 - *So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, **united** together as one man.*

Psalms 133:1 - *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in **unity**!*

Ephesians 4:1-6 - *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*