

INTRODUCTION

This chapter opens up a new subject that will continue until the end of the 14th Chapter. Paul discusses the subject of spiritual gifts, how to correctly exercise Spiritual gifts, the motives of those who exercise their gifts and the subsequent results. We'll learn from subsequent text, the Corinthians were heavy with Spiritual gifts and some abused the power by looking down on those who possessed less evidence of the Spiritual gifts. Also, others honored those who possessed the gifts in such a way that it appeared the Spirit wasn't at all responsible. Many Christians still do this today. Undue, over-the-top honor is bestowed on the messenger rather than on the One who sent him. This is not to say we shouldn't pray for and thank the messenger for obeying the Spirit by fulfilling the callings of the gifts bestowed, but we must remember where the gift or gifts originated and be sure to give God the praise because the kingdom is His, and the power is His and the glory is His!

1 Corinthians 12:1-7 (NKJV)

¹ Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

² You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.

³ Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

⁵ There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

⁶ And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

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As parents we often assume our children possess more knowledge than they really do. We are often surprised that there are missing pieces of what we consider a very simple puzzle, and to our dismay our children can't make the pieces fit. Then we say, "I thought you knew!..." Well, the Apostle doesn't want his "children" to miss any pieces to this very important "puzzle" of their Christian lives by assuming they know how to live with these new-found gifts of the Holy Spirit.

² You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.

Most of the Corinthian Christians were Gentiles and not Jews, so they were subject to every wind of pagan doctrine that was thought up. They looked to every object of nature and every object made by human hands to worship which never led them to the true and living God. Now things are different. They know Paul's words concerning the Christian life are true and probably asked him to address this subject in a previous letter (1st Cor. 7:1) Paul answers their request to make sure they don't follow the doctrine of "My guess is..." about the subject as there were probably many to choose from in Corinth.

³ Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

Paul said all of that to say this: In the use of any gift, no one will be able to contradict what has already been established by the Holy Spirit. If someone says Jesus is accursed (or any other derogatory statement about the Christ or His Church) that person cannot be speaking under the power of the Holy Spirit. Conversely, no one can say anything positive and live by it if they are of the devil.

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Paul wants, above all, that the church remains unified because he knows a divided church is a church on its way out. Jesus said in **Matthew 12:25 (KJV)**

²⁵ And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NKJV)

⁴ *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;*

⁵ *one Lord, one faith, one baptism;*

⁶ *one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.*

Before we can get into the study of the various gifts of the Spirit, we're going to have to lay down this foundation.

Just as there is unity in heaven, God's desire is for us the church to be unified on the earth. However, the very thing that Paul warned the Corinthian church about has fallen on deaf ears today. One of the most divisive things in the body of Christ is one of the gifts of the Spirit and that is the gift of tongues. Even though Paul spends time explaining what, why and when this gift is used, some men have distorted its purpose and need to the point of division. We don't want to get too far ahead, so stay tuned. There's more!