

**29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? 30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?** The main idea here is really clear when viewed in the context of the whole of chapter 12. God has **sovereignly distributed** the **gifts** according to His own **purpose** and **plan**, and **all the gifts** are **vital** for the **whole body**, whether they be **foundational** and **primary gifts** like **apostles**, or they be **gifts** that have a **limited use** among the gathered assembly like tongues. Here Paul is helping us to see that **no one** has **all the gifts**, or may not have any one gift, that others may have. The obvious answers to Paul rhetorical questions, **“All are not”** and **“All do not”** is... NO! God does **not intend** for everyone to have the **same gift**, but intends for us **all** to use **each one** we have together, for the **benefit** of **all**. Paul is here summarizing the **“varieties of gifts, varieties of ministries, varieties of effects,”** (12:4-5), by giving a brief list of **several kinds** of **gifts**, to make it clear that no matter what gift anyone may have is **not** what is **important**, but that we **accept** and **use our gifts** for the **betterment** of the **entire body** is **vital**. Here we see that **our duty** and **responsibility** is to **accept** the **ministries** and **gifts** that we have with **gratitude**, and **use them** with **faithfulness** for the **benefit** of the whole body.

**31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.** There is some controversy related to this verse, but I think it best to accept it the way the **translators** have **given** it to us. In this case, it is clear that Paul has **argued** that the **gifts** are for the **common good**, and that when functioning together, they **glorify God** and **fulfill His plan**. We should therefore **“earnestly desire the greater gifts,”** so that the body can **benefit** at the **maximum level** and God can be glorified in the same degree! We should **desire the gifts to function** among us with great **effectiveness**, and we should **receive** and **use the gifts** we have received as an **act of love** toward all the members of the body. This of course is his point in chapter 13, to which he points, **“And I show you a still more excellent way.”** In fact, after he finishes that discourse on the **“excellent way”** of love, he picks up this same argument again in chapter 14.

**1 Corinthians 14:1 - 14 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.** NASB

So, we are exhorted to **“earnestly desire”** the gifts, especially the one that have the **greatest affect** upon the whole body. This is of course Paul’s argument and

**main idea of chapter 14** and the **contrast** of tongues and prophecy, so Paul emphasizes what is best for the whole **“church.”**

**1 Corinthians 14:12- 12** So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, **seek to abound for the edification of the church.** NASB

Now let us not miss this very important exhortation as Paul summarizes chapter 12, and starts chapter 14 with the same idea. That we should **“earnestly”** or zealously **“desire”** the **gifts**, that they should **function among us** with **maximum effect**, so as to be the **greatest benefit** to the **whole body**, and use the gifts we have for the **benefit** of **all**.

Here we have seen in **12:27-31** how the **diverse** and **various gifts** of the body **function together** with the **vital use** and **effort** of **everyone’s gifting**. Here Paul has summarized the **main points** of **chapter 12**;

- God **sovereignly distributes** the gifts according to His will, for the benefit of the whole body, in much **diversity** yet for the **unity** of all
- We should **desire the gifts to function** among us with great **effectiveness**
- We should **receive** and **employ** or **use the gifts** we have received as an **act of love** toward **all** the **members** of the body.

**1 Peter 4:10-11 - 10** As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **11** Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. NASB

**10** As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Here Peter makes at least **six important points** about **spiritual gifts**.

- **As each one has received** - We all have a gift
- **a special gift** – Every gift has a special God designed function
- **employ it** – We must use them for God and others
- **in serving one another** – They are to serve others, not self
- **as good stewards** – Our gift is a stewardship (duty, privilege) from God
- **of the manifold grace of God** – Our gift is grace from God to us individually

Clearly God has **allotted to each Christian** a gracious gift to be used for the loving benefit of all. So Peter tells us the fact, **“As each one has received.”** He does not equivocate but plainly states that we **each** have a **“special gift.”** Although the word **“special”** is not in the original language, yet it is **obvious** that if God has given **“each one”** a gift, it serves a **special purpose** with the **individual**, and **designed to benefit others**. That is **every gift** has a certain **God designed** function. See with what **wisdom** God has placed **each of us** in the **body** of Christ, and how **vital** it is then for each one of us to **acknowledge** that we have a **“special gift.”** Since **God gave** it to us to **use**, Peter asserts, **“employ it in serving one another.”** You have the gift from God, who has far **more wisdom** and purpose than you or me, **we must** therefore **acknowledge** it is His desire for us to **“employ it.”** We must **not neglect** what God has given us to use.

**1 Timothy 4:14 - 14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you**, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. NASB

And so it comes with an **imperative** to use it to **serve others** in the body, **“employ it in serving one another.”** The gifts are to **serve others**, not for **self** but for the **good** of others. Here again see the **loving nature** of the gifts. Each one of us must make the **personal sacrifice** of using our **own gifts** in the **service** of **others**, and for **their good**. See here the **proper loving** and **self-sacrificial attitude** we should possess toward **one another** in the body of Christ. This Peter says, is a **stewardship** we have received from God, **“as good stewards of the manifold grace of God,”** and therefore a **duty** and **responsibility**. This is a **privilege** as well as a responsibility. The **Spirit** has **gifted each member** with gifts to **edify the body** and called us to be **stewards** of this **grace** He has given us. Let us **soberly** acknowledge that if we are a **“steward”** of the **gift(s)** that we have from God, **He** will surely **hold us accountable** for its proper and effective use! Dear Christian, let us see that it is a **“gift.”** Our gift is **grace from God** to us **individually**, let us therefore receive it with **gratitude** and joy and put it to its God intended use! The Spirit gives **unique** and **special abilities** to **each member** of the Body of Christ to **enhance** and build up the **spiritual life** and **faith** of the whole body.

**11a Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God;** Clearly here, if it is a speaking gift, **“let him speak,”** that is, use it for its **God intended** purpose. And use it purposefully and effectively **“as it were, the utterances of God.”** Let those who have **speaking gifts** speak as if they are **forthtelling** the **very words** of **God**, with an **impressive sense** of the **responsibility** of **delivering** a

**message** from the **Living God**. Let it be done with much **study, clarity,** and responsibility, as **God is worthy** to be **understood clearly** and **forthrightly**. Let those with speaking gifts **tremble** at the responsibility and do what they do with much **faith** and trust in God.

**11b whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies;** Let us see here that when we **use our gifts** for the **spiritual life** and **faith** of the whole body, it is **God working in us** and through us, giving us His **very strength** to accomplish **His purpose** with our gift. **God** is indeed **at work** among us as we use **our gifts** for the **good of others**.

**1 Corinthians 12:6** - 6 And there are varieties of effects, but **the same God who works all things in all persons.** NASB

Let us acknowledge and **worship God** for the **beauty** of His **divine plan** and work among us recognizing that the **gifts are empowered by God** and He is indeed at work among us.

**11c so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.** Here of course is God's grand purpose in the use of spiritual gifts among us, "**so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.**" God works among us in **spiritual gifts** so that **He** can **manifest** His own **glory** and **excellency** as God. When the watching world sees a body of very **diverse** and **broken sinners**, from all walks, **classes** and **racess** of life, **sacrificially loving** and **serving others**, for the **good** of others, surely the glory of our God, **who is Love**, is put on **display** in a way that is very **profound** and **counter cultural** from the **world** around us. This is something **only God** can do, and it **surely glorifies** Him, "**through Jesus Christ,**" who brought us **near to God** through the great things that He has done.

### **How can I know how God has gifted me with spiritual gifts?**

Since God does not give us **extensive treatment** of **all** of the **gifts** or detailed explanations of what they are, it can be difficult to understand how we have been gifted. We can **understand the gifts generally** from a survey of them such as we are studying here. Keep in mind that the Apostles assumed we are all gifted and exhort us to use our gifts as stewards of God's grace that He has gifted us with.

**Romans 12:6a** - And **since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them** accordingly, NASB

**1 Peter 4:10-11 - 10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another,** as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Let us therefore **be sure** that we are **using the gifts** and **talents God** has given us in the **service of others** in the Church. If we are **not sure** and **wondering** how we have been gifted, we can ask a **few questions** to **help direct** us to a **general idea** how and/or with **what gift** or gifts we may have been gifted by God. Keep in mind that we **all have at least one**, but **likely** have **many** gifts.

- What are some ways that you enjoy serving the body of Christ?
- What interests, desires, and abilities do you have?
- Ask others who know you for advice about how you are gifted.
- Has there been a blessing in the past in a particular kind of service?
- Pray and ask God for wisdom about your gifts.

## NOTES