

1 Corinthians 12a – Chapter Study

[Emphasis: Holy Spirit]

INTRODUCTION

As we've come now to ch. 12, we'll be altering our method a bit so we can take the time to develop a better understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit.

You see, the church at Corinth was well acquainted with the gifts of the Spirit.

The problem is, they'd lost sight of the *purpose* of the gifts & what the Spirit intended to accomplish by them.

When Paul originally planted the church, he'd spent a year & a half there, showing them how the gifts were used.

But with the passage of time, they'd turned them into something other than what God intended.

So in chs. 12-14, Paul reminds them of the purpose of the gifts & what the Holy Spirit gives them to accomplish.

The reason we'll be slowing down & doing some side studies as we make our way through these 3 chapters is because the work & gifts of the Holy Spirit have sadly become an issue of much debate & conflict in the church.

I say, "sadly" because a debate over this issue is *contrary* to the very thing the Holy Spirit is seeking to do – bring unity to the Body of Christ.

So, let's dive in, and see where our study takes us . . .

III. MAIN BODY 1:18-16:18

F. The Conduct of Public Worship 11:2- Ch. 14

1. Head-Coverings 11:2-16

2. The Lord's Table 11:17-34

3. Spirituals Ch. 12

a. no ignorance vs. 1-3

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

The first thing to notice is that the word "gifts" is in italics – meaning it was *added* in an attempt to smooth out the translation.

Literally Paul wrote, "Concerning spirituals, I do not will you to be unknowing."

What follows is his correcting them on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Let's take this first verse as our foundation for the next several weeks since there IS a lot of ignorance out there about the Holy Spirit.

Many are aware of the debate between those who believe in the gifts & those who don't & chose to stay out of the whole thing.

It's great to not argue, but don't let that equate to ignorance on the issue.

The Holy Spirit, speaking through Paul here says we ought NOT be unknowing about Him & His work.

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

Most of the Corinthians had been idol-worshiping pagans before coming to faith in Christ. That background did not prepare them to understand the Holy Spirit. If anything, it would obscure their apprehension of the purpose & work of the Spirit. So they needed to be on guard against assuming their past religious experiences would help them understand the Holy Spirit.

Paul then gives them a broad but basic test for discerning the work of the Holy Spirit.

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.

John 15 & 16 – Jesus & the disciples have just had the Last Supper & Jesus is telling them about the Holy Spirit who will come to indwell them.

He said when the Spirit has come, He will testify of & bring glory to Jesus in all He says & does.

[John 15:26 / 16:14]

So Paul gives the Corinthians a quick test to know if what's being passed off as a gift of the Spirit is what it's claimed to be – does it bring glory to Jesus?

And this is where we need to pause & take a bit of a side trip.

SPOTLIGHT – Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit: John 14-16

John 14:15-18

¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”

John 14:19-21

¹⁹ “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest [reveal] Myself to him.”

John 14:25-26

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will

teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. [Disciples & Rabbi]

John 15 is all about doing all Jesus had done.

About a whole new kind of life & living that's good in every way.

It's filled with power & joy unaffected by circumstances.

Jesus even warns that the world hates & will oppose that kind of life & living, but it can't win!

The point is – that life is what the Holy Spirit brings us.

Being a follower of Jesus isn't just adopting a set of intellectual beliefs.

It's being infused with nothing less than HIM!

Being a Christian isn't merely holding certain doctrines in our heads.

It's being in a relationship with Jesus that is so intense, so intimate, He gets *more* than our heads – He gets it ALL, these hands become His hands, these feet, His feet. These eyes, His eyes. these ears, His ears.

And all because the same Spirit that indwelt & empowered Him now lives in us!

He's the **HOLY** Spirit.

And that LIFE He brings is HOLY – but it's **LIFE** – don't ever miss that.

You see, for far too many of us, the word holy refers to stuff we **don't** do.

We don't smoke, & we don't chew & we don't go with those who do.

Ask someone to describe what holiness *looks* like – & most will give a list of things **NOT** done.

But is that how we think of *Jesus' holiness* – the stuff He didn't do?

NO! We think of *all the good He did* – of the *life & joy* He exhibited.

And that's precisely what the Holy Spirit comes to do in & through US!

Holiness isn't what we *don't* do – it's a life so in love with Jesus it spills out & onto everything we do & say.

God didn't create us **NOT** to do something. If that had been His intent, He wouldn't have made us in the first place!

AGAIN→If **not sinning** was the main goal of our lives – then God never would have created us!

No—God made us **FOR** something. He created us in HIS image so that we could share His life!

By & large, the early church *understood* this.

What drew people to the Faith in the 1st Century was the *way of life* modeled by its adherents.

In fact, before believers were called “Christians” they were simply known as members of “*The Way*.”

People saw how those early believers lived differently.

The *quality* of life they had was compelling.

Church historian Dr. Aaron Milavec wrote –

In truth, potential members assessed the movement not so much on the basis of claims made on behalf of Jesus who was absent, but on the basis of their experience of the way of life of members who were very much present to them. It is no surprise, therefore, that the entire system of the *Didache* [an early 1st Century document used to explain the Christian life to new believers] displays little taste for negotiating, defining, and defending the exalted titles and functions of Jesus. Rather, the *Didache* is taken up with the business of passing on the Way of Life revealed to its authors by the Father through his servant Jesus. Converts came forward ready to assimilate that Way of Life as it was formulated and lived out by the tried and tested members of the movement.

This emphasis continued on into the 3rd Century. During a terrible epidemic around the year 260 that wiped out whole regions of the Empire, people saw Christians acting very differently. The bishop of Alexandria at that time, Dionysius wrote:

Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains. Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead. . . . The best of our brothers lost their lives in this manner.

Contrasted to this was the way unbelievers responded to the plague . . .

The heathen behaved in the very opposite way. At the first onset of the disease, they pushed the sufferers away and fled from their dearest, throwing them into the roads before they were dead and treating unburied corpses as dirt, hoping thereby to avert the spread and contagion of the fatal disease.

This way of living is made possible by the Holy Spirit who indwells us.

John 16:7-15

⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹² “I still have many

things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

John 16:33

³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Acts 1:1-11

¹ The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ² until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³ to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. ⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “**which,**” *He said, “you have heard from Me; ⁵ **for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”** ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ And He said to them, “**It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.** ⁸ **But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”** ⁹ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”*
