

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

1 CORINTHIANS 12

One day in the grocery store, a lady bumped into her pastor. She loved her church, and was thankful for the impact its members were having on her life. As she complimented the pastor on his wonderful church, she blurted out, “Oh, Pastor Tom, I just love your body.”

Oops! Of course, she was referring to “*the Body of Christ*,” but that’s not how it was heard by the grocery store bystanders. It created an embarrassing moment.

The NT does speak of the Church metaphorically as “*the body of Christ*.” At His Incarnation, God clothed Himself in a human body to touch, help, and heal. Now today, Jesus carries on His work through another body, the Church. Just as our spirit and mind interact with our surroundings through our body; likewise the Church is the means by which Jesus interacts with a needy world. We are the hands, feet, and mouth of Jesus!

1 Corinthians 12 teaches us that *the Spirit of Christ* works through *the Body of Christ*. I hope people look at our church, and say, “**Lord, I just love Your body!**”

Chapter 12 is divided into two parts: Verses 1-11 discusses our gifts - verses 12-31, our place. Chapter 12 is about **using our gifts** and **finding our place**.

Verse 1, “**Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant...**” The Holy Spirit was active in the church at Corinth. **Spiritual gifts were commonplace, but they weren't always coupled with common sense.** There was an ignorance over their proper *use*. Spiritual gifts were *abused* and *misused*.

And today, there’s still much ignorance among Christians over the “*charismata*” or *spiritual gifts*. Folks go to extremes, either **charismania** or **charisphobia**.

I grew up in a church dominated by **charisphobia**. Spiritual gifts were explained away as having passed with the apostles. We were erroneously taught that the compilation of the NT made supernatural gifts obsolete. Yet nowhere does Scripture suggest that healings, miracles, tongues, *and the like*, have expired. Rather, these are gifts every Christian should still seek.

Yet as soon as I branched out beyond my Baptist roots I found other Christians who were into a **charismania**. They were so in love with *the gifts* they neglected *the Giver*. This was Corinth. They were enamored with displays of God’s power, but they failed to apply that power to holy, godly, and united living.

Some churches are like **a fireplace with no fire**. They’re empty and cold. There’s theological orthodoxy, but no life. Other churches are **a fire without a fireplace**. A focus on spiritual gifts burns out of control.

What we need is **the fire in the fireplace**. We need *the fire of God’s Spirit*, but within *the fireplace of God’s Word*. We want to see believers warmed - not burned.

It's been said, "As a dove climbs on two wings, likewise the Holy Spirit lifts the church on both the **gifts** of the Spirit and the **graces** (i.e. fruits) of the Spirit."

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

The Corinthians were fascinated with the vocal gifts: **prophecy, tongues, and interpretation**. *And for good reason!* Before coming to Christ they served mute idols or *gods with no voice*. They had bowed to chunks of stone or wood that were unable to speak - dumb gods.

Now they'd embraced an audible God. The Christian God has a voice. The Holy Spirit speaks to us and through us. *No wonder the church got carried away!*

Yet Paul warns, "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." Every time you hear a preacher say, "Thus saith the Lord" don't assume what comes next is from the Lord. It may or may not be.

It reminds me of the fisherman who cut a hole in the ice. He baited his hook, and was about to drop his bait, when he heard a voice, "No fish are under this ice." He moved a few feet away, and cut another hole. Again he was about to lower his hook, when he heard the same voice again, "There are no fish under this ice." He looked up to heaven and shouted, "Lord, is that you?" The voice spoke to him, "No, it's the ice rink manager."

We need to test the voices to make sure they're from God. Do they harmonize with God's Word - *both the written Word, **the Bible**, and the living Word, **Jesus***. Paul says no one speaking by God's Spirit will ever speak ill of Jesus. The Holy Spirit moves upon a heart to affirm the Lordship of Jesus, and to call that person to allegiance. He never denies the authority of Jesus.

When we study spiritual gifts remember miracles can be counterfeited. The pagan priests in Egypt were able to duplicate Moses' miracles, *to a point...* The end-times Antichrist will work "lying wonders..." Even Mormons today claim to speak in tongues... The gifts of the Holy Spirit build up the Body - they're good gifts, and that's why Satan does his best to imitate them.

Verse 4, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all." Here, Paul lays out three categories of spiritual gifts... What he calls "gifts" are **motivations of the Spirit** listed in Romans 12. These are born again instincts the Spirit births in us at our conversion. They help shape our life and service.

The second type of gift is what he calls "**ministries**." These are individuals, specific "**ministers**," who serve the Body of Christ. Ephesians 4 lists four types of ministers: "apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor-teacher"

And the third type of spiritual gift are "**activities.**" The Greek term is "**energeo**" or "**energies.**" Verse 7 refers to these gifts as "**manifestations of the Spirit.**" These are spontaneous allocations of supernatural ability.

Paul lists nine "**activities**" in verses 7-10... "**But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one...**"

Realize spiritual gifts are not *natural talents you're born with* - nor are they *learned skills, we cultivate through practice.* These gifts are evidence of a power greater than ourselves at work in and through my life.

Once an old lumberjack was encouraged to purchase a chainsaw. He was told, "**You'll chop four times more wood with a chainsaw than with an ax.**" But after several outings with his new chainsaw, he was chopping less wood... In frustration he returned the saw to the hardware store. The clerk was surprised. *He cranked the chainsaw to troubleshoot the problem.* As soon as he did, the old lumberjack had a strange look on his face. He asked the clerk, "**what's that noise?**"

Spiritual manifestations and gifts are like power tools. The Holy Spirit revs up supernatural, spiritual capacities that enable us to *do more* and *do better* for God. These spiritual gifts are available to all believers.

And notice their purpose... Verse 7 states it, "**for the profit of all...**" When a Christian uses a spiritual gift its not to promote himself, it's to benefit the whole body.

This is vital. As we study spiritual gifts, know why God gives them!... For *the pride of a few?* No! For *the promotion of the special?* No! Paul is emphatic. Spiritual gifts are given by God for "**the profit of all!**"

In verses 8-11 Paul lists nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit. He organizes them in three sets of three...

Gifts of wisdom: the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, and the discerning of spirits... **Gifts of wonder:** faith, healings, and miracles... and **Gifts of worship:** prophecy, tongues, and interpretation...

This list of gifts begins in verse 8... "**For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit...**"

Knowledge is *information.* Wisdom is *application.* And we need both! **A word of wisdom or knowledge** is just that - a word - not a whole book, just a bit or a portion. Suddenly, in a perplexing situation the Lord gives you a piece of the puzzle. Perhaps, it's not all the information you would like, but it's enough to make sense of your situation, and know what course to take.

"A word" is like a flash of genius. Bible teacher, Harold Horton, describes these words of wisdom and knowledge as "**divinely granted flashes of revelation.**" It's an insight that rolls across the screen of your mind. Info you could've never known apart from God's Spirit.

Verse 9, “to another faith by the same Spirit...” I've heard it said, “Nobody ever crosses a canyon in two steps. At times it takes a leap of faith.” And *the gift of faith* enables that leap. It's a special faith given to you by the Holy Spirit that causes you to be bold for God.

This is lion's den faith - this is giant-slaying faith - this is water-walking faith - this is mountain-moving faith!

“To another gifts of healings by the same Spirit...” Realize that ultimately, God will heal all our sickness. When we arrive in heaven we'll receive perfect health.

On earth there are times when God doesn't heal. *We all die at some point!*... Most commonly, when God heals it is through natural processes. He designed our body with amazing rejuvenating capacities... God also heals medicinally - through the skill of doctors. The marvels of modern medicine are no less than a miracle of God... But on occasion, God heals supernaturally...

There is a gift of healing. In the church He uses folks to lay hands on the sick and pray for their recovery. *And we've seen these miracles...* God expedites the natural process, or bypasses medical means, and does what only He can do. He miraculously intervenes.

Recently, God intervened for my son, and healed Zach of Covid pneumonia. No one familiar with his medical chart has denied a miracle occurred. But God also healed our friend, Chris Castille, yet He healed Chris by taking him to heaven. God heals in both ways.

And notice the double plural here... It's the “gifts of healings.” Apparently, there're different types of “*healings*” - physical, mental, emotional, spiritual...

There're also different “*gifts*” - or ways of mediating God's healing. Certainly, through intercessory prayer, or through physical touch like the laying on of hands...

Verse 10 continues the list. “To another the working of miracles...” If you believe Genesis 1:1, “God created the heavens and the earth...” then you should be able to believe in miracles. If God created space, time, and matter, and the laws governing nature, then He can suspend or override those laws when He desires!

I never validated the story, but I once heard Pastor Chuck tell of a girl who didn't have gas money to get to church. She really wanted to come so she took the garden hose, filled her tank with water - *and just as Jesus turned water into wine*, she asked Him to turn water into gas. When she finished praying, she drove to Calvary Chapel. God responded to her simple faith. *Did that actually happen? I don't know. But I believe it could have!* Let's always be open to the miraculous.

Billy Graham wrote, “As we approach the end of the age I believe we will see a dramatic recurrence of signs and wonders which will demonstrate the power of God to a skeptical world. Just as the powers of Satan are being unleashed with greater intensity, I believe God will allow signs and wonders to be performed.”

“To another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues...” In Chapter 14 we’ll discuss *prophecy*, *tongues*, and *interpretation* in-depth.

Here Paul also mentions, “*discerning of spirits.*” We teach our kids to read, but for kids to survive in our crazy world they also have to *read between the lines*. Not everyone is honest and straightforward. Kids need the discernment that goes beyond what is simply seen.

This is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit: “*discerning of spirits.*” A false prophet comes as “*a wolf in sheep's clothing.*” Satan appears as an “*angel of light.*” The gift of discernment enables us to see behind the disguise.

Verse 11, “*But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*” You or I don’t get to pick the gift we want. You can’t say, “*Oh, I’d like healing... Or sign me up for miracles...*” That’s not how it works. It’s the Spirit that chooses **what** gifts to distribute to **whom** and **when**.

Spiritual gifts are ours to use, but they belong to God. It’s His power. God’s Spirit remains sovereign over His gifts. In fact, the Greek word translated “*spiritual gifts*” is “*pneumatikos,*” which means, “*things belonging to the Spirit.*” This is why I don’t believe a spiritual gift is something you carry around in your back pocket, and whip out whenever we want to show it off... The gifts of the Spirit don’t work “*on demand*”... They are God’s gifts, administered by God’s Spirit.

Now that Paul has introduced us to the gifts, from here on he describes how they operate in church life. How they exist for “*the profit of all.*” **We need to know and use our gift, but we also need to find our place.**

He writes in verse 12, “*For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.*”

If you’re an adult of average size here’s what you accomplish every 24 hours: “*Your heart beats 103,689 times - your blood travels 168,000,000 miles - you breathe 23,040 times - you inhale 438 cubic feet of air - you eat 3.5 pounds of food (more or less) - you drink 2.9 quarts of liquid - you lose 7/8 pound of waste - you speak 4,800 words - you move 750 muscles - your nails grow .000046 inches - your hair grows .017 inches - and you use 7,000,000 brain cells.*”

No wonder you feel exhausted at the end of the day! Your body is a miracle of engineering. It consists of several trillion cells, and ten major organ systems working in precise synchronization with one another.

The human body is an amazing blend of *unity and diversity*, and so is the Body of Christ. We all are many members, but we should work to function as one body.

Look around at the people in this room. Go ahead and look around... *We’re different folks, from divergent backgrounds, with varied gifts, and diverse callings*, yet God has placed us together in one Body. And in the next verses Paul describes our interconnectedness.

And understand this idea of the Church as an integrated whole was revolutionary to the ancients.

When you visit the ruins of Corinth, a must-see is the Archaeological Museum. There's an exhibit of terra-cotta, or clay-baked figurines, fashioned as body parts.

In the display cases you find legs, hands, eyes, ears, female breasts, even genitalia, and internal organs...

The city of Corinth had a Temple dedicated to Asclepius, the Greek god of healing. So when a person became ill, they made a replica of the diseased or broken body part, and offered it as a sacrifice to Asclepius in hopes of healing. Thousands of such body parts have been found in the ruins of the ancient city.

This is strange to us, but it was in keeping with assumptions of healing in antiquity. Body parts were considered isolated - separated from each other. If an organ or appendage became diseased, the ailment was assumed to be confined to that particular part.

Few people understood the inter-connectedness of the human body. Pagans isolated the body's members, instead of viewing the body's health holistically.

But in contrast, Paul believed in a Creator, a Designer, who's imprint is on all He touches - *even our body*. Though we consist of many parts God made us one body. And the health of our body is determined by the cooperation of its members. The human body was built in a way that illustrates the Body of Christ.

Verse 13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

Notice, our common spiritual starting point. All believers are born into God's family by the same Spirit.

But here's where we need to clear up some confusion. Non-Pentecostals often point to verse 13 to show how Paul uses Spirit-baptism synonymously with Christian conversion - *and they're right*. The moment we're saved we are baptized or initiated into the body of Christ. But then they conclude, that in the NT Spirit-baptism **always** refers to conversion - *but it doesn't*.

Non-Pentecostals believe you receive everything relating to the Holy Spirit at conversion and *there's no empowerment following*. They don't accept a **second blessing**. The moment you're saved you receive all you need. But this is a misunderstanding of verse 13...

Realize the term "**baptized**" is like the English term "*watch*." It has multiple meanings. A person can *wear a watch*, or *stand watch*, or *be watchful*... Likewise the word "**baptism**" has different meanings. It can mean "*to initiate or to become part of*" - like we say of a rookie quarterback, taking his first sack, "*Well, he got his baptism...*" But the word "**baptize**" can also mean "*to engulf, or immerse*" - what happens in water baptism.

Now whenever **Paul** uses the term “baptism” it refers to *conversion*. Romans 6 says by faith we are baptized into Christ. We're united spiritually into the life of Jesus. I now share in all that He is and has accomplished.

But when **John** or **Luke** or **Jesus** or **Peter** use the term “baptism,” it speaks of *immersion not conversion*. In Acts, Luke describes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on people who were already believers, with the phrases “filled with the Spirit” or “baptized in the Spirit.”

Thus, throughout the NT the same word “baptize” is used to denote two separate experiences. There is an *initiation into Christ* that's called *baptism*. But there's a *saturation with Christ* that's also called *baptism*. There is a spiritual empowerment available to Christians after they believe. The Holy Spirit wants to fill us. Don't let anyone rob you of this vital baptism of spiritual power.

Yet here, Paul is speaking of our initiation into Christ. When I convert to Jesus I'm made part of His Body.

Spiritual baptism is like a merger, a smaller company gets bought out by a larger one. The smaller outfit is now under new leadership, with a new mission, new resources, new partners. And we too are no longer our own - “mom and pop.” We're part of Christ's church!

Verse 14, **For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?"**

One of the hindrances to harmony in the church is jealousy. The carnal Christian refuses to accept his place. If he can't play the position he wants; he takes his bat and ball and goes home. At church we need to submit our individual ambitions for the greater good. Leave personal agendas at the door. We don't serve on our terms. The Holy Spirit dictates our calling.

It's like your foot grumbling over its role... *“Man, it's hot and smelly in this sock. I'm tired of being treated like a heel. My sole is so weary - always toeing the line. I keep putting my best foot forward and nobody notices. I've had enough, I'm putting my foot down!”* Or imagine your ear complaining, *“If I get pierced one more time...”* What if the members of your body became tired of playing their role, and started competing with each other? You'd become spastic and uncoordinated. You sure wouldn't accomplish much.

And the same tragedy happens in the Body of Christ when its members pursue their own agendas, and refuse to cooperate with one another. The Body of Christ becomes uncoordinated and incapacitated.

Verse 17, **“If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.”** If I told a Little League team everyone

could play the position they wanted, I'd end up with ten pitchers, and a shortstop. Everybody wants the glamor spots. But I'd field a lousy team. *This is true at church.*

Here Paul paints a grotesque image - what if the whole body were an eye! A big eyeball rolling around on the table... *We'd all be blue!* We could see, but with no feet or hands - *we couldn't go anywhere or do anything.* And this is what happens to churches - they turn into one big *"I" - "I want this" or "I deserve that."*

Some churches suffer from *I-strain!* We need to be Christ's Body - led by His Spirit, not our own ego.

Verse 19 adds, *"And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body."* The Body of Christ is a blend of *unity and diversity* - to stress one above the other is a mistake. We need a healthy balance of both.

On the one hand, *to over-stress our unity, robs us of our diversity.* We all are different, and bring a unique contribution to the table... Years ago I read of a major scientific breakthrough in Scotland. For the first time, scientists cloned a sheep named *"Dolly."* I'll never forget reading the article, and thinking, *"That's no big deal, the church has been cloning sheep for centuries."*

Often the church strips its members of their individuality in the name of discipleship. We conform them - not into the image of Christ - but into our image.

Here's a short jingle, *"Be what I want - no more, no less - because I am right and no one else. Think what I think, do only what I do, then and only then, can I fellowship with you."* That's the attitude we must avoid.

Let's *not over-stress our unity*, but neither should we *over-stress our diversity.* At times the health of the Body of Christ needs me to *express my individuality*, yet at other times the corporate health of the Body is best served by me *suppressing my individuality.*

There're Christians who never settle in and become part of a church because they're unwilling to swap their own personal agenda for the goals of the group. *They insist on their own thing, and miss out on God's thing!*

This is why *unity and diversity need to be balanced with maturity!* Recall the gifts of the Spirit are for *"the profit of all."* This should be our motivation.

Verse 21 says it best, *"And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."* Each of us has a unique and specialized place in the Body of Christ!

God has given you gifts that can bless and benefit me. I in turn have gifts that can bless and benefit you. We all need to recognize that we need one another!

At the close of WW2 entertainer Jimmy Durante was invited by Ed Sullivan to perform at a veteran's hospital and cheer up some wounded soldiers. Durante stayed far longer than he'd promised. Later he explained what had inspired him. Jimmy pointed to two soldiers sitting side-by-side. Both men had lost an arm in the war, and

together they clapped by using their two remaining hands. The effort so moved Durante he couldn't leave.

And this is an illustration of the church. Spiritually speaking we are all disabled in some way. Where I'm weak you can make me strong, and where you're weak I can be strong for you. Thus, God wants us all to see that we're better for Him together than we are apart!

Did you hear about the big controversy at the *First Church of the Hand Tools*? It was a real donny-brook.

Some of the members complained about Brother Hammer. "You're too forceful. You pound home your points and nail the rest of us." But Hammer pointed to Brother Screwdriver, "Hey, I'm no worse than him. He always goes around in circles." This angered the Screwdriver, "What about Brother Plane, all his work is on the surface, he has no real depth." Brother Plane shouted at Brother Tape Measure, "You're so judgmental. You measure people, and size them up. You always think you're right." Brother Tape Measure then snapped angrily at Brother Sandpaper, "Well, look at him. He's so rough and gritty, he rubs people the wrong way. *Why don't you all go back into the box!*"

That's when the Master Carpenter arrived. Jesus put on His carpenter's apron and went to work building a pulpit from which the Word of God could be preached. He used the hammer, the screwdriver, the plane, the tape measure, the sandpaper, and all the other tools, each in the *right way*, and at just the *right time*.

Finally, Brother Saw *saw it!* He rose up and informed the others, "Brothers, we are all tools of equal importance in the hands of the Lord." *And so are we!*

Verse 22 tells us, "No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor..."

There is a tiny valve that normally closes, keeping harmful acids inside your stomach. But when that valve, the sphincter muscle, weakens the acids float up into your esophagus. And the result is "esophageal reflux," or in layman's terms, "*major league heartburn!*"

Speaking from experience this is no laughing matter! It amazes me that the weakening of one tiny piece of human flesh can create such pain. It reminds me that every body part plays a pivotal role. In the Body of Christ you may be a tiny valve, but trust me if you fail to fulfill your role correctly the whole body suffers.

There are parts of the Body of Christ that like that stomach valve serve, but are never seen. No one thinks of the unseen members, until there's a problem.

If a SS teacher fails to show up, or the sound man sleeps in, or the cleaners miss a week; suddenly we all realize the importance of their role. Let's make sure a person doesn't have to breakdown to be appreciated. Let's go out of our way to honor the unseen parts.

Verse 23, “And our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, but our representable parts have no need.” The job a pastor does is conspicuous. People recognize his contribution. But with folks who serve behind the scenes we need to be deliberate with our appreciation.

“But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.” Division is less likely if honor is divided equally among all its members.

Verse 26, “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.” If I accidentally pound my thumb with a hammer, it won’t just cause a swollen thumb - my entire body will throb. When one member of the body hurts; then the whole body is in pain.

Just as the organs in your body are interconnected, so is the Body of Christ. It’s been said, “Real fellowship doubles our joys and divides our grief.” We ought to be either *praying for each other* or *rejoicing with each other*. We should share in both our pains and our joys.

Verse 27, “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.” Back in verses 8-11 Paul listed nine spiritual gifts. Here, he mentions two more gifts: “helps” and “administrations.”

The gift of “helps” is a supernatural knack for assisting someone without making them feel like you’re taking over. It’s an ability to bring out the best in others.

And the gift of “administrations” belongs to the person who can help organize and manage ministry.

Business mogul Andrew Carnegie use to brag, “Take away our factories, trade, avenues of transportation, and money - leave us with nothing but our organization and in four years we’ll reestablish ourselves.” His greatest resource was his organization. And likewise Spirit-inspired management is a powerful and needed tool in the church. Seldom does a church need *more* organization, but we always needs *better* organization.

Verse 29, “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? No!” Paul is emphasizing the diversity within the Body. We all have different gifts and callings.

I have no doubt the most frustrating experience in the world is trying to be something you’re not. Feel forced to function in someone else’s calling, or try to mimic their gift, and you’re destined for misery. That’s why we need to find *our place* and use *our gift*. When we do God blesses in ways we never dreamed.

But notice here Paul's last two rhetorical questions: *“Do all speak with tongues?”* and *“Do all interpret?”* The obvious answer to both questions is the same as it is to the previous five questions, **“No.”** This is why I disagree with Pentecostals who believe that everyone filled or baptized with the Spirit **will** speak in tongues.

Tongues is a wonderful way to *praise God* and *pray to God*. (We'll talk more about it in Chapter 14). And every believer in Jesus should be open to speaking in tongues - but Paul is crystal clear, **not everyone will!**

In some Charismatic and Pentecostal circles the gift of tongues is worn like a badge of honor - it separates the spiritual *haves* from the *have-nots*. If you don't speak in tongues you're treated as spiritually inferior. This is sad! We'll learn later in 1 Corinthians that the gift of tongues is actually the least of the spiritual gifts.

Paul concludes Chapter 12, *“But earnestly desire the best gifts.”* And of course, this begs the question, *“What are the best gifts?”* And I believe **it's whatever you need at that moment**. If I'm making a huge decision then the best gift is a word of knowledge or wisdom... If I'm interacting with a person I don't know, it's the gift of discernment... If I'm afraid, I need a gift of faith... If I'm sick, the best gift is the gifts of healings.

Yet there is one commodity that's more important than all the gifts. Paul concludes, *“And yet I show you a more excellent way...”* Which leads us to Chapter 13. For sandwiched between the two great chapters on life in the Body of Christ and spiritual gifts is **“The Love Chapter”** - *for the greatest gift of all is love!*

Here's the surest way to know you've been filled with the Holy Spirit! You can speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but if you have not love, you're just a clanging cymbal... Next week we'll talk about love...