

Bible Study: 1 Corinthians

(Part 3-Chapters 8-12)

by Gary T. Panell

Chapter 8

(1) Another question the Corinthians had asked Paul to answer was, "What about eating things sacrificed to idols?" No doubt, many Christians that are not in a country where there are idols, probably want to skip over this section in their reading. However, we can apply this section to our lives in those areas that are "questionable," or debatable.

To give a bit of a background to this verse, and this section, we need to understand that in Corinth the animals to be eaten were dedicated to idols before they were killed. Then, even though parts of the animals were sacrificed, other parts were sold in the market place. Jews sacrificed animals, however, in their case, the family of the priests ate it at the tabernacle or temple, maybe even in their homes, but they did not sell it.

In the second half of the verse Paul talks about how, "*Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.*" Some Christians in the church at Corinth probably thought, that is a "stupid" question, of course it is wrong to eat meat offered to idols. In so saying they were not showing love, and really were not totally correct, but they were sure they were right, and as a result were acting proud. Love does not say, "I'm better than you," or "I know more than you know."

We tend to think our answer is the right answer, when it comes to "questionable" things. We decide it is right or it is wrong, not necessarily thinking about other's feelings. We have so much freedom in the Church Age that we can use it wrongly if we are not careful.

Paul is going to show us it is more than a question of whether something is right or wrong. If we are sure we are right we can become proud, and not show love even though we might be right.

(2) If we "think" we are right about something "questionable." We really do not know anything except what the Bible has spoken on or has principles about. What knowledge we have in the church is from the Lord and His Word the Bible, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." (Proverbs 1:7)

(3) If we believe in God and love Him, then He knows us, then He is all we need. You might think Paul would say, "If we know God," but it doesn't say this, it says, "this one is known by Him." Here, in the church, it is not so much, "what you know," or "who you know," but Who knows you! You see God knows all about us, and He can help us know what is best as He looks at the whole picture of our lives!

(4) Really idols are nothing more than lifeless material, there is nothing to them. They are not really "gods" as people suppose, because there is only one God!

(5) From as far back as the Tower of Babel, people have been worshipping what they call "gods," or "lords," but they are only called this by people.

(6) To the Christian there is only ONE God, in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(7) Some people do not understand this about "gods," "lords," or "idols," they may believe there is something to these; because before they were saved this is what they believed for a long time. They had been taught this by the world, and it is hard to get it out of their conscience. They have problems with eating meat that had been offered to idols.

(8) Even though Paul is dealing with (in one sense), meat offered to idols, it opens the door to give us some principles about "questionable" things. The thing they do not understand is that to God, food is food, whether it is offered to idols or not. It does not change the food. Music is music, even though it may be played by an unsaved piano player. So it in itself, eating food or listening to music, etc. does not commend us or condemn us in God's sight. To give an example: a television in itself is not sinful, how it is used makes the difference.

(9) The thing God is concerned about is that we do not hurt the weaker brother or sister in Christ. We must be concerned at all times about the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ and how our actions will affect them spiritually. Suppose you see nothing wrong with playing with cards or dice, for example. You know, though, that your fellow brother or sister in Christ believes it is wrong, would you still invite them to play these games with you? What should you do? You may try to reason with him or her, but suppose he or she is still convinced it is wrong. Then it would be best for you to take their feelings into consideration. We are not to let our liberty in Christ become something that would offend other Christians. It would be better not to insist that the brother or sister play with cards or dice if this is offensive to them. We must consider their beliefs and feelings.

(10) In those days they even had a restaurant connected to the idol's temple. You could eat at it for a good price, no doubt, even if you did not participate in the immoral activities.

It would be like what we have today where there is a nice restaurant connected to a casino. Now maybe you are not there to gamble, just to eat, but if a fellow Christian sees you there, they may think you are gambling. This very thing has happened to me as a school teacher. In the summer when school is out I have been asked by administrators to eat with them at the casino. But I have gone there as seldom as possible because I am afraid that other Christians will think I am gambling, and then they may go not to eat, but to gamble. I know there is nothing wrong with eating at that restaurant, but there is a principle here that we have to be careful about. However, I do not feel guilty if I have to be there for some reason. My main concern is for others in this case because my conscience is clear.

(11) What if a weaker brother sees you going to a bar to eat; now you are not drinking, but he does not know that? So they decide well if he can drink there so can I. As a result this individual gets into drinking and becomes a drunkard. As a result he has sinned against his conscience, because he feels this thing is wrong, but since he saw you doing it he assumes it is alright for him to do it. Christ died for your brother and sister in Christ, do not go hurting them by starting a chain reaction in their lives. We are to avoid even the very appearance of evil... "Abstain from every form (appearance) of evil." (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

(12) When we do not take into consideration the weaker brother's feeling we not only sin against him, but we sin against Christ. Anything we do to another brother or sister affects Christ's ministry here on earth. "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'" (Matthew 25:37-40)

(13) Stumbling a fellow Christian is very serious business. We have to decide how dedicated to Christ we will be in life. We should show our love to Christ by the way we live after we are saved. Will we be willing to give up certain things that God speaks to us about along this line? What are those things in our lives that may be alright in themselves, but have the appearance of evil? Things that could hurt a weaker brother or sister in Christ, if they saw us doing them.

Chapter 9

(1) Some Christians at Corinth were saying things like, "Paul is not a real apostle, and what does he know?" Paul has to remind them he is a real apostle of the Lord because he had seen the Lord, and also because he had led them to the Lord. (They may have thought, since Paul is not one of the twelve apostles he was not really an apostle, but this was not true.)

(2) Even if you do not know about the ministry I am doing with others, Paul says, you cannot deny the ministry I have had with you as an apostle! They were the fruit of his ministry as an apostle (sent one, or missionary). Often people do not see the great work people are doing for the Lord when they are living with them every day. People only see the human side; it seems easier for them to accept an evangelist that they see only once in awhile. The pastor of a church is with them every day, and they see them as not as exciting as an evangelist that they see only once, or not very often. We should not look at the leaders God has sent to work with us as not really being used of God. Think of how the Israelites complained about manna from heaven that angels eat, when they had it every day, they wanted something else. Do you think there was anything wrong with the manna, or was the problem with the people?

(3) To those who would question Paul's directives from the Lord he had this to say:

(4-5) Can I not be human in front of you and eat and drink like a normal human being? If you think about it, the other apostles are pretty human also. The other apostles even had their wives traveling with them, how human can you get? (Notice that even Peter was married, "if" he were the first "pope" he was a married one, what does this say about the idea that you cannot be married and be in the ministry?) Sometimes people think of their minister as different than them, in reality they are human beings just like them. They are different in their calling as a leader only.

(6) The other apostles do not work except in the ministry, is it wrong for Paul and Barnabas only, when they are supported by the church? (Most of the time Paul supported himself by his tent making, but there were times he was supported by the church so this, no doubt, is what the Corinthians' complaint was about.)

(7) It is only logical that a person who works in a ministry should be supported by that ministry. Some would question ministers of the gospel right to being supported by the ministry, because they think this

is a wrong motive for serving the Lord. Think about it, how could a person work fulltime in the ministry unless they are given money for service? It is true some do their ministry for the wrong reason and are only concerned about the money they can make, but I believe this is the exception rather than the rule. Actually ministers are often the most educated and receive the least amount of salary for their ministry, compared to other people in the world who have the same amount of education.

(8) Do you think I just made this rule up about ministers being supported by the church?

(9) Look at the Old Testament; this is where this principle comes from about being supported at the same time you work. Even oxen get to eat some of the grain they are grinding or treading out. Do you think God is only talking about the oxen, or is there a spiritual principle here for us in the ministry?

(10) There should be hope in knowing at the end of the work when the harvest comes, I will also have some of it to eat.

(11) So too, if a person who sows the Word of God, he or she should be given something in return, so they can have the money they need to buy the things they need to live on.

(12) Paul says, others who preached to you received money, could we too, since we led you to the Lord? But Paul did not take money because he worked to support his ministry. He is not saying others should not take money, he is just saying that he does not want to, this is because he does not want them to think that is his motive for preaching.

(13) Those that served in the Jewish temple and worked at the altar got food to eat from the temple. So too, in the church, ministers are like the Levites, in that the priests did not have land of their own to raise crops or animals, but they were supported by the temple ministry.

(14) It is the same in the Church Age, Christian ministers of the Gospel are to be supported by the Gospel.

(15) It, of course, is not wrong for them if they choose to be self-supported as Paul was either. It would really be very beneficial to the church if more ministers were self-supported so we could get the Gospel out faster. There are sometimes more people who want to minister than the church can support. However, sometimes the reason there is not enough money to go around for missions is because Christians are not giving at least a tithe. Often Christians give far less than a tithe, so God's work suffers. Paul's point in writing about this, though, is not because he wants them to support him. He is not taking money from them so he can "boast" (he is saying this facetiously) to them, I am not working for the money, there is no way you can accuse me of this. He feels very strongly about this, he would rather die than have people accuse him of serving the Lord for the wrong motive.

(16) Paul knows he is nothing special because he preaches the Gospel, in fact, he is duty bound to do so. He is preaching the Gospel since he owes so much of a love debt to Christ for salvation, and we all owe this debt!

(17) Either way Paul was bound to preach the Gospel whether he felt like it or not. Another place Scripture says we are told: "Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season." (2 Timothy 4:2a) In other words, whether we feel like it or not we are to preach the Word. This does not mean we are not to

use tact or wisdom in our witnessing. I am convinced that often the reason Christians do not witness is because they just do not feel like it. We are often just lazy! What if Christ had said, I do not feel like dying for these sinners today?! Think about it. We should not witness for the reward, however, there will be rewards for working for the Lord in this life and the one to come. Most of all we realize we are given a stewardship. This means we are put in charge of reaching the lost.

(18) Paul hardly ever mentioned money, unless it was to give to the poor or other Christians, but for himself, never. He could have asked for money for his ministry as the other apostles did because they were not supporting themselves for the most part. And by the way, there is nothing wrong with this, as we have seen before in the example of the oxen treading out the grain getting to eat some of it. But for Paul he was a "tent maker" missionary. In other words, he made his living by making tents, so he did not have to ask for money. In this way no one could doubt Paul's motive for preaching the Gospel. He makes it clear that he is the exception rather than the rule. God had given him a special ministry to fulfill, so he needed to go about it differently than most missionaries.

Some other Christians have felt led of the Lord to live like this since Paul, men like George Muller who lived by faith and never asked for money. God blessed them abundantly for their faith. However, we are not commanded not to tell people our needs, and each Christian must use their own judgment and guidance from the Lord. I personally have enjoyed the times through the years when God has allowed me to "make tents," so to speak, to support myself. I have had other ministries where I was paid for them, but I feel like Paul, in that there is great freedom when you are not answering to the individuals that support you. Also, no one can doubt your motive for preaching the Gospel. I personally feel we in Christendom have swung too far today toward the side of always taking up an offering, even from the unsaved. I believe it would better, to do like Paul did, and that is to have ministries that are supported by Christians, where we do not have to ask the world for money.

Can you imagine the impact the Gospel would have in the world, if ministries would stop asking for money? You may say, how can they continue without the world's money? My belief is that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, so He can sell a few if we ask Him to. So often today, the Church uses the same methods as the world, in order to accomplish the work of the Church. For example, they call people and ask for money, or send out letters asking for money. They have their "evangelistic" meetings and ask even the unsaved for money. I do not believe God ever intended for us to ask the world for money. Why can we not preach like Paul did, and not ask the world for money? The money should be coming from believers, and if Christians would give at least a tithe in the Church, we would have more than enough money to do God's work in God's way!

(19) Paul wanted to win as many people to the Lord in his life time as possible, so he went, not the second mile, but the tenth mile, so to speak! He did more in every area of ministry than what was expected of him as a minister of the Gospel. He was not really under anyone's authority, but he felt responsible to everyone because he wanted so much to win the lost to Christ. How many of us have this same desire? If we felt this way we would go out to reach the world for Christ! If we do not have this burning desire to reach the unsaved, we need to ask Christ to give it to us, even as Jesus and Paul had.

(20) When Paul worked with the Jews, he acted like he was under the law, so he could win some of them to Christ, even though he did not have to keep the law as a Christian in the Church Age. He did this to win Jews to his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We see an example here as how we can witness to those who are different from us. If I am in a Roman Catholic Church, I will do as they do. If I am witnessing to them I will remind them that Jesus was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary (so they will know that I believe

this to be true). I will remind them it is the blood that saves, not our baptism or good works. I will remind them that Jesus rose from the dead. These latter teachings are found in the Roman Catholic Church, but not always emphasized. This is how Jesus ministered to the Jews, and this is how Paul witnessed to them. They did not go and say, all you believe is wrong, because it was not all wrong; they picked out the good that they could find and emphasized those things. Hudson Taylor grew his hair long and wore it in a braid so that he could reach the Chinese. Did he have to do this, no; he did it so he could reach them where they were in their particular culture!

(21) Those without law would be the Gentiles who were without the Jewish Law. When Paul was working with the Gentiles, he did not act like a Jew, but he lived as a Gentile. He did not keep the Law as prescribed in the Old Testament, but as Christ instructed those in the Church Age. This was so he could win Gentiles to the Lord. Some might say that it is wrong to act one way in one culture, and another way in a different culture. It is not really acting, but it is more like becoming "one" with the people, living as they live. It is putting oneself into their shoes. This is what Christ did when He came from heaven to live with us as a man. He became one of us so He could win us to the Father, and you should be glad He did! Even our President has to conduct himself as the culture dictates as He goes to different cultures. If they kiss for greetings in one country, he kisses, if they bow to each other in another country, he bows. Why is it so hard for us as Christians to understand this principle of reaching the unsaved in different cultures? Where we were missionaries in Trinidad and Tobago, there were some American Christians who wanted the church buildings to be rectangle like we so often have here. However, in the culture of the people the missionary was working with, the people had their houses of worship as round buildings, this was hard for some Westerners to accept, but you know what, the nationals loved it. This missionary also used the musical instruments and music of their culture, do you think this worked? Yes, many received the Lord just because the missionary was able to bend and become like those he was working with.

(22) He did not do things that would hurt other Christians, or other cultures, when he was in the presence of one who did not eat meat offered to idols, he did not eat it. You see how he is still on this theme of how to relate to those who are weak in the faith. Even though we may have freedom to do something, it does not mean that we should do it. We need to think about others in the Body of Christ, the Church! So too, Paul when he was witnessing he would become what he needed to become in order to reach the lost. When we were missionaries, if we were working with the Hindus we would not do something that would offend them in their culture. If we were working with the Muslims, we would not do something that would offend them in their culture. Why? So we could win them to Christ!

(23) He really wanted to see the Gospel spread, so he did more than his part to see it prosper, even if it meant sacrificing his freedom as a Christian. He wanted to be one with them as Gentiles in Corinth so they could be saved along with him.

(24-27) It is kind of like a race, you have to be disciplined in order to practice and do a good job at running. There is nothing wrong with Christians trying to outdo each other to reach the lost, if they are doing it for the right reason. Also remember that God is watching as judge as how we run the race of life, we have to have the right motives for what we are doing. Those who run in a race are looking for an earthly reward that will fade away, but we want a reward from the Lord that will last. We want to win the unsaved so they will be our reward being with us in heaven, not the praise of men. If only we had more of this today. It seems as if we Christians are trying to outdo each other in how few we can win to Christ. Let us become more disciplined in ourselves so that we are not put aside. That is not to say he is talking about our salvation here, but our usefulness in the Body of Christ. We do not want to be put on

the shelf and not used of the Lord to reach the lost, but this is what will happen if we do not get down to business for the Lord, and live a disciplined Christian life!

Chapter 10

If you are following my outline of the book, we are at Roman Numeral IV. First we started out with this main heading: BECAUSE OF CARNALITY (IMATURATY OR WORLDINESS), DIVISIONS HAVE COME. IV. With Disagreement Over Meat Sacrificed to Idols, 8:1-11:1. We have: (A.) defined the principle in 8:1-10:22, and illustrated by Paul's life in 8:1-9:27. Now we want to illustrate the principle by Jewish life in 10:1-10:22. Then we will (B.) apply the principle in 10:23-11:34. We are not just talking about meat sacrificed to idols, of course, because this is only an example, but we are speaking here, of the principle of *how to treat a brother or sister in Christ that may not understand the freedom we have in the Church Age.*

(1) Remember, our spiritual forefathers in the faith really went through some spiritual experiences together. They followed a literal Pillar of Cloud out of Egypt as God led them, and went through the Red Sea together.

(2) In other words, this is a picture of *all* being baptized because both the cloud and sea have water in them. This is like us as Christians that have been baptized in water.

(3) *All* ate the manna, which is a picture of hearing or reading the Word of God.

(4) *All* drank of the water that Moses made come out of the rock when Moses struck it, which is a picture of Christ dying on the cross, and the water and blood coming out, whereby we are saved as we believe in Him and His sacrifice for us. "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe." (John 19:34, 35)

(5) Even though, *all* the Israelites saw the miracles God did when He brought them out of Egypt, He was not pleased with most of them. There were only two that got to go into the Promised Land, and that was Joshua and Caleb. Not even Moses, in his case, not for a lack of faith, but because he lost his temper with the people and struck the rock (a picture of Christ) the second time instead of speaking to it. Jesus had to suffer only once for our sins, and Moses broke that picture by striking it the second time, rather than speaking to it. "For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:16-19).

The land of Canaan is really more of a picture of the abundant spirit-filled life, than it is a picture of heaven. It is not enough just to be saved, yes; we will go to heaven if we are saved. However, the Israelites were saved and we will see them in heaven, but they did not get to go into the Promised Land. Why? The reason is because they did not have faith that God could do what He said He would do for them. Most of the Christians in the world today do not believe that God can really fill them with His Holy Spirit. They say, "Oh that was just for the early Church." No, if we want the fullness of God's Holy Spirit we need to believe and receive, then we will not be unbelieving but believing!

(6) There are many spiritual examples we can find for the Christian life in the Old Testament. That is why we read and meditate on God's precious Word every day. We want to see the applications for us as Christians from the lives of the Old Testament believers. What if God uses our lives for those in the future as examples?

We want to learn from their mistakes, and learn from their victories. One example of a mistake that we could make is to lust for things we do not need. Like when the people had manna to eat (angel's food), but they wanted meat. We have many wonderful things in this world, but sometimes we complain and want more. We as Christians can become very materialist if we are not careful.

(7-8) Some of them could not wait until Moses came back down from the Mountain of Sinai, but built a golden calf to worship. Then they had an immoral party, they drank and danced and fell into immorality. These are examples for us not to follow in our Christian lives, nothing should become an idol for us, not our cars, houses, things, nor should we be involved in pornography or immorality.

(9-10) Carnality can come in many forms, for the Israelites in the desert it came when they complained. I really believe God hates complaining just as much as other sins that we think are so bad. Look how many people died by the snake bites when the people complained.

(11) To us who live in the end times (the time since the cross is considered the end times) we can read the Bible and see how God wants us to live, and also how not to live by the examples we find in the Bible.

(12) You may be a Christian and think I could never fall into sin. "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. He who heeds the word wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the LORD, happy is he (she)." (Proverbs 16:18-20) Whenever we think we are self-sufficient without God that is when we will fall flat on our faces.

(13) Share your temptation with someone else and you will find that probably they have the same type of temptations. Anything and everything that happens to us is allowed by God. If we are allowed by God to be tempted, it is only so we will overcome the temptation and become stronger. God knows just how much we can stand. We can be assured if we want victory and are willing to trust God for it He will give it to us. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

(14) Christians can get too involved in their attention being directed toward things and people rather than God or God's perfect will for their lives. In the Old Testament books such as Kings and Chronicles we find that as one king after another came on the scene, there were some new idols or gods that had cropped up that had to be gotten rid of. The same thing is true of each new generation of Christians who come on the scene. There are certain things that Satan has devised to get Christians off the main track and so often it works. Be it an over occupation with T.V., sports, or you name it, Satan can use it. So we are to run from the misuse of these things, which can become idolatry. At the end of 1 John we have this warning for Christians: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen." Anyone or anything that means more to us than Christ is an idol!

(15) Paul is giving us the benefit of the doubt, a word to the wise is sufficient, we say. Pay attention if you want God's perfect will for your lives.

(16-17) Now Paul turns to the Lord's Supper or Communion. The reason for this is to show how we are related as brothers and sisters in Christ through the communion of the blood of Christ. Therefore, since we are related through the blood and body of Christ we do not want to offend the Lord or our brothers and sisters in Christ. The cup that they all drank the grape juice out of was a picture of unity, and the unleavened bread that they all had a piece of, showed the unity of the body. Yes, and it also shows our part in Christ, as the grape juice is a picture of his shed blood, and the bread a picture of his broken body. So we are related to Christ, and we are related to each other in the body of Christ.

(18) For an example of this discussion, look at Israel again and its sacrifices. The people who gave a sacrifice are saying they believe in the one Who commanded them to do this. It showed their belief in and obedience to, God the Father. Paul is going to use this sacrifice that they are aware of, to contrast it with offerings to idols which they are asking about. Should these offerings be eaten or not, some say, "Yes," and some Christians say, "No." His answer will be a principle for the whole Church concerning questionable things.

(19) First, Paul wants to say that an idol is a piece of wood or a piece of metal, that is all. They have eyes, but cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, and so on. Also the things offered to them are just food, flowers, and so on. We are not superstitious as Christians. A rabbit's foot, a black cat, the number 13, etc. these things do not have special powers.

(20) Then, Paul goes on to say, but there is something I do want you to be aware of, and that is there are those who really do believe in the power of idols. The power they believe in is really demons who are tricking people into thinking the idols are doing something for them. In reality demons are behind the images or objects making these images or objects look like they work. For an example a voodoo doll of the person, and putting a hex (curse) on people by putting pins into it. Now the doll is nothing but a piece of material, but behind the scene the demons are the ones putting the hex on the person. So in one since there is something to the worship of idols because it is involved with demon worship. People are asking the demons (fallen angels) to help them. (Please see my article on [Mediums, Psychics, and Spiritualism](#) for more information on this.)

So be careful Christians you may think it is a light thing to go and eat at the temple of the idols because now as a Christian you know idols are nothing only a piece of material, however, you need to be made aware that there is a power lurking in the shadows and that is the demon's power that is there in the temple of the idols.

(21) You cannot have the Communion one day, and then go to the temple where there are idols and have a drink there and eat the food offered to idols. This is compromising your stand as a Christian. Sure the idol is nothing, but what it stands for is something wrong. It stands for worship of something, or someone, other than the God of the universe. We cannot go to a Christian church one day and then go and attend a séance the next day!

(22) God is a jealous God (in a right way). "They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; they have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols." (Deuteronomy 32:21a)

"Are we stronger than He?" In other words, how will you stand up against God when He goes to judge you for worshipping something or someone other than Him? "Can your heart endure, or can your hands remain strong, in the days when I shall deal with you?" (Ezekiel 22:14a)

(23-24) So now Paul concludes with: we are free in the Church Age to do many things that will not be considered sin, as long as it does not stumble a brother or sister in Christ. We are not under the Old Testament law (read the [Romans commentary part two](#)), but there are still principles we live by. The main principle would be not to offend God, and the second is, not to do something to deliberately offend a brother or sister in Christ. Let us not put ourselves first, but let us consider others first in our lives. Remember the song Jesus, others, and you, that is the way to spell *Joy*.

(25) You could eat meat offered to idols as long as you are not making an issue out of it with someone else. You should not, however, go to the temple of the idols and eat there. To give another illustration, you may be alright with eating at a restaurant connected to a casino. However, if you know of another Christian whom you would stumble by your actions, do not do it! When they bought the meat they were not to ask the person, "Has this meat been offered to idols?" If they or their brother found this information out, that the meat had been offered to idols, this might bother them or the person with them. If it bothers a Christian brother or sister that you eat at the casino restaurant, for example, do not let them know you are going, or brag about it afterwards. There are principles here for us to keep unity in the Church. God wants order in His Church, so He has given us the Bible principles to go by.

(26) God has really created everything for our good in this world, and everything in this world can be used for good or evil. God wants us to use everything He has created for us for our good. He wants us to have freedom and enjoy our lives as Christians! Some Christians go around with long faces and are very legalistic about everything, always looking for something to pick a fight about. God never intended for us to live in the negative, in fact that is why we are given freedom in the Church Age to serve the Lord without a lot of *hang ups*.

(27) If someone invites you over, who is not a believer, and you decide to go, do not ask questions like, "Has this meat been offered to idols?" That way your conscience will not be bothered because you will not even know if the meat was offered to idols or not, what you do not know, in this case, will not hurt you.

(28) However, if someone tells you, "This was offered to idols," this should be a clue to you that it is bothering them, then do not eat the food. Again the principle is not to offend a weaker brother; this principle takes precedence over our freedom in Christ.

(29) Really the only way you would be hurting your own conscience is because if you went ahead and ate the food offered to idols it would offend your brother and your conscience would be bothered that you offended them. Now as far as just you eating the food there is no problem, you know for yourself there is no difference in it even if it has been offered to idols. We may not see anything wrong with playing with a deck of cards, but if it bothers my brother, I am not going to use the deck of cards in his or her presence.

(30) On things that are not spoken of as sin in the Bible, or if there is no principle we are violating, (like your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit), there should be no reason we cannot do it. You should be able to have a clear conscience for yourself and not be judged by others for what you are doing in private in clear conscience before God. We answer really to Christ, and we will be judged by Him, not anyone else!

(31) The first principle is: does it bring honor and glory to God, if it does good.

(32) The second principle is: do my actions offend others, if they do, do not do them.

(33) Our main goal in life should be to please the Lord, and our second goal is to win the lost, which also pleases the Lord. This means we will have to lay aside some of our own personal feelings in certain cases. It might mean thinking more about others and not so much about ourselves. It means having compassion on the lost by the way we live, knowing they may go to a Christ less eternity if we are not concerned how we live before them!

Chapter 11

(1) Paul was living so close to the Lord he could say follow my example as I follow Christ. This goes with our last section, and has to do with Paul's willingness to sacrifice his personal freedom in Christ to not offend either Jews or Greeks (Gentiles). Even though he had freedom not to follow the Jewish customs when he was with them, because he was now living in the time of the Church Age, still he wanted to reach Jews and so he kept their customs as we see in the book of Acts. When he was with the Gentiles he did not want to offend them so he would follow their customs as we will see in this chapter.

(2) They remembered Paul and how he had led them to the Lord and taught them. Paul says hold to the doctrines (traditions) that I delivered to you. When it says *traditions* he is not talking about traditions of men because elsewhere we are instructed not to do this. "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." (Colossians 2:8) They were not to add a few of their own, or take some of the doctrines away that they had been taught by Paul. They were to keep them just as Paul had taught them. The *traditions* for us would be the 13 or 14 letters that Paul wrote to the Church.

(3) In this section he answers the question about head coverings in the assembly. God has order in everything in His universe, so we should desire to see His order in every area of our lives, including when we come together to worship the LORD. The order in the chain of command is God the Father, Jesus the Son, the Holy Spirit, the man, the woman and the children. This is not to say that we are not equal as men and women, even as it is not to say that the Holy Spirit or Jesus the Son is not equal to the Father. No, men and women are equal, and God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equal, but in the chain of command there is an order that God has set up. "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." (Colossians 3:18-22a)

So there is order, we have to have someone in charge; it does not mean they are better. "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:26-29)

(4) I believe that this is a cultural injunction because the Jewish men covered their heads when they were praying. I believe for the Gentile men, though, it would have seemed irreverent to cover their heads when praying. So to this day in the Gentile culture when someone is preaching they do not wear a hat. You notice in court or any other formal setting that this same custom seems to apply as well. Since

the Church is mainly made up of Gentiles, God allowed these instructions to be given through Paul. It would also be a way of showing the chain of command, men not wearing a covering, but the women needing a covering, which we will talk about later.

(5) First, we see from this verse that a woman could be praying and prophesying (basically preaching) in the assembly. Next, we learn if she is praying or prophesying she needs to have a covering of some kind. Without a covering she would be showing disrespect. She needs to show that she is in subjection to the male authority. Evidently in those days a woman prostitute would have either very short hair or even have it shaved off. So Paul says if she does not have a covering, then it looks like she is a prostitute. This certainly would be the opposite of being in submission to a husband or a male church leader. Also, a woman with very short hair, or a shaved head, would be viewed as an attempt to resemble a man in her appearance.

This is just as wrong as a man trying to look like a woman. God has ordained order in the creation of men and women, there is an order of authority, and that is the way it should remain here on earth. Now in heaven I believe we will be like the angels and not have a distinction in our sexes. We may appear to be male or female, but I believe we will not have sex organs. I get this from this verse: "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven." (Matthew 22:30)

(6) If you know it is wrong to look like a man and you want to do this, Paul says, "Why don't you go all the way and shave your hair off?" In Paul's time only a prostitute would do such a thing. Today we have many women trying to look like men. The principle here is the most important; customs will change from place to place and time to time. A woman could wear a covering and be a hypocrite, and she could not have a veil or a hat on her head and show great submission still by her actions and attitude.

I believe there are different ways for a woman to show she is in submission. One way could be by using a veil or hat, and some churches hold to this. Another way, I believe, is by having long hair. Usually in our culture today a married woman would wear a wedding ring. As for a single girl that is speaking in the church, it would be good for her to show in some way she is in submission to the male leadership. I have seen women who would not stand in the pulpit, or would say to the church something like, "I have been asked to speak by Pastor so and so."

(7) The man should not wear a hat or cap when speaking. This is because man answers directly to God his head, and the woman should answer to her husband.

(8-9) Someone has said, "When God created man, He made him of the dust of the ground; when He created woman, He took her from the man. He did not take her from his head in order that she might lord it over him; He did not take her from his feet that he might trample upon her, but He took her from his side, close to his heart, in order that she might be his companion and that he might love and care for her." This is a good saying to think about as we relate to one another in the Church.

(10) Women speaking in church must show submission so they do not offend the angels that are watching us all the time. These want to see God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven. Again there is order in heaven, and God wants order in His Church on the earth.

(11) "...submitting to one another in the fear of God." (Ephesians 5:21) There is a careful balance in this area of authority. Men are not to lord it over women, not even the pastor of the church is to lord it over women.

(12) Without the man we would not have the woman, and without the woman we would not have the man. We need each other, and the women in the church will be more apt to submit to authority if they are loved and treated with respect by the leadership!

(13) To sum it up, a woman needs to keep this principle of having a covering to show her respect for authority. How she keeps this principle will depend on the individual, and the body of believers she is fellowshiping with.

(14) Nature shows us that we should make a difference between male and female. Men are repulsed by a woman who looks and acts like a man. Women are repulsed by a man who looks and acts like a woman. This is a general statement; you will always find exceptions in the world. Just like most women are repulsed by snakes as Genesis says they will be, but there are those few women who like snakes. Each culture will have standards for what is acceptable for men and what is acceptable for women. There are those exceptions again, even in Bible times you had the man who was under the vow of the Nazirite. The Nazirite male would never cut his hair his whole life through. By the way, Jesus was not a Nazirite.

(15) Long hair is very beautiful, and it can also be used as a covering to show that a woman likes her role as a woman.

(16) I do not believe these principles were ever meant to cause divisions in the Church. There should be ways that brothers and sisters in Christ could agree upon some good standards of dress for those speaking, praying or leading worship in the congregation.

(17) Now we move into the area of conduct for order in the area of the Holy Communion. Some would call it by different names such as Mass, The Lord's Supper, and so on. Paul had to do some serious correcting here. There were some real disorders in the church at Corinth in those days. I want to paraphrase what Paul said so you might know what it might sound like today in our vernacular, "I hate to have to say this, and I say it to your shame, but: It would be better, the way you are acting at the Communion Table that you did not even have it, as to have it the way you are now."

(18) They were dividing up into little cliques, remember at the first of the book he talked about some say, "I am of Apollos," "I am of Paul," etc., here they were probably dividing up by rich and poor. Maybe their divisions went along the lines of educated, not so educated, and uneducated. Whatever the divisions were, they were wrong. James says, "My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, 'You sit here in a good place,' and say to the poor man, 'You stand there,' or 'Sit here at my footstool,' have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2:1-4)

(19) One good thing has come out of this whole evil business, Paul says, at least we know by the way you are acting who loves the Lord and who does not!

(20) They were pretending to come together to have Holy Communion, but in reality they had other motives for coming. This never happens today though, does it?!

(21) They did not share their food with one another or wait for everyone to be served; they were just having a party by themselves in front of those who had nothing to eat. This, *another is drunk*, does not mean that they were really drunk, but Paul's way of saying you are filled up with drink and others are thirsty, how selfish could you be! (There is a good deal of material on this word *drunk* in the reference at the end of my article on [Wine in the Bible](#).)

(22) There is nothing wrong with a *love-feast* or a good *pot-luck* if it is done pleasing to the Lord in a well ordered manner. However, the way they were doing it in Corinth was out of order. If people were so hungry that they could not wait for the others and had to *dig right in*, it would be better for them to eat at home, rather than bring reproach on the name of Christ. It did not seem to bother them that there were some there that could not afford food, but still wanted the fellowship. The well to do, just had food for their own family and not for the others, this was definitely wrong. No doubt, this is the reason we have the *pot-luck* method today. (I had a pastor who liked to call it *pot-faith*.) In this method everyone who can afford it, brings more for those who cannot afford to bring much. Usually everyone, even if they are poor, can bring something.

(23) Right after they had the *love-feast* they would have the Communion or Lord's Supper. This was very much like what Jesus did on the night before His crucifixion. And it was very much like the Passover meal and worship, the main difference being that Jesus was the Sacrifice and the Passover.

Paul did not know the Lord when He was here on earth; he was not with the twelve in the upper room, so he must have received this as a direct revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ. Now Paul is going to go over the instructions he gave them before about the Lord's Supper, and how it should be carried out. Just like Jesus took some bread on the same night He was betrayed.

(24) After He gave thanks he broke it, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." (We know this is a memorial or remembrance of what Christ did on the cross where His body was broken for us.)

(25) Then He took the cup: The grape juice is to symbolize His shed blood. It was also the making of a New Covenant using His blood to seal it. This was prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-." This prophecy also has another fulfillment in the 1000 year reign of Christ where all Israel will repent and be saved as they enter the millennial reign of Christ here on earth. (You can learn more about this from the [Romans study part 4](#).) So the near fulfillment is for us in the Church Age, and it will also be true of Israel one day as the nation turns to Christ as their Savior and King!! Praise God!!

(26) He did not specify how often to have Communion, in the early Church it was almost every day. Then it became common to have it only once a week and today many churches only have The Lord's Supper once a month. When we have it we are telling the world that we are trusting in Christ's shed blood to save us from our sins and that we believe He is coming again.

(27) If a person is not truly born again and they are taking the Communion, they are sinning, it is only for believers. If a person is not serious when taking the Lord's Supper, and are doing it in a sloppy way, they are sinning.

(28) We are to be very serious at this time, and see if our hearts and lives are right with God as we partake of this ceremony. We will want to be still before the Lord and let Him speak to our hearts as we examine our lives to see if there is any unconfessed sin in our lives. If there is sin we need to confess this to the Lord: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

(29) If you partake with known unconfessed sin in your life, God will judge you for it. That is why confession before this sacrament is so important. Some confess their sins to someone else, but it is only God who forgives sins, so we can confess our sins directly to Him. If you know that there is something between you and someone else, you need to go to that person and confess that sin to them before you partake of the Holy Communion. "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24)

(30) Then there were some who were sick, and some who had even died, (Death for the believer is often called sleep because the body is sleeping, but the spirit is with the Lord.) because they took the Lord's Supper in a light way or with unconfessed sin in their lives. I believe it is still true today. "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (James 5:16)

(31) We need to think about our lives and walk uprightly before the Lord in holiness. We need to be like Job: "Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?'" (Job 1:8) "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and a night." (Psalm 1:1-2)

(32) There certainly is a reason for Christians to walk uprightly before the Lord, and the reason the Lord disciplines us is because He loves us! "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.'" (Hebrews 12:5-6) God *spans* us because He loves us!

(33) So now if you have a *love-feast* (pot-faith) before the Communion, this is fine, just make sure that everyone is served before you start eating, and be polite.

(34) Make sure if you are really hungry, and cannot wait for the others, then it would be best that you go home and eat first, so the Lord does not get upset with you. Some may have just come straight from work. In the early Church they took turns having a meal in each home, and then they would have the Communion afterwards. There may have been other things that Paul needed to say to the church in Corinth, he would tell them later, this would not apply to us so it was not included.

Chapter 12

This chapter starts the third section of our outline: III The Use of Gifts and Doctrines of the Church Verses Their Abuse.

(1) First, the Corinthians were really misusing the spiritual gifts, so Paul had to inform them as to how God intended for the gifts to be used in the Church. He uses great detail here, and this makes it very clear to us that these *rules* were to be in effect for the whole Church Age! What would be the point of taking up this much of the Bible for instructions on how to use the gifts, if in fact, they were not going to be used for the whole Church Age?

(2) The devil leads people the way he wants them to go, even though it is the wrong way, but the unsaved are *led* by him. The obvious conclusion to this point is that God surely leads His people by His Holy Spirit.

(3) Paul is going to give us some directions from the Lord, now that we are Christians. One thing a Christian will not be saying, "*Christ is accursed.*" (Gr. Anathema) In other words no one is going to be cursing Jesus if they are saved. Also, no one can say *Christ is Lord*, and really mean it, unless they are saved. This does not mean just saying the words, but meaning them! The word *Lord* is very strong, it means you are saying Jesus is your king or owner, the one you give allegiance to.

In the Greek it is (KURIOS) and after the resurrection of Jesus Christ it is only used to signify Jesus as God. Showing He was God in glorified flesh, Thomas stated his belief in John 20:28 "My Lord and my God." Then Peter's declaration in his first sermon after the resurrection, "God has made Him-Lord," Acts 2:36, and in the house of Cornelius "He is Lord of all," Acts 10:36.

There is the story told of a man who approached a Christian as he disembarked from a train. He told the Christian doesn't your Bible tell you that no unbeliever can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit? The Christian had to agree, "Yes, that is true." Then the man said, "Jesus is Lord, and I do not believe He is, but there I have said it and it proves the Bible is wrong." The Christian must have shot up a prayer to God, because God led him to call some people over, as he did this man wanted to know what he was doing. He said, "You want to confess Jesus as Lord, do so in front of these people. The man saw that it was some of his associates, and off he fled!

You see, he could say it with his mouth, but he did not believe it with his heart! So you have to be saved in order to have the gifts of the Holy Spirit, because these are given only to believers. Oh, yes, people can use the name of Jesus to do miracles, and there is power in His name, but to be gifted by the Holy Spirit, one must be truly saved.

(4) Diversities mean allotments or various kinds. "**gift, charisma** (*khar-is-mah*); Related to other words derived from the root char. Chara is joy, cheerfulness, delight. Charis is grace, goodwill, undeserved favor. Charisma is a gift of grace, a free gift, divine gratuity, spiritual endowment, miraculous faculty. It is especially used to designate the gifts of the Spirit (12:4-10) Strong's #5486."

There are different gifts, but there is only one giver, and that is the Holy Spirit.

(5) There are different ministries of the Holy Spirit, but still we have One who is in charge of it all, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

(6) There are various activities of the Holy Spirit in our lives, but all is directed by God the Father in us and He is working all in all. So here in these verses we see the Holy Trinity working together in the Church by the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

(7) The gifts are to help the individual, but the individual will use their gifts for the Church.

(8) I believe the best way to explain these gifts is by giving examples of them in use either from the Bible or everyday life. Some of the illustrations I am using are from the book: *The Gifts of the SPIRIT* by Harold Horton. The book is supported by Rev. Jack Hayford of the Foursquare Church, and Rev. Ralph Mahoney. (My wife and I had the privilege of studying under Rev. Ralph Mahoney and World MAP.)

"the word of wisdom" "In a word, the Word of Wisdom is expressed not only in foretelling future events, but in those commands and instructions which God gives men, arising out of His knowledge of those future events." (Horton, Pg. 61)

A young woman in Wales received a missionary call from the Lord. How should she know the precise field of her future labours? She waited on the Lord in prayer. In vision she boarded a great ship and arrived at a strange port. Unaccustomed houses all of one sort: flat-topped. A great company of little children ran to her and clung to her arms and clothing. As they lifted their heads she saw conical hats under their yellow faces and almond eyes, China! A few years later she landed on the shores of the Orient and saw the exact houses of her vision and the same group of little children clinging to her arms and garments (Horton, Pg. 70).

"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me. I will destroy them. Make thee an ark." (Genesis 6:13-22) God's knowledge of a future peril communicated without intermediary to man, with his purposes and helping instructions. Thus "Noah was warned of God of things not seen as yet (Horton, Pg. 66).

The Word of Wisdom may be used to warn an individual of approaching danger and to deliver them from harm.

It was in those terrible days in Ireland when to be out on the streets after curfew was to invite the flying bullets and the flashing knives of the lawless. In a little kitchen bakery run single-handed by a lonely old woman of God. She told me the story herself in the bread-scented little living room with the teacakes cooling on the dresser.

"I was counting my week's takings on a Friday afternoon," she said, "-a matter of perhaps twelve pounds. Sitting on that chair, I was. A voice plainly said to me, 'Put that money away!'"

"I looked round. Nobody in the room. I stepped to the door. Nobody in the street. I went on counting and making up my little book."

"The voice again, louder. 'Put that money away!' I looked round again. No person near. 'Yes, Lord,' I said, recognizing His warning Voice, 'I am just finishing now.'"

"Then louder than ever, 'Put that money away!'"

"I got afraid and pushed the money quickly under a cushion on that couch, when immediately two roughs came in at the door."

"'Hullo, Auntie!' said one; 'We have come to see you.'"

"'You are not my nephews,' I said."

"Then one took me by the throat and, pressing me back into a chair, put a pistol to my forehead, saying, 'Where is your money?' The other man was searching all the drawers in the room."

"'I am a child of God,' I said, 'and that pistol will never go off!'"

"Then the Spirit of the Lord got hold of me and I shouted, 'In the Name of the Lord Jesus I command you to leave this house!'"

"Without another word they both took to their heels and I have never seen or heard of them from that day to this. What a blessing I didn't put the money in the drawer!"

"Whoever would have thought of looking for money under a cushion on that old couch! Praise the Lord!" (Horton, Pg. 69).

"the word of knowledge" "It is confused with natural ability, natural learning or natural enlightenment. If it were any of these it would not be a Gift but an accomplishment. It is not natural but supernatural. The manifestations of the Spirit are beyond the sphere of the natural. Natural ability or characteristics may influence the expression of the Gift, as the tone of a voice or a foreign tongue might influence the reading of a psalm: but natural ability is neither the source nor the agency of the revelation." (Horton, Pg. 46)

The Word of Knowledge comes as a revelation without natural effort, as when Ananias received the revelation of Saul's conversion, a revelation in detail of the street, the house, its occupier, the convert, his attitude, his thought, his need (Acts 9:11,12) Natural knowledge is the result of intellectual effort. (d) The Word of Knowledge depends on our fellowship with God, as when Peter received his dazzling revelation, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). Natural knowledge can be independent of fellowship with God, as in the ungodly. (Horton, Pg. 47)

No amount of learning or knowledge of the Word or blessed Christian experience could have told Peter that the divinely appointed emissaries of Cornelius were at the gate of his lodging in Joppa: the voice of the Spirit revealed it to him through a Word of Knowledge. "The Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee" (Acts 10:19) (Horton, Pg. 49)

Here is another example of this gift in action: "I remember speaking in the Free Assembly Hall at Edinburgh, and as I was standing on the platform there in the evening I noticed a young man come into the gallery, a student, as I thought. He sat intently watching me and listening. During my address I happened to say - but why I said it I have no idea - "There is a man here who owes his employer £3 18s., and unless that is repaid he will never get peace with God.' On the great staircase Professor Simpson, with whom I was staying, said to this young man, to my great surprise: 'Will you take luncheon with Mr. Meyer tomorrow?' He said, 'I shall be very pleased.' We sat together at the luncheon table and talked on

indifferent matters. He said to me: 'Are you going again to the Assembly Hall this afternoon?' I said, 'Certainly.' He said, 'May I walk with you?' and soon as I got outside he took my arm convulsively in his and said: 'You know me!' 'No," I said, "I have never seen you except last night when you came into the gallery.' "The remarkable thing is," he said, 'that three years ago I took just £3 18s. from my employers. I am a Christian man; it has been on my heart ever since, but I didn't like the exposure of returning it. But here is a letter to them, and you will see the cheque inside for just the amount.' I read the letter, replaced the cheque, posted it, and as that letter passed into the pillar box, his soul rose up in a perfect hundredth psalm of thanksgiving." (Horton, Pg. 54)

I believe one time in particular I had a word of knowledge from the Lord. My wife and I, with our family, were traveling back to Michigan for some training with the mission we were in at that time. We came to a rest stop early on in the trip, in a beautiful mountain setting. There at the rest stop the Lord impressed on me to witness to a man who had pulled up alongside of our car. As I began to visit with him the Lord impressed on me in no uncertain terms that this man was in desperate need of salvation. It was like God was saying that he had had some problems and was at the end of his rope, so to speak. I also sensed in my spirit that he had a gun in the jockey box of his car and that he intended to commit suicide, at least this is what I felt in my spirit.

Then the Lord came upon me, I have no other way to explain it than this. The whole surroundings changed, or should I say were enhanced. The mountains that were so beautiful before were even more beautiful, the wonderful smells were intensified. I did not have the words to say, but the words were put in my mouth, all I had to do was open my mouth and the words flowed out. The Lord gave me a response for everything he said or asked. Then at one point he seemed like he would turn away from the salvation message I was giving him that Christ was offering. Then this verse, that I hardly knew, came to my mouth and I spoke it with the love and passion that I believe only Christ could have done through me. The verse was: "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we (Christ and I) implore (beg) you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." (The underlined section was the part the Lord spoke through me.) (2 Corinthians 5:20) The man changed his mind and prayed the sinner's prayer with me, and he and we went on our separate ways.

For me the experience I had was just for one occasion, but those who have the gift of the Word of Wisdom, or the gift of the Word of Knowledge probably have things like what happened to me happen quite often.

(9) "*faith*" The Gift of Faith is different from saving faith. Saving faith is given before salvation, but the Gift of Faith can only be received after salvation. The Gift of Faith is also different from the *faith* as the fruit of the Spirit. The Gift of Faith is not the same as the Gift of Working of Miracles. Now that we know what it is not, we need to explore what it is. Probably the best way to understand what this gift is about is to read Hebrews chapter 11 where we have a short list of some heroes of *faith*. Does this give you a better understanding of this gift? In recent history men like George Muller, and many of our early missionaries from England, Australia, Canada, and the United States possessed this gift. They believed that nothing was too hard for God to accomplish!

"*gifts of healings*" Jesus, Peter and Paul had this gift and probably all of the apostles. "And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow

of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed." (Acts 5:12-16)

"Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them." (Acts 19:11-12)

Jesus was sent not only to save us, but He was sent as our healer as well. Look at what He said to John the Baptist when he had his doubts in prison: "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 'The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 'And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.'" (Matthew 11:4-6) John would know that this was a fulfillment of the prophecies of the Messiah in Isaiah.

Through the years I have seen many people healed through prayer, but I have not been privileged to be around someone who had this gift. That is not to say it does not exist, it does, and there are those who have been used mightily in this area. I believe God uses the gifts of healings to reach the lost, and so often when these gifts have been used and it was of God, many people were saved as a result, as we see in Scripture.

(10)"*working of miracles*" "A miracle is a sovereign act of the Spirit of God irrespective of laws or systems. A miracle has no explanation other than the sovereign power of the Lord." (Horton, Pg. 113) It goes without saying that Jesus had this gift, but then He was gifted in most all of the gifts, with the exception of tongues and interpretation, which was saved for the Church Age. As we will see these gifts are a sign to the unbelieving Jewish nation, and the gifts were not used until the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Jesus of course did many miracles besides healings, for instance He turned water into grape juice, He stilled the storm, fed the five thousand, raised the dead, etc.

In the Old Testament we think of Moses, Elijah, and Elisha especially, even though there were many others that God used to do mighty miracles. Never is the miracle a result of human effort, but the power of the Lord at work in the individual.

Does God gift men and women to do miracles today? Yes, here is one example:

"On the shores of Lake Kisali in Mr. Hodgson's section of the Congo Evangelistic Mission, of which Mr. Burton is chief, the swindling witch-doctors were troubling the simple Gospel preachers. They threatened to annihilate the families of believers attending the mission meetings. Without avail. Then they schemed to destroy the evangelist. As a native evangelist was returning from preaching one evening he found that sorcerers had been taking scrapings from his bed and threads from his Sunday coat, to 'bewitch' him. 'At last,' shouted the chief sorcerer triumphantly as he was discovered in his evil work, "we have all that is necessary to bring about your end. You will fall dead at sunrise tomorrow morning."

"Next morning," Mr. Burton proceeds, "a big crowd gathered about the door of the evangelist's hut to see if the magic of the witch-doctor could accomplish what he boasted."

"Just at sunrise the evangelist opened his door, and went to beat the drum for the sunrise prayer meeting, when there was an awful cry at the far end of the village, where the sorcerer himself, on coming out of his hut, suddenly threw his arms into the air with a shriek of agony, and fell back dead" (Horton, Pgs. 117-118).

My wife and I have had several miracles happen to us after praying. I will just give one example here. My wife had her purse stolen from her car, there was not that much money in the purse, but she had taken her rings off and left them in her purse. More than a year went by and we prayed from time to time, "Lord you know where those rings are." We were not so much concerned over the value as the fact that these were the rings I had given Marlene when we were married. As I said, more than a year past and nothing happened, and then one day our granddaughter was on a school bus where a boy said he had seen a picture of her. We inquired about it, and sure enough a new neighbor that had just moved in had found the purse in their back yard, buried in the ground. We asked if they had found some rings in it, sure enough they were there too. We gave a nice reward to the boy who found them, and went on our way thanking the Lord and rejoicing in His miracle working power.

Here is another true story about this miracle gift. One day a missionary lady was riding along a road in faraway China. Suddenly some robbers came and took all of her money, and they took away her glasses too. She needed her glasses very much and could not read very well without them. There was no eye doctor for hundreds of miles who could give her new glasses. She asked God to help her, and on the way back to her house she remembered that she had another pair of glasses put away in a drawer at home. When she got home, she found this pair of glasses and thanked the Lord that she had them. Then she put the glasses on. But they didn't work; instead, everything she read looked blurry. So she took off the glasses very sadly, and what do you think she noticed? She noticed that she could read perfectly well without the glasses!

Prophecy: In the Greek it is: (PROPHĒTEIA) signifies the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God. The prophecy of *Scripture* is finished, but sometimes like in the case of John Huss or the two prophets of the book of Revelation, God does say something to the Church or the world that is not meant to be part of Scripture. For example, John Huss lived in a time when people were not allowed to teach and preach the truth. "Born again" Christians were often persecuted, or even worse put to death by burning. This happened to John Huss, but before he was put to death at the stake he prophesied: "You are now going to burn a goose, (Huss signifying goose in the Bohemian language), but in a century you will have a swan which you can neither roast nor boil." This quote is taken from the *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, and it also has this comment about John Huss, "If he were prophetic, he must have meant Martin Luther, who shone about a hundred years after, and who had a swan for his arms." Some in the Roman Catholic Church tried to kill Luther, but could not.

Some teachers teach that these verses in, 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, are saying that the gift of prophecy was to be done away with when the Bible was completed, after the book of Revelation was written. The main problem with this theory is that, "*that which is perfect has come,*" is not talking about when the Word of God was complete, but when we are in the perfect state in heaven. The context is very clearly speaking of when we are in heaven with the Lord. If this theory were correct, that there is no more spontaneous speaking the things that the Lord brings to our heart, then why does Scripture speak of the two prophets in the book of Revelation? You would also have to say that men like John Huss and others who have had a word of prophecy were not speaking for the Lord, when it is obvious that they were. No, all the gifts that were given to the Church are still for today!

WARNING: Prophecy that is used in the Church today, or in the future, is **not** to be added to Scripture. There is no new Scripture being added to the Bible. When the last book of the Bible was written, and that is the book of Revelation, there is no new Scripture being added to the Bible! (The reason I say this is because [Mormons](#) and others say that there are more Scriptures after the book of Revelation.) The reason I say there is definitely no more Scriptures being written today is because of what the Bible says about this, look at these verses: "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:19-21).

And also look at what it says in the last book of the Bible the book of Revelation: "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18, 19) Some people say, "Oh that is just talking about the book of Revelation." And my response to that would be, "Do you want to take the chance that you will not be in heaven?!"

Now back to this Gift of Prophecy. God does give words of prophecy that are not Scripture, look for example at the two prophets that will be in the future, these are found in the book of Revelation, chapter 11. Also look at the example of Agabus in Acts 21:10-14. Another question comes up here: "Can women be prophets?" Yes. In the Old Testament we have Deborah, Miriam, Huldah, in the New Testament, Elizabeth, Mary (Jesus' mother), Anna and then the four daughters of Philip in, Acts 21:8-9. There, no doubt, were others, but these are the ones that are mentioned. A woman would need to have a covering (a way of showing submission to the male authorities in the church) when prophesying, 1 Corinthians 11:5.

When a brother or sister is preaching the Word of God, this in itself is a form of prophecy, because God gave His word by prophetic utterance. Then too, when a person is preaching or teaching God may lay something on their heart to say. Afterwards someone may come up and say that was exactly what I needed in my life. You see God knows about everyone's life in the congregation. Then there may be times when God makes it clear that this is a special word for everyone.

Whatever prophecies are given, are to agree with the Word of God, or else they are not of God! If something is said that does not come true, it means that this person was not speaking for the Lord. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world." (1 John 4:1-3)

So prophecy can be used by preachers preaching the Word of God under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Prophets are those who forth tell Scripture, or speak out against sin as prophets of old did. Prophecy may be a spontaneous word from the Lord for a given person or situation. Prophecy is for edification, exhortation, and comfort. "But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men" (1 Corinthians 14:3). (see also 1 Timothy 2:7; 4:13-14)

Discerning of spirits: "Seducing spirits," "lying spirits," are responsible for "doctrines of devils" and "damnable heresies" (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 2:1). There is many a foul demon under a clerical cloak today preaching with pleasing voice and specious illogic lies instead of truth; denying the divinity, the virgin birth, the miracles, the saving blood of the Lord; denying the reality of sin, the devil, divine wrath, coming judgment and eternal hell. And when these devilish doctrines are accompanied as they are in many forms of Spiritism with devilish signs and wonders there needs this blessed gift to discern the evil talon in the soft wool. For the rest the impudent demons are so secure in the appalling general ignorance of the Word of God that they can undisguised and undeterred "deny the Lord that bought" us, as in respectable Unitarianism. (Horton, Pg. 80)

My wife, I believe has this gift of *discerning of spirits*. When we were in Trinidad and Tobago as missionaries, there were times when this gift of hers came in handy. We were dealing with three girls who were demon possessed. (When a person is demon possessed you may not always be able to tell it right away.) There were times when they could look as normal as anyone else. My wife could look into the eyes of the individual and tell me, Gary, this girl is still not delivered from the demons.

For those who do not have this gift, God gives a sure way of testing the spirits. You will need to make them speak and reveal themselves (1 John 4:1-6). Notice, what a lot of people overlook, that is the "spirits," themselves, not the person is to be challenged. That means that the person is actually speaking or acting under the supernatural power, such as a medium in a séance. The person who is demon possessed is sometimes allowed to operate as normal, but the spirit is hiding. For example when we were in church singing hymns, the girls mentioned earlier could come to church and even sing, etc. Then when we got to a powerful hymn such as *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* by Martin Luther, these girls could not continue in the church. They fled screaming out of the building. So the spirits will hide, and there needs to be a person who has this gift of discerning of spirits to find them out!

Kinds of Tongues: "What is the Gift of Divers Kinds of Tongues, or Speaking with Tongues? It is supernatural utterance by the Holy Spirit in languages never learned by the speaker-. It has nothing whatever to do with linguistic ability, nor with the mind or intellect of man. It is a manifestation of the Mind of the Spirit of God employing human speech organs. When a man is speaking with tongues his mind, intellect, understanding are quiescent. It is the faculty of God that is active. Man's will, certainly, is active, and his spirit and his speech organs; but the Mind that is operating is the Mind of God through the Holy Spirit." (Horton, Pg.135)

I can speak on this first hand because when I was filled with the Holy Spirit, I spoke in tongues. You can read more detail about this in my [testimony](#) that is one of our articles. When I was filled with the Holy Spirit I spoke in a language I did not understand. (Some would claim this is of the devil, I know it to be of the Lord.) When I have dealt with people who are demon possessed, it is true, that they may be able to speak in languages they have not learned, but this is because the demon is speaking through them. The person, however, who is demon possessed is like in a trance when the demon is speaking, they do not know what is happening to them then and not even after they come out of being used by the evil spirit. Not true with a person filled or baptized by the Holy Spirit, you know at all times what is happening, and can control your actions at all times.

To give some Scriptural examples we need to go to the book of Acts and chapter two to begin with starting at verse 5-8: "And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were amazed and marveled, saying to one

another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?'" Then we see this again in chapter 10:44-46a of Acts. "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God."

In chapter 19:5-6 or Acts it says: "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."

When this gift was used, sometimes it was in the language of the people listening, other times it was not. I was told of a case where in southern Oregon a sister in the Lord wanted to speak to her neighbor about Christ, but her neighbor only spoke Spanish, and did not understand English. One day, when the Spanish speaking neighbor was in this sister's home, the Lord came upon her, and spoke through her in Spanish to the Hispanic woman. The Spanish woman subsequently received the Lord, and later told the sister who had spoken to her in tongues that she was glorifying God in a beautiful way in Spanish.

Interpretation of Tongues: This gift seems to pretty easy to understand, once someone has spoken in tongues there another person can interpret what has been said.

(11) God is in charge of the giving of the gifts and sees that every local church and that the whole Universal Church has just what it needs to get the task done that needs to be done. God sees the whole picture so it is not so much what we desire, (however, we are told to desire the better gifts so we have some say 14:1) but God gives the gifts as He sees fit. "Spiritual gifts are not badges of honor or signs of spiritual maturity. They are not "earned." Our attitude concerning the gifts is to be willing, available, goodhearted friends of Jesus." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

(12) We have toes, fingers, eyes, and so on, but it all goes to make up our one body. So there are many different gifts given to the Church that help it all work together to accomplish the goal of getting the Gospel out.

(13) The Holy Spirit, when He comes into our life (Romans 8:9), He places us into this large Christian body. This Universal Church (see the article [The Holy Catholic Church](#)) is composed of all believers from the day of Pentecost until the Rapture of the Church. It is made up of all truly *born again* believers, no matter which denomination they belong to, no matter if they are living here or in heaven. There is one body, not Jews and Gentiles, there are no differences even if they are free or slaves. The Spirit of the Lord makes us one in Christ! This is the Church Age, the Age of the Grace, the Age of the Holy Spirit! Those who emphasis their church denomination over the Universal Church are wrong!

(14) This almost sounds like a contradiction in terms because it has just said we are one body but then here it says we are many. There is no contradiction here, there is one Body, the Church. Just like we have one body, but it has different parts--arms, legs, etc.

(15-16) The Baptist who says I am not going to have anything to do with those Pentecostals will still find himself spending eternity with them. The Pentecostals who say they do not want anything to do with those Baptists will still meet them and live with them throughout eternity on the other side. It does not

change anything if we do not like it; we are still part of the same Body. That does not mean we have to condone everything different denominations do or believe. We are to accept them as brothers and sisters in Christ!

(17-21) So we all have our gifts and role to play and we must realize this, that the gifts differ greatly, still there is a reason for them in the Body. Also I believe in each denomination there are those emphasis that help the whole Body. Look at some groups emphasize the study of the Word in the original languages. Other groups emphasize the Holiness of God. Still others emphasize the reverence that we should feel when we are in the House of the Lord. On and on the list could go. We should see the good in the groups other than our own, even if we do not understand them. We cannot be one big eyeball, or one big ear. We have a lot of different parts, believe it or not. You see, God did not make any mistakes. He knows what He is doing. We need to trust Him and love our fellow Christian brothers and sisters no matter what denomination they are in. I am not talking here about the false cults. Of course, we will not accept them because they do not accept Christ as Lord.

(22-24) If we all had the same gift, suppose we were all preachers, who would clean the church building? Have you ever thought about what it would be like if we did not have anyone with the gift of helps? We maybe do not think they are very important until the lights do not work or bathroom is not clean, or we have no one to help with music. No they are all important.

(25) God does not want any divisions in the Church. Everyone is important, and all the gifts are important. Those who say certain gifts are not for today are very wrong. Those who say that those who have the "Sign" gifts are of the devil are wrong as well. I was one who said these very things, and I was one who liked to make fun to begin with, until God showed me I was wrong. We have many denominations today that will have nothing to do with other denominations. These will change their attitudes or God will deal with them in His own way. Look at Jesus' prayer in John 17, and you will see that Jesus' prayer for unity among true born again believers will happen one day before the Lord's return and many will be saved as a result.

(26) We should be concerned that our brothers and sisters are being persecuted around the world. We should be concerned that many believers do not even have enough food to eat or a Bible to read. God help us to be more concerned for the Body, not just our denomination!

(27) So we are many different parts, but only one Body, the Body of Christ. We may be Baptists, Methodists, Nazarenes, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Church of God, Assembly of God, Pentecostal, not Pentecostal, Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Greek or Eastern Orthodox, Church of Christ, Calvary Chapel, and so on, but if we are born again we are part of the same Body of Christ, the Church. If you are not born again you are not in the Church, you may be in a denomination, but you are not going to heaven. If you are not saved now is the time.

(28) It may bother some people that there is a list of gifts in order of importance, I am sorry that bothers some people but this is the Word of God. First on the list are Apostles. Apostles (those who are sent to a new area to work where no one has gone before) these today are missionaries, what would we do without them? Second in the list of importance is Preachers (those who proclaim the Word to the unsaved and saved), we may not always appreciate them like we should, but they are of vital importance to the Church so they are second on the list of importance. Third, we need teachers. These are sent to establish the Church in the doctrines of the Word along with the missionaries and preachers.

It is interesting that miracles are mentioned next. Maybe there is more importance to people who have these gifts than what we understand. God knows we need healing of all kinds, so these gifts come next. Helps are extremely important; this is where we get our worship leaders, people who work on the buildings, etc. Then we need people at all levels that have administrative gifts for the Church. I know this bothers some people, but tongues are last on this list.

It is interesting to note that no one has all the gifts other than Christ. Jesus did a lot of going where no one had gone before, so He was an Apostle (missionary), He was a Prophet (preacher, proclaiming the Word), He was a teacher, He did miracles, He healed people, he helped people, and He was an administrator (organized things). He however did not speak in tongues; this was saved for the Church Age and the work of the Holy Spirit.

(29-31) These verses are crucial to Paul's argument that the Church is made up of many parts, not just one part. Those who are missionaries may not think that those who have the gift of preaching are important. Those with the gift of preaching may not think those with the gift of teaching are important. Even though there is a list of order of importance it is not to say the other gifts are not also important.

Let us use the illustration of the human body; even though the head and heart are the most vital parts, what would we do without eyes, ears, arms--you probably get the point. All of the parts work together to make the Church run smoothly!

Another illustration, even though we think we are the *best* church say for example Baptists, let's pick on them, what would the Baptists do without the rest of the body of Christ? We need each other and we need the gifts that are distributed throughout the whole Body of Christ. No one church denomination has a monopoly on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and I believe that is by design so we will depend on each other. (If you have not read the article on the [Holy Catholic Church](#) please do.)

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