

=FAVORITE BIBLE CHAPTERS=

Lesson 28

I Corinthians 12

INTRODUCTION: The church at Corinth was the poorest of all the churches; it was a church that was divided. The Apostle Paul said that they were baby Christians, that he could not feed them with meat, but had to feed them with milk. He wrote them a letter of rebuke concerning the divisions they had. There were the Cephasites, who followed Peter; the Apollosites, who followed Apollos; the Paulites, who followed Paul; and the Jesusites, who followed Jesus. Yet, the truth is, none of them followed their leader, for they were divided. They would sit in different parts of the church. They could not get along with each other.

One of the biggest problems and errors of the church at Corinth concerned spiritual gifts. They were especially wrapped up in the false tongues movement. The Apostle Paul explains to them the exact truth concerning spiritual gifts. Let us notice the true teaching concerning them.

- I. PAUL WANTED THEM TO KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS. Read I Corinthians 12:1.
- II. THERE ARE MANY GIFTS. In I Corinthians 12:4, notice the words, "...there are diversities of gifts...." The word "gift" is the word "grace." It is something that God enables us to do by grace.
- III. THE GIFTS ARE GIVEN IN ORDER TO OPERATE THE WORK OF GOD. In I Corinthians 12:6, notice the words, "diversities of operations." In other words, the gifts are aids in operating the matter of soul winning and the Lord's work. The Greek word for "operation" is "energies."
- IV. GIFTS ARE GIVEN THAT EVERY MAN IN THE BODY MIGHT PROFIT. See I Corinthians 12:7. In other words, God gives each of us a gift or gifts in order that the entire body of Christ may profit.
- V. NO ONE IS GIVEN ALL THE GIFTS. In I Corinthians 12:8 and 9, notice by the same Spirit one is given the word of wisdom; another, the word of knowledge; another, faith; another, healing, etc.
- VI. NOTICE THE LISTING OF THE GIFTS. The first list is given in I Corinthians 12:8-10. First is wisdom, then knowledge, then faith, then healing, then miracles, then prophecy, then discerning of spirits, then tongues, then the interpretation of tongues. Notice the second list in verses 28-30. First there are apostles, then prophets, then teachers, then miracles, then healings, then helps, then governments, then diversities of tongues.
- VII. NOTICE THE POSITION OF TONGUES. It is listed last. Those who deal with gifts of the Spirit invariably put them first.
- VIII. THE GIFTS ARE LISTED IN ORDER OF THEIR IMPORTANCE. In I Corinthians 12:28, notice the word "secondarily." This is an adverb. An adverb always modifies another adverb or a verb. This adverb "secondarily" modifies the verb "set." These gifts are placed in the list according to their importance, which means that tongues are last.
- IX. THE GIFT OF TONGUES IS SIMPLY THAT GOD GAVE SOME THE ABILITY TO SPEAK IN A LANGUAGE THAT THEY DID NOT KNOW IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT PRESENT THE GOSPEL TO SOME UNSAVED PERSON WHO COULD SPEAK ONLY IN THAT PARTICULAR LANGUAGE. It has nothing to do with a heavenly tongue which no one can understand except the speaker and God. It is strictly the matter of getting the Gospel out in some other language.
- X. EACH OF US IS SUPPOSED TO USE HIS GIFT FOR GOD. This is the main teaching of the lesson. Everybody has a gift, but that gift is not a substitute for soul winning. Take a fire department, for example. A fireman is supposed to put out fires, but firemen do have different duties. One fireman may sweep the building, one may clean the fire trucks, one may press the uniforms, etc., but these duties are not substitutes for putting out fires.

The same thing is true with an army. An army is supposed to fight; however, some people in the army are in the Quartermaster Corps, some are in the medics, etc., but the entire purpose is to win a war.

None of the gifts is to substitute for soul winning. Soul winning is a command, and a command always supersedes a gift. For example, as a church goes out soul winning, the people get hungry, so somebody has to cook, somebody has to buy the food, somebody has to raise the money, somebody has to care for the money, somebody has to take care of the baptistery, somebody has to take care of the music, somebody has to play the organ, somebody has to take care of the public address system. These are gifts, but they are not substitutes for soul winning! They are aids for soul winning.

CONCLUSION: Every person should find what his own particular gift is and use it for God, not substituting it for the winning of souls to Christ, but using it so that all of us might do a better job of winning souls.