

Guidelines for Controversy

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction. Text: I Corinthians 12.

II. The church is both a building and a body.

A. They are both places to live in.

B. The body of Christ flows out of the unity and diversity of the Trinity itself.

1. The Son assigns ministries for the body.

2. God gives us power for service.

3. The church is not just a meeting—it is a unique body born of the Spirit.

C. Everyone born of the Spirit is a member of the church.

1. To each has been given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

2. The gifts of the Spirit form the foundation of the work of God in the world.

III. What Paul underlies about the gifts.

A. To each a gift has been given.

1. No one is left out.

2. The work of the church is healing the broken hearted, setting prisoners free, etc.

B. The gifts are supernatural—they are not merely human talents.

1. They can be used together.

2. They are for the common good.

3. The gifts are for God's glory, not the church's glory.

IV. The gifts.

A. Speaking gifts.

1. The importance of these gifts is to systematize the Scriptures.

2. Knowledge presents a certain text.

3. Wisdom helps to apply knowledge.

B. Serving gifts.

1. Faith is a special gift beyond the ordinary—it is visionary.
2. Healing can be physical, emotional or spiritual and may exist today.
3. The gift of miracles is the ability to release the power of God in a unique way.
4. The gift of prophesy is the ability to speak the mind of God and is not limited to future prediction.
5. Discernment is the ability to spot a phony.
6. Tongues are the ability to speak a language one has never learned.
 - a. Tongues are never mentioned in the Gospels at all.
 - b. They are only mentioned three times in Acts, historically.
 - c. Beyond Acts, it is only mentioned in I Corinthians.
 - d. Tongues is not a private gift.
 - e. Tongues are for a sign.
 - f. In order to validate present signs they must share the characteristics of biblical tongues.
7. Interpretation is the ability to interpret a language that one has never learned.

C. The Spirit chooses the gifts that you get.

D. Stir up the gift that God has given within you.

Application questions:

1. Why are the gifts central to an understanding of what the church is?

2. What are the categories of the gifts, and which gift in particular stands out to you? Explain.

3. What is your gift? How are you discovering your gifts or developing them? What can you do?
