

## **BEIRUT**

Just wanted to update y'all on our sister Acts 29 church in Beirut.

- The goal set to raise was \$50,000...
- and our church was a part of raising
- more than \$150,000 in five days
- to go to relief work in Beirut
- and to help City Bible Church rebuild their demolished building.

Thank you so very much to those who gave, and if you still want to give, please go to [fathomchurch.org/Beirut](http://fathomchurch.org/Beirut)

## **INTRODUCE**

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. 1 Corinthians 12. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Corinthians 12.

## **INTRODUCTION: SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

Now, we're in the section of this letter where Paul talks about the church gatherings going on in Corinth, and today he bring up the topic of spiritual gifts.

Now, when I mention spiritual gifts I know there are a lot of different reactions, even in this room.

So, my charismatics here are like,

- *“Well, it's about time pastor,*
- *because I've been waiting.*
- *And I've got my anointing oil,*
- *and my tambourine,*
- *and I'm ready to start waving my flag.”*
- Right?

And the Baptists here are like,

- *“I knew it!*
- *I knew this place was weird...*
- *I saw people raising their hands during worship...*
- *and I knew it.”*
- *And you're getting your pleated Dockers all ruffled.*

And the Catholics in here are like,

- *“What you talking about?*
- *The Holy Spirit?*
- *You mean the Ghost?”*

## **TRANSITION**

So, this stuff can be very confusing, and divisive, but it need not be. Let's dig into the text, and see what Paul has to say to us about Spiritual Gifts. 1 Corinthians 12, starting in verse 1.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-3

[1] Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. [2] You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. [3] Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

### EXPLAIN: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

So, he starts by talking about spiritual gifts,

- and the Greek word used there is *pneumatikos*
- which is from the word *pneuma* which means Spirit,
- and it’s where we derive our English word pneumatic—
  - meaning air-pressure powered,
- and pneumonia—
  - an infection of the air sacs in the lungs.

And that’s all stemming from the Hebrew word *Ruach*

- which is the Old Testament word for the Holy Spirit,
- but it’s also the word for breath or wind.

So, when God creates Adam,

- He breaths the *Ruach* of life into his nostrils.
- That’s breath, or Spirit, or *Pneuma*.

And Paul says, **now concerning *pneumatikos*.**

- Which is translated *Spiritual Gifts*,
- but actually, the word *gifts* is not there.
- It literally translates, **now concerning *spirituals*.**

So, it reads **spiritual gifts** in most bible translations, and that's ok,

- but I just want to broaden the scope a little bit.
- Because most people translate it that way
- and put it in a box.

So, there are six places in the New Testament that list "spiritual gifts",

- and many have taken those lists,
- combined them,
- and created spiritual gifts lists.
- And while that fine and helpful...
- those lists are not, and were never meant to be exhaustive.
- It's not like there are 22 spiritual gifts, and that's it.

## POINT

So, I'll define Spiritual gifts for us today like this: **SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE **SLIDE** ANY ABILITY EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE CHURCH.** So, what does that mean? Well, let's keep reading.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-6

[4] Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; [5] and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; [6] and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

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## EXPLAIN: GIFTS

So, there are three words in those three verses that we need to engage. *Gifts, services, and activities.*

So, verse 4, **there are varieties of gifts**. That word is *charisma* and that is the word gift. So, we didn't see it in verse 1, but we see the word gift in verse 4. Sometimes these gifts just come upon us, but more often I think these are a talent or skill or disposition towards something.

You ever hear someone say, "*Wow, that gal is gifted!*" What do they mean by that?

- Well, they mean that someone has a natural talent.

Question: where do those natural talents come from?

- Yes, they come from God!
- They are gifts!
- But when a person gets saved,
- God ransoms and redeems those intuitive gifts.

Each of us was born with a bent toward things we're naturally good at, personality markers and skills we just came out of the womb with.

- And often the spirit of God takes
- some natural talent you have
- and supercharges it
- and anoints it
- for use in his kingdom.

So, I would ask this question: what are you good at? That's likely a gift.

## ILLUSTRATION: HALLWAY

When I was in middle school I was always getting busted in class for joking, and speaking out of turn.

- I was loud,
- and had a quick wit,
- and wanted to be at the center of the conversation.

And so, my teachers would often kick me out of class into the hallway...

- So, I spent a lot of time sitting in the hallway of my middle school.
- In fact, they put a desk out there for me.

Now, never in my wildest dreams did I think that one day the thing I was getting in trouble for in seventh grade, would be partly what you pay me for.

- God took that loud,
- obnoxious,
- funny kid...
- saved him...
- and gave him a face mic.

There are varieties of *gifts*

## EXPLAIN: SERVICE

And then verse 5, there are varieties of service. This word is *diakonia* which is where we get the biblical office of deacon. And it means *service* or can be translated *ministry*. There are varieties of services or ministries.

- So, you might just have a heart for kids,
- or to work with high-school students,
- or you are passionate about men being disciplined,
- or you love prayer ministry.

There are varieties of services or ministries.

### ILLUSTRATION: TONE-DEAF

And these very often work with your giftings...

- because I was a worship leader for many years,
- and very often I would have someone say
- that they were called
- to serve on the worship team.
- So, I'd set up an audition to hear them sing...
- only to be broadsided with a tone-deaf person.

I called it the American Idol syndrome, right?

- *"She bangs, she bangs..."*
- You remember William Hung?
- Yeah you do!

So, I would often have to say,

- *"I know you feel called to this ministry,*
- *but I don't see the gifting there."*

There are varieties of services. So, I'd ask, where do you feel led to serve?

## EXPLAIN: ACTIVITIES

And then verse 6, **there are varieties of activities**. This word is *energēma*, where we get our word energy. And it means operations or workings or activities.

And I think the best way to understand this is to think in terms of moments.

- There are moments when the Spirit
- just does stuff in and through us...
- maybe we're good at it, like a gift.
- Maybe it's in the ministry we serve in.

But sometimes there are moments when the Spirit moves and gives us energy, as it were, to do something.

- To pray for someone.
- To tell someone something that's been laid on our heart.
- To lay hands on someone, and maybe heal them.

If the question for gifts was, what are you good at?

And the question for services is, where do you feel led to serve?

Then the question here is,

- what are you open to the Spirit doing through you?

## TRANSITION

And you see what Paul is doing here?

- He's trying to describe these *spirituals*,
- and he just can't quite get a nice and tidy description.

They're like

- gift-talents-skills,
- and ministries or services,
- and these spirit-empowered-working-moments.

This is why I think it's broader than a list of 22 things, **SLIDE** but **ANY ABILITY EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE CHURCH.**

### **EXPLAIN: TRINITY**

And if you really want to geek out, notice that after each one of those three words it says, **the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God.**

There is a reference to each member of the Trinity,

- the Spirit (*pneuma*),
- the Lord Jesus Christ (*kyrios*),
- and God (*theos*).

The gifts work together to form a community, just as the Trinity exists in community. Mind melt!

Ok, skip down to verse 8, we'll circle back to verse 7 in a few minutes.

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## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:8-10

[8] For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, [9] to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, [10] to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

### EXPLAIN: WISDOM

So, like I said, this is one of the six lists in the New Testament of Spiritual Gifts. Again, it is not an exhaustive list. But it is helpful to run through these.

So, **utterance of wisdom**...

- Sometimes the Spirit of God will give you insight
- into his will in an area that is not really clear.
- These are moments when the Spirit gives you wisdom on something...
- and you might not even be aware of it.

### ILLUSTRATION: PREACHING

Before I planted Fathom, I was a worship leader at my previous church,

- and they gave me my first opportunity to preach,
- and one of the other pastors on staff came to me after I preached and said,
- *“Chris, that’s the first time you’ve preached?”*

- And I was like, “Yeah...”
- And he replied, “You won’t be here for much longer.”

I think that was a word of wisdom that led me towards discerning my call to preach and teach.

## **EXPLAIN: KNOWLEDGE**

Next, **utterance of knowledge**.

- This is when you just know something
- that you couldn’t have known.
- This ever happened to you?
- Someone tells you something
- that they in no way could have known, and they know.
- That’s a **word of knowledge**.

## **EXPLAIN: FAITH**

Next, **faith**. Now,

- this is not normal “believe in Jesus” kind of faith,
- but the ability to perceive what God wants to do.

Think of the people in the Gospels who come up to Jesus with an awareness that He will heal.

And Jesus is like, “*Never have I seen such faith!*”

- This is a mysterious surge of confidence.
- Some sort of internal trust that is above a normal level.

## EXPLAIN: HEALING

Next, **the gifts of healing**.

- Now, this one gets messy,
- because do people really have a gift of healing?
- Like, can they heal on demand?

Well, I don't think so.

If not, why not head on over to the Children's Hospital cancer ward and exercise your gift of healing?

- This also reeks of tv preachers...
- with the charis-mullets?

You've seen these people?

- Charlatans who claim to have the gift of healing,
- and use it to create a big TV ministry.

No, these gifts means

- that at certain times
- certain individuals
- become God's agents of healing
- in another's life.

We've been a part of that.

- We've prayed for people to be healed of terminal diseases,
  - and God has done so.

Not always.

- We've prayed for people to be healed
  - and they have died.
- But sometimes God heals through his people.

## **EXPLAIN: MIRACLES**

**Working of miracles** is next, and that overlaps with healings, but not all miracles are healings.

## **EXPLAIN: PROPHECY**

Next, **prophecy**.

- This is heavily debated,
- and we'll get into this deeper in coming weeks,

## **EXPLAIN: DISTINGUISHING SPIRITS**

**Distinguishing spirits** is next, and it seems to mean

- the ability to discern
- whether a prophetic utterance
- is from the Spirit of God
- or not.

I would say,

- distinguishing spirits is to prophecy
- as interpretation is to tongues.

## **EXPLAIN: TONGUES/INTERPRETATIONS**

And last Paul mentions tongues and interpretation, but I'm gonna save those for chapter 14 as well.

## TRANSITION

Now, these gifts seem pretty spiritual, right?

- I mean prophecy
- and utterances,
- and miracles,
- and healings.

I mean, when I think of spiritual gifts, these seem like the real deal gifts.

But I want to point us to Romans chapter 12. Romans 12:6-8 is another list of spiritual gifts.

### **SLIDE ROMANS 12:6–8**

[6] Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; [7] if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; [8] the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

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## EXPLAIN: LESS-SPIRITUAL GIFTS

So, Paul here gives us a different list, with some overlap, right?

- Prophecy!
- Seems pretty spiritual!

But what was the next one?

- Serving?
- Teaching?
- Giving?
- Acts of mercy?
- Exhortation...that means encouraging.

See, I think we often think there is some sort of hierarchy of gifts, like some are spiritual and others are less-spiritual gifts.

But Paul doesn't distinguish between the spiritual and the non-spiritual. They're all *spirituals*!

- It's not like, "Ah dude, you've got healings!
- I wanted that one.
- Man, all I got was encouragement."

No. Like I said, spiritual gifts are **SLIDE ANY ABILITY EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE CHURCH.**

Now, let's circle back to verse 7, and end our passage with verse 11.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7 & 11

[7] To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

[11] All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

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## **EXPLAIN: EACH ONE**

Paul says the same thing twice. **To each is given...**and **who**  
**apportions to each one.**

- To each one,
- or to everyone.
- Now, who here is included in everyone?
- Yeah! Everyone!

Spiritual gifts are given to every believer!

- Every believer has at least one spiritual gift.
- They are given to each one by the spirit.

No believer has them all.

- We'll get into that next week
- when we talk about the metaphor of the body of Christ.

And they are for the common good.

- Your gifts aren't for you, they're for us!
- They're for the church!

We need all of the gifts exercised for the church to thrive. But every Christian has gifts from the Spirit.

## **CONCLUSION**

Now, the question I have to close today is this:

- why would God choose to do it this way?
- Why apportion gifts out to his people to use imperfectly,
- instead of just doing the work of ministry himself?

Well, to quote C.S. Lewis: **SLIDE** *“God seems to do nothing of Himself which He can possibly delegate to His creatures. He commands us to do slowly and blunderingly what He could do perfectly and in the twinkling of an eye.”*

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### **ILLUSTRATION: WORKING WITH DAD**

I've historically illustrated it like this: when I was growing up, my dad was handy in all sorts of ways, and he took great pride in our yard and our house. And every weekend, he was working on some project or doing some chore to make our house or yard better.

- He'd mow the lawn meticulously every week.
- He was always planting a tree,
  - or cutting down a tree,
  - or moving a tree around in the yard.
- And he even tore down our old, rotten deck,
  - and built a beautiful, two level deck.

He was always doing this kind of stuff.

Well, I can remember,

- as a five-year-old boy,
- wanting so badly to help my dad with all these tasks.
- And so, every Saturday
- I would ask if I could work with him.
- And he'd say, *“sure.”*

So, if dad was mowing the lawn...

- I'd get my toy plastic mower,
- and I would follow him step for step.

And if dad was moving a tree,

- I'd get my plastic shovel from my sand-box
- and help him move the tree.

And if dad was building a deck with his tool belt full of tools.

- Well, I had a small tool belt,
- and some small tools...
- and I was right with him.

And dad was great.

- He'd thank me for my help mowing.
- And he'd let me dig little holes while moving trees.
- And he'd even give me a couple pieces of wood
  - and a nail to hammer on while building the deck.

And I literally thought I was dad's number 2 worker.

- Like, without me, he wasn't getting any of this done.
- And I'd brag to my friends at school
- that I had built a deck on Saturday with my dad.

And now, as a dad myself, I realize...I wasn't very helpful...at all.

In fact, it would have been easier for my dad to do those things without my help.

- I made it slower!
- I wasn't mowing!
- Those holes I was digging...he needed to fill back in!
- And it took me a few years to realize
  - that those boards I was nailing together
  - HAD NO PRACTICAL USE ON THE DECK AT ALL!

But the reason Dad let me work with him wasn't because he needed help.

The reason my dad let me work with him was because

- he loved me,
- he wanted to spend time with me,
- and he wanted me to become more like him.

## **GOING TO WORK WITH DAD**

Using spiritual gifts is like that. **It's going to work with your dad.**

- And it's not even that God needs you...
- it'd be far more practical for God
  - to simply show up to everyone in a burning bush.
- It'd be far more pragmatic
  - if God would audibly speak to everyone.
- It'd be far more utilitarian
  - if God would just heal people,
  - and reveal his will to people,
  - and serve people himself.

BUT THAT'S NOT HOW GOD DECIDED TO DO THIS!

- God loves you
- and he has given you spiritual gifts
- and he wants to use you to use them
- to build up his church.

So, who wants to play?

Let's pray. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

## RESOURCES USED:

- Babylon Bee. <http://babylonbee.com>
- Chandler, Matt. *Grace Made Visible (Part 2)*.
- Comer, John Mark. *The Common Good*.
- Garland, David E. 1 Corinthians. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.
- Greear, J.D. *Gifted*.
- Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology.
- Tyson, Jon. Beautiful Resistance.