

Text: 1 Cor 12.4-11

As we move through Corinthians, we will keep our place by developing the broad outline we started with.

I. Introduction (1.1-9)**II. Conditions reported to Paul (1.10-6.20)****III. Questions asked of Paul (7.1-16.4)**

1 Cor 7.1 ¶ Now concerning the things about which you wrote...

“The remainder of the body of this epistle deals with questions that the Corinthians had asked Paul in a letter. Paul introduced each of these with the phrase *peri de* (‘now concerning,’ 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12).”¹

A. Questions about marriage (7.1-40)

B. Questions about things sacrificed to idols (8.1-11.1)

C. Questions about worship services

1. Head coverings (11.2-16)

2. Communion practices (11.17-34)

3. Spiritual Gifts (12-14)

Summarizing 1 Cor 12 so far

- **The context:** In the mystery religions of the ancient world, ecstatic practices resembling the gift of tongues *confused* the Corinthians
- **The issue:** Some Christians in Corinth equated tongues-speaking as the mark of true spirituality, skewing their focus from serving others to exalting self
- **Biblical gifts:**
 - Comprise a variety of gifts, equal in value, coming from the Triune God
 - Given for the benefit of the church as a whole: “the common good” (7), “just as He wills” (11)

Today: comparing *The Spiritual Gifts*

Chart: See handout

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Co 7.1.

Observations

Note: I have organized this list with the list from our subject passage as the prominent list.

Note the gifts below the line in the chart: which of these gifts are missing in modern churches today? **None, the gifts below the line in the middle of the chart are evident across all denominational lines in living Christians today.**

Note the gifts above the line in the chart: which of these gifts are definitely missing in modern churches today?

Apostles, Prophets, Healing, Miracles and perhaps others

Of the gifts listed above the line, if any are evident today, how many are evident in every denomination? **None — very few if any of the gifts above the line are evident across denominational lines in living Christians today. (In other words, although some of these gifts are claimed in some churches, they are not evident in all churches.)**

I have classified the gifts above the line as **sensational** “at will” miracles

I have classified the gifts below the line as **Day-to-Day** Ministry gifts

Last week I gave you a classification for each of the gift lists by passage.

I left blanks in the chart for each of these lists for you to fill in

1 Cor 12.8-10 **Extra-Ordinary**

Rom 12.6-8 **Ordinary**

1 Cor 12.28-30 **Hierarchical**

Eph 4.11 **Ecclesiastical**

1 Pt 4.11 **Categorical**

The question that needs to be asked is this: Why are some spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament not universally evident in every Bible believing Christian church at least to some extent or other?

Temporary vs. Permanent Gifts

How do we know some gifts were temporary?

Apostles were temporary:

Revelation 21.14: Apostles **foundational**

Acts 1.20-26: **Criteria** strict

- Part of the company of Christ followers from John's baptism to the ascension

1 Cor 15.8-9: **One** "untimely born" (but sovereignly selected)

No one since the death of the apostles meets the qualifications.

Signs and wonders gifts, temporary or permanent?

2 Corinthians 12.12 **Signs** of an apostle, "signs and wonders and miracles"

Hebrews 2.3-4 Gospel **declared** by apostles and **confirmed** by signs and wonders and by various miracles done by the apostles (as well as other gifts from the HS)

Ephesians 2.19-20 Reaffirms the **foundational** nature of apostolic ministry

- The "at will" miracle gifts clearly were part of the **foundational** ministry of the apostles.
- They were especially present in the apostles themselves.
- Some of them were present in other Christians in the apostolic generation.
- The writings of the Church Fathers and church historians indicate that these sensational experiences "died out" of the mainstream of the church in the 2nd century.

1 Corinthians 13.8 Several named gifts (sensational gifts) will **cease**

Conclusion:

Sensational gifts confirmed the apostolic message at the foundation of the church. When the apostles died out, it seems that the sensational gifts died out also.