



Sunday School Lesson
1 Cor. 12:27-31
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Many Gifts in One Body



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This second study on spiritual gifts in the Smyth-Helwys Formations series is listed under the caption "So Many Gifts." The focus is on the listing of different gifts in 1 Cor. 12:28-30. But this passage must not be lifted out of its context in chapter 12, where a previous list is given in vv. 4-11. Additionally, in the Pauline corpus lists are found in Rom. 12:1-8 and Eph. 4:7-16. 1 Peter 4:7-11 contributes to this discussion with its brief mention of gifts. As a part of such a discussion on gifts, one must also give some consideration to the Greek word *χαρίσμα* (*charisma*), which is translated as "gift." The source of this Greek word is *χάρις* (*charis*), which means "grace." Thus, a "gift" is but a concrete expression of "grace."

One critical interpretive issue to be settled at the outset: In drawing a biblical theological picture of "spiritual gifts" as taught in the New Testament, we must *not* adopt a grocery cart mentality where all the items in all the lists are collected in the shopping basket called "spiritual gifts" in order to get an inclusive listing of everything possible. Then we begin sorting out each item in order to find a connecting link to contemporary church staff positions. Such an approach is seriously flawed on at least two accounts. First, it ignores the distinctive listing with distinctive objectives in mind that is found in each of the NT letters. This individual nature of each list is unquestionably present when these lists are studied in their context. Thus no two lists contain the same exact items. Second, such an approach ignores basic methods of doing Biblical Theology, as this discipline as developed over the past century or so. To take a shopping basket approach is to assume a "flat" horizon in the writing of scripture. This ignores the historical setting and authorial intention for the scripture documents where these lists are found. If modern Bible study has demonstrated anything, it has taught us to take each document of the New Testament on its own terms. Additionally, the letters in the New Testament, especially those of Paul, are "occasional writings." That means that some individual set of circumstances prompted the writing of each letter. And the same set of circumstances is not ever found for any two of Paul's letters. This is even true for the double letters, such as 1 and 2 Corinthians etc.

Instead, we must take each list against its own background. Once that has been done, then comparisons among the lists are possible but only for looking at similarities and differences of perspectives. Only very tentatively can applicational links to the present be attempted. This can be done more creditably with the list as a whole, rather than with individual items in each list.



I Context

Given the occasional nature of 1 Corinthians, understanding the background, both historically and literarily, of this letter is all the more important to correct interpretation of our passage in chapter twelve.

a. Historical

External History. That this letter originated from the apostle Paul to the believing communities in the ancient city of Corinth is about as certain among critical scholars as is possible. Even the most radical critical scholars over the past three centuries have accepted the authenticity of Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians and Galatians in the Pauline corpus of the New Testament. Paul's relationship with the city of Corinth began on the second missionary journey and extended into the close of the third missionary journey. In both situations, Corinth became the "turn around" point for both trips through the 50s of the first Christian century. This letter came during Paul's length ministry in Ephesus on the third missionary journey, but is one part of a long and complicated relationship with the church, as my [Paul's Relation to the Corinthian Believers](#) page at Cranfordville.com illustrates. This relationship must be understood from sources in both Paul's writings and the Book of Acts. Paul's relations with the Corinthians had its "ups & downs" in that there were bright moments and also highly frustrating and tense moments. The chaotic period began shortly after the writing of 1 Corinthians in the spring of AD 54-55 and was not fully resolved until his third visit in AD 57.

The writing of First Corinthians is prompted by two sources. Members of the "household of Chloe" visited Paul while in Ephesus on business and reported to him some problems occurring in the various house churches scattered across the city. In chapters one through six Paul responded to these concerns. At some point afterwards a "delegation" from the church at Corinth arrived in Ephesus with a

set of questions posed by the church itself. Chapters seven through sixteen contain Paul's response to these questions. For a detailed treatment of the literary signals of this structure see [the previous Bible study](#) on 1 Cor. 1:18-31 posted at Cranfordville.com.

In 1 Cor. 16:21, Paul signals the typical pattern of letter writing by stating, "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand." This indicates that someone else had done the actual writing of the letter, but that Paul himself wrote the concluding section in his own hand,

1. Initial Ministry

established the church on the second missionary journey
AD 50-51
Sources: Acts 18:1-17; 1 Thess. 3:6-13; 1 Cor. 2:1-5; 1:13-17; 2 Thess. 3:1-5; 1 Cor. 3:5-10; 11:2, 23, 15:1; 2 Cor. 11:7-9

2. Prior Letter

written before 1 Corinthians, now lost
may be partially contained in 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1
AD 52 (?)
Sources: 1 Cor. 5:9

3. 1 Corinthians

written from Ephesus while on third missionary journey to respond to questions from the household of Chloe (chaps 1-6) and the Corinthian delegation (chaps 7-16)
AD 54-55 (spring time)

4. Painful Visit

purpose: to try to correct ongoing problems in the church
AD 55
Sources: 2 Cor. 2:1; 12:14; 13:1,2

5. Sorrowful Letter

written from Ephesus after return from Corinth possibly contained partially in 2 Cor. 10-13, but most likely lost
AD 55
Sources: 2 Cor. 2:4; 7:8

6. 2 Corinthians

written from Macedonia after leaving Ephesus on third missionary journey
prompted by joyous report from Titus regarding the relief offering etc.
AD 56 (?)
possibly only containing chaps 1-9, if 10-13 are a part of the 'sorrowful letter'

7. Third Visit to Corinth

AD 57
Sources: Acts 20:1-3



writing as a seal of verification to the contents of the letter as reflecting his perspective. Unfortunately, the writing secretary or scribe is not mentioned here by name, as is the case in Rom. 16:22 and 1 Peter 5:12.

Internal History. That the believing community at Corinth was plagued with a fist full of problems is an understatement! Most of these were not minor issues. They included a man living in open immorality with his birth mother; a segment of the community questioning whether Jesus had been raised from the dead -- just to name a few of the problems. Given the highly immoral atmosphere of the [city of Corinth](#) itself, one should not be surprised that a young Christian community was struggling to make the transition from paganism to Christianity.

The questions about spiritual gifts evidently arose from some kind of misuse, as the introduction to this issue in [12:1-3](#) implies:

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. 3 Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

These verses suggest a pagan background played a major role in the Corinthian problem about spiritual gifts, and focused on speaking. The Corinthians had either too little understanding about their Christian experience, or else they had been misinformed about how "gifts" would work now that they were Christians. The exact nature of the problem hinges somewhat on how the topic reference, τῶν πνευματικῶν, is understood. The Greek reference can be translated either "spiritual persons," or "spiritual things." Most translations will adopt the latter un-



derstanding because of the literary unity of 12:1-14:31, in which "gifts" from the Spirit are unquestionably the focal point of the discussion. Ultimately, however, either understanding leads pretty much to the same conclusions.

What seems to lie behind the problem primarily is the use of ecstatic language, or "speaking in tongues." Such "language of the gods" was commonly practiced in most of the religious cults in the ancient world. A major center for it was located very

close to Corinth and just south of Athens. The center of the [Eleusinian Mysteries cult](#) was less than twenty miles from Corinth, and the practice of glosolalia was a major feature of its worship. In Christian conversion it seemed natural for many of the Corinthians to bring this practice with them into their new religious faith. The reshaping of the idea was that this gift came to the super pious from the Spirit of God, as it had previously been given to the highly devout worshippers of Demeter and Persephone in the mysteries worship experiences. Thus at least in some of the Corinthian house churches worship placed great value on the experience of tongues speaking. In such a state of frenzy, perhaps some had uttered "curses" of Jesus. We can't be sure whether Paul is alluding to actual instances or is just using hyperbole in order to emphasize the opposite "Jesus is Lord."

But Paul links very closely the presence of "gifts" to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Thus, whenever one expresses service either in worship or elsewhere it must be done under the guidance of God's Spirit. Otherwise, it can become destructive and disruptive. This is most likely Paul's central point in verse three.

b. Literary

Genre. The literary form of 12:27-31 is simple didactic material in the [Body section of an ancient letter](#). It begins with a strong declaration of unity and continues with emphasis on diversity. The concluding admonition encourages the seeking of "better gifts." Nothing in the verses distinguishes the pericope as being different from the norm or typical style of Pauline letter writing.

Literary Setting. The literary context for these

verses becomes terribly important for accurate exegesis of the passage.

12:1-3 serves to introduce the topic of "spiritual gifts" (NRSV):

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. 3 Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one

can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

This discussion is concluded in [14:37-40](#) (NLT):

7 If you claim to be a prophet or think you are very spiritual, you should recognize that what I am saying is a command from the Lord himself. 38 But if you do not recognize this, you will not be recognized. So, dear brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and don't forbid speaking in tongues. 40 But be sure that everything is done properly and in order.

Most likely the material between these two "brackets" follows an informal chiasmic though flow: **A** (12:4-30); **B** (12:31-13:13); **A'** (14:1-36). 12:31 especially suggests this structure. The implication is that the central emphasis is upon the gift of love in chapter

thirteen (**A/B/A'**). Everything builds toward love (chap. 12) and flows from it (chap. 14). Thus no room is left for spiritual elitism, particularly for the tongues speaker.

The internal structure of chapter twelve is important to explore as well. Again an **A/B/A'** thought flow emerges here as well. vv. 4-11 (**A**) places emphasis upon the diversity of gifts in the context of unity; vv. 12-26 (**B**) focuses on unity with the analogy of the body; vv. 27-31 (**A'**) returns to the diversity of gifts in the context of unity. Thus vv. 27-31 must be interpreted in light of this structure.

II. Message

Literary Structure. The internal arrangement of thoughts inside vv. 27-31 is clear, and is illustrated visually by the [Block Diagram](#) of the Greek text in the larger internet version of this study. The appeal to unity (v. 27) is followed by a listing of gifts (vv. 28-30). The passage is concluded by an appeal to seek the "greater gifts" (v. 31). In this parallel with vv. 4-11, the apostle continues the theme of unity and diversity. The diversity aspect is discussed similarly, but yet differently both in vv. 4-11 and vv. 27-31. The detailed explanation of unity stands in the middle at verses 12-26.

a. Unity, v. 27

Greek NT

12:27 Ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐστε
σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη
ἐκ μέρους.

NASB

27 Now you are
Christ's body, and indi-
vidually members of it.

NRSV

27 Now you are the
body of Christ and indi-
vidually members of it.

NLT

27 Now all of you to-
gether are Christ's body,
and each one of you is a
separate and necessary
part of it.

Notes:

This simple statement stands as a timeless principle, which here both summarizes vv. 12-26 and introduces vv. 28-31.

The summarizing aspect alludes to the previous discussion in vv. 12:26:

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many members, yet one body. 21 The eye cannot

say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; 24 whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, 25 that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

The analogy of a human body to the community of believers provides the apostle the opportunity to "level" the importance of each gift. Social class distinctions (v. 13) easily provided grounds for the Corinthians to make distinctions in the issue of gifts inside the church. Even human thinking about the human body can easily slip into this prioritizing of important and less important body parts (vv. 22-24a).

But Paul reminds the Corinthians that every body part is needed and needs to make a contribution if the body is to be healthy and function as expected. In the same way, every person is needed in the church and needs to make his/her distinct contribution. In such fashion, the apostle strongly denies any legitimacy to an elitist attitude by any member of the church. Every person is “gifted” and has a unique contribution to make. Some are more visible and obvious than others, but in no way can the degree of visibility be taken to signify levels of importance. Instead, his contention is that every member is required and is necessary.

Thus, 12:27 sums up the two essential points: 1) the Corinthians collectively represent the body of Christ; and 2) each person is a valued member.

This insightful image of a body masterfully communicates the need of unity inside the community of faith. But it isn't a flat, one dimensional unity. Diversity is an integral part of that unity. Essential is respect for the worth and contribution of each member.

Paul picked up on this probably because the members of Chloe's house had already alerted him of the disunity existing in the church, cf. [1:10-17](#). Divisiveness over their favorite preacher help lay a foundation for this further expression of division over spiritual gifts. Paul's appeal there was simply “that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.” At the very outset of the letter in the Proem, he had affirmed his confidence in the “giftedness” of the Corinthians (1:7): “so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Divisiveness seemed to have been a major problem at Corinth, since Paul will touch on it several times as it expressed itself in differing situations in the church: 3:3 -- jealously and quarreling; 4:6 -- elitism, “so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of one against another”; 6:6 -- taking one another to court; 11:27-22 -- “factions among you” (καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν; v. 19) leading to discrimination at the Lord's table.

Thus divisiveness over spiritual gifts is not surprising. When Paul turns to address this particular aspect of disunity, he puts most of his emphasis on finding unity. In the larger unit of 12:1-14:40, the primary problem causing disunity was clearly the speaking in tongues accompanied by its inherent disunity trait through promoting a spiritual elitism. Consequently, this particular gift is going to be de-emphasized repeatedly through the discussion.

One more observation about v. 27 should be made. The interpretive history of the church as the Body of Christ has been variously understood down through the centuries. Some have tried to see the image Body of Christ as designating the “church universal,” or “the invisible church” made up of all believers of all times. Thus Paul's second statement to the Corinthians that they are members of the body should be taken collectively to mean that the Corinthian church is but one part of that universal church. This reading has been popular in ecumenical circles of Protestantism.

Roman Catholic interpretation plays off this with [a different angle](#). The Roman Catholic Church is the Body of Christ. Each parish congregation is one member of that true universal church.

The context of v. 27 rules out both of these views as legitimate readings. Paul is speaking here of the collective community of Christ as the body of Christ (in Corinth). Individual believers in that community belong to that body of Christ. This is the correct reading of the image. As [Bruce N. Fisk](#) persuasively argues, the image pushes the intense identification of Christ with his church in this world. This close identity is Paul's point here and grew out of his own Damascus Road encounter with Christ (cf. Acts 9:5): “He asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The reply came, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting...’” Believers being the body means that Christ is the head. This image will be played out in several ways through Paul's writings, as [Paul Ferguson](#) summarizes:

Christ as Head of His Church. The church must submit to Christ. We are not our own but are bought with a price (1 Cor 3:23; 6:19-20; Eph 5:23-33). He has all authority in heaven and earth (Matt 28:18). He is the head of all principality and power (Col 2:10). People who wander from Christ are like those who have lost their heads (Col 2:18-19). Without the head no nourishment or growth is possible (Eph 4:15; Col 2:19). Paul was not dealing in philosophical speculation in his headship analogies. Even the simplest person knew that food, water, and air were taken in by head. He would know that the eyes and ears gave guidance to the whole body.

What connection of these verses exists with our day? The answer is pretty obvious. We still have divisions in church life. We still struggle with spiritual elitism. We frequently fail to see our church as the body of Christ in this world. So many church members feel little or any need to contribute themselves to the life and ministry of the church. Paul's words have powerful punch admonishing us to recommit ourselves to service in the church of Christ.

b. Different Gifts, vv. 28-30

Greek NT

12:28 καὶ οὗς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν. 12:29 μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι; μὴ πάντες προφῆται; μὴ πάντες διδασκαλοὶ; μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις; 12:30 μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων; μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν; μὴ πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν;

NASB

28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. 29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? 30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

NRSV

28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

NLT

28 Here is a list of some of the members that God has placed in the body of Christ: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who can get others to work together, those who speak in unknown languages. 29 Is everyone an apostle? Of course not. Is everyone a prophet? No. Are all teachers? Does everyone have the power to do miracles? 30 Does everyone have the gift of healing? Of course not. Does God give all of us the ability to speak in unknown languages? Can everyone interpret unknown languages? No!

Notes:

On the heels of the unity in diversity emphasis comes the exploration of diversity in greater detail as spiritual gifts. To be sure the term “spiritual gifts” is not used in these verses, but, in the first listing of these items in vv. 4-11, the list is introduced by *διαίρέσεις χαρισμάτων εἰσὶν* (“there are diversities of gifts”).

A.C. Thiselton in the *New International Greek Testament Commentary* observes:

The word *διαίρέσεις* occurs only here in the NT and means either *differences*, *distinctions*, or *apportionings*, *dealings out*. The use of the verbal form *διαίρουσιν* in v. 11, however, alludes to the sovereignty of the Spirit of God in *apportioning out gifts to each as the Spirit wills*.⁵ Although *different apportionings* may seem stilted or clumsy, *varieties* (NRSV, RSV, REB), *different* (NJB), or *even different kinds* (NIV) does not seem to bring out the idea of *what is allotted* by God. One does not question what is freely given as one’s portion.⁶

Surprisingly, while he recognizes BAGD’s proposal to translate the word here as *allotments* (also Collins), Barrett’s *distributions*, Parry’s *variety of gifts assigned*, and even the link with *apportion* in v. 11, Fee simply states without arguments that *difference* or *variety* “is also well established; the context rules in favor of the latter here.”⁷ But this may appear to carry weight only because, against the views of Dale Martin, M. M. Mitchell, Harrington, Best, Lategan, and Collins, Fee places a heavier emphasis on variety than unity, entitling 12:4–31 as a whole as “The Need for Diversity.”⁸ Although Wright and Lang follow this approach, Conzelmann and Allo put the other side of the case in more detail.⁹ Allo draws a contrast between the *human construct* of differences which become *divisions* (1:10–4:21) and the *divine allocation* of distinctions as “*distributions*.”¹⁰ Conzelmann also argues that while the parallel in Rom 12:6 may seem to favor *distinction*, 1 Cor 12:11 decisively points to *assignment*, but grounds this rightly in Paul’s theology of grace. Paul’s change of the Corinthian term *πνευματικά*, *spiritual things*, to *χαρίσματα*, **spiritual gifts**, “*gifts of grace*,” calls attention to God’s generous act of *freely apportioning* different gifts to different recipients.¹¹ Once again, grace through the cross governs ecclesiology and ministry. Ideally, as Héring argues, a translation which stresses both aspects is best of all, but the link with apportioned *gift* *χάρις*, *χάρισμα*) remains at the center.¹²

Thus these “gifts” are simply the concrete expressions of divine grace appor-

tioned out to individual believers to enable each to contribute to the building up of the life of the body of Christ on earth, that is, the local church. Uniformly through both listings here, these are talents, skills given by the Holy Spirit that are to be used under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Our modern tendency is to make a distinction between “natural talent” and “spiritual gifts.” But such thinking presupposes thought structures emerging from modernity, which did not exist in the world of Paul. Consequently, we make arti-

ficial distinctions between “the natural” and “the spiritual.” His Jewish world, and Paul himself, would have seen any ability, e.g., public speaking, as basically a gift from God, an expression of His favor (χάρις). Whether it came at birth, was developed through training, or surfaced during one’s Christian walk is irrelevant. It is first and foremost a divine allotment of grace with the specific use of edification of the community. In fact, every gift should have all three of these aspects if they are to be utilized fully. A quick study of the lives of Paul, Peter and other early church leaders dramatically illustrates this. God took their “native” skills, their training, and their walk with Him and developed their ability to contribute individually to the beginnings of Christianity in ways that have had lasting impact for two thousand years.

In 12:4-7, Paul defines his ideas of gifts more clearly:

- 4 Now there are **varieties of gifts**,
but the same Spirit;
5 and there are **varieties of services**,
but the same Lord;
6 and there are **varieties of activities**,
but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

Gifts (χαρισμάτων) means “services” (διακονιῶν) which means “activities” (ἐνεργημάτων). In this synonymous parallelism these three descriptors define the same reality. Then in verse seven he offers another general description: “the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον). Gifts are ministries and empowerments. They are manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Their purpose: the common good of the community of faith.



What are these gifts that Paul lists? In verse 28 Paul prioritizes one listing:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| πρῶτον | first |
| ἀποστόλους , | apostles, |
| δεύτερον | second |
| προφήτας , | prophets, |
| τρίτον | third |
| διδασκάλους , | teachers; |
| ἔπειτα | then |
| δυνάμεις , | deeds of power, |
| ἔπειτα | then |
| χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων , | gifts of healing, |
| ἀντιλήψεις , | forms of assistance, |

κυβερνήσεις ,
γέννη γλωσσῶν .

forms of leadership,
various kinds of tongues.

Given that the controversy over gifts in Corinth centered on speaking in tongues, it isn’t surprising that Paul moves it from the top of the Corinthian’s list to the bottom of his list. This point will be hammered in more decisively in the elaboration found in [chapter fourteen](#), where Paul will make the dramatic declaration, “in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue” (14:9). The Corinthians had elevated to top priority an activity inherently divisive and disruptive. Paul will limit it to personal use pretty much in private, while placing the other activities above tongues because they are designed to build up the community of faith.

When Paul listed specific gifts in vv. 8-10, they do not match those listed in v. 28:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (1) To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, | first
(1) apostles,
second |
| (2) and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, | (2) prophets ,
third |
| (3) to another faith by the same Spirit, | (3) teachers;
then |
| (4) to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, | (4) deeds of power ,
then |
| (5) to another the working of miracles , | (5) gifts of healing , |
| (6) to another prophecy , | (6) forms of assistance, |
| (7) to another the discernment of spirits, | (7) forms of leadership, |
| (8) to another various kinds of tongues , | (8) various kinds of tongues . |
| (9) to another the interpretation of tongues. | |

This variation in listing strongly suggests randomness in listing. Only some of the items overlap. It argues against inclusiveness in listing, even with a pooling of items from all the lists in Paul’s letters. J. Paul Sampley (*New Interpreters Bible*, iPreach) correctly amplifies this:

Paul lists the gifts of the Spirit in 12:4-10, 27-31 and in Rom 12:3-8. How should we understand these lists? Are they intended to be exhaustive? Illustrative? The interpretive landmines related to spiritual gifts are numerous. First, there is the natural human tendency to look at the lists and to check ourselves against them, as we check a part to its template, to see how (or even whether) the Spirit is working one or more of those gifts (charismata) in our own lives. Second, we

could easily assume that the lists exhaust the possibilities of the Spirit's gifts (see 1 Cor 7:7 for a charisma that is not even in a list); that if one is not an apostle or has not been working miracles or healing recently, we might conclude that this person is not the medium for the Spirit's working. Third, perhaps that one gift more than all the others is the gift of choice.

The lists do not agree in content. Speaking in tongues is not even mentioned in the Romans list. Faith, a charisma that, by definition, every believer must have, is listed as a gift in 1 Cor 12:9, so no one can look at the lists and not see himself or herself reflected in them somewhere.

Although the lists are somewhat tailored to the circumstances of the letters in which they are found, they are not exhaustive of the ways the Spirit works in believers. Rather, they are illustrative. Further, we may conclude that, as Paul is at pains to argue in 1 Corinthians, no one gift is superior to all of the others and that no one gift is the hallmark or telltale sign of one's being a Christian. Likewise, we see that each gift is determined and allocated by the Spirit, as the Spirit wills, as a means of enriching the community life of the believers, and that there is no limit to the number of gifts an individual may exhibit. So modern Christians should view the Pauline lists of gifts as suggestive of the multitude of ways that the Spirit works in and through the lives of individuals to enrich the shared life and the common good of the believers.

One final point: The different kinds of spiritual gifts should not be isolated from the "different kinds of service" and the "different kinds of working" that parallel and overlap in 12:4-6. So as modern believers look for signs of the Spirit's working in them, they should not look simply at the spiritual gifts; that is only one part of the Spirit's working. They should look also at their service as a sign of the Spirit's expression in them; likewise, they should consider also their different ways of working along with and through others as yet another sign of the Spirit's manifesting itself in and through them. Like grace, the Spirit works in lives in surprising ways, some of which bowl us over with their immediate power and obviousness while others may seem more like Elijah's "gentle whisper" (1 Kgs 19:12 NIV), more like silence than a whirlwind. Believers should never underestimate the power or mode of the Spirit's working even if to them its working is neither obvious nor overwhelming. Accordingly, in the shared life of faith even the actions or deeds that seem the most menial and inconsequential may be the medium through which the Holy Spirit works to enrich the common good of the faithful.

In verses 29 and 30, Paul turns around and asks a series of rhetorical questions with the same core structure: "Are all ----?" He does not repeat each item in his list. Two items in the list are ignored: (6) forms of assistance, and (7) forms of leadership. Page 8 of 1Cor. 12:27-31 Bible Study

Additionally, a question is raised about an item not in the list: "Do all interpret?" The point of the series of questions is seen in the repeated "all." Everyone doesn't do one thing. Again, this is intended to dramatically emphasize the diversity factor. And the randomness nature of the listing shows up again.

A few of the items may need some explanation, since modern translators will struggle to find accurate and meaningful English words to express them.

Apostles (ἀποστόλους), prophets (προφήτας), and teachers (διδασκάλους) are fairly clear. But δυνάμεις, χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν may need some amplification.

δυνάμεις (*dynameis*) is variously translated as "miracles" (NASB), "deeds of power" (NRSV), "those who do miracles" (NLT), "workers of miracles" (NIV), "those who perform miracles" (TEV), and "miracle workers" (Message). The most literal translation of these is the NRSV, since the Greek word means concrete expressions of extraordinary power. But generally, this word in the plural form as here simply means "miracles." In that ancient world the availability of divine expressions of power over disease etc. was a critical hope for deliverance from these diseases etc.

Interestingly, at this point in the list Paul moves from personal terms -- apostles, prophets, teachers -- to non-personal references -- miracles etc. This in part is signaled by the shift in connectors from a number to "then." Some translations ignore this indicator of list structure and use personal terms consistently through the list. One implication in this structure is to further heighten the importance of the first three items in the list.

χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων (*charismata iamaton* = gifts of healing) is closely connected to the previous designation of miracles. Not much distinction between these two would have been understood at that time.

ἀντιλήψεις (*antilempseis*) has a possible variety of meanings around the core idea of "helping," as Thieselton (*NIGTC*) summarizes:

There are three clear choices in the translation and meaning of the word in 12:28. Either it means (i) *helpful deeds* (as in BAGD and Dunn) in the most vague and general sense; or it means (ii) the *help* and *support for those in need* traditionally associated in later church history with the ministry of deacons (as in Grimm-Thayer, Chrysostom, Calvin, Meyer, Heinrici, and Lang) (but against J. N. Collins); or (iii) its context in the rhetorical function of *body* means support in the sense in which in modern cultures we speak of *support staff*, i.e., in the plural **kinds of administrative support** (as, in effect, Robertson and Plummer).

Consequently, the translations will vary from “helps” (NASB), to “forms of assistance” (NRSV), to “those who can help others” (NLT), to “those able to help others” (NIV), “to help others” (TEV), to “helpers” (Message). Very possibly Paul had in mind the ministry to orphans and widows among others.

κυβερνήσεις (*kyberneseis*) has to do with leadership and administrative skills. Its non-religious usage often was to refer to the piloting of a ship. As Thieselton (NIGTC) observes:

we translate κυβερνήσεις as the **ability to formulate strategies**. To be sure, κυβερνήσις in the singular often means *leadership*. Collins understands the term to denote *leaders* with “some kind of directive activity.”¹³⁹ Hence the plural, *forms of leadership* (NRSV), is broadly acceptable on grounds of Greek lexicography and reflects AV/KJV’s and RV’s *governments*. But is this translation sufficiently context-specific, given the nuances of the word in various texts? One aspect, namely the one discussed under (f), is expressed by NIV’s *administration*, and it is useful, if not entirely adequate, to find this component underlined in the NIV. It is utterly without warrant for Fee to comment that “‘administration skills’ ... is probably a far cry from what Paul had in mind.”¹⁴⁰ Again, the more a person longs to preach and to teach, the more conscious he or she becomes of the need for others to give structural support (e.g., who will “follow up” what events, and when, and has it been done?) however primitive the structures or small the community.

One issue arises about these last two gifts in particular with attempts to apply them to a modern church setting: are they generalized references or do they apply just to a modern church staff? Since the early church had no such thing as a church staff which is largely based on a distinction between clergy and laity, they must be understood in generalized terms. In the structure of a house church, which was the first century organizational structure, Paul is simply alluding to individuals within the group that potentially would have skills in these particular areas.

γένη γλωσσῶν (*gene glosson*) is rendered “various kinds of tongues” by the NRSV and NASB, and “different kinds of tongues” by the NIV. Other translations gloss over the first word and merely translate it as “tongues” with some adjective like “strange” or “unknown.” The first approach is more accurate. Probably Paul is alluding to estatic speech, but recognizing variations of it. By nature, “tongues” are an individual speaking to God, over against

prophecy, preaching, and teaching being a speaking from God to others. Exactly what kinds of variations Paul had in mind is unclear, and is debated among scholars. That Paul has in mind here estatic speech is hardly questionable. How does this have variations? Probably the variations have individual expression traits as much as anything. But possibly he also sees levels between the “speech of angels” in 13:1 and the frenzied expressions that seriously disturb visitors at the assembly (14:23).

How do we connect all this to our world? One approach to avoid is that of patristic Christianity. The early church fathers took these lists as setting up an organizational structure for the church. The concept of [apostolic succession](#) is derived in part from taking these lists this way. In no way can one deduce from these lists an organizational chart for how to set up a church staff!

Another approach to studiously avoid is the shallow and irrelevant “quests for my gift” mentality present among some evangelicals today. The only Pauline admonition to seek comes in verse 31 where the quest is not for these gifts mentioned in chapter twelve. But the how to books on finding your gifts abound in some circles. This represents a horrible twisting of Paul’s discussion. For Paul, the issue is using what God has given you, not trying to find your gift. To “seek” rather than to “use” is a serious distortion of Paul’s concern.

Gifts are ministry and actions as defined in 12:4-6, not some mystical experience with God either at conversion or subsequently. They grow out of our talents and training and express devoted service to God under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Once we open ourselves to obedient service intended to build up God’s church, the Holy Spirit will open those proper doors of ministry allowing us to make a worthwhile contribution to this edification of the people of God. The key is dedication and involvement in service. The doors open up on the playing field, not up in the stands.

The unity of God’s people is a top priority. But it is unity, not uniformity. The diversity of giftedness among the community of faith is something to be acknowledged and cherished. This includes respecting the value of each gift, and thus avoiding spiritual elitism. But it is to acknowledge that some contributions have a more visibly prominent place in the community. Yet, this doesn’t make the others any less important, in the final analysis, for all are needed. The sense of oneness transcends the differences to point to a common goal: edifying the

church. It is achieved through the presence and leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The lists here in chapter twelve only suggest possibilities of contribution. They do not define the limits of contribution. Anyone knowing the leadership of the Holy Spirit understands the frequent twists and turns that the Spirit of God will take one in ministry contribution. Most of these can never be anticipated. To make these lists definitive of all possible spiritual gifts is to attempt to draw a box around the Holy Spirit and then limit His leadership

to inside that box. Not only is such impossible to do, it borders on the blasphemous. Our God can never be so defined! He's too great and powerful for that.

What is the bottom line of these verses for each of us? It is this: open yourself to the marvelous possibilities of ministry that God has in mind for you. He knows how to position you to contribute in the unique way that you are "gifted" to do. Let Him lead you in the midst of obedient service. Just sit back and watch what great things our God can do!

c. Better Gifts, v. 31

Greek NT

ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ
χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα.
Καὶ ἔτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν
ὁδὸν ὑμῶν δεικνύμι.

NASB

But earnestly desire the
greater gifts. And I show
you a still more excellent
way.

NRSV

But strive for the
greater gifts. And I will
show you a still more ex-
cellent way.

NLT

And in any event, you
should desire the most
helpful gifts. First, how-
ever, let me tell you about
something else that is
better than any of them!

Notes:

Several interpretive questions are present in this rather short verse comprised of two sentences.

First, do both sentences bring 12:1-30 to a climax? Or do both sentences introduce the discussion on love as the greatest gift in chapter thirteen?

Second, is it possible for the first sentence to be linked to chapter twelve and the second sentence to belong to chapter thirteen?

How these two sentences are understood contextually will largely determine their meaning. The second sentence, "And I will show you a still more excellent way," is pretty obviously linked to chapter thirteen. Most printed Greek texts link the second sentence with what follows. Paul promises to explain to them the path that is beyond excellence. This is the path of love that he describes in the next chapter.

The unclear issue is what are the "greater gifts" (τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα) mentioned in the first sentence. Also, is ζηλοῦτε describing what they were already doing, or, is it admonishing them to seek something different? The Greek verb spelling can mean either "you are seeking," or "seek." If the former is the intended meaning, the Paul is referring back almost sarcastically to their seeking of the gift of tongues as the "greatest gift." If so, then the second sentence on the better path becomes his challenge to these misguided Corinthians to "get their act together" in terms of what gifts were all about and thus how the various gifts should sort themselves out.

Most translators will take ζηλοῦτε as an impera-

tive verb with the meaning "seek." The ironical meaning of this as an admonition is still possible and has the tone of "you really ought to seek..." over against an implied "you haven't been seeking properly." The ironical meaning will point "the greater gifts" toward faith, hope and love in chapter thirteen. This is over against "greater gifts" alluding back to the three gifts at the top of the prioritized list in 12:28: apostles, prophets, teachers. Given the New Testament definition of "apostles" as exclusively referring to the original Twelve and to Paul, the idea of seeking to be an apostle seems to be totally out of bounds. This is especially so as something that Paul would urge the Corinthians to seek after. To seek to be a prophet also seems incompatible with NT definition of prophet in the early church. To aspire to be a teacher seems more plausible, but then comes the warning in [James 3:1](#) against people seeking to become teachers: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness." James didn't encourage people to aspire to become teachers. It's highly unlikely that Paul is doing that here.

Consequently, the better understanding -- in my estimation -- is that Paul admonishes the Corinthians to seek the best gifts of faith, hope and love. They needed to refocus their aspirations away from what brought them attention and supposed spiritual superiority. Instead, they needed to focus on those qualities that pushed them into gifted service. We would do well to follow that same path.

Greek NT

12:27 Ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους. 12:28 καὶ οὕς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν. 12:29 μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι; μὴ πάντες προφῆται; μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι; μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις; 12:30 μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων; μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν; μὴ πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν; 12:31 ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα. Καὶ ἔτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δεικνυμι.

NIV

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

NASB

27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. 29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? 30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? 31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

TEV

27 All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it. 28 In the church God has put all in place: in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, and in the third place teachers; then those who perform miracles, followed by those who are given the power to heal or to help others or to direct them or to speak in strange tongues. 29 They are not all apostles or prophets or teachers. Not everyone has the power to work miracles 30 or to heal diseases or to speak in strange tongues or to explain what is said. 31 Set your hearts, then, on the more **important**

NRSV

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Message

27 You are Christ's body - that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything. 28 You're familiar with some of the parts that God has formed in his church, which is his "body": apostles prophets teachers miracle workers healers helpers organizers those who pray in tongues. 29 But it's obvious by now, isn't it, that Christ's church is a complete Body and not a gigantic, unidimensional Part? It's not all Apostle, not all Prophet, not all Miracle Worker, 30 not all Healer, not all Prayer in Tongues, not all **Inter-**

NLT

27 Now all of you together are Christ's body, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it. 28 Here is a list of some of the members that God has placed in the body of Christ: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who can get others to work together, those who speak in unknown languages. 29 Is everyone an apostle? Of course not. Is everyone a prophet? No. Are all teachers? Does everyone have the power to do miracles? 30 Does everyone have the gift of healing? Of course not. Does God give all of us the ability to speak in unknown languages? Can everyone interpret unknown languages? No! 31 And in any event, you should desire the most helpful gifts. First, however, let me tell you about something else that is better than any of them!

gifts.

Best of all, however, is the following way.

preter of Tongues. 31 And yet some of you keep competing for so-called "important" parts. But now I want to lay out a far better way for you.

Greek NT

- ²⁷ δὲ
1 Ἰμεῖς ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ
καὶ
μέλη ἐκ μέρους.
- ²⁸ καὶ
2 οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς
ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ
πρῶτον
ἀποστόλους,
δεύτερον
προφήτας,
τρίτον
διδασκάλους,
ἔπειτα
δυνάμεις,
ἔπειτα
χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων,
ἀντιλήμψεις,
κυβερνήσεις,
γένη γλωσσῶν.
- 3 ²⁹ μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι;
4 μὴ πάντες προφῆται;
5 μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι;
6 μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις;
7 ³⁰ μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων;
8 μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν;
9 μὴ πάντες διερμνεύουσιν;
10 ³¹ δὲ
ζηλοῦτε τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Greek NT

12:4 Διαίρεσεις δὲ χαρισμάτων εἰσιν, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα· 12:5 καὶ διαίρεσεις διακονιῶν εἰσιν, καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος· 12:6 καὶ διαίρεσεις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσιν, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν. 12:7 ἑκάστῳ δὲ δίδεται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον. 12:8 ᾧ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδεται λόγος σοφίας, ἄλλῳ δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, 12:9 ἑτέρῳ πίστις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, ἄλλῳ δὲ χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι, 12:10 ἄλλῳ δὲ ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, ἄλλῳ [δὲ] προφητεία, ἄλλῳ [δὲ] διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, ἑτέρῳ γένη γλωσσῶν, ἄλλῳ δὲ ἑρμηνεία γλωσσῶν· 12:11 πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα διαιροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἑκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται.

NASB

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6 There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

NRSV

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 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 discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

NLT

4 Now there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all. 5 There are different kinds of service in the church, but it is the same Lord we are serving. 6 There are different ways God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work through all of us. 7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church. 8 To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another he gives the gift of special knowledge. 9 The Spirit gives special faith to another, and to someone else he gives the power to heal the sick. 10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and to another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to know whether it is really the Spirit of God or another spirit that is speaking. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, and another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. 11 It is the one and only Holy Spirit who distributes these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

1 Cor. 12:4-11
Greek NT Diagrammed

4 δὲ
1 Διαιρέσεις χαρισμάτων εἰσίν,
δὲ
2 τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα·
5 καὶ
3 διαιρέσεις διακονιῶν εἰσίν,
καὶ
4 ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος·
6 καὶ
5 διαιρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσίν,
δὲ
6 ὁ αὐτὸς θεὸς
ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν.
7 δὲ
7 ἐκάστῳ δίδεται ἢ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος
πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.
8 γὰρ
μὲν
διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος
8 ᾧ...δίδεται λόγος σοφίας,
δὲ
9 ἄλλῳ (δίδεται) λόγος γνώσεως
κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα,
10 9 ἐτέρῳ (δίδεται) πίστις
ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι,
δὲ
11 ἄλλῳ (δίδεται) χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων
ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι,
10 δὲ
12 ἄλλῳ (δίδεται) ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων,
δὲ
13 ἄλλῳ (δίδεται) προφητεία,
δὲ
14 ἄλλῳ (δίδεται) διακρίσεις πνευμάτων,
15 ἐτέρῳ (δίδεται) γένη γλωσσῶν,
δὲ
16 ἄλλῳ (δίδεται) ἐρμηνεῖα γλωσσῶν·
11 δὲ
17 πάντα ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα
διαιροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ
καθὼς βούλεται.

Rom 12:1-8

Greek NT

12:1 Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν·

12:2 καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον.

12:3 Λέγω γὰρ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι παντὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν, ἐκάστῳ ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐμέρισεν μέτρον πίστεως. 12:4 καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι πολλὰ μέλη ἔχομεν, τὰ δὲ μέλη πάντα οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει πρᾶξιν, 12:5 οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν σώματι ἐσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, τὸ δὲ καθ' εἷς ἀλλήλων μέλη. 12:6 ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα, εἴτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, 12:7 εἴτε διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ, εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, 12:8 εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει· ὁ μεταδιδούς ἐν ἀπλότητι, ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ, ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἰλαρότητι.

NASB

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

NRSV

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

NLT

1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? 2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

3 As God's messenger, I give each of you this warning: Be honest in your estimate of yourselves, measuring your value by how much faith God has given you. 4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others. 6 God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you. 7 If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, do it! If you have money, share it generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Rom 12:1-8
Greek NT Diagram

- 12:1 οὖν
(1) Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς
ἀδελφοί,
διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ
παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν
θυσίαν
ζῶσαν
ἀγίαν
εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ,
τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν·
- 12:2 καὶ
(2) μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ,
ἀλλὰ
(3) μεταμορφοῦσθε
τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός
εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς
τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ,
τὸ ἀγαθὸν
καὶ
εὐάρεστον
καὶ
τέλειον.
- 12:3 γὰρ
(4) λέγω
διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι
παντὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν
μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν
παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν
ἀλλὰ
φρονεῖν
εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν,
ἐκάστῳ
ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐμέρισεν μέτρον πίστεως.
- 12:4 γὰρ
ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι
καθάπερ...πολλὰ μέλη ἔχομεν,
δὲ
τὰ μέλη πάντα οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει πρᾶξιν,
- 12:5 οὕτως
(5) οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν σῶμά ἐσμεν
ἐν Χριστῷ,
- (6) δὲ
τὸ καθ' ἑἷς ἀλλήλων μέλη.
- 12:6 δὲ
ἔχοντες χαρίσματα...διάφορα,
κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθείσαν ἡμῖν
εἴτε προφητείαν (ἔχομεν)
(7) (ἔχομεν αὐτήν)
κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως,

12:7
(8) εἴτε διακονίαν (ἔχομεν)
(ἔχομεν αὐτήν)
ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ,

(9) εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων
(ἔχέτω αὐτό)
ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ,

12:8
(10) εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν
(ἔχέτω αὐτό)
ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει·

(11) (εἴτε) ὁ μεταδιδούς
(ἔχέτω αὐτό)
ἐν ἀπλότητι,

(12) (εἴτε) ὁ προϊστάμενος
(ἔχέτω αὐτό)
ἐν σπουδῇ,

(13) (εἴτε) ὁ ἐλεῶν
(ἔχέτω αὐτό)
ἐν ἰλαρότητι.

Eph. 4:7-16

Greek NT

<4:7> Ἐνὶ δὲ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. <4:8> διὸ λέγει, Ἄναβας εἰς ὕψος ἡ χαμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. <4:9> τὸ δὲ Ἄνεβη τί ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα [μέρη] τῆς γῆς; <4:10> ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα. <4:11> καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους, <4:12> πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, <4:13> μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, <4:14> ἵνα μηκέτι ὄμεν νήπιοι, κλυδωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐν πανουργίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης, <4:15> ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ, Χριστός, <4:16> ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους τὴν αὐξήσιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ.

NASB

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." 9 (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) 11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

NRSV

7 But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." 9 (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) 11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. 14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. 15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

NLT

7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift according to the generosity of Christ. 8 That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." F5 9 Notice that it says "he ascended." This means that Christ first came down to the lowly world in which we live. F6 10 The same one who came down is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that his rule might fill the entire universe. 11 He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, 13 until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be like children, forever changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us something different or because someone has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16 Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Eph. 4:7-16 Diagrammed

- 4:7
1 δὲ
Ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις
κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
- 4:8
2 διὸ
λέγει,
Ἄναβας εἰς ὕψος
α ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν,
β ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.
- 4:9
3 δὲ
τὸ Ἄνεβη τί ἐστίν,
εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη
εἰς τὰ κατώτερα [μέρη] τῆς γῆς;
- 4:10
4 ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν,
ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα.
- 4:11
5 καὶ
αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους,
δὲ
τοὺς προφήτας,
δὲ
τοὺς εὐαγγελιστάς,
δὲ
τοὺς ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους,
4:12 πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων
εἰς ἔργον διακονίας,
εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
4:13 μέχρι καταντήσωμεν οἱ πάντες
εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως
καὶ
τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως
τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ,
εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον,
εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
4:14 ἵνα μηκέτι ὦμεν νήπιοι,
κλυδωνιζόμενοι
καὶ
περιφερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας
ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων,
ἐν πανουργίᾳ
πρὸς τὴν μεθοδεῖαν τῆς πλάνης,
4:15 δὲ

ἀληθεύοντες
ἐν ἀγάπῃ
--- αὐξήσωμεν
εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα,
ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ, Χριστός,
ἐξ οὗ **πᾶν τὸ σῶμα**

4:16

συναρμολογούμενον
καὶ
συμβιβαζόμενον
διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς
τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας
κατ' ἐνέργειαν
ἐν μέτρῳ
ἐνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους

τὴν αὐξήσιν

τοῦ σώματος

ποιεῖται

εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ
ἐν ἀγάπῃ.

1 Pet. 4:7-11

Greek NT

^{4:7} Πάντων δὲ τὸ τέλος ἤγγικεν. σωφρονήσατε οὖν καὶ νήψατε εἰς προσευχάς· ^{4:8} πρὸ πάντων τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες, ὅτι ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν. ^{4:9} φιλόξενοι εἰς ἀλλήλους ἄνευ γογγυσμοῦ, ^{4:10} ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ διακονούντων ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ. ^{4:11} εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ· εἴ τις διακονεῖ, ὡς ἐξ ἰσχύος ἧς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός, ἵνα ἐν πᾶσιν δοξάζεται ὁ θεὸς διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἐστὶν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

NASB

7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. 8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint. 10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

NRSV

7 The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. 8 Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaining. 10 Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 11 Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

NLT

7 The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. 8 Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. 10 God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you. 11 Are you called to be a speaker? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Are you called to help others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then God will be given glory in everything through Jesus Christ. All glory and power belong to him forever and ever. Amen.

1 Pet. 4:7-11 Diagrammed

4:7

δὲ

Πάντων

1 τὸ τέλος ἤγγικεν.

οὖν

2 σωφρονήσατε

καὶ

3 νήψατε

εἰς προσευχάς·

4:8

τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες,

πρὸ πάντων

ὅτι ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος

ἁμαρτιῶν.

4:9

φιλόξενοι

εἰς ἀλλήλους

ἄνευ γογγυσμοῦ,

4:10

ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα

εἰς ἑαυτοὺς

αὐτὸ διακονοῦντες

ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος

θεοῦ.

4:11

εἴ τις λαλεῖ,

4 (λαλεῖτω)

ὡς λόγια θεοῦ·

εἴ τις διακονεῖ,

5 (διακονεῖτω)

ὡς ἐξ ἰσχύος

ἧς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός,

ἵνα ἐν πᾶσιν δοξάζεται ὁ θεός

διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

ὃ ἔστιν ἡ δόξα

καὶ

τὸ κράτος

εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων,

ἀμήν.