

G I F T E D
G I F T E D
G I F T E D
G I F T E D
G I F T E D
G I F T E D

1 CORINTHIANS 12 - 14 SERIES GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GIFTED SERIES // 1 CORINTHIANS 12-14

WELCOME	2
THE TROUBLE WITH CORINTH	3
CONVERGENCE (RED DOOR THEOLOGY)	4
SPIRITUAL GIFTS 101 + REVELATORY GIFTS	5
FAITH, HEALING & MIRACLES	6
BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT	7
BODY BUILDING	8
THE WAY OF LOVE	9
PROPHECY	10
TONGUES	11
WORSHIP	12
WHERE TO NOW? PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LIVING IN THE SPIRIT	13-14



WELCOME

JONATHAN SMITH // LEAD PASTOR

Educated, equipped, expectant!

Welcome to this ten-part teaching series on 1 Corinthians 12-14!

From the outset, I want you to know why I'm taking us on this journey:

1. I want us to be *educated* about the work of the Holy Spirit - particularly in the use of spiritual gifts in the life of the church. Much of my own resistance to the gifts and ministry of the Spirit has been due, frankly, to ignorance. 1 Corinthians 12-14 is the most thorough Scriptural teaching we have on this topic. I'm excited to see what God will reveal to us through his word!
2. I also want us to be *equipped* to use the gifts God graciously gives us. Simply being educated *about* the gifts and ministry of the Spirit is not enough. At Red Door we really need to gather practical wisdom, and grow in (faltering) experience. I see Small Groups as a wonderful training ground for this - so be sure to join a group!
3. Finally, I want us to be *expectant*. That word has been brought to the minds of many in our church over the past 12 months. I believe it is a revelation from God about how he wants us to approach him. To be expectant about what he can (and will) do powerfully for us and through us. Remember, we have a good Father who will give the Holy Spirit to all who ask him (Luke 11:13), and he is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us (Eph. 3:20)!

With all this in mind, please join me in praying: "Come, Holy Spirit!"

Yours,

Red Door Church, May 2019

First up: The sorry state of affairs in the Corinthian church.



THE TROUBLE WITH CORINTH

WEEK ONE // ACTS 18:1-11 + 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9

The Big Idea: The church at Corinth is in a mess! On the one hand, they have gratefully received the Gospel and pursued all the gifts of the Spirit, but on the other hand, they are living in a way that makes a mockery of Jesus' call to discipleship.

KEY TEACHING POINTS

The church at Corinth: Corinth was situated at a busy crossroads for trade in the first century, and was a place where many cultures and religions mingled. Paul, and his friends, Priscilla and Aquila, planted a church and spent 18 months in Corinth in the early 50s A.D.

Sometime later, having moved on to Ephesus, Paul received an oral report that the Corinthians were suffering serious problems of division, sexual immorality, social snobbery, doctrinal misunderstanding, and more.

Corinthian abuses: *"[The Corinthians] have worked their way through the entire body of Christian doctrine and praxis, and made a pig's ear of all of it. There is division, not unity, about virtually everything: leadership, baptism, marriage, idol food, spiritual gifts, eschatology... Corporate gatherings are a weekly debacle and do more harm than good: license-flaunting dress codes, drunkenness at the Lord's Supper, self-indulgent spirituality, total chaos."* (Andrew Wilson, Spirit and Sacrament, 93).

At root of much of the trouble in Corinth lay a lack of concern for personal holiness and a prizing of spiritual giftedness over unity and love.

Spirituality without love: "If I speak human or angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." - 1 Cor. 13:1. Paul wasn't speaking hypothetically about the necessity of having love as the foundation of giftedness; he was rebuking the Corinthian church for utterly neglecting this truth! They had bought the lie that competency was more important than character (see more in page 9).



Next up: the unlikely convergence of three traditions.

CONVERGENCE (RED DOOR THEOLOGY)

WEEK TWO // 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-7

The Big Idea: At Red Door we believe in the 'convergence' of three Christian traditions: 1) the centrality of the Gospel and the absolute sovereignty of God (Reformed); 2) the necessity of regularly participating in Baptism and Communion (Sacramental); and 3) the validity and practice of all spiritual gifts in the life of the local church (Charismatic).

KEY TEACHING POINTS

Reformed: We are reformed by both conviction (from Scripture) and tradition (as Anglicans). This means that we believe in the Gospel of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, the necessity of repentance and faith, and the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation and, indeed, over all things. It also means we prize the expository preaching of God's Word in our worship gatherings.

Sacramental: Standing with the Church from its inception, we insist that the sacraments of Baptism and Communion be regularly practiced. Baptism is how we put on Christ, are buried with Christ, raised with Christ, washed, and saved (see Rom. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:11-12; 1 Pet. 3:21-22).

We share Communion every Sunday, because, in Scripture, Communion was something that happened "whenever [the church] comes together" - 1 Cor. 11:17-20. These sacraments are not merely remembrances of something, but means of grace that God uses to strengthen our faith.

Charismatic: As charismatics we believe that all spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament continue today and are given by the Spirit according to his will.

This view is in contrast to that of cessationists who believe that certain spiritual gifts (e.g. speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing, etc.), ceased to exist at the close of the first century when the last Apostle died or when the last words of Scripture were inspired.



Next up: Words of Knowledge/Wisdom, and Discernment.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS 101 + REVELATORY GIFTS

WEEK THREE // 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11

The Big Idea: God wills that we desire spiritual gifts, not to pursue our own fame, but to selflessly strengthen others – “so that the church may be built up” (1 Cor. 14:5).

Gifts of knowledge/wisdom and discernment are “revelatory” gifts because they are concerned with something the Holy Spirit reveals that could not otherwise be known.

KEY TEACHING POINTS

Manifestation: Spiritual gifts are not “things” separable from God himself. They are, in fact, God in us, “energising our souls, imparting revelation to our minds, infusing power in our wills, and working his sovereign purposes through us.” (Sam Storms, *The Beginner's Guide to Spiritual Gifts*, 13). Therefore, we should desire all the spiritual gifts because we desire God himself.

Words of knowledge/wisdom: Like all spiritual gifts, these are given to the church for the “common good,” (v.7) so as to strengthen, nourish, encourage, console, instruct and edify us in the faith.

The only place these gifts are mentioned in the New Testament is here in 12:8. We do, however, get an idea of how they operate in the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles: see Matt. 9:1-8, 12:22-37; Luke 6:6-11, 9:46-48; John 1:43-51, 4; Acts 5:1-11, 8:26-40, 9:10-19, 13:1-3, 14:8-10.

The discerning of spirits: Again, we are not given a definition of this gift, but it seems to be the ability to distinguish between the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of a demonic spirit (or even ‘the human spirit’).

While *all Christians* are responsible to “test the spirits to see if they are from God” - 1 John 4:1, here Paul speaks of a special ability that is given by the Spirit. It is probably a Spirit-enabled ‘sense’ regarding the source or power of a spirit in any given situation.



Next up: the gifts of Faith, Healing, and Miracles.

FAITH, HEALING, & MIRACLES

WEEK FOUR // 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11

The Big Idea: The charismatic gift of faith (distinct to the converting gift of faith, given to all believers) is often given by God for a specific time and purpose - often in order to empower a believer to exercise gifts of healing and/or miracles.

KEY TEACHING POINTS

Gift of faith: The gift of faith, probably more so than most other gifts, is occasional or spontaneous, rather than permanent. It is an empowered faith that “enables a believer to trust God to bring about certain things for which he or she cannot claim some divine promise recorded in Scripture...” (D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 39).

In other words, it is an unexpected surge of confidence which results in an extraordinary certainty and assurance that God is about to breakthrough, usually in circumstances of great need.

Healings: There seems a close connection between gifts of healings (as well as the gift of miracles) and the gift of faith. God often seems to heal on the occasions when he gives a corresponding gift of faith to the person praying. We also see this faith exercised by the person receiving the healing - something we saw repeatedly in Jesus’ own healing ministry in our recent series on Mark’s Gospel .

Miracles: The most literal translation of Paul’s words in v.10 is “workings of powers”. Again we’re left without a definition, but although healing is definitely miraculous, Paul almost certainly has something additional in mind here (otherwise why would he repeat himself?).

For some possible examples of the gift of miracles, see: Acts 9:40; Acts 13:8-11; Acts 5:1-11; as well as the miracles of Jesus and Elijah; and, perhaps, supernatural deliverance from demon possession.



Next up: the controversial topic of Baptism in the Spirit.

BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT

WEEK FIVE // 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-13

The Big Idea: Are all Christians automatically baptised in the Spirit at the moment they are saved? Or is there a subsequent experience of 'Spirit Baptism' that follows sometime later? We will examine three historically significant views.

KEY TEACHING POINTS

Classical Pentecostal: Pentecostals believe in the doctrine of subsequence, that is, Spirit baptism is always subsequent to and therefore distinct from conversion. In this view, the initial evidence of having been baptised in the Spirit is speaking in tongues. If a believer has not spoken in tongues, they have not been baptised in the Spirit.

Contemporary Charismatic: Generally speaking, most contemporary charismatics endorse the two-stage doctrine of subsequence (above). However, many reject any conditions on which Spirit-baptism is contingent and do not believe all Spirit-baptised Christians necessarily speak in tongues (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:30).

Third Wave Movement: Identifies evangelicals who believe in and consistently practice the full range of the Spirit's gifts. According to this view, Spirit-baptism describes what happens when one becomes a Christian (contra Pentecostal subsequence). Therefore, all Christians, *by definition*, have been baptised in the Spirit.

However, in this view, there are also multiple, subsequent experiences of the Spirit's activity whereby we are 'anointed' or 'overwhelmed' by the intimate presence of the Spirit. This is what the Bible calls the "filling" of the Spirit. Thus, there is one baptism of the Spirit (at conversion), but multiple fillings thereafter (cf. Eph. 5:18).

At Red Door, we believe this view best aligns with what we find in Scripture.



Next up: the church-building purpose of spiritual gifts.

BODY BUILDING

WEEK SIX // 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31

The Big Idea: God has gifted each believer in different ways in order to build a healthy 'body of believers' called the church. Each of us should embrace our gifting and work in unity for the good of the whole body.

KEY TEACHING POINTS

To those who feel inadequate (v.14-17): In the same way that different body parts contribute to the health of the physical body, so each of us, irrespective of where we fit in or what role we play, are absolutely essential to the health of the body of Christ!

To those who feel superior (v.21-26): Just as you can't tell whether or not a body part is valuable based on its external appearance, so it is with gifts. The point is that God is opposed to any division in the church based on the differing gifts of his people.

Should we ask for different gifts? (v.11; 18): In 1 Cor. 14:1; 13; 39, Paul says we should pursue and earnestly desire certain spiritual gifts. But if God is the one who chooses which gifts we have, why are we told to seek after them? Hasn't he already decided what we should have?

Firstly, not all gifting is given permanently. Sometimes God wants to gift you for a specific time, place, or need (e.g. the gift of faith, page 6).

Furthermore, God often brings about his will by changing ours! That is, one of the ways he accomplishes what he desires is by birthing in us a desire for the same thing. If God chooses to give you the gift of healing, he will often work in your heart to want it. Or to put it another way, your desire for a particular gift, along with your corresponding prayers, is the means by which God goes about fulfilling his own will in your life.

Beyond the subject of spiritual gifts, this 'mechanism' is one that God often uses to guide us and bring about his will in our lives.



Next up: setting spiritual giftedness in its place

THE WAY OF LOVE

WEEK SEVEN // 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13

The Big Idea: If love for other Christians doesn't govern how we use our spiritual gifts, then they're not only worthless, they're dangerous.

KEY TEACHING POINTS

The primacy of love: This passage makes extremely clear the fact that character is more important than competency (gifting). *The fruit of the Spirit is always to be valued above his gifts.*

One of the most dangerous and destructive things that could happen at Red Door is for people to prize a person's competency above their character. In this case the gifted person is encouraged to ignore spiritual maturity in favour of spiritual performance. The oft repeated result of this error is that the church is united - not under Christ - but by a cult of personality and performance.

The principles of love: Paul lays out a litany of principles that describe what love is and is not, and what love does and does not do.

Love is: patient, and kind.

Love is not: envious, boastful, arrogant, rude, self-seeking, and irritable.

Love does: rejoice in the truth, bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things. Love never ends.

Love does not: keep a record of wrongs, and find joy in unrighteousness.

The permanence of love: Whereas all spiritual gifts are for this life only, love is permanent and eternal. This is one reason why love is superior to gifts and why gifts exercised without love are worthless.

No spiritual gift is an infallible proof of the Spirit's presence. *All spiritual gifts can be counterfeited.* But this is not so when it comes to genuine Christian love. This quality of "agapē" love is the distinguishing mark of a genuine disciple of Jesus (cf. John 13:35).



Next up: the gift of Prophecy.

PROPHECY

WEEK EIGHT // 1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-19

The Big Idea: Our church needs more building-up, encouragement and consolation, and this is the goal of prophecy! So, with due care and discernment, I want us to obey Paul's instruction, "Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy" (1 Cor. 14:1-5).

KEY TEACHING POINTS

What is it? "...prophecy, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, combines pastoral insight into the needs of persons, communities, and situations with the ability to address these with a God-given utterance... (whether unprompted or prepared with judgment, decision and rational reflection) leading to challenge or comfort, judgment, or consolation, but ultimately building up the addressees... While the speaker believes that such utterances or discourses come from the Holy Spirit, mistakes can be made, and since believers, including ministers or prophets, remain humanly fallible, claims to prophecy must be weighed and tested." (Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 964).

Who can do it? Anyone can! But that doesn't mean we should all expect to function consistently as a prophet. Paul wishes that "all" would prophesy (1 Cor. 14:5), but doesn't mean he expects them to. He wants everyone to prophesy, not because it's a super-gift, but because "the one who prophesies builds up the church" (1 Cor. 14:4).

Is it dangerous? It seems to me that both tongues and prophecy are more susceptible to abuse. At Red Door, I want us to avoid 'spiritual weirdness' and anything that takes our eyes off Jesus. I want the Bible to be held up as our final authority in all things.

That said, the abuse of gifts by others doesn't mean we should neglect them. If that was so, Paul would never have told the ultra-charismatic Corinthians to keep pursuing spiritual gifts! I've heard plenty of bad preaching in my life, but that doesn't make me want to avoid preaching! The key is to practise the gifts (in love) according to God's word.



Next up: the gift of Tongues.

TONGUES

WEEK NINE // ACTS 2:1-12 + 1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-25

The Big Idea: While the primary purpose of spiritual gifts is the building-up of the corporate church, Paul's description of tongues in 1 Corinthians identifies it primarily as a form of prayer for self-edification.

KEY TEACHING POINTS

Tongue-speech at Pentecost (Acts 2): In this case, speaking in tongues is the supernatural ability to speak real human languages not previously known to the speaker. We are told that the Passover pilgrims in Jerusalem heard the uneducated Galileans speaking in their own native language (v.5-8). It was an edifying gift (v.7) given at an important moment in salvation history which happens occasionally today.

Different kinds of tongues: Paul envisioned "various kinds" of tongues (1 Cor. 12:10). Thus, tongues may operate in a similar way as at Pentecost, but may also be angelic languages or never before heard speech shaped by the Spirit for the edification of the one speaking.

Tongues as prayer language: In 1 Cor. 14:2, Paul asserts that whoever speaks in a tongue speaks "not to men but to God."

It's clear that praying in tongues was a normal part of Paul's private devotional life. In 1 Cor. 14:18-19, he says: *"I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all. Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue."* So then, if Paul won't speak in tongues in church (unless there is an interpretation) yet he speaks in tongues more frequently than anyone, it must therefore be a gift he exercises in private.

"...contrary to the opinion of many, spiritual edification can take place in ways other than through the cortex of the brain. Paul believed in an immediate communing with God by means of the Spirit that sometimes bypassed the mind..." (Gordon Fee, 1 Corinthians, 657).



Next up: exercising gifts in the worship gathering.

WORSHIP

WEEK TEN // 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40

The Big Idea: In the final paragraph of 1 Cor. 14, Paul addresses some important and controversial subjects regarding the worship gathering.

KEY TEACHING POINTS

The interpretation of tongues: Regarding speaking in tongues in the worship gathering, Paul gives the following instructions: a) "let there be only two or at most three" (v. 27a); b) "each in turn" (v. 27b); c) "let someone interpret" (v. 27c); d) without interpretation you can still exercise your gift, but privately (v. 28). If tongues are used in the church gathering there must be an accompanying interpretation, because without interpretation only the one speaking in a tongue is edified.

Judging prophetic words: The early church was to evaluate prophecy in the light of apostolic teaching (1 Thess. 5:20-21; 2 Thess. 2:15) *Therefore all prophetic words must be in absolute conformity with Scripture.* We also measure prophetic words by their tendency to edify or build up (1 Cor. 14:3), along with the test of love (1 Cor. 13). Finally, we should always share the 'prophetic word' with others in our community who have skill and experience in evaluating prophetic revelation.

The role of women: This is a controversial passage that is difficult to interpret. Theories abound as to precisely what Paul meant to communicate. It's clear that he wasn't giving a blanket command for silence among women because he stated in 1 Cor. 11:5 that women were to pray and prophesy in the church.

One theory is that Paul was prohibiting women from publicly questioning another woman's husband. *"There existed... a strong prejudice against women speaking in public, and especially against their speaking to other women's husbands. In a society with strictly defined gender and social roles... such behaviour was treated as totally inappropriate"* (Christopher Forbes, Prophecy and Inspired Speech, 274-75).

This reading of the text would render it a culturally-bound instruction, and therefore non-binding in the contemporary western church.

Next up: practical tips for living in the Spirit



WHERE TO NOW?

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LIVING IN THE SPIRIT

Four statements to summarise what we've learned:

1. Every believer, both male and female, young and old, is gifted to minister in the church. 'Professional religious people' aren't more qualified to receive or exercise spiritual gifts. *"A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good"* (1 Cor. 12:7).
2. Spiritual gifts are designed primarily for the building up of the church. They ought to move you outside of yourself to serve others for the collective good.
3. Spiritual gifts exercised without love are worse than useless, they are irritating and offensive. *"A noisy gong or a clanging cymbal"* - 1 Cor. 13:1. Gifts will come to an end, but love lasts forever.
4. Tongues and prophecy are more susceptible to abuse, and this should give us pause for self-examination. However, the antidote to these dangers is not to despise the gifts, but to properly exercise them in accordance with biblical principles.
"So then, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in other tongues. But everything is to be done decently and in order" - 1 Cor. 14:39-40.

Practical tips for growing in the gifts:

- Acknowledge and embrace from the outset that you can do nothing to force God's hand. *"The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."* - John 3:8
Whether or not God gives you a particular gift is entirely dependent on his will. If God doesn't choose to bless you with a particular gift, rest assured he has other, equally important plans for you to help build up the church.



- Make growing in the gifts a consistent focus of your prayers. Try fasting prayer as a way of demonstrating your hunger for God's blessing, and cry out to him for a manifestation of his Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7; 14:1).
- Check your motivation: be sure that your desire for gifting is your love and concern for the welfare of others, not the attention or affection that spiritual gifting might bring you.
- Learn from others who are already operating in the gifts. Seek them out, ask them questions, listen to their story, learn from their mistakes, and be encouraged by their fruitfulness.
- If you think God has revealed something to you for the edification of another, first share it in confidence with trusted and mature Christian friends who can help you process what has happened.
- Be willing to risk being wrong. Step out in faith and humility: *"I may have this wrong, but I think God may have put something on my heart for you."* Resist the temptation to say: *"Thus saith the Lord"* or *"This is the will of God for your life!"*. Remember, *"we know in part and we prophesy in part"* (1 Cor. 13:9)
- Immerse yourself in God's Word. Meditate on who God is and what he's like. This will help you discern whether or not it is God who is speaking. He will never reveal anything to anyone that is inconsistent with his word, his character or his ways.
- Finally, some things to avoid:
 - i) be slow to share negative or critical words (1 Cor. 14:3);
 - ii) don't assume that every random thought is from God;
 - iii) don't rely on revelatory gifts to make routine decisions that require regular wisdom;
 - iv) regarding big decisions with life-changing consequences: the more dramatic the life-change, the more careful discernment is required. Use your small group and mature disciples at church to help you along the way.

Discover more: www.reddoorchurch.com.au/sermons





RED DOOR RESOURCES
WWW.REDDOORCHURCH.COM.AU