

1 Corinthians 12

The Team Concept

When a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ in the Church Age, he is given a spiritual gift which is designed to function in harmony with the spiritual gifts of others in the team (1 Corinthians 12:8-21). Therefore, we must understand how this team functions, and how this team becomes a great team. No team ever functions well together and becomes a winning team without a lot of instruction, training and respect for authority.

What is the team, and how and when is it formed? The team formed by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at Salvation is described as “the body” and its leader is called “the head”. Jesus Christ is the head and all Christians make up the different parts of the body. Some members of the team are eyes, some are hands, and feet etc. (1 Corinthians 12:20-22). At salvation, God the Holy Spirit gives each believer a spiritual gift. These gifts determine the position the Christian plays on the team.

Let us use American football as an analogy to illustrate how a team functions. There are different positions and functions on a football team. Not every Christian can be the quarterback; not every Christian can be the running back and carry the ball. Some Christians must do the blocking. Some Christians must do the tackling. Every position is important. The quarterback is not going to be effective unless there is good blocking and tackling. Furthermore, the team is not going to be an effective unless every player on that team does his job. Though spiritual gifts are designed and distributed by the Holy Spirit to unite the members of a church into a harmonious functioning team, they were actually dividing the members in Corinth. This is why Paul is specifically writing to them regarding this matter.

12:1. Now concerning spiritual gifts [literally “spiritual matters,” but in the plural used for spiritual gifts as a general term] **brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant** [the greatest enemy of the Christian].

In the Corinthian Church there was a great deal of misunderstanding regarding spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14). They thought that possessing a sensational spiritual gift such as speaking in Tongues (communication of the gospel in a foreign language not known by the possessor of the gift) made one a superior Christian and that a sensational spiritual gift was thus more important than a non-sensational spiritual gift. This was sheer nonsense since ones spiritual gift is given in grace and merely determines what position one plays on the team. Furthermore, they did not even understand the purpose of the Gift of Tongues (the gift of speaking in a foreign language) nor how it functioned (1 Corinthians 14:1-19).

Application

Today, some pastors consider themselves as superior because of their spiritual gift of communication. For this reason, many churches use the expression “clergy and lay people” (lay people are also known as “laity” or sometimes just referred to as “ordinary believers”, as if the clergy were “extraordinary believers”). The Bible never uses these expressions. The church is a team made up of many spiritual gifts. No believer is superior based on his spiritual gift and no Christian is an ordinary believer.

Because many pastors think that their gift alone allows them to comprehend theology, they conclude that their 'lay people' are unable to comprehend theology, and so refuse to teach the members of their congregation technical theological words and concepts. Obviously this causes serious harm to the spiritual growth of their members. (Advancement in any subject requires the mastery of its technical words.) Thus, by not teaching technical words, pastors are deliberately sabotaging the spiritual growth of the members of their congregation.

12:2: You know that when you were heathen gentiles, as often as you were led face to face [The Greek preposition "pros" with the accusative case] **with mute idols** [worshipped idols], **you were led away** [from the true solution].

A person who worships wood, stone or metal objects has to be completely divorced from reality, and the more a person moves away from reality, the farther he is from the truth. When the Corinthians were unbelievers they worshiped the Greek pantheon. They worshipped them by means of stone, wood, gold and silver statues which statues could neither hear nor speak. Each trip to a heathen temple took them farther away from the truth, and though the Corinthians could think and communicate well as they possessed large vocabularies, they would worship idols without brains. This was complete divorcement from truth and reality.

Paul now informs the Corinthian by comparison that they are again in a state of ignorance. They are totally ignorant of the doctrine of spiritual gifts, and how these gifts are supposed to function in a group of believers. For that reason, Paul implies that they are again acting like fools because of their ignorance. He also provides them with hope for just as knowledge about the Lord Jesus Christ and faith in Him solved their problem as unbelievers, so too will knowledge of the spiritual gifts and their proper application solve their present confusion.

12:3. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God [filled with the Holy Spirit] **says, "Cursed is Jesus," and no one can say that Jesus is Lord** [with meaning] **except by the Holy Spirit.**

Why is Paul mentioning this to the Corinthians? Many Corinthian believers motivated by a lust for power and approbation were seeking to gain influence in the Church. For this reason, the Church became divided into different groups seeking control of the Church (1 Corinthians 1:11-17). Each group claimed superiority based upon who baptized them. One group said that Peter had baptized them, and that group maintained that since Peter was one of the earliest leaders of the Church, their group should be the most prominent. Another group said that Paul had baptized them, and argued that since Paul was the most knowledgeable apostle, they (by association) were the greatest. Others formed their group around Apollo's reputation. The fourth group rallied around the reputation of Christ since he is the God-Man. In any case, all of these Corinthians were out of fellowship. Apparently, some of the believers became so angry at the "Christ-group" that they said, "Cursed is Jesus." And apparently, the Christ-group were walking around uttering the clause "Jesus is Lord" hoping to gain influence in this way.

Some Christians might maintain that it is not possible for a Christian to curse his Savior. These are the same Christians who would say that it is not possible for a believer to deny his Lord, yet Peter denied his savior three times. Remember that a Christian can commit any sin and any evil in life. A Christian possesses the same sin nature as does the unbeliever, and when a Christian is out of fellowship, he can think, say and do the same evil things an unbeliever can.

Only a mature believer in fellowship with God can say “Jesus is Lord” with meaning, for this phrase expresses the highest reverence and respect for the Lord Jesus Christ. (In this verse the two proper nouns “Jesus” and “Lord” are anarthrous, a technical word in Greek grammar which means “not possessing an article”. Many times when nouns are anarthrous, it means that these nouns possess the highest possible quality.) Certainly, those Corinthians who were competing for power and approbation were not even close to loving Jesus Christ.

12:4. Now there are differences [a variety] of gifts [χαρισμα /charisma], but the same Spirit [the Holy Spirit: the source of spiritual gifts].

The Greek word ‘charisma’ means a gift freely and graciously given without any human merit. At the time of a believer’s salvation The Holy Spirit enters him into the spiritual team, the body of Christ. Just as there are many positions on a football team so there are many spiritual gifts on the spiritual team. It is the sovereignty of God the Holy Spirit who decides what position (what spiritual gift) each member of the body of Christ will receive. This decision was not to make one believer superior or inferior, but for harmonious team function.

12:5. There are a variety of ministries [non-technical use of this word: kinds of Christian service], but the same Lord [we all serve the Lord with our gift: the importance of occupation with Christ].

There are different kinds of ministries or Christian service, but one correct motivation. For example some with the gift of helps have a ministry toward unbelievers or believers in need of some type of help or comfort. Some men with the gift of administrative leadership function in a local church, others in missionary organizations, seminaries etc. Some pastors teach in churches; others teach in Bible colleges and seminaries, and some even communicate through writing. All these services should be executed with the correct motivation of pleasing the Lord.

Application: Since correct motivation only comes with spiritual advance, the Christian should grow up spiritually before getting involved in Christian service. If not, he will more than likely become arrogant about his service and lose out in his opportunity to fulfill the spiritual life. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 states “All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching [by the Pastor], for rebuke [the Christian is rebuked when he fails], for correction [the good believer makes the necessary correction after his rebuke], for training in righteousness [reaching spiritual maturity with maximum virtue] in order that the man of God [the believer] might be proficient [capable], having been well equipped [prepared] for every good work [Christian service].” The only Christian properly equipped and qualified for Christian service is the mature believer. Christian service is not for children.

12:6. There are different kinds of jobs [activities, responsibilities], but the same God who works all things in all persons [motivation from Bible doctrine].

Within a ministry there are various jobs which need to be accomplished. These jobs are equally important.

12:7. But to each one [dative of advantage] is given [for his benefit] the manifestation [the spiritual gift being brought to light through teaching and spiritual advance] of the Spirit [The Holy Spirit will reveal your spiritual gift through his teaching ministry] for the purpose of being beneficial [to the team: The

Greek word “pros” plus the accusative of purpose “sumpheron” is translated “for the purpose of being beneficial [to the team].” .

The team must be taught well by the pastor under the Filling of the Spirit. This means that each member of the team must learn the technical words of theology and the doctrines and problem solving devices found in Scripture. In order to accomplish this, the Holy Spirit communicates through the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. The pastor is the agent, but it is the Holy Spirit who makes Biblical truth understandable to the believer.

The team benefits when spiritually advanced Christians function under their spiritual gifts. On the other hand, the team suffers when Christians do not function properly under their spiritual gifts. Every Church, missionary organization, Bible College, seminary and other Christian organizations consists of a team of believers. When the team consists of spiritually advanced believers, the team functions harmoniously under grace, but when the team is made up of emotional, non-thinking believers the team is irrational, or if the team is made up of legalistic Christians the team will also produce only dead works. In order for Christian organizations to function well the believers in those organizations must either be in spiritual maturity or very close to it otherwise the gifts will not function properly.

The Spiritual Life: Correct Thinking and Motivation

Your thinking determines the kind of person you are. If your thinking is bad, then you are bad. If your thinking is noble, you are noble. If your thinking is limited, you are limited. If your thinking is self-centered, you are self-centered. If you don't think, you are nothing. If your thinking is not in agreement with divine thinking, you are not a great believer. If your thinking is consistently aligned with God's thinking, then you are a great believer. “For as he thinks in his soul (nephesh) so he is” (Proverbs 23:7).

A right thing or action must be done in a right way in order to be right. Thus, Christian service must be done in a right way in order to be right. In order for Christian service to be done in a right way it must be supported by correct thinking and motivation. Correct thinking is the Word of God circulating in the soul of the believer. The desire to please the Lord is the only correct motivation. So, when the Christian has God's thinking in his soul and is motivated by his love for the Lord, then his actions (Christian service) etc. will correct. He will have done a right thing in a right way!

12:8. For though the Spirit is given to one a word of wisdom; and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit;

These two spiritual gifts of the pre-canon period must be distinguished from developing knowledge and wisdom through learning and applying as what occurs in the post-canon period. The gift of wisdom and knowledge were gifts given to certain believers by the Holy Spirit at the point of their salvation in the pre-canon period. On the other hand, in the post canon period of the Church Age, the prepared pastor through his diligent study under the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit gains knowledge of the Church Age and then passes it on to the members of his congregation. With this knowledge circulating in their souls, they can gradually develop wisdom in their souls through application of this knowledge. Thus, in the pre-canon period, the gift of knowledge and wisdom was given to compensate for not having a completed canon, whereas knowledge and wisdom is developed in the post-canon through the study of the completed canon.

12:9. and to another faith by the same Spirit; and to another the gifts of healing [various types of healing gifts] by the same Spirit;

The gift of faith is to be distinguished from the use of the faith-rest drill. The faith-rest drill was the focal point of the Old Testament believer's spiritual life (Hebrews 11) and will be again be in the Tribulation, the last 7 years (shortened: Matthew 24:22) of the Age of Israel (Matthew 24:15-18; the remnant keep fighting because of their faith application of God's Word: Zechariah 12:5; 14:2-3) and it continues to be a problem solving device in the Church Age (2 Corinthians 5:7). However, this verse is not talking about the faith-rest drill rather it is talking about the temporary spiritual gift of faith which was possibly related to some miraculous function and/or used to encourage Christians in time of disaster and quite likely similar to the gift of faith given to the apostles to Israel as mentioned in Matthew 17:15-21, 21:21. On the other hand in the post-canon period of the Church Age there is no longer a need for this gift for God's promises and truth are written down in the completed canon for the Christian to examine. Furthermore, as far as the strength to apply these promises and truths, if the Christian is willing to submit himself daily to good Bible teaching, his faith will become strong enough to handle any problem requiring the use of faith-rest-drill.

The gift of healing (a type of miracle) and miracles (mentioned in the next verse) were temporary spiritual gifts to certify a person as a communicator from God and to authenticate his message. (As we have mentioned previously, all the gifts mentioned in verses 8-12 were temporary gifts, that is they did not enter into the post-canon period.) These gifts were given to the apostles and possibly to others with communicative gifts. Paul for example, had these gifts which were used to establish his ministry and to gain a hearing (Acts 13:6-11; 15:12; 19:11, 12). After his ministry had been well established, his gift of healing was taken away (deduced from the fact that he could not heal Trophimus in 2 Timothy 4:20, nor Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:27), and we could rightly assume that his gift of miracles was removed as well since the gift of healing and the gift of miracles had the same purpose.

Occasionally, in the Church Age God does heal a believer, but this miraculous act is apart from the gift of healing. Sometimes He heals as an answer to a prayer, other times apart from prayer. All the same, God does not heal many in the Church Age since this is not the age of miracles. It is impossible to place a number on this, but perhaps out of 20,000 sick and dying Christians, God may heal one by means of a miraculous act.

Miracles and healing may gain one a hearing, but it is the Holy Spirit who convinces the unbeliever of his need for salvation (John 16:8-11). Two powers are involved in the convincing ministry of the Holy Spirit, namely His power and the power of the gospel. So, since Paul realized that it is the power of the gospel that saves people, he used the Old Testament Scriptures which he related to Christ and the cross to convince the Jewish unbelievers regarding salvation, not miracles (Acts 13:5, 14-41). However, when they faced difficulty many times the Lord would confirm these messengers of God by signs and wonders coming from their hands (Acts 14:1-3).

12:10. and to another workings of miracles [mentioned also in Matthew 12:28], to another prophecy; and to another discerning of spirits; and to another the gift of foreign languages; and to another the interpretation of foreign languages.

There were many who had the gift of prophecy in the pre-canon period of the Church Age. Some used their gift to record prophecy in their writings (the apostles, or those closely associated with them, such as Mark or Luke); others used it to teach or to warn of some near disaster in order that changes and or

preparations could be made. Paul (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), Peter (2 Peter 3:10), and, John (the book of Revelation) used their spiritual gifts of prophecy mainly in writing. Regarding these prophetic writings as found in Scripture, each writer contributed a portion. When all of these parts were finally collected and put together into one book along with the other teachings, the Canon of Scripture was completed. Others like Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, Judas (Acts 13:1), Silas (Acts 15:32) and Agabus had the gift of prophecy. These prophets had a limited teaching ministry related to contemporary events; that's why they are called "prophets and teachers" in Acts 13:1. It was Agabus who warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem in 58 AD (Acts 21:10, 11).

The prophets of the pre-canon-period of the Church Age were not national leaders as were many of the prophets of the Old Testament. Old Testament prophets were national leaders, especially in times of crisis. In times of prosperity, they were the final authority on Bible doctrine. Some examples of Old Testament prophets having a ministry in a national crisis were Elijah who pronounced judgment (no rain or dew except by his word) because of the apostasy of King Ahab and the nation (1 Kings 17:1). Elijah reprimands King Ahab and commanded him to assemble all Israel along with all the false prophets of Jezebel on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:18, 19). Isaiah warns King Hezekiah not to seek help from the Egyptians against the Assyrians (Isaiah 31:1). Then, after Sennacherib had seized the fortified cities of the Southern Kingdom, Hezekiah surrendered (2 Kings 18:13-16). Because of this evil, Isaiah told Elijah that he would die the sin unto death. However, Hezekiah recovered fellowship and the death sentence was removed, (Isaiah 38:1,4, 5). Jeremiah publically taught that Israel should stay under the suzerainty of the Chaldeans rather than rely on the chariots of Egypt (Jeremiah 27, 28:3), whereas those with the gift of prophecy in the pre-canon period of the Church Age stayed out of politics. For example, Paul never criticized Nero or interfered in his evil rulership. Also, Peter never criticized King Herod Agrippa I though Herod murdered James the brother of John, and intended to do the same for him (Acts 12:1-3), nor did John ever make a political statement or criticize the persecution of the Christians by the Emperor Domitian's reign. In fact there is no record of any of the apostles to the Church interfering in politics or even criticizing the government. In summary, in the dispensation of Israel there was no separation between the prophets and priest on the one hand and the government on the other hand whereas in the Church Age, the Church and the State (government) are to remain separate (Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17).

In the Church Age women are never given authority over adult men in the local church. For example, Paul did not permit a woman to speak in a Church much less teach adults in the assembly (1 Corinthians 14:34, 35). This principle was applied outside the Church walls as well for there is no instance of a woman exercising authority in spiritual matters over a man in the New Testament. You might say, "What about the four prophetesses!" Yes, there were these prophetesses, but they did not exercise authority over men. This explains why even though the four virgin-daughters of Philip were prophetesses and staying with Paul in their father's home, God did not use them to issue a prophetic warning to Paul as this would have given spiritual authority to these women over Paul. Instead the Lord led Agabus all the way from Judea to the home of Philip to deliver a prophetic warning (Acts 21:8-11). Apparently, these ladies had a prophetic ministry which was directed toward women only.

In the Church Age there must be a way of detecting false doctrine and false teachers. In the post-canon period of the Church, this detection is quite easy. We can just point to the Bible and conclude that someone's teachings and or doctrine is correct or incorrect. However, remember that in the pre-canon period of the Church Age there was no canon of scripture. People had no Bible. Thus, God the Holy Spirit provided the gift of discerning spirits whereby a person with this gift could know whether a

communicator's teachings were correct or false. Once the canon was completed and circulated this gift was removed.

12:11. All these spiritual gifts are the work of the one and same Spirit distributing to each one individually just as he determines.

Jesus Christ initially distributed spiritual gifts, after which it is the Holy Spirit who sovereignly distributes all spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11; Hebrews 2:4). The Lord Jesus Christ distributed spiritual gifts ten days after his ascension on the Day of Pentecost for it states in Ephesians 4:7, 8, 11, "To each one of us, this grace has been given according to the measure of the spiritual gift from Christ. Therefore, it [Old Testament Scriptures] says, 'When He ascended into heaven, He led a host of captives [the Old Testament believers] in a triumphal procession from a state of captivity [Abraham's Bosom/Paradise], and He gave spiritual gifts to men [communicative gifts given to men on the Feast of Pentecost]. . . Then [resumption after the parenthesis of 9-10] He [the Lord Jesus Christ] gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastor-teachers,'"

12:12. For even as the body is one [one royal family in union with Christ] **and has many parts** [a body has hands, feet etc.: analogous to spiritual gifts], **and all parts of the body though they are many, are one body; so also is the Christ** ["the Christ" is Christ plus everyone in union with Him].

12:13. For also by agency of one Spirit we are all baptized [identification resulting in becoming a new spiritual species] **into one body** [in union with Christ], **whether Jews or Greeks** [racial distinctions are removed], **whether slave or free** [class distinctions are removed], **even all were made to drink** [a non-meritorious function: an illustration of faith in Christ] **the one Spirit** [what God the Holy Spirit provided for us at salvation with emphasis on the Baptism of the Spirit.] (For more information, please listen to Spiritual Dynamics series No. 637.)

12:14. For the body [of Christ] **is not one member** [one spiritual gift], **but many** [members: many spiritual gifts].

Paul will argue that just as all parts of the body are necessary so are all spiritual gifts, and just as a person would not argue that the foot is inferior to the eye, so we shouldn't contend that the gift of helps for example is inferior to one of the more sensational spiritual gifts.

12:15. If [hypothetical case] **the foot** [not observed by many; possibly the gift of helps or mercy] **should say, "Because I am not the hand** [in a more prominent position; representing the gift of healing or administration, for example.], **I do not belong to the body** [a believer feeling sorry for himself because he does not have some spectacular gift.]" **It** [the foot] **would not for that reason cease to be** [any the less] **a part of the body** [false reasoning doesn't remove the foot from the body: doesn't remove the believer from his position in Christ].

The arrogant Corinthians maintained that if one did not have either a sensational or communicative spiritual gift, he had a lesser value than a person who did. The sensational temporary spiritual gifts were as follows: tongues, the interpretation of tongues, healing and miracles. The communicative gifts were apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, and teaching (Most if not all of these communicative gifts possessed the gift of knowledge). The possession of a sensational or communicative gift does not make the believer superior. The gift the believer possesses only determines his position on the team.

Paul now moves from the parts of the body to the parts of the face.

12:16. And if the ear [analogous to the gift of discerning spirits etc.] **shall say, “Because I am not the eye** [representing some communicative gift such as apostleship, prophecy, and teaching], **I do not belong to the body;” It therefore would not cease to be a part of the body would it? Of course not!** [Arrogant dissatisfaction and false reasoning does not remove it from the body]

12:17. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear where would the sense of smell be?

How can there be a team if everyone has the same position? Paul logically is revealing to the Corinthians their illogic. Not only were the Corinthians illogical, but so are the Christians who claim that if you do not speak in Tongues (a temporary spiritual gift that went out in August of 70 A.D.), you are not spiritual and in some cases that you are not even a believer. Are they not inferring that the body be can be formed from only one part? Can you imagine the body being one big eye or one huge proboscis! These Christians are illogical and completely ridiculous.

12:18. In fact God [the Holy Spirit] **has arranged the parts of the body** [the distribution of spiritual gifts], **every one of them in the body just as He wills.**

Since God the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to each believer at the point of salvation, the spiritual gift a believer receives is not based on merit. Therefore, what spiritual gift one possesses cannot be the basis of inferiority or superiority. For example in the pre-canon period, the gift of languages (Tongues) did not make that believer greater in any way. So, in the post-canon period, just because a believer has the spiritual gift of evangelism or Pastor-teacher does not imply a better spiritual life than any believer in the pew.

12:19. In fact, if it [the body] **were all one part, where would the body be?** [there would be no body.]

12:20. But now there are many parts [many spiritual gifts and not all may even be mentioned in Scripture], **but one body.**

It is not a problem if you don't know what your spiritual gift is, for as you advance spiritually it will become known to you. Furthermore, the more advanced spiritually you become, the better your spiritual gift will function. If you become aware that you have been given a gift in communication (i.e. pastor-teacher or evangelist) then you must prepare academically with the study of Greek and Hebrew, ancient history, and culture in order that you will understand isagogics, Biblical theology and the development of orthodox theology in church history, and the principles of hermeneutics.

12:21. And the eye [in this case representing an arrogant believer with a communicative gift] **cannot say to the hand** [the gift of administration: some communicators don't appreciate good administration], **I have no need of you** [I do not need you]; **nor again the head** [Jesus Christ is the head: Ephesians 5:23. Colossians 1:18] **to the feet, I have no need of you.**

Someone with a spectacular spiritual gift cannot say to someone with a less spectacular gift, “I have no need of you.” Even Jesus Christ cannot say to any believer, to any member of the body, I do not need you (eternal security).

12:22. On the contrary, to a greater degree [πολλω μαλλον / pollo mallon, the Greek language equivalent to 'a fortiori' : a Latin phrase used in forming a comparison with an inference to produce an inescapable conclusion] **the members of the body which seem** [subjective thinking: an erroneous opinion not based on facts] **to be weaker** [useless] **are necessary** [to form the pivot of mature believers in a client nation as explained in the next two verses].

What spiritual impact brought about the Golden age of the Roman Empire from 96 AD to 192 AD? Was it the impact of believers with the sensational spiritual gifts such as Tongues, prophecy, apostleship, healing, miracles etc.? No, for they no longer existed by that time. Was it the impact caused by pastors (pastor-teachers: Ephesians 4:11), deacons (diakonos), chairmen of the boards or other believers with the gift of administrative leadership (1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:28)? No, for there were not enough to form a pivot of mature believers (a large group of mature believers having an impact on the nation). Rather, it was the collective impact of those mature believers in the post canon period of the Church Age with the so-called 'inferior spiritual gifts' such as the gift of helps (1 Corinthians 12:28), mercy (Romans 12:8), service (ministry: the Greek word *diakonia*): those who work on committees; teach children etc. (Romans 12:7), giving (Romans 12:8: "he who gives with generosity"). The pivot of mature believers who blessed the Roman Empire for nearly a century came primarily from those with the so-called inferior spiritual gifts.

12:23. And [when we understand this principle of necessary spiritual gifts] **those** [parts] **of the body which we erroneously judge** [think to be] **less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor around them** [they have the honor of forming the pivot in the post-canon period]. **And our unrepresentable members have** [are given] **more abundant propriety** [than all those sensational temporary spiritual gifts of the pre-canon period].

12:24. For our presentable [members: spiritual gifts of the pre-canon period] **have no need** [of honor and recognition], **but God has so designed the body together, giving more abundant honor to that** [member] **that lacked honor** [the so called inferior spiritual gifts];

The post-canon-Church Age believer with the so called inferior spiritual gifts is given the honor of producing the client nations through his invisible spiritual impact. These Christians come from those sitting in the pews. Without them, there would never be a client nation to God. So, in this way the Lord gives more honor and propriety to those Christian with spiritual gifts that many look down upon.

12:25. that there not be division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another [based on understanding how this spiritual team functions].

12:26. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with [him]; **if one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with** [him].

By analogy if one part of the body suffers, the entire body suffers. For example if you hit your finger with a hammer, your entire body suffers since the nervous system is connected.

12:27. Now, you are the body [though the noun is anarthrous, not possessing an article in the Greek, we provide one in the English] **of Christ** [a team], **and individually members of it.**

(For those of you who may be reading from the Greek please understand that this is a Greek idiom.)

The anarthrous structure indicates the highest possible quality. Thus, Christians with many different spiritual gifts form a very important team in the Church Age. We are all on the same team, but each plays a different position, and because this team is of extreme importance each believer should fulfill his responsibility on that team.

12:28. And God has appointed in the church, first, apostles [in authority and power]; **second, prophets** [in authority and power etc.]; **third, teachers** [teaching which would eventually be written into the New Testament] **then powers, then the gifts of healings** [powers (miracles) and healings: similar to an I.D. card to prove that a man was an apostle or a prophet or teacher], **then gifts of healings, helps, administration, kinds of languages** [different languages/ 'tongues'].

12:29. All are not apostles, are they? No. All are not prophets, are they? No. All are not teachers, are they? No. All are not workers of miracles, are they? No.

12:30. All do not have the gifts of healings, do they? No. All do not speak with foreign languages, do they? No. All do not interpret [those foreign languages], **do they? No.**

Paul is demonstrating to the Corinthians the obvious namely that the different spiritual gifts were designed to produce a spiritual team functioning in harmony with each other.

12:31. But [a change to whatever transpired before in the pre-canon period] **keep on seeking the greater gifts** [the post canon-communicative gifts], **and yet I point out to you for your benefit a way** [a system] **beyond all comparison** [the spiritual life of believers in the Old Testament cannot be compared to the spiritual life of the Church Age].

Just to mention a few things in comparing the Spiritual Life of the Old Testament with the Spiritual Life of the New Testament: For greater elaboration on the uniqueness and greatness of our spiritual life, you will need to listen to R. B. Thieme Jr's series on Spiritual Dynamics.

1. Although the Old Testament believers were commanded to love the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12-13), their becoming heroes or heroines was related to the application of God's word by faith (Hebrews 11:4-38: Although Hebrews chapter 11 is in the New Testament, it is discussing the spiritual life of the Old Testament heroes.) On the other hand although our spiritual life does use both the basic faith-rest drill (2 Corinthians 5:7) and the enhanced faith-rest-drill (Galatians 5:22b), our spiritual greatness depends upon our love for the members of the Godhead (Romans 8:28; James 1:12; Ephesians 3:17-19; Philippians 1:21). Thus, in the Old Testament the spiritual life centered on the use of faith whereas, in the Church Age it centers on loving God the Father, God the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. No husband in the Old Testament was ever commanded to love his wife just as Christ loved the Church (Ephesians 5:25). No wife in the Old Testament was ever commanded to subordinate herself to her husband in everything as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22). Thus, in the Church Age the highest commands in marriage are related to loving the Lord. Thus, in the Church Age, marriage is related to the spiritual life.
3. Although an Old Testament believer was commanded to love his neighbor as himself (Leviticus 19:18b; Matthew 5:43), he was never commanded to love his enemies (Luke 6:27; Matthew 5:44: a command which would be executed in the Church Age under the power of the Filling of the Spirit.)

4. Although a few Old Testament believers were endowed with the Holy Spirit for certain functions (Genesis 41:38-40; Numbers 11:17, 25; Exodus 35:30-35; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 2 Samuel 23:2; 2 Kings 2:15 etc.), none were ever filled with the Holy Spirit. In the Church Age all believers at salvation are given the Filling of the Holy Spirit which power functions as long as the believer is in fellowship with God (Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19).
5. Although the Old Testament believers did not have the power of the Filling of the Spirit to learn, retain and apply the Word, they did have the power of the Word circulating in their souls. On the other hand we in the Church Age have two powers namely the Filling of the Spirit and the power of God's Word circulating in our souls.
6. Although God the Son dwelt in the Holy of Holies from 1441 BC to 586 BC except during periods of apostasy (Exodus 25:21, 22; Psalm 99:1; Isaiah 37:16), He never indwelt a person in the Old Testament. (neither did the Holy Spirit, nor God the Father.) Now, in the Church Age, God the Holy Spirit indwells the believer from the moment of salvation in order to make our body a temple for the dwelling Christ (Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:19) who indwells every believer as a guarantee of blessing and glory (Colossians 1:27). Even God the Father indwells the believer as the author of the plan and designer of the dispensation of the Church Age to ensure our portfolio and escrow blessing as per Philippians 2:13, "for it is God [the Father] who is operational [at work] in you [indwelling] both to will [we are responsible to God] and to be effective [good actions come from good decisions] for his good pleasure [the actions of the spiritual life glorify God]."
7. Only Church Age believers are said to be in union with Christ as He is seated at the right hand of God the Father (Galatians 3:26-28; Romans 6:3).
8. All believers from the Adam and Eve to the writing of the Pentateuch learned about their spiritual lives without any written canon. Then from the time of Moses to Malachi, the Old Testament canon was gradually written, over a period of a thousand years or so. In contrast to this, the Christians in the post canon period of the Church Age have a completed canon of Scripture from which to learn the spiritual life. Before the Age of Israel, believers were taught about spiritual matters by visions, dreams, and angelic teaching, and from God the Son Himself (theophanies: as a man (Genesis 18:1-33), as the angel of the Lord (Genesis 16:7-13), and as a phenomenon of nature (Exodus 40:38; 3:2ff.). During the Age of Israel, they were primarily taught by the Levitical priests and prophets. In the pre-canon period of the Church Age, Christians were taught by apostles, prophets and pastors. In the post-canon period of the Church Age believers are taught by pastors only.
9. The Priesthoods of the Old Testament were quite different from the royal priesthood of the Church Age. The patriarchal priests (for example: Noah (Genesis 8:20, 21), Job (Job 1:3-5), Abraham (Genesis 12:7; 13:18), Isaac (Genesis 26:25) and Jacob (Genesis 33:20)) had to be the eldest male believer of the family or tribe; the king-priest, a royal priest (Melchizedek being the only known one) was a believer who not only conducted priestly functions for his family, but for the citizens of his kingdom. The Levitical Priests, both the high priests and other priests were all to be taken from the Aaronic family. The qualifications for this priesthood is found in Leviticus 21. Since this priesthood functioned in ritual only, there were no spiritual qualifications (they didn't even have to be saved). Regarding the aforementioned priesthoods, all terminate in physical death (Hebrews 7:23) whereas God the Father decreed in Psalm 110:4 that Jesus Christ was to be a high priest forever: "The Lord [God the Father] has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You [the humanity of Christ] are a priest forever according to the likeness of Melchizedek.'" It is this priesthood to which the Church Age believer is related through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit; a priesthood which will function not only during the lifetime of the

believer, but forever in the eternal state after the completion of the Millennial reign of Christ (Hebrews 7:24). Furthermore, our priesthood offers neither food offerings nor animal sacrifices; theirs (Old Testament priesthoods) offered both food offerings and animal sacrifices. As Church Age priests, we receive our instructions through the New Testament epistles. The patriarchal and king-priests received their instructions through dreams, visions, angelic teaching, theophanies etc. since there were no written instructions; the Levitical Priesthood through the Mosaic Law. From this we may conclude that the eternal priesthood of the Church-age believer is far superior to that of any other priesthood in human history.

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