

Chapter 13: Orderly Public Worship: Part 2

1 Corinthians 12:1–31

In 1 Corinthians 12:1, Paul transitions to a new topic. Once again, Paul uses the phrase “now concerning” to introduce a topic that the Corinthians themselves have raised (cf. 1 Cor. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 16:1, 12). Although this new topic will lead Paul into a discussion of the various offices and gifts that God has appointed in the church, Paul opens this chapter with the main criteria for true worship: the confession that Jesus is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3). Then, Paul gives a theologically rich explanation of how each person of the Trinity works in a joint, coordinated effort to equip the church with gifts for the work of ministry. In the last half of the chapter, Paul shows how each of these gifts should work together as the various members of a body, serving various functions so that the whole church can operate as God designed it. In this remarkable chapter, Paul gives deep explanation and vivid imagery to show how *God has arranged and honored every member in the body of Christ*.

Jesus is Lord (1 Cor. 12:1–3)

Importantly, the word translated as “spiritual gifts” is not the word commonly used for spiritual gifts (χαρίσματα; *charismata*).¹ Here, the word is simply (τῶν πνευματικῶν; *tōn pneumatikōn*), a plural form of the word “spiritual,” which could refer either to spiritual *people* or spiritual *things*.² Primarily, this word has to do with “things of the Holy Spirit,” as Gordon Fee explains: “When the emphasis is on the manifestation, the ‘gift’ as such, Paul speaks of *charismata*; when the emphasis is on the Spirit, he speaks of *pneumatika*.”³ Paul’s ambiguous language is probably a direct response to the Corinthians’ original inquiry, which we do not have, which makes it difficult to know whether the Corinthians wrote about the people directed by the Spirit, or the gifts that manifest the work of the Spirit.⁴ Regardless, Paul’s emphasis here is on the work of the Spirit, as we will see in v. 3, as well as this wider section.⁵ Specifically, Paul wants them to know that *all* Christians are *spiritual*, in the sense that they are guided by the *Spirit*.⁶

The Spirit-led status of the Corinthian Christians stands in contrast to their former lives (1 Cor. 12:2). Formerly, they were “Gentiles” (ἔθνη; *ethnē*). Many English translations choose the word “pagans,” which accurately reflects the former religious practices of the Corinthians. Nevertheless, the word is “Gentiles.” As in 1 Corinthians 5:1, Paul is saying that the Corinthians are no longer to be classified as Gentiles, clearly implying that they have been grafted into Israel (cf. Rom. 11:17–24; 1 Cor. 10:1).⁷ When they were still “Gentiles,” they were led astray toward worshiping mute, unspeaking idols. The language does not suggest any kind of ecstatic, religious action.⁸ Paul does not describe that the Corinthians had been led *by* the idols, but only that they were led *toward* worshiping the idols in their unbelieving ignorance.⁹

What, then, does Paul want them to know about the difference between their former and their current lives? It is difficult to know what has in mind by the phrase “*Anathema Jesus!*” (1 Cor. 12:3).

Does this describe someone rejecting Jesus *as* anathema, cursed justly as though he were a blasphemer?¹⁰ Does Paul have in mind the Jews in particular, who pronounced Jesus as anathema for claiming to have been the Messiah, and the Son of God?¹¹ Or, did some Corinthian misunderstand Paul's teaching that Christ became "a curse for us" (cf. Gal. 3:13)?¹² Or, was someone invoking Jesus' name and authority to curse *someone else*: "May Jesus curse my enemy!"¹³

Regardless of which option is correct, Paul's larger point is clear: only by the influence of the Holy Spirit can anyone instead confess that "Jesus is Lord." As Leon Morris writes, "The Lordship of Christ is not a human discovery. It is a discovery that is made and can be made only when the Spirit is at work in the heart."¹⁴ This does not mean merely pronouncing the words, but confessing the words with a heart that matches the words: "To confess Jesus as Lord (*kyrios*) involves the whole self in an *attitude* of trust, obedience, commitment, loyalty, and reverence to Jesus as the Lord who has the care of one's life."¹⁵ This is clear from how Paul pairs the confession that Jesus is Lord with the necessity of faith from the heart elsewhere: "...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9). A true confession requires that our verbal acknowledgement of Jesus' Lordship matches our faith from the heart that God raised him up from the dead. It is faith that saves us, so that our confession serves as an expression of our faith.

Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 12:4–11)

Upon the foundation of Jesus' lordship that Paul addressed in the first three verses of this chapter, Paul begins to speak about the nature of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:4–11. First, Paul contrasts the diversity of the gifts (using a diversity of words to characterize the nature of those gifts), with the unity of their source. The great range of spiritual gifts within the unity of the church are, as John Calvin calls it, "a manifold unity" that functions like an orchestra, where several instruments combine to form one, unified sound.¹⁶ Paul himself is leading up to the metaphor of the one body composed of many members (1 Cor. 12:12ff).

The Indivisible Works of the Triune God (1 Cor. 12:4–7)

In v. 4–6, however, Paul calls these diversities "gifts" from the same Spirit, "services" to the same Lord, and "activities" of the same God. In these descriptions, Paul seems to be varying his language in order to present them from different aspects: "Viewed in relation to the Spirit, they are gifts; in relation to the Lord, they are ministrations; and in relation to God, they are operations, i.e. effects wrought by his power."¹⁷ Notice that Paul contrasts the diversity of gifts with the unity of the source of the gifts; however, Paul names the unity of the source of the gifts (God) according to the triune distinctions between the three Persons in the Godhead. Part of the way that Paul is illustrating the diversity of gifts in the unity of the church is by reminding us of the distinctions of Persons in the one God. In Trinitarian theology, it is an axiom that the external works of the Trinity are indivisible.¹⁸ The work of the Father may be distinguished from the work of the Son, and both their works may be distinguished from the work of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are working jointly, in an inseparable, indivisible, common effort as the one God. In this passage, Paul does not give us a formal, explicit prooftext for the Trinity, but his language clearly reflects his persistent Trinitarian thinking.¹⁹

This indivisible work of the Triune God manifests itself in the diverse apportionments given to the various members of the church. The Holy Spirit works by giving “gifts” is (*charismata*), a word that emphasizes the *gracious* nature of the gifts. David Garland suggests translating this word as “grace-gifts” so that we do not consider the goodness of the gift apart from the grace of the Giver.²⁰ The Spirit graciously disburses these various gifts to the various members of the church. The “Lord” (that is, the *Lord* Jesus Christ) works by assigning varieties of “service,” or “ministry” (*diakonia*). By this aspect, we see the authority of the Lord Jesus to assign ministers (servants) to establish the rule of his reign. The Father (“God”) works by “empowering” (*energōn*) various “activities” (*energēmatōn*). The idea comes out more clearly through the related words in Greek than in translation, but the idea here has to do with the translation of God’s power to the powerful work of the various members of the church: “Paul’s meaning is, that although believers may be endowed with different powers, they all take their rise from one and the same power on the part of God.”²¹ Indivisibly, the three Persons of the Triune God graciously give, assign, and empower individual believers for their work in one body of the church. Or, as Charles Hodge puts it, these various gifts/services/activities “are all and equally gifts of the Spirit, modes of serving the Son, and effects due to the efficiency of the Father.”²²

In v. 7, Paul draws his conclusion about the purposes of the various gifts within the unity of the church: “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” Lenski summarizes this contrast well: “Two things are thus made prominent: each believer has his gift, and every bestowal of a gift is for the common good.”²³ Again, the analogy of the diverse work of the unified church is to the Trinity: each Person of the Trinity gives from a different slant, and yet in a unified, undivided way. In the same way, the diverse church receives diverse gifts, but for the common, unified, singular good—namely, the good of glorifying Jesus as Lord. We should note, however, that while these gifts of the Spirit are ministries of the Lord and activities empowered of the Father, Paul most explicitly attributes these gifts as “the manifestation of the Spirit.” In this manifestation, “the Spirit of God does there manifest himself — in an active sense, because the Spirit of God, when he enriches us with any gift, unlocks his treasures, for the purpose of manifesting to us those things that would otherwise have been concealed and shut up.”²⁴ That is, the Holy Spirit manifests himself in order to reveal Christ to us, who, in turn, reveals to us the Father.

The Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 12:8–10)

Although difficult to translate into English, Paul’s original Greek words categorize the list of spiritual gifts in v. 8–11 into three main groups.²⁵ In the first group are two gifts that seem to involve the *understanding*: “For to one (*hōi*), on the one hand, through the Spirit is given *word of wisdom* (*logos sophias*), but to another (*allōi*), on the other hand, word of knowledge (*logos gnōseōs*) according to the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:8; my translation). The language of “to one, on the one hand” followed by “to another, on the other hand” indicates the connection between these two gifts. Next, Paul begins a group of five gifts with the language of “to another” (*heterōi*), followed by four instances of a different word that also means “to another” (*allōi*): “[9] To another (*heterōi*) faith by the same Spirit, to another (*allōi*) gifts of healing by the one Spirit, [10] to another (*allōi*) energies (*energēmata*) of power, to another (*allōi*) prophecy, to another (*allōi*) discernment of spirits...” (1 Cor. 12:9–10a; my translation). These five gifts all seem to involve *faith*, from the first gift of faith itself, to the next two involving faith-gifts of *deed*, and the last two involving

faith-gifts of *speech*. The final two gifts both involve *the tongue*: “...to another (*heterōi*) kinds of tongues, to another (*allōi*) interpretation of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:10b; my translation). Again, Paul uses different words for “to another” to show that these gifts fit together into a group, distinct from the other gifts in the other two groups.

While these groups may help us to understand how Paul categorizes these gifts, they do not completely explain to us *what* each one of these gifts are. This conversation has been difficult for some time. Even in the days of John Chrysostom (347–407 AD), the nature of these gifts were already difficult to discern because many of them had already ceased: “This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place.”²⁶ Furthermore, we should recognize that Paul does not intend to give a full account of how these gifts should function in the life of the church at this point. Here, Paul’s purpose is to demonstrate that the diversity of gifts come from the same source, the Holy Spirit, in order to create one church out of many members (1 Cor. 12:12). Paul will have more to say about how these gifts function in 1 Corinthians 14. For now, he is content merely to list them out. Still, we will do our best to understand these gifts as we encounter them here.

The Gifts of Understanding (1 Cor. 12:8)

In the gifts of understanding, Paul does not clearly differentiate between the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. Paul pairs the two together here, as in other contexts, without explaining the difference (cf. Rom. 11:33; Col. 2:3). When we distinguish between wisdom and knowledge in English, we often use “wisdom” as a deeper, more profound, and more practical version of “knowledge,” which largely refers to mere information. We must be careful, however, not to import English meanings into these words. Instead, it is better to look at how Paul uses these words. Earlier, Paul taught that the wisdom of God was Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 1:18–2:13). As for knowledge, Paul both praised the Corinthians for their being enriched with all knowledge (1 Cor. 1:5), and he also criticized them for wrongly using knowledge to justify eating food sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. 8:1, 7, 10, 11).

In my judgment, the best explanation sees these gifts as largely connected with the list of offices and gifts that Paul lists later in v. 28–30.²⁷ If so, the utterance of *wisdom* has to do with direct revelation from God, and belongs to the office of the apostles and prophets, while the utterance of *knowledge* is the gift of the teachers.²⁸ Under this view, the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, who revealed God’s long-hidden mystery of Christ crucified in the exercise of their gift of wisdom (1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 2:20). Then, the teachers take that once-for-all foundation of the revelation of Christ crucified and pass it to the church, as an exercise of the gift of knowledge (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10–11). In the case of wisdom, Paul explains that this comes through the mediation of the Spirit (“through the Spirit”), while in the case of knowledge, Paul indicates that this gift comes by the Spirit’s determination (“according to the same Spirit”).²⁹

The Gifts of Faith (1 Cor. 12:9–10a)

The second group of gifts seem to fall under the heading of the first gift named in the list, of faith.³⁰ Even so, Paul lists faith as a gift unto itself, which means that the faith Paul has in mind here goes beyond the common, saving faith that every true believer possesses.³¹ This may refer to the kind

of faith that can miraculously “remove mountains” (1 Cor. 13:2), which may demonstrate the connection between faith and the next gifts listed in the same group.³² Or, it may simply refer to “a higher measure of the ordinary grace of faith,” such as in the celebrated faith of those listed in Hebrews 11.³³ Paul describes faith and healing (the next gift) as gifts given in the sphere or realm of the Spirit: “by/in the same Spirit” and “by/in the one Spirit,” respectively.³⁴

Paul describes this second gift as “gifts (*charismata*) of healing.” We do not need to spend much time in discussion of the gifts of healing, since we have many descriptions of the exercise of this gift in the ministry of Jesus (e.g., Matt. 8:13; 15:28; Mark 5:29; Luke 5:17; 6:18–19; 7:7; 8:47; 9:2, 11; 14:4; 17:15; 22:51; John 4:47; 5:13) and of his apostles (e.g., Acts 9:34; 28:8). The only note we should perhaps make is to recognize that “healing” means not only healing from physical diseases, but also from demonic possessions (e.g., Luke 9:42; Acts 10:38).

The third gift in this group of faith-related gifts is “the working of miracles” (1 Cor. 12:10; ESV), or, more literally, “energies of power” (my translation). The word for “working/energies” is *energēmata*, the same word that appeared in v. 6: “and there are various kinds of activities [*energēmatōn*], but it is the same God who empowers [*energōn*] them all in everyone.” R. C. H. Lenski notes, “Previously Paul had called all gifts both ‘charismata’ and ‘energies’; he now uses both terms in a specific, we may even say a technical sense, the one with reference to healings and the other with reference to miracles.”³⁵ Sometimes, this “power” specifically relates to the power of God’s judgment against Satan (e.g., Matt. 24:29–30; 26:64; Luke 4:36).³⁶ Elsewhere, “power” is closely associated in several passages with “healing” (Luke 5:17; 6:19; Acts 10:38). This close connection between power and healing suggests that this third gift is the more comprehensive category, under which healing would be one kind of miracle.³⁷ Both are faith gifts of *deed*, in distinction to the two faith gifts of *word* that come next.

Fourth, Paul simply writes, “to another, prophecy” (1 Cor. 12:10). In the New Testament, the term “prophecy” can mean two different things: “broadly to indicate any and all ability to communicate the saving will of God to others so that every true teacher and preacher may be called a prophet; and more narrowly to designate the receiving and the communicating of direct and specific messages from God. The apostles were prophets in both senses of the term. Their regular assistants were prophets in the former sense. Agabus, Acts 11:28; 21:10, and Philip’s daughters, Acts 21:9, were prophets in the latter sense.”³⁸ It is in the latter sense that Paul elsewhere writes that the church was “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20). All apostles received the gift of prophecy, but not all who received the gift of prophecy were apostles. In the latter, more *primary* sense of receiving and communicating direct and specific message from God, prophecy has ceased (Heb. 1:1–2). In the former, *ongoing* sense of faithfully teaching the once-for-all received revelation of God in the Scriptures, prophecy will continue until they pass away when Christ comes again (1 Cor. 13:8). This dual sense of the word “prophecy” falls along the same lines of interpretation as suggested above for distinguishing between “word of wisdom” and “word of knowledge.” If so, the earlier gifts of wisdom and knowledge may refer to the *reception* of wisdom and knowledge, while prophecy may refer to the *communication* of that wisdom and knowledge to others.

Fifth, Paul mentions “the ability to distinguish between spirits” (1 Cor. 12:10). This cannot mean distinguishing between prophecies from the Holy Spirit, as though some Holy Spirit-inspired prophecies may be mixed with error by the humans communicating those prophecies. There is

absolutely no reason to think that New Testament prophecies from the Holy Spirit are in any sense fallible.³⁹ Instead, the rest of the New Testament interprets this distinguishing between spirits as the testing of prophecies to see whether they are from God, or from *another* spirit: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone into the world” (1 John 4:1; cf. 1 Thess. 5:20–21).⁴⁰ This testing of the spirits stands in direct continuity with the requirement of the Old Testament to test prophecy, to see whether someone was a true prophet of God, or a false prophet (e.g., Deut. 18:20–22).

Gifts of the Tongue (1 Cor. 12:10b)

In the third group of gifts, Paul mentions the two gifts that are the most controversial among Christians today: “various kinds of tongues” and “the interpretation of tongues.” Because Paul simply lists these gifts here, without going into much explanation of the nature of these gifts, we will hold off most of our explanation of the nature of these gifts of tongues until our study of 1 Corinthians 14, when Paul goes into much greater detail about the exercise of these gifts of tongues. For now, we will simply make three preliminary statements that will need further explanation during our study of 1 Corinthians 14. First, the gift of tongues in Acts 2 is clearly identified as the ability to speak in languages previously unknown to the speaker, so that the burden of proof remains with those who argue that these tongues in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 represent something different. Second, the gift of tongues is closely associated with prophecy, so that interpreted tongues function as prophecy (1 Cor. 14:5).

Third, Paul speaks of “kinds of tongues.” Anthony Thiselton translates this as “species of tongues,” since the word for “kinds” is the Greek word *genos*, which we have appropriated into English to describe another category of taxonomy: “genus.”⁴¹ Thus, this gift involves various kinds or classes of tongues—a “variety of languages.”⁴² Additionally, this gift is paired with the interpretation of tongues. As Paul will say, the gift of tongues does not edify the body unless there is someone to translate what is being spoken (1 Cor. 14:5). We will study this gift of the Spirit in more details in our exposition of 1 Corinthians 14.

One and the Same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11)

While Paul explicitly named the connection between the first four gifts and the Holy Spirit, he did not explicitly note how the Holy Spirit relates to the last five gifts. Here, Paul makes the connection abundantly clear that every one of these gifts “are produced and operated by the energy of the Spirit.”⁴³ We should notice that here in v. 11 Paul uses the word “empower” (*energei*) to describe the work of the Holy Spirit, even though Paul earlier attributed the Father as the one who “empowers” all things (v. 6). We must remember that the external works of the Trinity are indivisible and common. So, we can both say that the Father and the Spirit empowers us in the exercise of these gifts, since “Whatever the Father does, he does through the Spirit.”⁴⁴ Also, we should notice that Paul attributes the apportionment of the gifts to the choice of the Spirit: “as he wills” (1 Cor. 12:11). The Holy Spirit exercises the will of God in choosing to apportion gifts to each one individually. What gifts we receive are not assigned at random, but according to the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The Many Members of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12–31)

As Paul concludes his initial list of the gifts of the Spirit in v. 4–11, he begins to explain how all these various gifts work together. Paul illustrates the variety of gifts within the unity of the church by the imagery of the human body.⁴⁵ Paul uses the same illustration in Romans 12:4–5: “For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” There, however, Paul’s main purpose was to emphasize the *diversity* of gifts within the unity of the one body: “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them” (Rom. 12:6). Here, however, Paul is emphasizing the *unity* of the body, in which there are a diversity of gifts.⁴⁶ In light of our culture’s low view of membership and commitment to various clubs, associations, and even to the church, we must be careful not to diminish the strength of Paul’s imagery in describing every believer as a “member” of the body of Christ. Anthony Thiselton brings out the force of Paul’s word “members” by his translation, “limbs and organs.”⁴⁷ Without a great diversity of limbs and organs, there cannot be a body that makes up an “organic whole.”⁴⁸

Paul, however, goes beyond merely reflecting on the unity and diversity within the church. Beyond the application of this metaphor to the church, Paul takes one step further by relating the metaphor to Christ: “so it is with Christ.” Paul does not mean by this that we *become* Christ in a pantheistic sense, as though our personality dissolved into his. Instead, Paul means that we are united to Christ in the closest possible spiritual union.⁴⁹ We see this close relationship between Christ and his church revealed elsewhere in the New Testament. Indeed, when the Lord Jesus originally confronted Paul (then, Saul) on the road to Damascus about his persecution of the church, the Lord asked, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting *me*?” (Acts 9:4; 22:7).⁵⁰ To persecute the church is to persecute Christ. Furthermore, this union is the very basis of the gospel, since by our union Christ’s death and resurrection become *our* death and resurrection (Rom. 6:4). We should even recall the very first question Paul asked in this letter: “Is Christ divided?” (1 Cor. 1:13).⁵¹ For the church to divide into factions is functionally to divide *Christ*. In the body of Christ, we are *distinct* from the Lord Jesus, but we are not *separated* from him.

In v. 13, Paul explains the two means by which we are united to the one body of Christ: by baptism in the one Spirit, and by being made to drink of the one Spirit. Regarding the first image, baptism in the Spirit, we should make two important observations. First, Paul states that *all* of us were baptized into the one body of Christ. Second, Paul states that all of us *were* baptized into the one body of Christ.⁵² This is not a reference to some kind of second-level, higher experience that only some true Christians come to experience at some point *after* their conversion. Instead, the baptism in the Holy Spirit refers to the once-for-all outpouring of the Holy Spirit recorded in the book of Acts. This once-for-all outpouring took place in four stages (Acts 1:8): first to Jews in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4); second to Samaritans in Samaria (Acts 8:14–17); third to Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts 10:44); and fourth to disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus who had not yet received the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1–7).⁵³

The baptism in the Holy Spirit, like the death and resurrection of Christ, are unrepeatable. These great redemptive events were accomplished once for all, with ongoing benefits for all believers. They lay the foundation that all true Christian ministry has been built upon throughout history. Individual believers, then, do not await their own personal baptism in the Holy Spirit, any more than they

await their own personal death and resurrection of Christ. Rather, individual believers enter into what Christ has already accomplished by dying, rising, ascending, and pouring out his Holy Spirit upon his church. Thus, Paul is stressing the unity that of the baptism in the Spirit that we have all received, with the clear implication that anyone who have not received such a baptism by the Spirit is not truly a Christian.⁵⁴ Water baptism is a sign and seal of this great reality of baptism by the Spirit, which unites every true believer into the body of Christ.⁵⁵ We should note that, on the Day of Pentecost, the baptism in the Spirit was not described as an *immersion* into the Spirit, but as an *outpouring* of the Spirit by Christ (Acts 1:5; 2:18, 33). Thus, Christ is the one who baptizes by pouring out the Holy Spirit from heaven (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 2:33).⁵⁶

The second image of being made to drink of one Spirit probably refers to Jesus' words during the Feast of Booths: "[37] On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. [38] Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." [39] Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37–39). As Leon Morris puts it, "The Spirit has entered their innermost being and it is the same Spirit that has done this in all of them."⁵⁷ Thus, the view that this refers to drinking the cup of the Lord's Supper is unlikely.⁵⁸ For both of these images—both baptism in the Spirit and being made to drink of the Spirit—Paul stresses the universality of experience, incorporating Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free.

Do Not Envy Other Gifts (1 Cor. 12:14–20)

After his initial introduction of the idea that the church is the diverse, but unified, body of Christ, Paul moves on to tease out applications of the significance of this illustration. As we read this next section, we should be careful about how we interpret this. The idea of describing individual people as members of a larger body was very common in the ancient world. When ancient, collectivist cultures would use this imagery, though, they played up the importance of *unity* and *harmony* in the body, encouraging people to suppress individual needs for the sake of the whole.⁵⁹ When our western, individualist culture appeals to the imagery of the body, we tend to play up the *diversity* of the body, rejecting any notion that an individual would have responsibility to a collective whole larger than himself or herself. Whether we come from a collectivist or an individualist culture, this passage confronts the excesses of our internalized values.

So, on the one hand, Paul is giving general principles at this point that he does not thoroughly apply to the situation in Corinth until chapter 14.⁶⁰ To some extent, then, we may take these general principles and apply them directly to our own situation. On the other hand, however, Paul does indeed have a specific point that he is trying to communicate to the Corinthians in this passage. So, we must fit our interpretations and applications of this passage within the context of the situation in Corinth, rather than letting Paul's imagery lead us imaginatively anywhere we might let it.⁶¹ We should also observe that Paul's point, in general, is easily understood; however, Paul also examines the main point from a variety of angles. To study this passage effectively, it will be helpful to organize our work not *inductively*, slowly working toward the final conclusion, but *deductively*, identifying each facet of Paul's argument as we go along.

Paul's first point, then, is to insist that the body, by definition, must consist of many *different* people, each having a function of his own (1 Cor. 12:14).⁶² We should not equate any single

member, or any single function, with the church as a whole, for only among *all* the members, performing *all* the functions do we have a body.⁶³ Each member has a unique, essential, irreplaceable role to play in the body.

Second, because each member has a unique role to play, no member should be envious of another's role (1 Cor. 12:15–16).⁶⁴ The fact that a foot cannot function as a hand, or that an ear cannot see as an eye, does not make them less a part of the body than the more outwardly-impressive members. Paul uses an unusually strong double-negative to make the point: “not for this *reason* is it not part of the body” (1 Cor. 12:15, my translation).⁶⁵ We should notice that the comparisons drawn here are between similar organs: foot vs. hand, ear vs. eye. Citing the church father Chrysostom's observation, Leon Morris writes, “We are prone to envy those who surpass us a little, rather than those who are patently in a different class.”⁶⁶ Instead of envying another's gifts, we must all be content with whatever role God has given to us.⁶⁷

Third, each of us should be content with our role in the body because each role is not only *unique*, but *essential* (1 Cor. 12:17). Regardless of how we esteem this gift or that, every gift, every office, every function in the body is necessary. Remove one gift, and the whole body suffers. Indeed, “the very existence of the body as an organization depends on the union of members endowed with different functions.”⁶⁸ No one person can do it all, and no function can be safely discarded or neglected.

Fourth, the organization of the body comes by God's own arrangement (1 Cor. 12:18–20). To rebel against the order that God has appointed for the organization of the church is to rebel against God's own gracious, sovereign purposes.⁶⁹ This does not mean that God chooses specific people based on their merit, for God chooses graciously, according to his own wisdom.⁷⁰ We should be on guard, then, not only against outward envy and rebellion, but even against false humility and self-disparagement about the gifts God has given to us.⁷¹ Our gifts come by *God's* appointment, and to demean those gifts is to demean God's work.

Fifth, while Paul writes this principle to address the subject of spiritual gifts, these instructions should also influence the way we steward everything else that God has entrusted to us in our lives. Charles Hodge writes, “One is born in Europe, another in Asia; one in America, another in Africa; one is rich, another poor; one has ten talents, another one; not because one is better than the other, but simply because God has so ordained....This verse thus contains the second practical inference from the nature of the church as the body of Christ. The place and gifts of each member are determined by the Lord.”⁷² God expects that we will be good and faithful to steward what he has given to *us*, not what he has given to *others*.

Do Not Despise Other Gifts (1 Cor. 12:21–24)

Sixth, no member should despise or disdain another's gifts (1 Cor. 12:21). Earlier, Paul warned members with lower gifts against envying those with higher gifts. Now, Paul warns those with higher gifts against despising those with lower gifts.⁷³ While we are tempted to envy those similar to us, yet who excel us, we are tempted to despise those who are different from us, and to judge them as inferior.⁷⁴ The “eye” and the “head” probably refer to prominent leadership roles in the church, and Paul is insisting that leaders must not look down on others in the church who have different gifts.⁷⁵

Seventh, gifts that seem weaker are nevertheless indispensable to the body (1 Cor. 12:22). The ESV rightly translates v. 22 as describing not gifts that *are* weaker, but that “seem to be weaker.” We

will underestimate the strength of these gifts if we evaluate them externally. The contrast here is probably between those gifts which are outwardly impressive and rare, and those gifts which are outwardly unimpressive and common. This principle is true in the human body, in the church, and in wider society. As Alfred Plummer and Archibald Robertson explain, we may be able to spare any single common worker better than any single genius, but we can spare all the geniuses better than all the common workers.⁷⁶

Eighth, gifts that seem to be without honor should be clothed with abundant honor (1 Cor. 12:23a). If every member operated independently, then the outwardly impressive members would do well, while those members who labor in obscurity would have no honor. In a body, however, the members do not operate independently, but in coordination as a unified whole. So, the shame and dishonor of any one member would bring about “the common disgrace of the whole body.”⁷⁷ When members in a church go out of their way to honor the humblest members in their midst, everyone in the church benefits.

Ninth, modesty may forbid us from presenting some gifts publicly, and yet God honors members with those gifts by the church’s great care for them (1 Cor. 12:23b–24a). Paul is warning the Corinthians against being embarrassed by those who not only possess externally unimpressive gifts, but who perhaps also lack wealth, intelligence, power, and even good manners.⁷⁸ By equating such people in the church with the genitals, Paul shows powerfully that modestly protecting these members does not mean that they lack value. On the contrary, as D. Martin writes, “The genitals may *seem* to be the most shameful part of the body, but our very attention to them—our constant care to cover them and shield them from trivializing and vulgarizing public exposure—demonstrates that they are actually the most necessary of the body’s members, those with the *highest* status.”⁷⁹ God himself has so organized the body to give greater honor in the church to those who have lacked honor in this world (1 Cor. 12:24b). Indeed, Jesus taught that the greater reward would come not to those who flaunted their philanthropy and prayers in the public eye, but who gave in secret and prayed in secret: “And your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matt. 6:4, 6).

No Division in the Body (1 Cor. 12:25–26)

In v. 25, Paul gives the purpose for this elaborate organization of the church: “that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.” The body cannot survive with each part divided into separate silos. What one part of the body experiences is common to the whole body, so that one member’s suffering or one member’s honor leads to the suffering or rejoicing of the whole church (1 Cor. 12:26). Martin Luther captures this idea so well: “See what the whole body does when a foot is trodden on, or a finger is pinched: how the eye looks dour, the nose draws up, the mouth cries out, and all the members are ready to rescue and to help, and none can leave the other, so that it means, not the foot or a finger is trodden on and is pinched, but the entire body. Again, when good is done to one member, that suits all the others, and the entire body rejoices therein.”⁸⁰

We recognize this intuitively with regard to the body, but it is much harder to understand this in regard to the church. So, for the human body, Anthony Thiselton points out how absurd it would be to tell a victorious runner, “I congratulate your legs.”⁸¹ Our natural understanding of the wholeness of the human person, then, shows how foolish we are in the way that we think about the various members of the church: “The very purpose of Paul’s illustrative analogy is by means of the facts

concerning the human body to show, not what *is true* with regard to the spiritual body, but what *ought to be true*. He also shows how unnatural and how wrong it is when it is not thus.”⁸² We must instead see each fellow members’s welfare as vitally important for our own, so that we love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:39) and even consider others as more significant than ourselves (Phil. 2:3).

Individual Members of the Body (1 Cor. 12:27–30)

In v. 27, Paul offers one final summary sentence to capture the idea of the church as one body, yet many members. He states first, that we are the “body of Christ,” that is, the body that belongs to Christ, and over which Christ exercises authority.⁸³ Then, Christ states that we are “individually” (or, “part by part”) members of that body.⁸⁴ In view of this great reality, we should do nothing that would destroy or divide the body; instead, we must each seek to protect and build up the body.⁸⁵ As the context makes clear in the rest of this section, Paul specifically has in mind the need for the church to acknowledge and honor the various appointments that God has made in his church.

In v. 28, Paul offers a list of officers and of gifts that God alone has given to the church. Paul is adamant on this point. We do not choose gifts and offices for ourselves, but “God has appointed” us to our various roles as individual members in Christ’s body.⁸⁶ Paul used the same verb “appointed” in v. 18, which the ESV translated there as “arranged”: “God *arranged* the members of the body, each one of them, as he chose” (cf. v. 24).⁸⁷ This list is clearly not exhaustive (cf. Rom. 12:3–8; Eph. 4:11); however, Paul obviously intends to demonstrate that God equips his officers by corresponding spiritual gifts.⁸⁸

Paul numbers the first three offices he lists: “first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...” (1 Cor. 12:28). Paul does not here explicitly give the reason for this ordering, but we may reasonably infer Paul’s purposes from what he writes elsewhere. On the one hand, these three offices uniquely establish both the foundation for the church, as well as the ongoing growth of the church.⁸⁹ Elsewhere, Paul insists that the church was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, who received immediate revelation from the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the person and work of Christ Jesus as the church’s cornerstone (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:10). Teachers (or, pastor-teachers; cf. Eph. 4:11) build on that foundation not by adding new revelation, but by faithfully proclaiming the foundational message of Christ: “For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). Thus, apostles, prophets, and teachers play a foundational, first-order role in equipping the saints for the *rest* of the work of ministry in the church (Eph. 4:12–16). While the work of apostles and prophets was unique and unrepeatable, given once for all for the whole church, God will continue to appoint teachers to edify particular congregations until Christ returns.⁹⁰

After these first three offices, Paul shifts his presentation in two ways. First, he does not continue with his numerical ordering. Rather than continuing with “fourth,” he instead simply says, “then miracles, then gifts of healing....” After those two gifts, Paul does not even continue to use the conjunction “then” between the various appointments of God in the church. Second, Paul shifts from speaking about *offices* (apostles, prophets, teachers) to instead speak about *gifts* themselves. Even so, the whole context of this passage makes clear that Paul is describing gifts given to specific people for the accomplishment of specific functions within the church. It was not that miracles, healings, helping, administrating, and tongues-speaking simply *happened*, but that God specifically appointed

and gifted certain people to perform these functions, for the edification of the whole church.⁹¹

Of these gifts, miracles, healings, and tongues-speaking were associated with the ministry of apostles. Just as Jesus had performed miracles and healings as signs to confirm the authenticity of his own ministry, so the apostles performed miracles and healings to confirm the authenticity of their message about Christ (cf. Acts 2:43; 3:1–4:22; 5:12; 9:32–42). Also, the apostles spoke in tongues to spread the gospel of Jesus in other languages to new people groups (cf. Acts 2:6–11). Others beyond the apostles participated in these mighty outpourings of God's Spirit in the early church. Nevertheless, these signs were so closely related to the ministry of the apostles that Paul pointed to them as a confirmation of his ministry: "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works" (2 Cor. 12:12). When the ministry of the apostles ceased, these gifts ceased with them.

The two other gifts of helping and administrating, though, are different from the sign gifts in at least three ways, as Gordon Fee notes: "(a) they are the only two not mentioned again in the rhetoric that follows (vv. 29–30); (b) they are not mentioned again in the NT; (c) they do not appear to be of the same kind, that is, supernatural endowments, as those on either side (miracles, healings, tongues)."⁹² Where the verbal form of the word for "helping" appears in Acts 20:35, the meaning is clearly related to mercy ministry: "In all these things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must *help* the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"⁹³ As such, this word seems to describe a gift exercised chiefly among the deacons in a church.

The word translated as "administration" probably misses the idea of the word, which describes a "steersman" or "pilot" of a ship (cf. Acts 27:11; Rev. 18:17).⁹⁴ Anthony Thiselton gets much closer to the idea with his translation and explanation: "the ability to formulate strategies: someone who can perceive what opportunities or dangers lie in this or that direction."⁹⁵ As such, this word seems to describe a gift exercised chiefly by the elders in a church.⁹⁶ Since Paul has already mentioned the office of a "teacher" (i.e., a teaching elder, or a pastor), Paul probably has in mind ruling elders in a church. Ruling elders play a critical role, along with teaching elders, in giving direction to the church, but ruling elders not "labor in preaching and teaching" (cf. 1 Tim. 5:17).⁹⁷

In v. 29–30, Paul draws his conclusion: all in the body do not have the same function. Not all are apostles, nor prophets, nor teachers, nor miracle-workers. Not all possess gifts of healing, or speak in tongues, or interpret tongues. God has appointed *different* members to play *different* roles and functions. Nevertheless, all of these roles and functions hang together in unity as the one body of Christ. We must do away with any kind of boasting, envy, contempt, ambition, or anything that would divide us from our fellow members in the body of Christ.⁹⁸

Then, Paul gives a final exhortation: "But earnestly desire the higher gifts" (1 Cor. 12:31a). In light of everything Paul has said, it is clear that he is not telling feet to lament that they are not hands, or ears that they are not eyes (cf. 1 Cor. 12:15–16). Instead, Paul is simply instructing every member to seek after the most *useful* gifts in the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 14:5).⁹⁹ As Garland observes, "The greater gifts are those that edify, encourage, and comfort others."¹⁰⁰ Paul's last sentence of this chapter, then, is not an entirely different idea: "And I will show you a still more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31b). Instead, Paul is telling us *how* they ought to seek the higher gifts: by the criterion of love (cf. 1 Cor. 13).¹⁰¹ Lenski puts this well: "Love is to be the all-dominating motive in seeking and in using spiritual gifts."¹⁰²

Discussion Questions

1. What role does the Holy Spirit play in leading us to confess that Jesus is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3)? How did the Holy Spirit *inspire* the writers of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible? How does the Holy Spirit *illuminate* us as we read the Bible, so that we understand the message? How do we get it wrong apart from the Holy Spirit's ministry? Do you pray for the Holy Spirit to open your eyes, ears, and heart so that you confess Jesus as Lord?
2. How do the “varieties of gifts” of the Holy Spirit equip us for ministry (1 Cor. 12:4)? How do the “varieties of service” serve the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 12:5)? How do the “varieties of activities” of the Father empower us for ministry (1 Cor. 12:6)? How do these distinct works of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus, and the Father connect together? What do we mean when we say that the external works of the Trinity are indivisible and common? Why is this important?
3. Whose gifts do you most often envy (1 Cor. 12:15–19)? How does envy tempt you to demean and to devalue the gifts that God has given to you? Whose gifts do you most often despise (1 Cor. 12:20–21)? How does pride lead you to devalue the gifts of others? What would a healthy appreciation of your gifts look like, without moving into sinful pride? Who is one person you could encourage this week to use his or her gifts (1 Cor. 12:22–26)?
4. What gifts has God given to you to serve the church? What responsibilities has God given to you in the church? What abilities and resources has God entrusted to you for your stewardship? What relationships has God put you in, whether inside or outside the church? How has God equipped you to faithfully steward what he has entrusted to you? How can you be most useful to the church out of love (1 Cor. 12:31)?

Notes

1. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 162.
2. “Four times it refers to persons (2:13, 15; 3:1; 14:37), six times to things (2:13; 9:11; 10:3–4; 14:1), and four times to the contrast between the body animated by the Spirit and the body animated by the soul (15:44–46).” (Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 561–62.)
3. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 638.
4. “Paul takes up a new topic—‘now concerning’ (περὶ δὲ, *peri de*)—that he will address in chapters 12–14. The genitive plural τῶν πνευματικῶν (*tōn pneumatikōn*) can be read as masculine, ‘the spiritual persons,’ or as neuter, ‘the spiritual things or gifts.’ The ambiguity reflects the fact that he picks up an issue raised by the Corinthians. They would understand what he means, even if we do not.” (Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 558.)
5. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 192.
6. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 561.
7. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 209.
8. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 253.
9. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 565.
10. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 240–41.

11. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 570–72.
12. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 163–64.
13. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 193.
14. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 164.
15. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 194–95.
16. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, 397. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.ii.html>>
17. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 242.
18. In Latin, this standard phrase is *Opera ad extra sent indivisa aut communa*. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 496.
19. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 164.
20. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 575.
21. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 399. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.ii.html>>
22. Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians* (Reprint: Edinburgh, UK: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2000; Originally published 1857), 242–43.
23. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 497.
24. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 400. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.ii.html>>
25. This point, and the categorizations that follow, come from Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 499. I have changed Lenski's word "intellect" to "understanding."
26. John Chrysostom, "Homily 29," in *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom Archbishop of Constantinople, on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, trans. John Keble (London: J. G. F. and J. Rivington, 1845), 395. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf112/npnf112.iv.xxx.html>>. Cited in Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 165.
27. For a full diagram, see Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 580.
28. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 245–46.
29. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 499.
30. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 582.
31. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 246.
32. Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 166.
33. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 247.
34. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 499.
35. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 502.
36. "The gifts of healing and of miracles, therefore, serve to manifest the goodness of God, but this last, his severity for the destruction of Satan." (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 402. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.ii.html>>)
37. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 247.
38. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 503.
39. Wayne Grudem argues, for example, that the prophecy of Agabus was fallible in Acts 21:11 (Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, pp. 54–74, esp. pp. 58–67. Cited in Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 260.). Thomas Schreiner responds to this claim, writing, "Agabus was not mistaken in Acts 21:11, since when Paul recounts the story of his arrest in Acts 28:17 he appeals to the very word Agabus used (*paradidōmi*) to describe Paul being handed over to the Romans." (Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 260.)
40. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 249.
41. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 203.

42. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 262.
43. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 511.
44. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 253.
45. “For introduces an illustration of the truth taught in the preceding verses. Every organism, or organic whole, supposes diversity and unity.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 253.)
46. “He now derives a similitude from the human body, which he makes use of also in Romans 12:4; but it is for a different purpose, as I have already stated above. In that passage, he exhorts every one to be satisfied with his own calling, and not to invade another’s territory; as ambition, curiosity, or some other disposition, induces many to take in hand more than is expedient. Here, however, he exhorts believers to cleave to each other in a mutual distribution of gifts, as they were not conferred upon them by God that every one should enjoy his own separately, but that one should help Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 404–06. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.ii.html>>)
47. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 208.
48. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 253.
49. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 513.
50. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 208.
51. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 590.
52. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 254.
53. Orthodox Presbyterian Church, “Report of the Committee on the Baptism and Gifts of the Holy Spirit,” 1978. <<https://opc.org/GA/giftsHS.html>>
54. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 668–69.
55. “...baptism is an engrafting into the body of Christ, for God in that ordinance does not represent anything but what he is prepared to accomplish, provided we are on our part capable of it. The Apostle, also, observes here a most admirable medium, in teaching that the nature of baptism is — to connect us with Christ’s body. Lest any one, however, should imagine, that this is effected by the outward symbol, he adds that it is the work of the Holy Spirit.” (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 406. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.ii.html>>)
56. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 263.
57. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 169.
58. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 407. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.ii.html>>
59. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 208–09.
60. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 517–18.
61. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 674.
62. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 256.
63. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 169.
64. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 409. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.iii.html>>
65. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 594.
66. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 169.
67. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 257.
68. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 257.
69. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 409–10. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.iii.html>>
70. “The eye did not give itself the power of vision, nor the ear its ability to discriminate sounds. Each member occupies in the body the position which God has seen fit to assign it, and which is most conducive to the good

of the whole. It is so also in the church; the position which the gifts of every member are determined by the Lord. One has one gift and another another; one is a pastor and another is a missionary; one labors in a city, another in the wilderness, not according to their relative merits, nor in virtue of their own selection, but as God wills and orders. It is therefore as inconsistent with the idea of the church that each member should decide on his own position and functions, as that the members of the body should arrange themselves according to their own notions.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 257.)

71. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 523.

72. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 258.

73. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 410. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.iii.html>>

74. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 526.

75. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 595.

76. “Robertson and Plummer comment that in society the humbler workers are more necessary than those with higher gifts. ‘We can spare this artisan better than this poet but we can spare all the poets better than all the artisans.’” (Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 170–71.)

77. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 411. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.iii.html>>

78. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 215–16.

79. D. B. Martin, “Tongues of Angels and Other Status Indicators,” in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59 (1991), 567. Cited in Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 596.

80. Cited in Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 533.

81. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral*, 210–11.

82. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 534.

83. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 292.

84. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 598.

85. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 412. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.iii.html>>

86. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 172.

87. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 268.

88. “Man may appoint men to offices for which they have not the necessary gifts, but God never does, any more than he ordains the foot to see or the hand to hear.” Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 262.

89. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 598.

90. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 414–15. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.iv.html>>

91. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 262.

92. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 685.

93. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 599.

94. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 688.

95. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 215.

96. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 416–17. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.iv.html>>

97. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 262.

98. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 417. Available online: <<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39/calcom39.xix.iv.html>>

99. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 264.

100. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 602.

101. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 264.

102. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 543.