

The Whole Council of God

1 Corinthians 12:8 – 31



~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God is traversing a section of Scripture in which some of us may disagree; but I hope we can avoid being disagreeable by studying to show ourselves approved. If we continue to disagree, I hope we can still love each other. I don't write the way I do to separate myself from anyone or anything; I am not on a crusade or anything like that. I don't want to fall out with any of my genuine brothers or sisters; and I would never want to see divisions in any church.

That said, the undertaking of a systematic, sincere, proper, correct and complete Bible study necessarily dictates there are going to arise highly controversial subjects. That's just a fact that cannot be avoided. Writing it out as this expedition does requires dealing with *all* the bases and touching each of them. That leaves me giving an interpretation of many passages on which much better men sometimes differ.

If I were running for a public office or attempting to win a popularity contest, there are many sections of the Word of God I would detour around. It would be easy to speak only on the sins of the Moabites – and how terrible they were – while spreading sunshine and rose water on the perfect plastic plants of modern so-called Christians who aren't real. I know I would receive astronomically more support, but I digress.

See, the problem is: God's purpose for my life is to declare the *WHOLE* council of the oracles of God; from front cover to rear cover without fear or favoritism from man. Most people disagree with me and many simply do not like my message or my method. Well, all I can tell you is: I'm teaching the Bible, friends. This safari is a learning exercise – for the reader. These things I write are the things the Holy Spirit has inspired me to write

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regarding my understanding of the Word of God. It's not open for debate. In this teaching of the entire Word of God to the entire world, the chips are just going to have to fall where they may.

I do not claim to have a monopoly on the truth. I don't say I am always right in my views. I try to keep it simple, and to avoid doctrine and theology as much as possible. I'm certainly not a Bible know-it-all; in fact, the more I learn about the Bible, the more I realize I don't know very much. I am amazed at my vast ignorance; frightened by the things I have totally forgotten when I see them again in the Bible. I am trying to grow spiritually in grace, but I am, apparently, a truly slow spiritually-growing person.

I also regret that not everyone agrees with me; but, then again, I am the only person in the world with whom I totally agree – so, I suspect you are similar? Plus, everyone has the right to be wrong sometimes. God gives me light, and I shine it for others to see. I have a very profound conviction about the things I write, and I don't compromise. However, we should be able to have fellowship in the Word of God if you believe in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and His deity.

If we can meet around the Person of Jesus Christ on those terms – His terms: well, I rejoice – because I need all the friends I can get. If you say we are brothers in Christ, that's good enough for me. Once we come together in Him, then we need to all make a stand first and foremost for the inerrancy and inspiration of the Word of God. Christians should present a Scripturally-based unity in Christ; standing against the flesh, the world and the devil.

In our previous report, we initiated a close examination of several spiritual endowments we enjoy in the spiritual realm. Paul has already told us that spiritual gifts are a manifestation of the Holy Spirit working through a believer. We're told every man is given a particular gift from God. That gift is given to profit the church, to build the churches wealth, and to spiritually edify one another....

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⁸ For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

~ Wisdom specifically means insight into Godly truth. Frankly, not everyone can understand the Bible message overall and completely. And even the best teacher needs a competent teacher. I recognize the verse that says the Holy Spirit teaches and they needed no man. Well, that was Paul talking to people he had *ALREADY* taught, friends. Not everyone has the gift of wisdom and judgment, let's just keep it real. Wisdom is a special insight given to some people by God Himself into the truth found only in Holy Writ. To get this understanding means to investigate and to dig into the truth....

⁹ To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

~ Different gifts are and were for different ages. You can argue faith healing all day long; I believe in faith healing. I *DON'T* believe in faith healers. If you're going to be healed, you're going to have to take your case directly to the Great Physician. I believe Christians are given gifts relative to certain functions of the particular age in which that person finds themselves living. Sometimes, it is supernatural, to be sure.

It happened in the apostolic age; but, I think we're seeing much greater spiritual miracles today than they did in the first century. See, when Jesus spoke, and a person was immediately healed physically, that was not such a big miracle to me. However, when you or I speak the Gospel and a lost person's life is transformed from a life of sin to faith in Christ – that, my friends, is the *MUCH* greater miracle. What we need to do is preach the Word of God and trust the Spirit of God to use it like He said He will; because He does....

¹⁰ To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

~ Notice that “*divers*” in verse ten is not in italics; which means it isn’t in the best manuscripts. We all have a New Testament Bible and most of us can all speak a common language today. There’s no need for psycho-babble. Let’s let the sheep go ‘bah-bah’ while we teach the world the Gospel in a coherent way they can love and understand; not to mention believe is genuine. Interestingly, there isn’t a *SINGLE* tongue-tied Christian who is sincere; and I know that because there isn’t an “*interpreter of tongues*” to be found in any church anywhere in any part of the world. To say you are an interpreter of tongues is to admit openly that you have no credibility in any capacity....

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

~ The Holy Spirit is sovereign when deciding gifts – *BUT* – I do feel we have a right to pray for and covet the best of them. In fact, I know we have that right. See, the Corinthian church was operating on an extremely low level. Paul was trying to bring them up a bit by correcting certain problems amongst them; and that church in Corinth was horribly wrong, friends. I don’t care what you think – the church in Corinth was *very* far off-base. The Corinthians were all hipped on the tongues movement, too; in fact, they were totally and completely hung up on incoherent psycho drivel....

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

~ So, God presents a full-blown comparison of the spiritual body to the human body in this passage. We have so many parts — thousands — on and in our bodies. I think there are, likewise, as many gifts. We have organs, tendons, muscles, soft tissue and blood vessels. There are twenty-seven bones just in the foot. Sometimes it's hard to tell which part is hurting because it feels like it's all hurting. If one member suffers, the whole body suffers. Some experts say the most important part of the body is the big toe; it's what enables us to stand. Most of us just stuff our big important toes right down in a sock and never think twice about them on any particular day. Well, I know some people say I could be a foot model, but I don't think they mean it in a good way; my big toe isn't very attractive, if you ask me – but it sure is important for balance....

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

~ Usually, the most important member in a church is that unknown obscure saint you don't see much of. They're usually in the back row. These are the ones who pray and have faith; they're the ones who truly keep a church alive. Even if tongues were for today — which they aren't but — but if they *were* for today, not everyone would speak in tongues. The analogy is the body, and the body is not all tongue. Actually, I do know a few people who are just about all tongue; but, they are the exception and not the rule, to be sure. Even if tongues were a gift for today not everyone would have that particular gift. And we only use our gifts to glorify Christ, friends. When we use our gift properly, the body can function properly....

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

~ Ananias and Sapphira had gifts, but they misused them by *LYING* about their appropriation; and they both fell down dead before Simon Peter as a result. Dorcas had a gift for making widow's clothes; but, Dorcas only made clothes because Simon Peter had raised her from the dead! Dorcas had a very important and very real gift. God didn't even raise Simon Peter from the dead; but he was the preacher on the Day of Pentecost. You might want to think about all of that.

It just happens to be the Spirit of God Who is sovereign in all of these matters. God determines what and who is important when and why. If the Spiritual Safari is to be a success, then we need each other. We need to take the entire Word of God to the entire world properly, correctly and completely – together. There is no better feeling of adventure than to discover what God wants us to do in our life to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ
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