

# *Spirited Efforts*

Long Beach Alliance Church • October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009 • Pastor Chris Lankford

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.

~1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:4–6 (NASB)

## 1) This Is True Spirituality...

- A) Our attention shifts to a new topic, that of “spiritual gifts/ things” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:1). Paul’s introduction “now, concerning...” indicates an answer to a written question.
- B) Because many of the followers of Jesus Christ in Corinth came from pagan backgrounds (12:2), Paul desires to make them aware of “true” spiritual things (12:1).
- C) Rather than seek some sort of pagan “authentication” of spiritual matters, Paul notes that true spirituality comes from embracing “Jesus Christ as Lord” through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (12:3)
- D) Conversely, cursing Jesus Christ could only come from a heart which is not under the Spirit’s control (12:3).

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## 2) A More Trinitarian & Unified View Of God's Gifts

- A) Paul then develops a three-layered (12:4-6) understanding of how the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, and God (Trinity) function within the context of God's people (the church).
  
- B) There are a variety of "spiritual gifts" (supernatural talents), all given by the Spirit (12:4). Each of these various gifts parallel "spiritual ministries" (supernatural services), all given by the Lord (12:5). These gifts and ministries have "spiritual effects" (supernatural outcomes), all given by God to all His people (the church, 12:6).
  
- C) Most of us have been raised with an over-emphasis on "spiritual gifts" and very little emphasis on "spiritual ministries & spiritual effects." But one cannot understand how "the common good" can be achieved (12:7) without keeping each of these BONDED together!

## 3) Examples Of The "Common Good"

- A) Paul provides examples of the gifts/ministries/effects which God/Christ/Holy Spirit are providing to the church (12:8-10). This list is not meant to be exhaustive (cf. Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11).
  
- B) Since this is the case, we should resist the desire to organize the list into firm categories (internal vs. external OR natural vs. supernatural, etc.). Rather, these are probably common gifts/ministries/effects.
  
- C) Emphasizing that the Spirit (note the "inclusio" created with 12:4) is at work in all these things (12:11), Paul presses on each follower of Christ that when "Jesus is Lord" of our lives, the Spirit "gifts" all of God's people (church) for the common good (12:7).

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