

## Small Group Guide

### THE CROSS AND CHRISTIAN GIFTS: THE SPIRIT

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The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. Jim Shaddix

September 8, 2013

1 Corinthians 12:1-13

Use this resource as a tool to help Christ-followers move forward in their spiritual growth. To do this well requires that the Small Group Leader is building a relationship with the individuals in the small group and has identified where the people are in their relationship with God. Are they Christ-followers? Are they growing in Christ? If so, in what areas do they need to grow further? As disciple-makers, Small Group Leaders shepherd people to know the truth of Scripture, to understand why it matters, and to apply it to their lives. Small Group Leaders come alongside those whom they disciple to discover how loving God, loving each other, and loving those not yet in the Kingdom should shape how they live. The structure of this resource coincides with moving people from knowledge (Main Truth) to understanding (Why It Matters) to application (Now What Do We Do?). Utilize this Small Group Guide as a flexible teaching tool to inform your time together and not as a rigid task list.

## GETTING STARTED

*Welcome* – Incorporate time for greeting one another, enjoying any refreshments, and making announcements. If guests are visiting, make introductions and help them feel welcomed. Ask for their contact information, so you can follow up with them.

*Looking Back* – Provide an opportunity for small group members to share what God is teaching them, how they are applying what they are learning, and how He has given them opportunities to share the gospel with others. This can be done as a whole group or in smaller groups. Do the people know each other well enough to share more than surface level information? How can time together be used to foster deeper relationships among those in the small group? Also, what are the struggles and needs of the people in the small group? How can the people in the small group sacrificially serve each other?

*Looking Up* – Hold prayer as fundamental to small group time rather than supplemental to it. Give adoration and thanksgiving to God in prayer. Submit yourself to Him, confessing sin. Petition God for personal needs and other requests. Pray for the disciple-making efforts of those in the group and for the salvation of the lost in each other's families, spheres of influence, and in the world. The Weekly Prayer Focus below can also be incorporated in the group's prayer time.

### *Weekly Prayer Focus (from Our Worship Guide)*

- *Pray for Our Lives:* Praise God for the work of His Spirit in our lives. Thank the Spirit for the gifts with which He empowers us. Ask God to guide us and to grant us understanding in our study of His Spirit and spiritual gifts. Pray for unity among our faith family as we all seek to obediently utilize the gifts with which the Spirit has blessed us. Ask the Spirit for the gifts you desire. Pray for Him to help you utilize the gifts He has already given you.
- *Pray for Our City:* This week, as we remember the events of 9/11, we want to pray for our first responders in the Birmingham area who put themselves in harm's way to ensure the security and safety of those around them. We are also praying for True Vine Baptist Community Outreach Church, Inglenook, and Ralph Garth, Pastor.
- *Pray for Our World:* This week we are praying for Brook Hills Long-Term workers, Jayson and Ashley F. serving in East Asia. Jayson and Ashley were sent out from Brook Hills almost four years ago. They are working to engage unreached people

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groups with the gospel and to strengthen the work of the local church in their area. Join us this week as we pray for Jayson, Ashley, and their four children. We are also praying for our Short-Term team led by Chris McClain as they serve with the Brocks and Coes in Ecuador.

## MAIN TRUTH

### Message Outline

#### The Cross and Christian Gifts: The Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:1-13

#### The truth about spiritual gifts...

- They are easily misunderstood and misappropriated. (1 Corinthians 12:1)
- They often cause disunity and division in the church. (1 Corinthians 12:1)
- They should be desired, discovered and developed. (1 Corinthians 12:1,31; cf. 1 Corinthians 14:1,12,39; 1 Peter 4:10)

#### The theology of spiritual gifts...

- Believers are immersed in and indwelt by God's Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- God's Spirit joins believers together to form Jesus' body. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)
- Believers receive grace from God's Spirit to make Jesus' body work right. (1 Corinthians 12:2-31)

*Spiritual gifts are the supernatural ways  
God's Spirit works through God's children to make God's Son look right.*

#### The test for spiritual gifts...

- God's Spirit works through believers to proclaim Jesus' glory. (1 Corinthians 12:3; cf. John 16:14; 1 Peter 4:10-11)
- God's Spirit works through all believers in many different ways. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)
- God's Spirit works primarily to benefit the body, not the believer. (1 Corinthians 12:7-10; cf. Romans 1:11-12; 1 Corinthians 14:4-5,12,17,26; Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Peter 4:10)
- God's Spirit works through believers according to His sovereign plan. (1 Corinthians 12:11; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:18,28; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:7)

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#### Message Summary

In his letter to the Corinthian church, Paul addresses a question they posed regarding spiritual gifts and teaches that spiritual gifts are the supernatural ways God's Spirit works through God's children to glorify God's Son. When gifts are misunderstood, it leads to disunity and division in the church. This is why believers should know the truth about gifts and desire, discover, and develop their gifts.

## WHY IT MATTERS

### Digging Deeper

Based on the phrase “now concerning” (1 Cor. 12:1), we can tell that Paul was addressing an issue that the Corinthian church had asked concerning spiritual gifts. In the broader context of 1 Corinthians 12:1-13, Paul addresses the Corinthians' favoritism of specific gifts, particularly that of speaking in tongues. Because of their pagan background, the Corinthians may have been concerned about what those who were exercising the gift of tongues were actually saying, which is another purpose for having an interpreter that Paul later lists as a requirement for using the gift of tongues. Also, because of their misunderstanding, the Corinthians were susceptible to being led astray by false teachers and pagan worshipers.

Explain that today there are disagreements about whether the charismatic gifts, such as speaking in tongues, still exist. Some people believe that those gifts are no longer given, although others believe that those specific gifts continue today. **Point out that no matter what we believe about these specific gifts, Paul's exhortation remains the same: Spiritual gifts are for the good of the body and are equally valuable within the Body of Christ.** In fact, the last phrase of verse 3 tells us that only those who are genuine believers can sincerely proclaim that “Jesus is Lord” of their lives and that is because the Holy Spirit dwells within them. Therefore, because all who are believers in Christ have the Holy Spirit, all of their gifts are valuable for the church.

The Old Testament prophets spoke of a day when God would pour out His Spirit on His children in a way that had never happened before (Joel 2). After Pentecost, Peter proclaimed that such prophecy had been fulfilled (Acts 2). Explain that during the times of the Old Testament, God would often send His Spirit to a person for a specific purpose or task for a specific time. After Pentecost, God sent His Spirit to actually live within each believer and never leave. Jesus Himself, spoke to this truth as He ascended into heaven and promised His presence would be with His disciples “always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). **Emphasize to learners that we have something today that the patriarchs and history-makers of the Old Testament didn't—the constant presence of God in the lives of His children through His Spirit.**

Looking at 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, ask learners to describe how Paul purposely used the Trinity to show how diversity and unity work together. Ask: How do spiritual gifts reflect the diversity and unity of the Trinity? Many Christians neglect to see the purpose of spiritual gifts in light of unity. Instead, particularly in an individualistic culture, we often see them as a welcome present into the family of God. Invite learners to discuss how such a view contradicts the need for unity and places the focus of spiritual gifts on one's self instead of the body of Christ.

Do each of the people in the group know what their spiritual gifts are? Do they even know how to identify their gifts? Have the group share with each other what their gifts are, if they know them. For a listing of the different spiritual gifts named in Scripture, visit [brookhills.org/pdfs/impact\\_sg\\_roles.pdf](http://brookhills.org/pdfs/impact_sg_roles.pdf). If anyone in your group would like to take an assessment, visit [brookhills.org/contribute/impact\\_homework\\_2.pdf](http://brookhills.org/contribute/impact_homework_2.pdf) to download an assessment. How did the believers in the early church identify their spiritual gifts? While spiritual gifts assessments can be helpful tools, believers can also affirm the giftings they have seen in fellow Christ-followers. In fact, the most reliable indicator of a spiritual gift is the affirmation of these personal characteristics by other Christians, and gifts are often discovered while one serves in various capacities in the

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body. What gifts have you seen the different people in the group exercise? Encourage them to also ask those close to them to think through various gifts that they have seen the person employ.

How are the individuals in the group using their gifts to serve the body as well as the people in the small group itself? What are ways that the gifts represented in the group can be used in the church? Challenge the group members to think through how they can use their gifts this week for God's glory in the body. Also, discuss the heart motivation involved when you exercise your gifts as well as how to guard against pride, comparison, etc. when it comes to spiritual gifts.

## NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

### Group Discussion & Application

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- Paul was addressing a church that had been plagued with those who did not understand the biblical principles of spiritual gifts. Considering this background, what was Paul's intent with his letter? Why did Paul think that a correct biblical understanding of spiritual gifts was necessary to the health of the church?
- In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he never trivialized the existence of or the necessity of spiritual gifts. What does this indicate about the truth of their value?
- How does our culture seem to either downplay spiritual gifts or focus on them too much? How can both issues be harmful?
- Verse 13 indicates that all believers are immersed in and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Paul also stated here that believers become identified together into one body—the body of Christ—through the Spirit. Because all believers are indwelt by the Spirit and unified together to make up the visible body of Christ, what is the importance of their unity and godliness?
- The Holy Spirit's residence within believers does not completely eradicate their sinful nature. Why, then, is God's grace and empowerment so essential?
- How are spiritual gifts a part of God's grace? How do spiritual gifts empower believers to show Christ to a fallen world?
- Why do we often see spiritual gifts as an individual "prize" for becoming a follower of Christ? Why is this thought damaging to the church?
- Look closely throughout verses 1-13. Notice the repeating pattern of Paul's use of "one Spirit," "one body," or "same." What does this repetition indicate about the purpose of spiritual gifts and their value within the church?
- How does the unification of the body of Christ serve as a foundation for proclaiming Christ?
- How does our church culture often elevate some gifts over others? How can we embrace and find freedom in God's sovereignty to gift His children according to His sovereign plan?
- How can we encourage one another to discover and use our giftedness to benefit the body of Christ? What needs of the church correspond to strengths and gifts that you have?
- Why are we so reluctant to become involved within the ministry of the church? What does our intentional lack of involvement indicate about our value of the body of Christ? What does it indicate about a self-centered view of salvation?
- Does the presence of some areas of giftedness excuse us from engaging in other areas? How can we use gifts effectively while also seeking to continue to grow in all areas of godliness?