

A Spiritual gifts:

❖ Many gifts, one Giver.

- Who gives spiritual gifts? (1 Cor. 12:4-6)

1 Cor. 12:4	there are differences of	gifts	But the same	Spirit
1 Cor. 12:5		ministries		Lord
1 Cor. 12:6		workings		God

- To help us understand the relationship between spiritual gifts and their Giver, Paul uses three terms to identify them, highlighting their diversity: gifts; ministries; and operations.
- However, the Giver is One: the [Holy] Spirit; the Lord [Jesus]; and God [the Father]. That is to say: The Deity working in unison (John 14:16).
- But God does not bestow gifts as the Greco-Roman “gods” did (1 Cor. 12:2). There is no ecstasy, nor a hierarchical selection of the recipients of the gifts (such as, for example, priestesses).
- Why does God give different gifts to different people? (1 Cor. 12:7)
- Spiritual gifts are used “for the benefit” of the church. Only God knows which people can use a particular gift to achieve that purpose.

❖ Many members, one body.

- God is one, but each member of the Godhead has its own function. Likewise, the church is one, but each component of it has its own function as part of the body of Christ on Earth (1 Cor. 12:12-13).
- Paul uses the analogy of the human body as the church to highlight unity in diversity. The eye has the “gift” of sight, but the ear does not. However, the two complement each other by working together. Similarly, in the church, each person carries out their work according to the gifts they have received (1 Corinthians 12:28-30).
- This implies that everyone is needed; that no one is greater than another; that everyone should care about the well-being of others; and that everyone should work for the unity of the church (1 Cor. 12:15-27).

B The unifying element:

❖ The excellence of love.

- Love is not a gift, but “the most excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31). It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (Galatians 5:22). Spiritual gifts can only be used properly through love.
- The gift of tongues, without love, is “a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.” The gift of prophecy, the gift of knowledge, and the gift of faith, without love, are nothing. The gift of generosity and the gift of martyrdom, without love, are worthless (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

C Special gifts:

❖ The gift of tongues.

- Paul's emphasis on the gift of tongues and its proper use implies that it was being misused by members of the Corinthian church, causing disorder and confusion in public worship (1 Cor. 14:23).
- The gift of tongues is the ability to speak human or angelic languages unknown to the person (1 Cor. 13:1). When this language is unknown to the listener, it needs interpretation (Acts 2:8; 1 Cor. 14:2, 13-14, 27-28).
- Paul's desire that all should speak in tongues has been misinterpreted by those who think that we should all have that gift (1 Cor. 14:5).
- In reality, this longing encompasses all the gifts (1 Cor. 14:1). Paul had already made it clear that “to each one is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:7). Therefore, not everyone receives the same gifts.

❖ The gift of prophecy.

- We must not limit the gift of prophecy to predicting future events. The primary use of the gift of prophecy is for edification, exhortation, and consolation (1 Cor. 14:3).
- Paul highlights this gift above others (1 Cor. 14:1, 4, 22-25). But he also urges that it be used correctly so as not to create confusion: “but let everything be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40; see 1 Cor. 14:29-33).
- As a characteristic gift of the remnant church, it had its special manifestation in the life and work of Ellen G. White (Rev. 12:17; 19:10).
- How to recognize a true prophet?
 - (1) The announced future events—if they are not conditional—must come to pass (Deut. 18:22; Jer. 28:8-9; Jonah 4:2)
 - (2) His message must be in accordance with that of the earlier prophets (Deut. 13:1-3; Isa. 8:20)
 - (3) He must bear witness to the incarnation of Jesus (1 John 4:1-3)
 - (4) His life must be in accordance with the biblical message he preaches (Mt. 7:15-20)