

# The Gifts of the Spirit

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[ 0 : 00 ] Okay, how you guys doing? Really? Hey, we are... So if you're new here, my name is Tobin.

I'm one of the pastors here. And we are glad that you're here with us as a family at Watermark. You know, when we...

So in October, 10 will be five years old. And when we started the church, or started praying about the church and what to do, and what kind of church God would have us to be, I remember the meeting as clear as day.

One time somebody just said, so what are we going to name the church? And we never really thought about a name of a church or what that would look like or things like that. And so about 20 of us just started praying, and we started listing out a whiteboard, and we got all these types of names out there.

And we started thinking about what kind of church does God want us to be, and what does He have us here for? What is our purpose on this western side of Hong Kong Island? And we came up with this idea of...

[ 1 : 07 ] We wanted to call... We felt like God was calling us a church Watermark. And we picked the idea of Watermark because we realized that, you know, like on paper and on different types of things, that Watermark is a symbol.

It's kind of a symbol of authenticity. It's something that you can see, and you can look up, and you can say, okay, is this genuine or not? And we do it on money or other things. But there's a Watermark there. But we realized also that God's fingerprint, His Watermark is on everything in creation.

He's put His fingerprint on you, whether you know that or not, His Watermark on you. And we realized as a church that as our responsibility is to bring God's light, His Word, His Spirit, the community out there, and as we did that, that things would become clearer.

We'd understand why we exist and why we're here as people, of His people, and why we're on this journey. We also realized that water is this big change agent. And we really feel like God was calling us to be a church that made a difference.

One of the questions we ask our staff all the time is, if the church wasn't here, would this part of Hong Kong be any different? Would people miss the church not being here? And our prayer and our hope is that the answer would be yes, that something would be missing, there'd be something lacking.

[ 2 : 20 ] You know, about six or seven years ago, when Christine and I were praying, and we were talking about, okay, so what are we going to do with this church? As God's calling us to plant this church, how are we going to do it? What will we look like? We just start asking people, what is a church supposed to look like?

I mean, literally, we've been in church all our lives, almost, but we wanted to say, what do you want your church to look like? What is a church supposed to look like? And we asked people who were churching, we asked people who were unchurched, we asked people who were de-churched, people who had just given up on church, and they'd been in church for so long, and they just felt a burden or this heaviness, and so they just gave up on church.

And so we asked everybody, what does a church look like? What do you want a new church to look like? And here's some of the responses that we got as we were praying through that. Some people would say stuff like, I want a church that never asked me to do anything.

I'm already too busy in Hong Kong, and I'm just so busy with clubs and Bible studies and other things I'm doing, I need a church that will just ask me to do nothing.

If you can do a church that asks me to do nothing, that's the type of church that I want to be about. And Christina and I would just look at each other afterwards, and we were like, okay.

[ 3 : 29 ] But, you know, inside, we hurt. I mean, often I feel like Charlie Brown, you know, in the movies. Charlie Brown goes around, and all he can say is, good grief, you know.

So I have a question. Anybody want to be a pastor? It's crazy as you look at these things. But, you know, as we look at these things and what we struggle with in our lives, we realize that Paul, in this passage, and his church, they struggled with the same things.

The church of Corinth, they struggled with this idea of self-centeredness. They struggled with this idea of selfishness. They struggled with this idea of serving. They struggled with this idea of gifts. I mean, they basically said they struggled with this idea of what does it really mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to be spiritual? How do I know that I'm really the Christian that God has called me to be? And so what I want to do is we look at this passage here.

I want to look at three things. I want to look at what is Paul talking to us about? What does it mean to be spiritual? He gives us a test in what it looks like so that we can know if we're spiritual or not spiritual.

[ 4 : 39 ] He's going to talk about these gifts that he's going to give us and these gifts that he's giving us to serve each other. And we want to look at those and talk about and lay down this foundation. We're going to talk about this for like three or four weeks. And so there's going to be a lot here.

And as you look at it, you're like, okay, I have all these questions. And if your question doesn't get answered today, hopefully it will in the next three or four weeks. And then I have some questions for us afterwards. Does that make sense? So where we're going is we want to look at what it means to be spiritual.

We want to look at this test that we can decide, are we really the people that God has called us to be? We want to look at these gifts that God's given us to walk through this journey in life. And then we want to ask some questions.

Okay? Now, if you've been with us for any period of time, you realize that the church in Corinth, they have been struggling. They've come out of this culture that is probably the most immoral and out-of-control culture that I've ever read about in the known world.

It was full of idols. It was full of bad influences. The church had these habits. I know none of us have these habits, but the church had these habits. And these habits were stuff like pride and self-centeredness and arrogance and selfishness.

[ 5 : 41 ] And what happened is as the church was going on this journey, these things just kept coming up and coming up and coming up. And when these self-centeredness and selfishness comes up in chapters, we've been reading them in 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 today.

What you see is a self-centeredness and this pride just starts to fracture the church. Instead of being a family, instead of being a community, they're just this group of individuals. And it's interesting because in this passage, in chapter 1, verses 5 through 7, Paul begins the book and he praises us.

He praises them. He says, man, you guys have your act together. You're full of knowledge. You know how to use your gifts. You're doing really well. But here in this passage, Paul says, no. You don't know what you're doing.

You don't know how to use your gifts. There's this lack of knowledge. There's this misunderstanding. And so if you look at verses 1 through 3, Paul begins to set out his argument for us, for the church.

And what he says to them and what he says to us is this. He says there are two types of spirituality in all the world. There's two types. There's either true spirituality or there's false spirituality.

[ 6 : 49 ] And if you're in here right now, you're either being led by one of those two types of spirituality. He says that the true spirituality is being led by God's spirit.

It's from God's word. It's from his character. And that a false spirituality is from the world and from demons and from scary things.

And you've got to remember, I feel like I'm getting feedback up here, but you've got to remember as this church was going through life, they had come out of this crazy culture that was out of control.

I mean, it wasn't too long before ago, it wasn't too long ago that all the people in the church were worshiping in pagan temples. It wasn't too long ago that all the people were involved in immoral acts as they came into their life.

It wasn't too long ago that people entered into their temple and they asked questions like this. Does this make me feel good? Does this make me happy? Do I feel like I deserve this?

[ 7 : 54 ] Am I experiencing good things? It wasn't too long ago that the people in Paul's church in Corinth, everything they asked about and everything they talked about centered on themselves. They were the center of their focus.

And listen to me here, guys, because this is, in Paul's day, in an ancient world, people would go to temples and they would experience miracles.

I mean, they would enter into a temple and they would see incredible things. They would enter into temples and they would see visions. And people would talk about the future and people would talk about prophecy.

They would enter into the temples where the sacrifices were happening, where the orgies were happening, and people would be healed. They would enter into the temple and people would see other people speaking in tongues.

In many different strange languages. And they felt like power came upon them. And when they came into these temples, this power came upon them and it captivated everybody.

[ 8 : 53 ] And they felt great. I mean, there's a passage in Acts 8. As the disciples are going around and they're sharing the gospel, there's this guy named Simon. He's a magician.

And it says that he actually had power and he was doing all of these miracles. And this power was coming from these demonic sources that were invading his life. And we're told that all of Samaria was captivated by this guy.

I mean, this guy was doing all these miracles and it was amazing. And he was claiming to be great and everybody was following him. And then in Acts 16, we're told again, there's this slave girl. And she's possessed by a demon.

And she's telling everybody his fortune. And she's telling everybody what's going to happen. And everybody is following her. And everybody knows where this power is coming from. And what Paul is saying to you and I, and he's saying to the church of Corinthian, is that everybody is spiritual.

Everyone is spiritual. The question is, where is your spiritual power coming from? Where are you receiving that spirituality from?

[ 10 : 00 ] And so in verse 3, Paul just gives us a test. And it's a really simple test. I don't know why we haven't talked about it before, but we need to be talking about it all the time in the church.

And this is what Paul says. Guys, if you want to test where your life is, if you want to test where your spirituality is coming from, you want to test where the power in you is coming from, all you need to do is take an oath.

And this oath was something that everybody did every day in Corinth. And this is what you would do. You'd get out of your house, you'd go to work, and as you walk into the marketplace to do your work, to do your business, to buy your goods, you would see a statue of Caesar there.

And you'd take a little incense, and you would burn it in front of Caesar, and you would say, Caesar is Lord. And if you didn't do that, you couldn't enter into the marketplace.

If you didn't do that, you couldn't do work. If you couldn't do that, you couldn't buy your goods. And so everybody did this. And Paul says in his passage, you can tell what kind of spirit controls us by what we say about Jesus.

[ 11 : 00 ] He says that in the Gospels, that when people came to Christ, and even when the demons came to Christ, often the demons would say things like, well, Jesus, he is the Son of God. And sometimes the demons would come before the Lord, and they would talk about him to other people, and they would say, Jesus, he is the Holy One of God.

But what you never see in the Gospels is a demon saying, Jesus is Lord. It never happens. Because they had another Lord.

They received their power from someplace else. And so Paul says to the church of Corinth, and he says to us, that if you're struggling with this idea of how you're living your life, if you're struggling with this idea of are you really spiritual, if you're struggling with where your spirituality comes from, he just says, look at your life.

And look at the oath that you take. Can you say that Jesus is Lord of your life? Can you say that Jesus is your master?

Can you say that Jesus is your patron that we talked about last week? Can you say that Jesus owns you? Can you say that Christ owns all of you? That Jesus owns all of your stuff?

[ 12 : 10 ] That he has the right to direct and control your life. Now, these aren't just words that Paul's talking about here. But what he's actually talking about is not just our words, but it's our actions and our thoughts and our life and the things we do when no one else is looking.

And he's saying all of these things point to the power in our life. It talks about the thing that controls us. And the question is, where is this power coming from? And can you and I say that Christ is our Lord?

That he controls everything about us? When you read the passage, you realize that the church in Corinth, they struggled with this. Because the church in Corinth, they wanted to play both ends. They wanted to live double lives. They wanted to live with one life in the marketplace and have their work or their law firm or their school or something like that be their Lord and control their life and be all of what they're about to be.

But then when they went to church on Sunday, they wanted to be about Christ and Jesus and what he did and how he controlled all their life. And he was all about that. And so Paul just asked a simple question to the church so that we can just kind of lay this line down and say, where are we in this whole process?

[ 13 : 23 ] And the process he asked us is, is Christ Lord of your life? Now, when I say that, I know that sometimes we get kind of tense, right? Because we read these passages and we go, okay, this is where I'm supposed to be.

I'm not there. I'm not. And you realize as we talk about these things, it's a journey we're on. At the end of the sermon, we're not saying, okay, we all should be like that because if we were all like that, none of us would be like that and the pastor wouldn't be like that and the staff wouldn't be like that and we'd all be lost.

But the question we have to ask ourselves is, if Jesus is Lord and I'm not living like it, what's the next step I need to move in that direction to start living like that? How do I start to live like Christ is my king?

How do I start to live like he is in control of all of my life? What is that next step? So we're not asking you to get there today or next week because you're never going to get there because we're broken, we're fallen, we struggle.

But what we're talking about as a church is we're going on a journey, we're being filled with God's spirit or some kind of spirit and the question is, can we discern the truth in our life?

[ 14 : 32 ] And that truth is going to be determined by what kind of spirit leads us. And Paul gives us an easy example and he says, the way you figure this out is, can you look at your life, can you look at how you live, can you look at how you use your money, can you look at how you treat your people, can you look at how you do all these gifts that God's given you, and can you say in the midst of all that that Christ is Lord of your life and you're trusting him to take control over you?

Everybody's really serious. But the question is, can we do that? Can we say that Christ is Lord of our life? You know, I struggle with that.

I mean, there's times we preach and we teach and we talk through things and then all of a sudden I get out into the world and I get busy and I start doing things and all of a sudden I'm just focusing and I'm going down this path and all of a sudden I kind of stop and I go, wait a second.

Who's trying to control my life? Is it me? Is it the circumstances around me? Or is it God? Is Christ's control of my life?

So how do you answer that question? What do you say to that? Because he says the church at Corinth and us, we need to really figure about this answer out before we move forward.

[ 15 : 51 ] He gives an example. You know, for me, I guess the biggest example I ever saw of this in my life was my time in China. In the late 80s and early 90s, I was teaching in China. And we would see just amazing things happen.

I just found out that one of the guys who was in our study became a pastor and he's serving and that's neat. I think it's neat that they just keep walking with the Lord. One night we were able to baptize 16 people in our bathtub.

Our bathtub was literally this big. Now, we didn't get all 16 in at one time, but we did it, you know, one after another after another. And I'll never forget, as we shared the gospel with these students, it usually happened their junior or senior year.

And in their junior or senior year, because of the universities that we were teaching at, they all had to make a decision. And the decision was this. Are they going to join a communist party or not?

Because their senior year, they had to make this decision and they had to take this oath. And in this oath, they had to choose between God and the party. And for them, it was really clear that they couldn't do both sides because once they made a decision, they were just full in.

[16:57] They just had to do all of that. And so as we talked about these, and sometimes as Westerners, we struggle with that. Well, why can't you just do both? And they go, no, you can't do that. You have to either be all in or all out.

And I realized as I watched them that we all struggle with that. Are we all in? Are we all out? Because he says there's not an in-between. There's not an in-between. Either we follow him and he's our Lord or we don't follow him and something else is our Lord. So the question is, where is he in your life?

And what he's saying here, and Paul is saying to the church, is that Jesus is Lord of everything and if he's Lord of everything, it changes everything and either we accept his control and we follow him or we don't. And so he lays down his dividing line.

Does that make sense? Is that clear? I struggle with that because I'm gonna leave here and there's gonna be a lot of things that are gonna happen in my life and I'm gonna wanna control, grab control of those things.

[18:00] And I'm gonna struggle with, am I trusting God or not trusting God? And Paul is saying to the church, you know God is good and you can trust him. He goes on in verses four through 11 and he says some things about why and how God is good to us as his people.

And he talks about this idea of spiritual gifts. And he says that Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God the Father, they give us these spiritual gifts. And these spiritual gifts are things that we use on our journey.

He actually says in verses four, five, and six, there's a variety of gifts, there's a variety of ministries, and there's a variety of effects, a power that goes through these gifts. Now there's a lot of debate out there when we read these passages and people have been writing and talking about these things for thousands of years.

And so I'm just gonna say this is what I think. I'm gonna define a spiritual gift as any supernatural ability that God has given every Christian by the Holy Spirit. This spiritual gift allows us to serve within the body of Christ.

This spiritual gift is often manifested outwardly as we come into people's lives and we help people, we give them things, we meet visible needs that are in people's lives. The Greek words actually say that these gifts are tools that we build a house with.

[19:20] That these gifts are tools that we build a community of God with. Now maybe some of us are gonna get disappointed today again because we're not gonna talk about every gift and how it fits into our lives, but what we're gonna do is we're gonna lay down this foundation of what the gifts are.

My prayer is that you're in a community group because we're gonna talk a lot about these in community groups and how we can live these out in our daily life. So the first thing that Paul says in verses four is that these gifts are gifts.

They're favors. They're acts of God's grace in our life. He's saying that every Christian, when you come into the family of God, that the Holy Spirit enters in your life and there's a couple things that happen.

Before you are walking with the Lord, before you know the Lord, the Bible says that you and I walked in darkness. That our eyes and our hearts and our ears were shut to God. We didn't wanna be friends with God.

We were actually enemies of God. And for some reason, I do not understand why God sends his spirit into our life. And his spirit came into your life and if you're a child of God in here, he started to open your eyes, in your ears, in your heart, to the thoughts and the ideas of God.

[20:28] And sometime in that journey, as the spirit was working in your life, you had your eyes open, you saw Christ, you saw your sin, you saw your need for the gospel, and you said, I need that.

That's what I need. That's the gospel. That's the message we're talking about. And at that moment, we're told that God's Holy Spirit comes into your life. He indwells you.

It's the assurance of the people. It's the assurance of God's people. What the Bible would say is that spirit never leaves you. That you never have to worry about not being a child of God if you've

entered into God's family.

But the next thing we're told in this passage is that when that spirit comes into you, that he gives you gifts. He gives you manifestations of God's power in working in your life.

Now, this is a new concept for many people. For some people, you're struggling with this and you're trying to figure out, okay, what does this look like? What's my gift? How do I know? Am I doing it well? I want that gift. I don't want this gift.

[ 21 : 30 ] Why does somebody give me that gift? And so we're always thinking through these things. So this is a huge topic that we're trying to just kind of jump into and try to build this foundation on. But what needless to say, everyone is given a gift.

And I personally think that we're all given many different gifts. So when you come into God's family, God empowers you through his Holy Spirit and he gives you these gifts. There are glimpses of what God looks like in his world.

We're told in verse 11 that these gifts never indicate how mature you are. So if you're sitting here today and you have awesome gifts, it has nothing to do with you.

And if you hear me right here, I think all the gifts are awesome gifts. But if you're out here and you have these spectacular gifts, what the Bible says is that none of these gifts have anything to do with you.

They weren't given to you because you were great. They weren't given to you because you were ultra super obedient. They weren't given to you because you asked for them. The gifts were given to you because God loves you. He wants to pour out his grace on you.

[ 22 : 30 ] He has a purpose for you in his life. He has a purpose for you in his church. And he wants you to serve other people. That's why the gifts are given to you. So there's no gifts that are better than other gifts.

They're all there. And the interesting thing is sometimes when we struggle with this and we say, oh, I have this gift. And it's a really special gift. And I can do these things. And when I do these things, people come to me and they're attracted to everything I do or I say or I heal.

And what happens is it takes the focus off of God and his spirit and what God is doing in our life.

And you look at the Church of Corinth and what we see in the Church of Corinth is that the Church of Corinth had all of these gifts.

They had all the gifts. But they were a mess. They weren't any more spiritual. They weren't any more better. They had all these gifts but it wasn't any good. Paul says in verse 7 that all these gifts come into us because of God's grace.

And these gifts that God gives you is for the common good of all the people. So if you're here today and you've come into the family of God and God has given you these gifts and you've seen these things worked out in your life, these gifts were not given to you for your own good.

[ 23 : 42 ] The passage says that these gifts were given to you for the good of all God's people. Now listen to my heart here because it's going to... So if you have a special ability that God has given you and this ability has made you really famous or this ability has given you a lot of money, the gift was never given to you for that purpose.

The gift was given to you so that you can make God's name great and bless God's people. So just like he says you can test what kind of spirit is leading your life in verses 1 through 3, if you have gifts in your life right now, you can test whether those gifts are from the Lord or not.

Or if you're using them the way that God wants you to and the test is are you using these gifts for God's glory? Are you using these gifts to build up God's people?

Paul goes on and he says every one of us was given these gifts and you have to realize that when you're given these gifts that not every one of us were given the same gifts. Not every one of us were given the same passions. Not every one of us were given the same ministries.

That was the problem in the church of Corinth and that's the problem in the church in America and around the world. That we see people with different gifts and we want those gifts or we want everybody to have the same gifts that we have or sometimes we want people to have the same passions that we have.

[ 25 : 05 ] And so we walk into a church and we say well I really have a passion for this and this is what my ministry is and you start sharing with people and people kind of go yeah, that's a need but that's not really my passion.

My passion is this. And they start sharing what they're doing and why God's called them to do things and what Paul is saying here is that God has given every one of us different passions and God has given every one of us different ministries and God has given every one of us different hearts and the question is are we going to embrace that difference?

Are we going to rejoice in the difference? Now the church of Corinth they couldn't do that. So just like their sexuality just like their worshipping of idols just like their eating of meat just like their communion that we talked about two weeks ago just like their gifts.

They allow these gifts to come into their life and to separate themselves. And so the problem was in the church of Corinth instead of having all these gifts that brought the church together and caused unity through diversity what was happening is everybody was angry with each other.

Everybody didn't like each other because they didn't have the same gifts that they had and basically what people were saying is you don't I don't need you you don't need me my gift is the most important. Does that make sense?

[ 26 : 24 ] So there's this big struggle going on in the church and Paul is talking to them and he's giving us this warning he's saying hey don't go down that route because if you go down that route you're doing exactly what the gifts were not meant to be.

You're dividing the church. And so Paul says that there are many gifts and there's many ministries in verses 4, 5, and 6. He says there are many ministries there's many gifts there's many effects they're all from the same God and in your church you're going to have dramatic gifts you're going to have non-dramatic gifts you're going to have teaching gifts you're going to have speaking gifts you're going to have sign gifts you're going to have many variety of gifts and all these gifts are needed and all these gifts are valued.

If you got a bulletin today I put a list in there and so we want you to start building on this. So on this page right here is the four main passages that talk about spiritual gifts and you can divide them in any way you want to divide them.

We put them into three different categories we put them into speaking gifts service gifts and sign gifts and we gave the four passages that talk mostly about these gifts. Now there are only 19 gifts on this list but there are over 30 or 40 or I don't know there's millions of different ministries and there's probably hundreds of different gifts but what Paul says is in this passage is no matter what the gift that you're given the purpose of this gift is to bring unity in closeness to God's people. Does that make sense? So the question we have to ask ourselves is as we walk through this journey with God as we walk through this journey with God's people are we taking the gifts that God's given us the resources the people the supernatural powers are we taking these things and are we building up God's people and are we building up God's kingdom or are we building up Tobin or are we building up somebody else?

[ 28 : 05 ] Because he says in the end the only way to know if you're using the gifts properly is where the focus is is the focus on yourself or is the focus on other people?

Is this too heavy? We need to go here. In verses 8 through 11 Paul lists out nine gifts and you can read them. He says there's a gift of wisdom word of wisdom there's a word of knowledge there's a gift of faith there's a gift of healing there's a gift of miracles there's a gift of prophecy there's a gift of distinguishing spirits there's a gift of various tongues and there's a gift of interpreting tongues and he says all these gifts are valid all these things are needed all these things express God's character all these things bring unity to the body of Christ if you take any of these things away it's not good and all these things are played out every day.

So let me give you an example. I added in that list the gift of hospitality. Now the gift of hospitality is kind of alluded to in the Ephesians passage but it's really talked about in Romans and Hebrews and one of the things that's been amazing to me at Watermark is just to see this gift of hospitality lived out and the gift of hospitality is basically in Greek the word means a love for strangers and so God gives this gift of people on people who come into the family and he gives them this love for strangers he gives them this ability to make people feel at home he gives us this gift to make people feel at peace he gives this gift to people with the gift of hospitality and encouragement and he basically says I want you to treat people like they're your own family and create an environment where they can come in and the amazing thing to me about this is I've seen this lived out in our church over and over and over so when we talk to people who come into Watermark one of the first things they say is you guys are just a family and it feels like you care for each other and it feels like you want the best for each other and it feels like you're authentic and real for each other and it's just

awesome and Paul would say that's the gift of hospitality being lived out

I mean in my home and I have to say this because and I'm not in trouble with my wife so I'm not trying to build up equity or anything like that but my wife has the gift of hospitality and if you've been in her home you can see that played out and I think that she's probably fed everybody at Watermark at least two or three times and if you haven't been fed yet raise your hand we'll invite you over okay but that's that gift of hospitality being lived out is what happens in our life and it brings people into our community and into our home and they see our life being lived out in authenticity and that's one of the things we prayed for is a church at Watermark now there's a lot of other gifts we can talk about and I'm not going to go into all of these today we're going to come back and talk about them later but I want to answer some questions that people keep asking the staff okay the first question is do we believe that the gifts even the dramatic ones are real and we would say yes God's word is real all these gifts are real and the next question they'll ask us is do we think they still exist today and we would say yes we think they still exist today now there are some gifts

I don't know about being a gift of an apostle because the idea was you had to see Jesus and to get instructions from him but I do know that one day these gifts are going to cease you think about it the only reason we have spiritual gifts today is because of the brokenness and the sin in our world and so God has imparted upon us his character in each one of us and so that when we do ministry and we love people and we encourage people and we pray for people and we heal people and we speak in tongues or whatever that looks like in your world that's part of a manifestation of God's kingdom but one day when you die or when Jesus comes back and you see him face to face you're not going to need the gift of exhortation and you're not going to need the gift of prophecy and you're not going to need the gift of tongues and you're not going to need the gift of healing because you're going to be in the presence of the healer and the speaker and the prophet and the king so we believe that all these gifts exist but yes one day they will cease to exist does the church need all these gifts we're going to say yes we're going to talk about that in two weeks because if the church doesn't have all these gifts then we're like a body without a head or we're like a body without legs or we're like legs without feet and so yes we need all of these gifts in our church because we want to be a complete body the next question people ask me all the time is this how come we don't ever see you or the other pastors practicing these gifts in front of the church and I can only understand or think it means like speaking in tongues or healing or prophecy or something like that and I would say that

[ 33 : 06 ] I think that you do see us practicing some of these things in gift in front of church but that we would also say this as we look at God's word and as we look at Paul's world we realize that if Paul were in a house church of 20 or 30 people who all are Christians that the expression of those gifts would look very different than if you're in a church family of 300 or 400 people and there are Christians and non-Christians and de-church people and so we would say that God has asked us to live out these gifts in an orderly in biblical fashion in front of God's people when I hear this all the time I've heard this in every church I've ever been a member of in every church I've ever been a pastor of we have people come to me and they say this they say you know I have this gift here but I don't ever really see it lived out in this church and so I think maybe it's best for me to go to another church where that's lived out because then I'll feel free to express those things and I can do it when everybody else is doing the same thing and I've had it happen in every church that I've ever been a member of in every church that I've ever been a pastor of and what I would say to you is this if you're in that position and you're thinking about that if you do that you're going exactly against what Paul says in his passage he says the gifts were given in diversity he says if you leave a church family because you don't feel like you can express those things or no one else is expressing those things in this big setting what you're doing is you're actually hurting the body of Christ and if you go to another church where everybody is doing whatever that gift is that you don't feel comfortable doing here he says what you're doing is you're hurting that body also because in that body they already have enough people doing those gifts that you don't feel comfortable practicing here and so if you have a gift or you feel like

God has empowered me to do things or to serve things we want you to practice those things in the setting that brings honor and glory and order to God and his people does that make sense I hope I was really clear because we get asked those questions all the time so let me flesh out verses 4, 5, and 6 and then we're going to end with some questions 4, 5, and 6 so let's say you have the gift of encouragement exhortation and so what Paul says in his passage is that there are many gifts

there's many ministries so ministry is how you would live that out and there's many effects which means the word actually means power or strength or intensity so you have many gifts you have many places where you live that out and you have different powers or intensity in which you would do it and so let's say you have the gift of exhortation or encouragement now the exhortation or encouragement is just basically the ability to speak peace into people's lives I love people who have the gift of exhortation or encouragement it's the ability to reassure people the ability to comfort people the ability to bring deep spiritual healing into other people's lives it's the ability just to affirm people for who they are in their journey with God now I didn't grow up in that my parents were German 100% German right so if I came to my dad and I said oh man my arm really hurts when I do this my dad would say don't do that now that is not the gift of encouragement okay and that's not the gift of exhortation right that's not what he's talking about here he's talking about something really different and so let's just say you have this gift of exhortation and you're a teacher well your ministry is a teacher you're playing out this gift so maybe you're ministering to your students and you're exhorting them and you're encouraging them or maybe you're exhorting and encouraging other teachers or maybe you're exhorting and encouraging the parents of your students and Paul says in any of these ministries in any of these settings your gift is going to look different you're going to have a different passion you're going to have a different intensity you're going to live out these things differently now maybe you have the gift of encouragement and exhortation but God has called you just to minister in your home and so you're using your gift as a husband or a wife in your home and you're encouraging and you're exhorting your people and you're just bringing God's truth and love into their life or maybe God has called you with this gift to live it out in your dorms or maybe you're a student here and you're trying to figure out okay where do I live out my gifts and how do I serve the Lord and God says hey you serve him where I placed you and I placed you in these dorms and so I want you to use this gift out to encourage and exhort people and to bring them into the fellowship of God maybe you're a doctor and you live out this exhortation in the hospital or you live it out in the restaurant today as you're nice to the waiters or maybe you live it out in the bank the banks need a lot of encouragement nowadays right so if you're an exhortation or you're an encourager there you can have an amazing ministry in the bank so last week I wrote a check to HSBC and it came back to me in the mail and it said insufficient funds so I wrote another check and I said your insufficient funds or my insufficient funds it's a joke but what I'm trying to say is there's a lot of places that need encouragement and exhortation for me one of the best places I've seen and being able to use my gifts is the barber chair there's just something about getting your haircut and you're sitting there next to people who are getting their haircut and they cannot move they're just stuck there right so you have 30 minutes to an hour just to encourage them and exhort them and talk to them about the things

God is doing in your life and you're able to do all these things and so what Paul is saying is that no matter where you are we have all these gifts I've given you all these different assignments and what God is saying is I just want you to serve people I want you to love people I want you to give yourself to others I want you to help others and the problem in the church in Corinth is that they forgot the other part and so when they started thinking about how God has gifted them and what they're supposed to do with their life and how they're supposed to live all they started thinking about is themselves and what they needed and Paul says in his passage that you and I need each other so wherever you are on your journey God has called you to live out those gifts serving each other does that make sense so let me ask us some questions and we'll finish first question is this if you're honest right now and you were to examine your life this week what spirit would you say controlled you if you looked at how you lived your life this week what spirit would you say controlled you maybe the question would be where is your focus been has your focus been on yourself or has your focus been on others

God's family second question I've been asking myself as I look around watermark and I look at my brothers and sisters next to me do I see a need for them in my life do you really need the person next to you now if it's your spouse hopefully you're going to say yes I really do I love you honey but do you really need the people next to you I mean some of us come in here and we sit down we don't ever say hi we don't ever talk to people and then we leave right away and this is exactly the thing that Paul was warning the Corinthians about because some of you have gifts and some of you have talents and some of you have a ministry sitting right next to you but you're so focused on yourself that you're missing this amazing opportunity that God wants to give you to love and encourage the people around you so do you see a need for the brothers and sisters around you in

your life maybe to ask another way would be this how do your brothers and sisters bless you with the gifts and talents that they have if I were just to say turn next to the person right next to you and say man you know

[ 42 : 03 ] I'm really encouraged by this in your life and I really see God's spirit living out in how you do this what would you tell them see the church of Corinth couldn't tell each other anything because they were so focused on themselves they were so busy about living out their own life they were so busy about their own world they didn't even think about the people next to them that they're part of the body that they need each other and Paul is encouraging them to say be careful of this because if you run down this path it's going to be destructive to the life of the church one last question how are you using your gifts right now to build up God's church God if you are a Christian in here

God has given you a gift and my question for you and the question for me is how are you using the gift that God has given you right now to build up his church what does that look like in your life because the passage says that you and I have God's fingerprint on us to each one of you as God's child has been given a gift and each one of these gifts is needed in the life of this church and if you're sitting in your chair and saying my gift means nothing I don't have a gift that's all wrong and many of us are going to walk through our life and we're going to waste these amazing gifts and talents that God has given us for his kingdom and I promise you that the greatest joy you're ever going to experience as God's child is living out his gifts in your life in the service of other people the church of Corinth could not get that because they were so focused on themselves my prayer for us as a church watermark is that we would get it that we would realize

God has a purpose for you God has a gift for you God has a ministry for you those ministries are spread out throughout your world every day and the question is are we going to trust him are we going to allow him to be lord of our life or are we going to be our own lord does that make sense father we thank you for this day we thank you for these words of the church of Corinth lord I know that there are some amazing gifts in this church as I think about the people that you've equipped and brought into this church and I think of the spiritual gifts that we see that every day I realize that we're probably one of the most gifted churches I've ever seen in my life and yet we often many of us sit back and we do nothing with those gifts we expect other people to give those gifts and put their gifts on us and to minister to us and we are just so busy and so self-focused that we miss the blessings that you want for your people lord I just confess

I beg your forgiveness in my own selfishness I beg your forgiveness just for my own pride and arrogance trying to live life often as a lone wolf Christian and not realizing that you've put this body of Christ around us to serve and to minister to us lord I pray for all of your children here that you would open their eyes to your grace and your mercy and the gift of your spirit that you've given them lord I pray for this church that we wouldn't be a church with a hand chopped off or an arm chopped off maybe even our head chopped off because we refuse to accept all of your blessings in our life lord I pray for us as individuals as we live out these gifts and these blessings that we would know that the focus is on others and on the body and that it's not on us lord most of all I just pray that we would be different pray that we would trust you that we would walk with you that whenever we have a struggle we would look to your son and realize that in his life and in his words and his actions there is truth in life and there is the true spirit help us to call him lord help us to call him savior show us what that next step is as we surrender our lives to you and ask you to change us and to make us different lord we pray for this church watermark we talk a lot about missions we talk a lot about the gospel we talk a lot about out there and serving and often we just don't do it father we need you we lift up all these things to you and we pray these things to your son Jesus holy name amen you