

International Bible Lessons Commentary
1 Corinthians 12:1-11

English Standard Version

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, May 10, 2015

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, May 10, 2015**, is from **1 Corinthians 12:1-11**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. A podcast for this commentary is also available at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

International Bible Lesson Commentary

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

(1 Corinthians 12:1) Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

The Bible teaches that God is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The heavenly angels and God's children love the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and they seek to serve God according to His will using the gifts that God has given them. God the Father and Jesus the Son of God give spiritual gifts to God's children through the Holy Spirit who indwells them and who will never leave them. Other principalities and powers that hate God and His children also exist in the spirit realm; and the heavenly angels and God's children face their opposition when they use God's gifts. The devil also gives his children spiritual gifts, and demons will sometimes indwell the devil's children, who will attack the children of God using the devil's gifts. For these and other reasons, Paul does not want any believer uninformed about spiritual gifts.

(1 Corinthians 12:2) You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.

The Christians in Corinth were Gentiles (not Jews, for the most part) who came from pagan backgrounds, and who came to love and serve the one true God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ; therefore, they became members of

God's family, the Church. They would remember how demons and those who served the devil had enslaved them to sin, led them to worship idols that could not speak, and prevented them from finding the true God, who alone could empower them to do good and bless others and themselves.

(1 Corinthians 12:3) Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

Paul wanted believers to evaluate their own past experiences and the experiences of others. He wanted them to be aware of what was going on around them. Inspired by evil spirits or false teachings, in one way or another, if not in these exact words, some religious people were saying, "Let Jesus be cursed!" They cursed Jesus and tried to lead others away from trusting in Jesus. Those who were truly members of God's family; that is, true Christians, proclaimed and lived according to the reality, "Jesus is Lord." True Christians obey Jesus as Lord and they keep His commands because they love Jesus. The Holy Spirit fills Christians with love for Jesus as their Savior and He guides them to follow Jesus as their Lord.

(1 Corinthians 12:4) Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;

So believers are not enticed and led astray by demons offering demonic gifts that promise them the power to achieve all their desires, the Bible stresses that we keep our focus on learning the truth about God and true spiritual gifts from the Bible; then, we can use our gifts wisely and recognize any counterfeit gifts. The Holy Spirit has many gifts for God's children, and the Spirit bears spiritual fruit from within God's children. The one and the same Holy Spirit gives many gifts to the Church and God's people. The varieties of God's gifts do not mean that true believers are indwelt by a variety of spirits. As a counterfeit, the devil's children are indwelt by a variety of spirits that give a variety of self-destructive gifts. To save people from destruction, Jesus cast out many demons.

(1 Corinthians 12:5) and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;

The "same Lord" is the one and only Lord Jesus Christ. God's children do not serve a variety of principalities and powers: they serve the one Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ gives God's children a variety of ways or services so they can serve God and others using the variety of gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to bless them and to serve God and others.

(1 Corinthians 12:6) and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

Within the family of God, God's children follow Jesus as Lord and use the various gifts the Holy Spirit has given them, which results in a variety of activities and work being done in and through the Church. Ultimately God activates or empowers all of the gifts, services, activities, and works in every Christian. The Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together in the life of the Church, in every godly activity, and in every true believer in Christ as Lord, so believers can achieve God's plans in many ways.

(1 Corinthians 12:7) To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

The work of the Holy Spirit is manifest, or obviously present, or shines forth in the life, words, and work of every true Christian for the common good of every one inside and outside the Church. Jesus commanded believers to spread the gospel to everyone around the world, and the gifts and varieties of services and activities of Christians in the Church work together to achieve that goal for God's glory and the good of all. Christians have turned from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness; therefore, they put God first and work together to achieve the purposes of Christ in the Church.

(1 Corinthians 12:8) For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another

the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

In the Church, some believers may be especially known for their wisdom, for the best and right application of the Scriptures to daily life and the work of the Church – this is one gift of the Holy Spirit. Others may know biblical facts and other truths so they can teach and help unbelievers repent, come to faith in Jesus Christ, and enter the Church; so they can help believers grow in their faith and faithfulness to Jesus Christ – this is a another gift of the Holy Spirit.

(1 Corinthians 12:9) to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

Some have the faith to achieve God's plans and purposes in ways only God could inspire, begin, and complete for the benefit of the Church and others. They have the faith to move mountains, if only by one shovelful of rock at a time – the Holy Spirit has given them this gift of faith. Others know how to heal people by word or by touch or by medicine; some are physicians (as was Luke, Paul's companion) – the Holy Spirit has given people this gift of healing; therefore, many glorify God for His abundant mercies.

(1 Corinthians 12:10) to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the

ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

Many in Corinth tended to focus on the gifts listed in this verse, because some of them seem extraordinary or spectacular. Demonic powers can also work miracles, foretell the future, carry out what they have foretold, and speak in tongues through unbelievers to mislead people away from a single-minded faith and devotion to Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Holy Spirit has given some believers the ability to discern the spirits or the source of many gifts and activities and works in human life. They can reveal or warn when demonic spirits are impersonating the Holy Spirit – this gift of discernment is another gift of the Holy Spirit for the common good.

(1 Corinthians 12:11) All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

The Bible teaches Christians, members of the family of God, the body of Christ, to seek to develop a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and the leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit according to the Scriptures. Otherwise, believers might be misled by demonic powers and spirits. All of the activities, gifts, and services that Christians possess and use are from the Holy Spirit, not from a variety of lesser spirits. The Holy Spirit

gives the gifts He chooses to give to believers, and He chooses to give His gifts for the good of many, and He knows what gifts are needed and where they are needed so the work of Christ can be done in the best ways possible on earth.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What are some of the dangers from remaining uninformed about spiritual gifts?
2. How are pagans led astray to idols?
3. What is the only way someone can say “Jesus is Lord”?
4. What is a reason Paul gives for the giving of spiritual gifts?
5. Who chooses what gifts and activities are for each individual believer?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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