



1 CORINTHIANS

# STEWARDS *of the* GOSPEL

Sermon Series

## Utilizing Spiritual Gifts

### 1 Corinthians 12: 4-14

- Will be finishing up our study through 1 Corinthians at the end of May. As we progress through this letter, we see some of the main themes mentioned early on expanded and defended Biblically.
- He not only addresses specific issues, Paul gives the theological backing what he is saying. These are the Biblical principles that we have been studying – godly stewardship, being faithful in our witness, pursuing purity, rejecting division, and embracing God’s plan for the church.
- One of my favorite passages of scripture, as it is with many others as well, is 1 Corinthians. It’s what some refer to as the love chapter. “Love is patient, love is kind.”

- But it is really important to look at chapter 13 in light of chapter 12. That's what we're looking at today. We read chapter 13 often at weddings. I think that's fine because all of those principles mentioned are applicable to a Christian marriage, but we have to remember the context behind it.
- The primary focus of chapter 13 Paul is addressing is with the church. The love and communal blessings of being a part of the body of Christ. One of the main issues that was addressed was that of division. What better reminder is there that they should know of the blessings in the family of God.
- *At its core, the church isn't a business, country club, government, or entertainment venue. The church is a family.* We call each other brothers and sisters. We have young and old. Young children and spiritual parents/grandparents. We even have crazy uncles.

**Main Point: Everyone in the church has spiritual gifts to contribute to the body of Christ.**

- There is comfort in realizing God knows who we are as individuals and how we are to fit in the larger group of believers in the church.
- *What God required from us is not uniformity, but rather unity.* Coming together, utilizing our differences for the glory of God. We have the most important thing in common – we are all believers in Jesus Christ as the Son of the Living God.

#### **I. God's will**

- a. There is and will always be this interesting dynamic in the church where many people from a variety of backgrounds will gather for one purpose and one mission. Different people uniting for the Gospel of the Lord Jesus.
- b. That's not just a reality, that is the will of God.
- c. VERSES 4, 5, and 6.

- d. I love the church. I love what Butch said one time, “Even with all its imperfections, the local church is the best thing going.”
- e. There are certainly other efforts that we could commit to that would be easier. Less time committed and less personal sacrifice. But the church is God’s way of executing His mission here on earth.
- f. I remember as a child watching a preacher on TV. Wasn’t a prosperity Gospel preacher, but they were asking for donations for their ministry. I thought it was a great thing so I told my dad that I would like to send some of my money from my chores to their ministry. What he said was very valuable, “There’s nothing wrong with sending them money, just make sure you have supported our church first.”
- g. That was an important lesson. God had led me to be a part of that local church. My home church in Rockmart – Piedmont Ave. Baptist Church.
- h. God led John Hooper to be the pastor, and Mel Roper to be the Minister of Music and a deacon. God led me to be a contributing member. Not only financially – but with anything God has blessed me with.
- i. The folks on TV had a good ministry, I’m sure. But they were not my local church family.

## II. God's calling

- a. VERSE 7 – *God’s Spirit works in different ways in each of us for the benefit of all of us.*
- b. This is something that needs to be addressed greatly in churches today. The latest numbers from the Southern Baptist Convention have shown us that baptisms and attendance are up. But membership continues to spiral downward.

- c. It's wonderful that more people are hearing and responding to the Gospel. It's wonderful to think that attendance is doing a rebound of sorts over the past several years.
- d. But God has not called us to be spectators. God has called us to be participants.
- e. Where is church membership in the Bible? They may not have had the exact model that we have today. It's hard to know about many of the details. However, there was the necessity to know who was in the church and who was not in the church. You can call that membership.
  - i. There was and is a very specific process to follow outlined in **Matthew 18** of how to remove someone from the church or to find reconciliation for that person.
  - ii. **1 Corinthians 5** is an example that we preached on several weeks ago.
  - iii. **2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 (ESV): "If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy but warn him as a brother."**
  - iv. **Titus 3:10-11 (ESV): "As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned."**
- f. When God called us unto salvation He called us unto a people who will help us grow in our salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- g. Mark Dever: “The church is not a place. It’s not a building. It’s not a preaching point. It’s not a spiritual service provider. It’s a people—the new covenant, blood-bought people of God.”

### III. God's mission

- a. VERSE 13 – this is the mission that we are committed to – Drawing all people unto Christ.
- b. If I could say anything to the graduates today I would like to say this – commit to God’s plan for your life. When we are focused on His mission, God takes care of everything else.
- c. Colossians 3:17 - **And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**
- d. ***Let His mission be your mission.*** Go and make disciples and serve in whatever way you can for the glory of God.
- e. When you commit to His mission, it always involves the body as a whole. God brings together people in a way that only He can. All for His glory and our good.