

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12 – 13

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ

Part 11 of 14



Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

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3. To accept that **our identity in Christ** is something shared, and is a basis for unity with diverse others in the church.
4. To appreciate **biblical diversity as a spiritual strength** that expresses itself in the people and ministries of our church.

Previously in this series

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- As we look back on our previous messages, consider how each segment contributes to **our identity in Christ**.
- This is the story that we all fit into together.

Previously in this series

A Shared Origin: The Story of Creation

Genesis 1 – 2

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Previously in this series

A Shared Tragedy: Sin and Its Effects

Genesis 3 – 11

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Previously in this series

A Shared Promise: The Covenant with Abraham

Genesis 12:1-3

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Previously in this series

A Shared Standard: The Law of Love

Leviticus 19, Deuteronomy 6:4-9

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Previously in this series

A Shared King: The Covenant with David

2 Samuel 7

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Previously in this series

A Shared Songbook: Christ in the Psalms

Psalms 2, 16, 22, 110 & 118

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Previously in this series

A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

Isaiah – Malachi

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Previously in this series

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Matthew 1 – 2

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Previously in this series

A Shared Assignment: The Great Commission

Matthew 28, Luke 24 & Acts 1

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Previously in this series

A Shared Spirit: Uniting of Jew and Gentile

Acts 2, 10 – 13

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A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- As the church grew and multiplied, it was noticeable that people in it differed widely from one another.
- Not only did they have different backgrounds, but they added to the life of the church in different ways.
- This is still clear in the church today.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- Some of our abilities are natural, while some come directly from God.
- The second type are **spiritual gifts**, which may not be obvious in a person's life before their conversion.
- Nonetheless, these gifts help in building the church and impact how we relate to one another.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- The church in **Corinth** was a gifted church, but it was not spiritually mature.
- There was a lot of division, a lot of ego, a lot of selfish and sub-Christian behavior.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- Among other things, the Corinthian church seems to have misunderstood spiritual gifts.
- The upside is that it prompted Paul to give them some specific teaching, which is valuable for us as well.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- Let's start with **1 Corinthians 12:1-11**.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- **12:1-3** First of all, the Spirit leads us away from idols and toward the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- **12:4-6** We mainly associate gifts with the **Holy Spirit**, but **all three Persons** of the Triune God are involved.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- **12:7** Our individual gifts are for the good of the whole.
- **12:8-11** Here Paul lists some sample gifts.
- Other lists are found in **Romans 12** and **Ephesians 4**, but none of these is meant to be complete.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- Now let's read **1 Corinthians 12:12-31**.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- **12:12-13** God brings us together in unity out of diversity.
- **12:14-20** This is the “I am not needed” pitfall. We can admire the gifts of others and not see how we fit in.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- **12:21-26** This is the “you are not needed” pitfall. We may not value others as we should.
- Most parts of the body do their job in unseen ways.
- We cannot see our lungs, but we are happy we have them.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- **12:27-30** Certain gifts are more prominent than others – all are not apostles, etc. – but all are still needed in the body.
- **12:31** Paul still has something even more important to say.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- And now **1 Corinthians 13**.

A Shared Responsibility: The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- And now **1 Corinthians 13**.
- **13:1-3** As important as self-sacrifice, faith and spiritual gifts are to the Christian life, love is more important still.
- **13:4-7** Love helps us not to be self-centered, but rather, humble and persevering.
- **13:8-13** Most of all, love is a mark of maturity.

A Shared Responsibility

Conclusions

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- The Holy Spirit provides the church with diverse gifts and abilities, which he disperses among the members.
- Each of these gifts is important – as are the diverse people who possess them.
- We need to be careful not to downplay how important each of us are to the entire body of Christ.

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- No one person can have all the various gifts.
- God keeps it that way so that all of us always need one another.
- Even the most important gifts are only useful as they are used for the common good of the body of Christ.

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- When we perform at our best, the whole body is blessed.
- Our Spirit-given ability to love is has to be added to all of our gifts in order to make the gifts most effective.

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- In Christ, our gifts help form part of our identity.
- They are part of what makes us who we are.
- Still, they are only an outward expression of what God has done within – by supernaturally connecting us with himself.

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- Finding our **identity in Christ** is to see ourselves as¹:
 1. Created in Christ (**Ephesians 2:10**)
 2. Crucified with Christ (**Galatians 2:20**)
 3. Buried with Christ (**Colossians 2:12**)
 4. Baptized into Christ and his death (**Romans 6:3**)

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- Finding our **identity in Christ** is to see ourselves as¹:
 5. United with Christ in his resurrection (**Romans 6:5**)
 6. Justified in Christ (**Romans 3:24**)
 7. Glorified in Christ (**Romans 8:30**)
 8. Sanctified in Christ (**1 Corinthians 1:2**)

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- This **identity in Christ** provides the inner motivation that compels us to unite rather than divide.
- In so doing, we still validate our individuality.

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- We can look at each other's gifts and see that all of us are important to helping the church function at its best.
- Rather than negating differences, our identity in Christ transcends them, looking first at that which all of us share.

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- Our identity in Christ is wrapped up in our belonging to him.
- **Who we are** is very important, but **whose we are – who we belong to** – is more important still.²

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- In **Philippians 1:21** (ESV) Paul was able to say,
“For to me to live is Christ ...”
- I pray we can all say the same thing.

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- Let's pray that God would:
 1. Fill us with his Holy Spirit
 2. Help us appreciate who we are in Christ
 3. Reveal to us our spiritual gift(s).
 4. Help us to exercise our gifts for the blessing and the benefit of the entire church.
 5. Above everything, to cover all that we do with massive amounts of Christ's unending love.

A Shared Responsibility Conclusions

- Finally, may the Lord make a church that is
 1. Even more unified
 2. Even more diverse
 3. So fully identified with Christ that God's nature, love and wisdom will be evident to us and to the outside world.

Next Week

A Shared Citizenship: Reconciling of Jew and Gentile

Ephesians 2:11-22

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Reference List

1. Yuan, Christopher. 2018. *Holy sexuality and the gospel: Sex, desire, and relationships shaped by God's grand story*. Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 190-191.
2. Rosner, Brian S. 2017. *Known by God: A biblical theology of personal identity (Biblical theology for life)*. Kindle edition. Edited by Jonathan Lunde. Grand Rapids: Zondervan; 46, 137.