

Series: Together Toward Maturity

Inductive Bible Study Guide: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11



Step 1: Observation – What does the passage say?

Read **1 Corinthians 12:1–11** slowly and carefully. Paul introduces the topic of **spiritual gifts**, correcting confusion and grounding their use in the work of the Holy Spirit.

Observation Prompts:

- What topic does Paul introduce?
- What does Paul say about the Spirit, Jesus, and God?
- What repeated words or phrases stand out?
- What variety and unity do you observe?
- Who is responsible for distributing the gifts?

Read the passage and note what you see:

What does Paul say about the Corinthians' past spiritual confusion in verses 1–2?

What test does Paul give for discerning whether something is from the Spirit in verse 3?

What similarities and differences does Paul describe in verses 4–6?

What purpose does Paul give for spiritual gifts in verse 7?

What gifts are listed in verses 8–10?

What does verse 11 say about how and by whom the gifts are distributed?

Step 2: Interpretation – What does the passage mean?

Paul is addressing confusion and misuse of spiritual gifts in the Corinthian church. He begins by reminding them that spiritual experiences must always be evaluated by their confession of Christ. Paul emphasizes both **diversity and unity**: different gifts, same Spirit; different forms of service, same Lord; different activities, same God. Spiritual gifts are not about status or self-expression — they are given by the Spirit for the **common good** of the church.

Questions to Explore:

Why does Paul begin by addressing their former life and spiritual ignorance?

Why is confessing “Jesus is Lord” central to discerning the work of the Spirit?

What does Paul mean by varieties of gifts, service, and activities — yet one God?

Why is “the common good” the purpose of spiritual gifts?

What does the Spirit’s role in distributing gifts teach us about control, comparison, and pride?

Word Study Suggestions:

- **Spiritual gifts (v.1):** grace-given abilities empowered by the Holy Spirit
- **Lord (v.3):** a declaration of allegiance and authority
- **Varieties (vv.4–6):** different kinds, expressions, or forms
- **Common good (v.7):** benefit of the whole body, not the individual
- **As He wills (v.11):** gifts are sovereignly given, not earned or chosen

Step 3: Application – How should I respond?

Paul invites believers to embrace both humility and responsibility. Spiritual gifts are not a badge of maturity, but a **tool for serving others**. The same Spirit who saves us also equips us to build up the body of Christ.

Personal Reflection:

Do I see spiritual gifts as something to compare, or something to steward?

How does knowing the Spirit decides the gifts free me from pressure or pride?

In what ways am I using what God has given me for the good of others?

Do I value gifts I don't have as much as the ones I do?

How does this passage shape how I view unity and diversity in the church?

Summary Truths:

- Spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit, not human effort.
- Every true work of the Spirit points to Jesus as Lord.
- There is great diversity in gifts, but complete unity in God.
- Spiritual gifts are given for the common good of the church.
- The Spirit distributes gifts according to His will, not ours.

Optional Memory Verse:

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit." — 1 Corinthians 12:4 (ESV)

Prayer Prompt:

"Holy Spirit, thank You for equipping Your church. Help me use what You've given me for the good of others and the glory of Jesus. Free me from comparison and teach me to serve faithfully where You have placed me."

For Further Study:

- Romans 12:3–8 — Gifts used in humility
- Ephesians 4:11–16 — Gifts for building the body
- 1 Peter 4:10–11 — Stewards of God's grace