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**The Life-giving Power of Serving Others**

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**1 Corinthians 12:1-11**

**Now concerningspiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. 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.Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 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. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.**

**BIG IDEA: Spiritual gifts are graciously given, service-oriented gifts for the glory of the King and for the good of the kingdom. In vv. 1-11 we learn that the Holy Spirit of Jesus graciously endows His people with gifts for His glory and our good.**

In this section of 1 Corinthians, Paul is addressing a question and a problem related to spiritual gifts. The Corinthians had divided over spiritual gifts. Their focus was on the “splashier” gifts like speaking in tongues and healing. For them, these gifts represented a mark of spiritual maturity, leading some to think of themselves as superior because of their more advanced giftedness. They completely missed why God chose to provide these gifts to the church.

* There are obvious parallels between the Corinthian church and the current-day church in America. Spend time discussing the ways in which we resonate with our 1st Century brothers and sisters.
* Randy stated: “When you become a Christian; what happened to you is beyond having your sins forgiven; it goes beyond belief in God; or reading religious literature like the Bible; it that and more!”
  + Read the following passages: Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11
  + What do these passages tell us about the gifts we are given?
  + In Romans 12:3, Paul begins his short discussion on gifts by telling his readers to “not think of [your]self more highly than you ought.” Why do you think he started the discussion in this way? What does this tell us about how we should view our gifts and ourselves? How should we view others?
* “The ultimate benchmark of the Spirit’s activity is the exaltation of Jesus, not the demonstration of gifts” (Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence, pg 157).* What do we normally focus on? In a performance-based culture, it is easy to focus on the performing of gifts instead of the Giver to which they point. This is no less truth in the church. How can we guard against this drift? Personally and collectively, how can we encourage one other to remain focused on Christ versus ourselves.
* Many of you have probably taken a spiritual gifts inventory test in the past. If you have, take some time to share what your gifts are. In this cultural moment when church looks very different because of COVID, what are some ways you can use those gifts in unique ways to bless those around you?