

HIGHLANDS CHURCH

Study Guide

Spiritually Gifted for the Good of Others

Thomas Slager
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Major Points

- 1 No one can confess Jesus is Lord apart from the Holy Spirit, making the Spirit the starting point of both salvation and spiritual gifting**

1 Corinthians 12:3

- 2 There are varieties of gifts, service, and activities, but the same Triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — is the single source who empowers them all**

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

- 3 Spiritual gifts are given for the common good, not for personal benefit — they are to be stewarded for the people around us and for the glory of God**

1 Corinthians 12:7

- 4 Nine gifts are listed in this passage, and believers should pursue unity rather than division over how each gift functions today**

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

- 5 The Holy Spirit apportions gifts individually as he wills — no gift is better or worse, and every believer is created on purpose for a purpose**

1 Corinthians 12:11

Key Quotes

“Christianity is a team sport, by the way. Each and every one of us have a position to play. Each and every one of us have a job to do.

at 3:17

“Here's a quick reminder. You don't make Jesus anything. We only submit to him as such.

at 11:31

“What would be awesome is if Highlands could be a place who pursues unity instead of being right.

at 22:07

“God doesn't give someone the gift of preaching and teaching and exhortation so they can stand in a mirror and preach to themselves. It'd be weird.

at 17:33

“I am the way that I am, created on purpose, for a purpose. No accidents, no mistakes.

at 29:26

Discussion Questions

1. Pastor Slager compares Christianity to a team sport where every member has a position to play. What position do you think God has placed you in, and how actively are you playing it right now?
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2. Pastor Slager says we do not make Jesus Lord — we only submit to him as such. How does this distinction between making Jesus Lord and confessing him as Lord change the way you approach your relationship with God?
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3. Pastor Slager urges Highlands to be a church that pursues unity instead of being right when it comes to disagreements over spiritual gifts. Where in your own life or community have you seen disagreements over secondary issues damage relationships, and what would it look like to pursue unity there?
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4. Pastor Slager illustrates the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and faith through specific people in his life. Who in your community models a particular spiritual gift in a way that has encouraged or challenged you, and how might you express that to them?
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5. Pastor Slager closes by saying the game is more fun on the field than on the sidelines. What is one concrete step you could take this week to move from spectating to serving within your church family?
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Word Studies

πνευματικός pneumatikos

Greek

Pertaining to the Spirit; spiritual. In 1 Corinthians 12:1, Paul uses the neuter plural ta pneumatika to introduce the topic of Spirit-given capacities. The word derives from pneuma (spirit/wind/breath) and signals that these gifts originate not from human effort or natural talent but from the direct activity of the Holy Spirit. Some scholars note that Paul may intentionally use the broader pneumatikos rather than charisma here to emphasize the Spirit's role as source before discussing the specific gifts.

Usage: 26 times in the NT

συμφέρω symphero

Greek

To bring together, to be profitable or advantageous; used in 1 Corinthians 12:7 in the phrase 'for the common good' (pros to sympheron). The word literally means to bear or carry together, evoking the image of a symphony where each instrument contributes to a unified whole. Paul uses it to define the telos (purpose) of every spiritual gift: not personal enrichment but the collective benefit of the entire body of believers.

Usage: 17 times in the NT

διαίρεσις diairesis

Greek

Distribution, apportionment, variety. Paul uses diairesis three times in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (varieties of gifts, varieties of service, varieties of activities) to stress that the diversity within the church is not chaotic but divinely distributed. The same root appears in verse 11 (diaroun), where the Spirit 'apportions' to each individually, underscoring that the variety is purposeful and sovereign rather than random.

Usage: 3 times in the NT

Cross References

Romans 12:4-8

Paul uses the same body metaphor and lists additional gifts — prophecy, service, teaching, encouragement, giving, leading, and mercy — providing a complementary catalog to the nine gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and reinforcing that gifts differ according to the grace given to each believer.

Ephesians 4:11-13

Paul teaches that Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry and to build up the body of Christ until all attain unity of faith — expanding the purpose of gifting beyond the local Corinthian context to the universal church's maturity.

Acts 2:4-11

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit empowered believers to speak in known languages so that people from every nation heard the gospel in their own tongue — the foundational event Pastor Slager references when he defines the gift of tongues as speaking known languages for the purpose of gospel proclamation.

Psalm 133:1

David declares how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity — the Old Testament foundation for Paul's appeal in 1 Corinthians 1:10 that Slager emphasizes as the interpretive lens through which all disagreements about spiritual gifts should be approached.

Hebrews 2:4

God bore witness to the gospel through signs, wonders, various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will — echoing the language of 1 Corinthians 12:11 and affirming that the sovereign distribution of gifts serves the attestation and advancement of the gospel message.

Further Reading

- **The Holy Spirit (Contours of Christian Theology)**
by Sinclair B. Ferguson
- **Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14**
by D. A. Carson
- **Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts: A Personal Inventory Method**
by C. Peter Wagner

Scripture References

REFERENCE	TYPE	TIME	CONTEXT
1 Corinthians 12:1-3	Read Aloud	4:10	<i>Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not...</i>
1 Corinthians 12:4-7	Read Aloud	15:30	<i>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spi...</i>
1 Corinthians 12:8-11	Read Aloud	25:00	<i>For to one is given through the Spirit the utteran...</i>
Romans 10:9-10	Referenced	11:20	<i>Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus...</i>
1 Peter 4:10-11	Read Aloud	22:30	<i>As each has received a gift, use it to serve one a...</i>
John 16:7-8	Referenced	18:00	<i>Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your ...</i>
1 Corinthians 1:10	Read Aloud	26:00	<i>I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord...</i>