

Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Lecture 28, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul's Response to Question Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Introduction to 1 Corinthians 12-14

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This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is lecture 28, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul's Response to the Questions Concerning Spiritual Gifts. Introduction to 1 Corinthians 12-14.

Well, welcome to our lecture that begins chapters 12-14, the next major unit in the book of 1 Corinthians. We've come quite a way. This is lecture number 28, and you have note packet number 14, which should begin with page 178.

So, you need to have these notes in front of you for the lecture to make the most sense because I write out things sometimes fully and give you charts, which helps to make clear what I'm endeavoring to say. Well, chapters 12-14 are pretty famous because of the fact that they deal with this question of spiritual gifts. Notice the section summary on page 178.

Paul discusses spiritual gifts from two perspectives, the sovereign Lord and the law of love. The one gift that seems to have been creating problems in Corinth was tongues. Yet Paul argues that tongues, instead of being the ultimate test of spirituality, are actually one of the least desirable gifts.

Besides being placed last in the gift list, the whole argument of 12-14 is that edification and love are the supreme demonstrations of spirituality, not tongues. In fact, tongues were actually a hindrance to both edification and love. By comparison with the more overt gifts, the practice of Christian virtue seems staid and colorless to some of these Corinthians.

Paul's discussion of the subject is epic-making. He begins by showing that the lordship of Christ is what is important, as Leon Morris has observed. So, we're going to move through these chapters.

Chapter 12 raises the issue of gifts. Chapter 13 is a great chapter on love that everyone knows about. Chapter 14 deals with the regulation of these gifts.

But this is a unit, and it's extremely important that we keep it together. Chapter 13 isn't some afterthought or some digression, but it is the glue that holds together 12 and 14 and makes this whole issue about the community and not just about individuals who think that maybe they're better because they have exercised some

externalistic overt type of a gift like tongues. Structurally, Richard Hayes sees a three-fold structure in these chapters.

Chapters, of course, were added quite late in Christian history, and versification is in that same category. But the addition of chapters and verses has, by and large, been useful. It was obviously done originally so people could find things, but those who did that work did a decent job of chapter divisions, although not always.

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 are units, big units, and that's where our chapter divisions happen to fall. Chapter 12 argues the complementary role of gifts in the community. Gifts are not individualistic, privatized items, but they're for the good of the community.

This is a theme that goes through these chapters over and over and over again. The body metaphor becomes a major presentation in that regard. Chapter 13 presents love as the norm governing all spiritual manifestations.

Love is the regulating principle. Love is something that works in a community. It's not individualistic, but it looks at the whole rather than the individual parts.

Then chapter 14 provides guidelines to govern gifts under the umbrella of love. It continues to proceed in that chapter, especially tongues as governed. That now emerges as the presenting problem.

We've not been told a lot about the nature of that problem as we've been given hints in other places. We could assume that those who had status perhaps practiced tongues to enhance their status. That would be an assumption, but it would be a reasonable one in light of what we've seen about the Corinthian community so far.

Some other structural observations you'll notice on page 178. It looks jumbled, but I've tried to show you a chiasm here. In 12:1-3 we have the statement that Jesus is Lord.

That's often overlooked, but it is setting the programmatic pace of what's going on in chapters 12-14. Jesus is Lord. You'll notice that 14:37-40 that ends this whole unit.

We have teaching Jesus is Lord. To use an analogy in the pun, Jesus is Lord teaching because it's communication that Paul is after. It's for people being educated, not just observing somebody who's doing something they don't even understand.

In the middle of those two brackets, Jesus is Lord, teaching is Lord. We have 12:4-30 where unity and diversity are played. 12:31-13:13, where we have the primacy of love, and that becomes the middle because Lord, Lord, on the boundaries.

12:4-30 unity and diversity. 14 is about order. How do you order and maintain unity in the gifts? And the hinge of this whole thing is the question of love in chapter 13.

I think this is a legitimate presentation of chiasm, and chiasm shows the structure and how things hang together. So, it shows us the primacy of chapter 13. It's not just an afterthought or some cute little devotional stuck in the middle of all this, but it is the managing principle of dealing with the expression of public worship.

All right, so those are some minor structural things; most of it's relatively clear, and we do start at the bottom of page 178, 1 Corinthians 12-14 is now flagged with *peride*. That Greek phrase that we've seen over and over again, often translated literally, is now concerning. And so, Paul starts in chapter 12, now concerning the gifts of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12-14 This time, Paul doesn't provide some original question or some slogan to which he responds. The problem becomes obvious, but this time, it's not so much a response to the question as it is a response to the overall issues of the expression of gifts. We might say right here, at the beginning, before we get too far into this, that these were active gifts and they were legitimate ways of doing worship.

Paul never says that they were not, but he regulates them. And I'll mention it again later, it is actually very interesting to me that the only time that we have this stated in the New Testament and dealt with is here. The pastorals in the book of Ephesians, which are two major church books about order and function, never mentioned it at all.

And that's fascinating to me because they probably come after these issues in 1 Corinthians. As a result of that, you would expect some reflection. Maybe Corinth was the only place that did public worship exactly like this.

We don't know, but it is an observation that it doesn't come up elsewhere, particularly in pastoral type writings. All epistles are pastoral, but in the pastoral epistles, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, and in the book of Ephesians, which has some major, major pastoral aspects, particularly in the last half, it's not there. That's fascinating to me.

All right, spiritual gifts and the sovereign Lord, chapter 12. We begin our analysis with some general observations about spiritual gifts in the New Testament. Let's look at it in general as we start before we get into the specifics of the verses.

We might ask ourselves on page 179, what is a gift? The term gift does not clearly communicate the concept of 1 Corinthians 12 to 14. Particularly in, at least in Western culture, the word gift in our culture because of the development of

Christmas and birthdays, when you get gifts given to you. That's what most people probably immediately think of when they hear the word gift.

They think about something that's given to them in that regard. And while gifts are an endowment from God in some way, they are not like Christmas gifts. So we've got to be very, very careful with what we imagine up in our minds from our own settings and culture about the word gift itself.

In fact, the word gift is never in this chapter. It is a supplied term, logically, for other terms that refer to the spiritual charismas. But the word for gift, a common word in the New Testament, *doron*, never occurs.

And so, we have to be very careful with how this is imaged to us. Two Greek terms are prominent in these chapters. The word *pneumatikos*.

Pneumatikos is an adjective. It's built off of the term *pneuma*. You probably know, you've heard of *pneuma*.

That's the word for spirit. It also covers wind and breath. And it covers the human spirit, the Holy Spirit.

The word *pneuma* is used for the Holy Spirit. But if you put it into an adjective form, *pneumatikos*, then it modifies something like a spiritual body. We'll see in 1 Corinthians 15.

The talk about Moses and wandering in the wilderness is spiritual food. And so spiritual charisma, the word *charisma* gets translated as the gifts. And that's the second word.

Charisma comes from the word *xaris*, which means grace. This is a noun, but it is the term that has to do with grace and giftings. You can't get away from the word gift even though I don't like the word.

You can't get away from it. The term *pneumatikos*, as I've said, is an adjective that means spiritual. It may refer to persons.

There are four passages, only four passages, out of not quite 30 uses of this term in the New Testament. This is a good term for you to do a word study on. You'll discover that it's dominantly a Pauline term.

It's a term that's dominantly in the book of 1 Corinthians and not too many other places. The term spiritual is never used in relation to Jesus. But if you were going to do a study on what it means to be spiritual, you'd obviously want to talk about Jesus.

So, a term doesn't cover the field. It's one aspect. And for whatever reason, it becomes very important in the book of 1 Corinthians.

Only four places. Those four places, by the way, are cited in the Bauer-Arndt Gingrich-Danker lexicon on the Greek Bible. And so that's a very important reference to validate that these four places are viewed as referring to spiritual people.

There are some debates interpretive-wise on this, but at least that's one good source, and here they are. It may refer to a person. It may refer to a thing, such as the resurrection body in 1 Corinthians 15, that we'll see.

Or to a domain of the spirit, like these so-called gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12 to 14, the term gift is supplied with pneumatikos, spirituals. That would be the spirituals.

But that doesn't make sense, so you've got to supply something. Well, somebody in the English translations decides to supply the word gift rather than to create a new term like spiritual graces. Or the word manifestations would be better, as we'll see in the defining verse in this chapter.

Chapter 12:1, literally, now about the spirituals. But since this term can be masculine or neuter, it could be spiritual things or the word gifts that have been supplied. As I said, the word manifestations would be a good word.

Or it could be spiritual persons, those who are gifted in certain ways. It could be masculine in light of 12:2 and 3, which address people. So, there's everywhere we go, and if you were reading these more elaborate commentaries, the real commentaries, you see that almost every phrase, every word is disputed.

Not that it's disputable, but that it needs explanation. And when you have an array of qualified scholars at the highest levels, you're going to find some various perspectives on how to describe things. All right, the term charisma.

This is a neuter noun. Remember, you may not know this if you haven't studied the Greek at all, but Greek is like Latin. It's a gender language.

You've got masculine, feminine, and neuter. Gender has absolutely nothing to do with what the word represents. The word for sin is a feminine word.

Well, that doesn't mean only women sin. And so, you have to be careful. The word for spirit is a neuter word.

Pneuma is a neuter noun. That doesn't mean the spirit is a thing rather than a person. You've got to divorce the idea of our typical idea of gender from these Greek words because masculine, feminine, and neuter words have those categories as

nouns and adjectives, but it has absolutely nothing to do with the question of gender at the end of the day.

It only has to do with grammar, and they are parsed in a gendered sense, but it's a grammatical thing. It's not a reality thing. This noun is derived from the root word that signifies grace.

In the spiritual domain, it signifies a special manifestation of divine presence, divine activity, divine power, or divine grace, for that matter. These two terms are combined. In Romans 1:11, where Paul said to the Romans that he had not been able to address them, and he says, in anticipation of that, for I long to see you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift to the end that you may be established.

And so here, that I may impart to you a pneumatikon charisma, spiritual charisma. Spiritual modifies the noun charisma, and it's translated spiritual gift, even though it's actually in the plural. Actually, it's in the singular here, and you know that from the adjective easier than the neuter, the spiritual gift.

To the end you may be established. With the adjective noun literally spiritual charisma, there you have it. You have to deal with translation.

There is no such thing as an absolutely literal translation because, usually, it wouldn't make sense. You've got to deal with terms. All right, the normal Greek term for gift, *doron*, does not occur in any of these gift lists.

While the above terms are almost universally translated as a gift, whether you supply it or whether you translate charisma as that, and sometimes you even supply it with that term when it's used alone. This English translation conjures up in the mind of a non-critical reader an array of ideas that may or may not be the intent of the text. So please cancel out your cultural understanding of being given a gift.

Get rid of it come into this chapter with a clean slate, and try to get your arms around what's going on within the chapter. So that's a bit of an answer to what is a gift in terms of the terms. But now we want to ask, how do we define this pneumatikon charisma? The definition of a spiritual gift in the context of chapters 12 to 14 is actually in chapter 12 and verse 7. This is the best verse, the verse that's kind of designed to bring this together.

12:7. Now, to each one, the manifestation of the spirit is given for the common good. 12:7, the manifestation of the spirit, is literally, and to each one is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good.

Here, manifestation is used, and it uses the spirit to modify manifestation. A genitive noun is like an adjective, but it doesn't use either of our two terms. But it's telling us what's going on here in relation to these gifts.

Let's think about this for a moment. Now, to each one, there is the manifestation of the spirit. That's the phrase you ought to latch on to for describing and defining spiritual gifts.

They're manifestations of the spirit. Now, that needs a little explanation in and of itself, and we'll talk about it. So, when we break this definition out, what are some of the characteristics of it? First of all, at the bottom of 179, a manifestation of the spirit is an ability or ministry that the spirit actualizes within the believers and which reveals the presence of the spirit.

Jesus said, by their fruits, you will know them. Well, by the activities in a congregation, you will know if the spirit is active because the activities in the congregation reflect what the Bible teaches the spirit will enhance—love, joy, peace, like the fruit of the spirit, that sort of a thing.

You're not trying to find the spirit as a person. You're trying to find the manifestations that the spirit would generate. The works of the flesh, for example, if you go in a congregation and you find those kinds of things, you know that's not of the spirit.

That's of the flesh. That's of the carnal nature. But if you see the characteristics of the spirit, the things the spirit generates, that's evidence.

By their fruits, you shall know them. You look at a tree to know what the tree is. You look at people to know who they are.

This is, in a sense, when we talk about these manifestations of the spirit, and we talk about the spirit in relation to congregations and people, we're using what's known as religious language. It's a description. Let's think a little more about that in a moment.

All right, now you'll notice I've said here that Ciampa, if I'm pronouncing his name correctly, never met him, calls this a subjective genitive. They're the manifestations that the spirit produces. If you're not a Greek student, the genitive case in Greek is a very productive case for what we call interpretation.

Much of Greek is just grammar, but the genitive has a special way of being used, and it becomes very interpretive. And in the genitive case is what's known as subjective and objective genitive. Certain grammatical constructs call for this.

A subjective genitive means that the genitive produces the action. An objective genitive means that the genitive receives the action. So, if you know what the genitive is, you ask, does it produce it or does it receive it? And here he's saying that it produces it, that the spirit produces the gifts.

Now keep that in mind as we go along here—second bullet. The question is, is the genitive pneumatikos to be taken here as objective? That is, the gift manifests the spirit to others in the community, and that the spirit receives, as it were, our ethical behavior.

And therefore, when people look at us as the tree, they see the fruit. Okay. Or is it subjective, that is, what the spirit produces in the community.

Now, typically, I think everybody assumes that it's subjective, the spirit produces. Because our sometimes uncritical view of spirituality means that nothing happens if the spirit doesn't prompt or come into our cranium and speak and those kinds of things. We have a very mystical view of spirituality in that regard.

And that needs to be questioned, actually. How does spirituality happen? And what is it? We know God's involved. I mean, that's an assertion that's clear.

But how is the question? How are we spiritual? How does the spirit generate these things? How does our obedience to a list like the works of the flesh make us either spiritual or carnal? You see that religious language is extremely difficult to get our arms around. Now, either sense would suit the context. You could go subjective or objective.

Spirit produces, Spirit receives in the sense that what we do reflects the Spirit and, therefore, is spiritual. It could go either way. And you'll find scholars, as you read books, that will go one way or the other.

See, that's interpretive. It's not that the Greek is telling us. The Greek gives us the occasion to make a decision.

And I should say right here that knowing Greek doesn't solve all the interpretive and theological questions on the planet. Knowing Greek just aggravates the solution to those problems. Language is not in and of itself the magic wand that solves everything.

Neither Hebrew nor Greek. It helps you to be more specific as you pursue a solution. But it doesn't necessarily solve the problem in and of itself.

It is an interpretive issue. It is a contextual issue. And human beings are going to bring some baggage to that.

Therefore, we have different answers. Number three. The genitive quote is much more probably objective about the operation, which manifests the spirit in public.

Thus, the animating power and purpose is one even if phenomena in the public domain take diverse forms. Thistleton.

Thistleton translates the verse as each one being given the manifestation of the spirit for common advantage. The next bullet. The nature of spiritual language that I've been talking about has to be considered.

Under the umbrella of the church, in which the spirit we assume is empowering, every activity that enhances the community for spiritual purposes is credited to the spirit in religious language. Even though, at times, the talent or the gift or the endowment that a human being has may well be the product of a human being's journey in life, it could be the manifestation. It's natural, but because it's under the umbrella, it's spiritual.

Dissecting the causality of spirit and the causality of us as people who know God doing spiritual things is extremely difficult, if not impossible. But we always default to giving God the credit. For example, if you were driving, and especially in southwest Florida where I live, the wild west of driving, and you come to a stoplight and you have a green light.

I don't assume because I have a green light that nobody's coming. Those assumptions can cause wrecks and get you killed because, in my world, people run red lights like water. Now, if I came up to a green light and did my usual critical thinking about stoplights, there might be some idiot who was going to run this thing.

That's critical. And I look, and I see, maybe this time I see a police car, but you can't hear the siren. Siren, siren, you know that's in the south in America, that's two words, siren.

And you don't hear it, but you see him, and you avoid a wreck by stopping. Or maybe you see the car of the cops chasing, and the cops are blocked behind that car, and that car runs the light. And because you thought critically, you stopped and avoided perhaps a deadly accident.

What do you do when that happens? Thank you, Lord. Don't you? I do. But why did I avoid that accident? Did I avoid it by divine guidance, or did I avoid it because of the practice of critical thinking? Probably the latter.

Because some people, some good people, some people better than I die by not thinking when they come up to a light. So, when we are Christians, we live under this

umbrella that for every good thing that happens to us in life, particularly the things that that scare the socks off of us, we thank God, and we should. But at the same time, was he the causality of that thought, or were we the cause of that thought? Makes no difference.

We still thank God, right? Well, what about spiritual manifestations? If we show love in a community, is it because God made us do that, or is it because we did it out of our maturity as Christians? You see, the issue of dissecting these things is not only extremely difficult sometimes, but maybe impossible, but it's not necessary because, as Christians, we live under that umbrella of the Church, of God, and therefore we always give him credit without dissecting the causality. Now, that's a very important thought. That may be strange to you.

It may be new to you, but it is an extremely important thought—the nature of spiritual language. A lot of mistakes are made about understanding the Bible because typical reading of the Bible does not understand metaphors, and almost all spiritual language is metaphorical.

There are books written on this. You can go find them, okay? Now, let's continue on. The Spirit empowers every activity that enhances the community.

Page 180. For spiritual purposes, it is credited to the Spirit in religious language, even though, at times, the talent or gift may well be the product of a human being's journey in life. A musician, an accountant, a speaker, someone who helps and comforts.

Go on and on and on. To serve with your abilities, those that you've perhaps had your entire life by birth and by development when you come under the umbrella of the Church, the exercise of those human endowments become spiritual gifts and become gifts to the Church for you and for them to function properly. I think we need to get rid of the mysticism of gifts.

Gifts are functions, and functions under the umbrella are manifestations of the Spirit. You can be a spiritual janitor. God knows that janitors are one of the greatest gifts to a pastor in a small church, or you're going to spend your time cleaning the toilets and mopping the floor.

Spiritual purposes are credited to the Spirit in religious language, even though, at times, the talent or gift may well be the product of a human being's journey in life. To serve with your abilities under the Church umbrella is to exercise your giftedness as a person for spiritual purposes and spiritual formation. Now, we need to talk about some other issues to bring all this together, but I just want to emphasize that you need to think very deeply about these things we've just talked about.

Gifted persons in a church percolate to the surface. That's a metaphor, percolate. You may not even understand what that means because you have never seen a percolator.

In my early years, a percolator was a coffee pot where the water percolated through the grounds in a cyclical manner and made coffee. And there were percolators you set on a stove, percolators you plug in. That was in advance, and these days you have espresso machines instead of percolators.

So, that's a metaphor. This idea is that gifted persons percolate their surface in the midst of ministry. Notice how I've emphasized in the midst of ministry.

Dry today, excuse me. Percolate in the midst of ministry as a result of the inward work of the Spirit and for the resulting imagery of a spiritual community. We are spiritual and the community is spiritual because we do, D-O, we do spiritual things to enhance our community and to reach our world.

Let's do a little overview of spiritual gifts in the New Testament. This doesn't take long because we don't have a lot of information here. Notice this overview on page 180.

The terms that are used by the New Testament. The word gift as we've understood gift in our language is never used as we've mentioned in Greek, but is supplied by translators for the following constructs. The gift designated or the Greek designations in gift texts break out as follows.

First of all, the adjective pneumonticus is the word for spiritual as we've talked about. You've got spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. It mostly functions as an adjective, spiritual body, spiritual food, spiritual songs, spiritual blessings, etc.

It's an adjective. Please hang on to that idea how this word is an adjective. That means it is descriptive of something.

Four times it refers to believers as spiritual and every reference views spirituality as a correlation with God's word. Study those references, three of them in Corinthians, one of them in Galatians. Every one of those contexts sets up the spiritual person as one who's obeying God and relating to biblical truth. So, the word pneumonticus.

Now, the word charisma. Something graciously given.

Graciousness, grace. It's used for the word salvation in Romans. Blessings and privilege in Romans.

Celibacy in 1 Corinthians 7:7. The gift of celibacy. The grace not to have sexual desire and therefore have no need in that regard. That's a gift.

It's not something you choose. It's something that chooses you. Money is graciously given.

Spiritual gifts in Romans and Corinthians are mentioned in some of these other texts as well. The terms only occur together in Romans 1 11. That's the only place.

In light of the above, so-called spiritual gifts are believers who demonstrate, quote, and graciously energize functions within the body that characterize the spirit's management of spiritual church activities for the benefit of the body. Now that's a mouthful. I try to tie everything I do to sources so you have authority beyond me.

This happens to be my construct sentence here, but I think it's a good one. Graciously energized functions within the body that characterize the spirit's management of spiritual church activities for the benefit of the body. All right, so that takes that definition a little deeper.

Now, let's talk about the list of gifts. Here again, there's not a lot. We have four lists of gifts in the New Testament, and we have some references that are to non-lists, and I'll mention those too.

I should mention to you here that the issue of list in the New Testament is pretty common. It may be more common than you think because you read over them, but the New Testament is not alone. Plato, Socrates, and the Greek writers, they love to use lists.

In fact, before the New Testament was written, many virtue lists and vice lists were used in the Greek ethical literature. The New Testament comes along and does exactly the same thing. I have a series of lectures on the fruit of the spirit, about 10 hours.

If you want to see it, you can go to my website, www.gmedors.com, and under teaching, you can expand it and you can find it. I have a series of brief videos, but after that, I have one hour of lectures. I even have notes for that.

I hope to do one of these biblical or biblical learning sessions on that, but the list is a big thing. Virtue list, vice list, and here we have what we call the gift list. 1 Corinthians 12, 8 to 10, we're going to look at.

Notice how this list is constructed. We'll come back to that later. That's on purpose, the way I've put it down there.

Then, 1 Corinthians 12:28, another list, and you'll notice none of these lists are the same. They may have some typical, some same terms, but they're never sequenced the same. There is no conforming one list to another.

Romans 12:6 to 8 is a list. Again, some items we've seen, some items that are different, but it seems random almost that Ephesians 4 is a very different list. It's not a list of functions but a list of people, people who do something.

Many talk about Ephesians 4 as a list of people who have been gifted by God. There again, giving credit to God, gifted how? Gifted by life and by their journey up to that point. Look at Paul.

Why was he chosen to be such a major figure in the New Testament? Because Paul had been to seminary. Isn't that cute? You like that, don't you? Yeah, he'd taken the doctoral program with Gamaliel and others, probably being in Jerusalem as early as 12 years old. He was thoroughly educated.

He was prepared. He knew the Septuagint. He knew the Second Temple Jewish literature.

He knew the Old Testament in Hebrew. God needed somebody like that, and he chose him, and he had to do it in such a way to make it happen on the road to Damascus. That's interesting, isn't it? So, we have Ephesians 4:11. By the way, the context of Ephesians 4 is to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body, and to all of us come into the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God.

So, there are four lists. That's all there is. Now, there are some non-list references.

Romans 1:11, we've talked about, where the two terms are combined. Paul says, I want to impart unto you some spiritual gift. Romans 11:29 refers to Israel's privilege, not the current category of gifts.

1 Corinthians 1:7, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift. The Prolegomenate of this book we're in now. 2 Corinthians 1:11, King James Version, renders as a gift, but should be a blessing or favor.

But that's a translation issue. 1 Timothy 4:14, do not neglect the gift that is in you. And that Paul talks about it to his protege Timothy.

2 Timothy 1:6, rekindle the gift that is within you. The pastorals are quite interesting because they're so personal, and Timothy's own struggles kind of come to the surface. 1 Peter 4:10, like good stewards, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

Lots of discussion about these, but no other list. It's assumed that people function, and you can just use this nomenclature to refer to, function, and do your job, which is the point. Now, because Ephesians 4 is a little bit special, I want to talk a little more about it on page 182.

Ephesians 4:1 begins the application of the ethical section of the epistle. Have you ever noticed most of Paul's epistles are half theology and half ethics. We've called it doctrine and practice.

We've called it a lot of things. But religiously, every one of Paul's epistles is half and a half. If you've got four chapters, one and two will be the theological foundations, and three and four will be the application of those, the practice.

If there are six chapters, it'll be three and three. Ephesians 4 begins the last half of the six chapters of Ephesians, and guess what? It begins by the application of what you do now that you've learned these things. This is fascinating.

I have a paradigm where I try to say that this is Paul's model. Faith is theology, love is ethics, hope is eschatology. I think Paul's epistles are like this because faith, love, and hope is integrated through the whole thing.

Can't deal with that here. May have to deal with that another time in another place. So, Ephesians 4:1 begins the application of the ethics section.

Ephesians 4:1-16 is a call to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. What is that? 1-6 is the grounds of unity, and the trinity is the model for unity. 7-16 asserts that God's gifting of individuals, people, and officers to equip the church for its work in the world is the means to achieve unity.

At the end of the day, the answer to how you achieve unity is education. You have pastors and teachers, and they educate the community so that the community can do the work of the ministry. Christianity is one of the most mind-oriented religions on the planet.

And yet, we've turned it into an emotional-oriented religion. People will skip the mind so they can do the activity. Well, if you do that, you have gutted the ability and the depth of what you do.

You cannot bifurcate the mind and the activity. They're together. That's the biblical presentation of it.

The gifting of individuals to equip the church is how you achieve unity. We are all gifted to fulfill a task in the church by our connection to Christ. 4:7 Paul validates

gifting by an analogical proof text in the use of Psalm 68 and it has a Christological twist.

You'll have to go see that. The ascending and descending refers to Christ's incarnation and ascension. Ephesians 4:11-16 focuses on a group of gifted persons who are responsible for equipping believers to do the work of ministry.

The church is not an evangelistic hall. It is an equipping center. You come in, you get equipped, you go out and do evangelistic work, and then you bring those people in so they can get equipped to go out and do that work.

In the cultural development of America and the American church, a large segment of it turned the church into an evangelistic hall. They achieved a great purpose in bringing people to Christ, but when they brought them to Christ, they didn't do anything with them. Some tried, but perhaps the mess that we are in now in the American church is the result of that lack of educational purpose in the church.

I've been in a lot of megachurches in my life, and I have found it absolutely amazing in megachurches that they have no educational plan. They have hit-and-miss Sunday schools. They have Sunday schools that are geared to meeting felt needs rather than educating the congregation, if they have Sunday school at all.

What happened to us? Where did the educational mission go? Have you ever noticed that in large churches that have the resources to hire workers, you've got senior pastors, you've got administrative pastors, you've got youth pastors, you've got senior pastors, you've got married couple pastors, da-da, da-da, da-da, for some of my former students. Where's the scholar pastor? Where's the educational pastor? Where's the person who is not just gifted, but trained to teach, who can educate the senior pastor, who probably wasn't adequately educated himself? Very few churches have that category, because we've lost the educational mission. So, it's a group of gifted persons who are responsible for equipping believers to do the work of ministry, and that equipping begins in Romans 12:1, and 2. They've got to get a transformed mind so they can achieve ownership of the Christian message and be able to repeat that meaningfully and deeply to others.

Without that, you cannot perpetuate yourself. You come in to get equipped. You go out to bring others in.

Now, so those are lists. Ephesians. Ephesians is a great book.

In fact, some have said Ephesians has more about Pauline theology than even the book of Romans. It's amazing. If you want to study Ephesians sometime, I'll recommend to you a commentary by Harold Hohner.

H-O-E-H-N-E-R. Harold Hoehner. Harold was a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary for some 50 years, I think.

He's deceased now. He was a fine, fine man. I knew him, and he was loved by everybody who knew him.

He was a respectful person. He was a good scholar, and he wrote a magisterial volume on Ephesians. Not very many questions are left unanswered in that book.

I think it's published by Baker. Harold Hohner on Ephesians. You get that, and you'll have something that can equip you to work well in the book of Ephesians, and furthermore, it's readable.

Some commentaries are not readable because they're only for reference. Just reference. Now, Hohner is certainly for reference, but it's also readable enough that you can move through it, and there are others.

A philosophy of the list. Now, when you think about lists and these individual lists, how do you think about them? Well, first of all, you need to think about these thoughts. Here you go.

Any given list is seldom complete, so don't ride the horse of one list as if that's the end of your life. It isn't. No list is complete in and of itself.

Furthermore, any given list designed, and I think we dropped the S there on any given list, is designed to serve a purpose within its own context. Every list, in some sense, is contextually conditioned. Man, there are some great lists.

The Fruit of the Spirit is a great list. 2 Timothy chapter 1 in verses 5 to 7 has one of the lists I love, and both of those chapters deal with the issue of love, and they both put love at the end. Oh, actually, the fruit is first.

And so, what in Galatians? So, there is a massive design in these lists. Some of them are just, and some of them seem haphazard to you. Maybe you can't explain the design, and then you get some that are so designed that they knock your socks off. Consequently, all lists of the same subject have to be compared.

So, if you want to know what the gifts are, you have to look at all those lists, as well as those ones where you didn't have the list but had the reference. But notice this, put bullet number four. The sum total of all lists of the same subject does not necessarily mean you have a complete list.

So, go ahead and take all the gifts you can find in the New Testament, and make yourself up a quiz to find out what people's gift is, and you may miss what their gift is

because their natural endowment to serve Christ in the church might be what doesn't happen to be on a list in the New Testament. Maybe they're qualified to be a Sunday school superintendent. Maybe they're the best janitor in the world, and they love doing it.

Maybe they're an usher. You know, a good usher is a godsend for lots of different reasons. Maybe they're someone who manages the service.

A good song leader is a gift. I'm not so sure worship teams are gifts. Sorry, I'm just being a little sarcastic.

A good leader of a service is a gift. So, as culture changes, the needs of the congregation change. So, the gifts are forever expanding into categories of need in the community.

Giftlessness does not have to be proved by finding the reference in the New Testament. But it's by owning the fact of a person functioning that we can enhance how the church works. A lot of churches in American culture have had what we call visitation programs.

That's died off. Some of the reasons are because of the culture and access to people. In Hong Kong, you can't go visit because it's illegal to do so in the high rises.

So, at least what I've been told, and so, you've got methods to adjust to where you are. But, there are some people who are gifted in visiting people who have visited your church.

And, they can go in and not be offensive, and be happy, and make those people want to come. I like to use the analogy, you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make them drink. However, your job, by analogy, is to make them thirsty.

If they get thirsty enough, they'll drink. Some people are gifted at making sinners thirsty to seek God. I've seen this.

I'm not gifted that way. But, I have had friends, and I've even worked in ministries, where my bosses were so gifted about that. It would blow your mind.

They just were that way. So, this thing of endowment, and gift, and functioning under the church, is these manifestations are what the spirit wants happening. But, oftentimes, the spirit takes us for who we are and uses us in that regard.

So, the sum total of all this isn't the end of the day. Furthermore, what would you add to a list of spiritual gifts for your church in your own cultural context? That would be a great discussion. What would you add? If you're a startup church, and you've

got one or two persons that you can count on to be sure that that school auditorium has been reorganized for your morning service, you don't have to worry about that.

That's a godsend. That's a gift that somebody is responsible enough and talented enough to make that happen. Sound is a gift.

But, what is it? It's a function. It's a skill set that some people have, and others don't. PowerPoint.

There you go. Technology. These are things that in our current churches are so important.

Musicians. Wow. Talk about giftedness. A good musician is worth their weight in gold. And so, a philosophy of list in the Bible, you've got to engage this, and you've got to let go, probably, of some stereotypes that have misled you about the nature of gifts. Now, observations in light of this data that we've been working through.

Page 182 at the bottom. Notice, first of all, that gifts are functions that fulfill and enhance the activities of the church. The functions are under the umbrella of the church, and the church is orchestrated by the Spirit.

Consequently, they are imaged in relation to the work of the Spirit. You don't have to dissect, and you shouldn't get too uptight to demand that it was the Holy Spirit and not just the natural order of things under the umbrella. Be careful about that.

2a. Some gifts are miraculous and, therefore, a direct endowment from God. Some gifts are ordinary functions of persons who emerge as, for example, gifted to encourage others.

Gift of encouragement. I have the gift of criticism. I guess that's part of being a teacher.

I've never been too good at encouragement. I was paid to grade your papers and show you how you can do better. I wasn't hired to give you a reward for doing C-level work.

I'll spank you for that, okay? In this regard, the skills and character of a person before becoming a Christian may also serve God and the community in this new spiritual context and thereby be called a spiritual gift. 3a. Deciding the role of the miraculous kinds of gifts in the current church is highly debated.

We'll talk more about this, and I have an entire lecture at the end of our text lecture on this question. There is a book it's old now probably needs to be redone, *Our Miraculous Gifts for Today* by Wayne Grudem, the editor, and there are four views, I

believe, in that book, and that helps you to start this discussion, but the book is anything but complete now because of its datedness. 4b.

All lists are contextually conditioned, and therefore, no one list or even the total of lists is necessarily complete. Consequently, the church continues to expand what constitutes a gift on the basis of changed cultural conditions and the needs of the body. 5. How does the church identify the gifts of its members? How do you know what your gift is? How do you know what someone else's? First of all, critical thinking about what the ministry context needs is a big thing for a congregation. Sitting down and doing some critical thinking about what a congregation needs is important.

I know of a church plant right now, and it wasn't working, and they had to let their pastor go. They had some gifts, but not the gifts they needed, and now they're reframing themselves. I have a friend who is gifted at helping churches think through who they are and how they should posture themselves for ministry. This friend of mine is a highly skilled author of many books and does this for free. All you got to do is pay his plane fare and put him up, and he'll take care of it.

What a help, what a gift, but I can't get this church to do it. They think they know what they need. They think they know.

Don't ever be deceived into thinking that you know without help. That's why God gave us a community, and their community as a combined community can't rise any higher than they are. They need somebody to help them see things, to help them find what they need, really find what their talents are, and to help them enhance in certain areas and be adequate in other areas.

You don't do that yourself. You need help. Everyone needs help, no matter who you are.

So, critical thinking doesn't happen naturally. It takes someone who is skilled to make it happen, secondly, by observation of how members function as they worship and work within the body.

Just look around you. Get busy in the congregation, and then see what happens. See who slides into a slot of need and makes it happen.

Be alert in your critical thinking. You do not declare your gift. The body affirms your gift.

You can say, I think I have the gift, but it's not you who decides that you do. If you say, I think I have the gift, and your next step is to say to that congregation, do you think I have the gift? I've known people who just were dying to teach Sunday school.

They believed they were a gifted teacher, and they took a class of 40 down to 10 in a matter of one quarter.

Well, they weren't a gifted teacher. They had to be rearranged. They had to be helped to critically see that that was not their gift.

Thirdly, by recognizing God-ordained leadership. Ephesians 4:11. There is a need for leadership. We are not all pastors.

I've seen church signs that say, ministers the congregation. No, that's not right. Not everybody in that congregation is gifted to do what needs to be done under the rubric of official ministry.

Now, everybody ministers to people, but that is leveling that word below the waterline. Certain individuals have to lead. Now, there have to be checks and balances in leadership in a sinful domain, and it can go sour real quick, but the fact is that God has given people to lead.

They have to emerge. They have to be recognized. They have to be listened to.

They also have to be pushed sometimes, but it is the educational process that makes that happen—recognizing God-ordained leadership. Just because someone says they're God-ordained, or even the church says they're ordained to do it, if they screw it up, you've got to challenge them.

Again, according to 1 Timothy 3, you do not tell the church what office you want to hold. You'll say, well, I desire the ministry. The Bible says that if any man desires to be a pastor, desires good work, well, read the rest of it.

Then, the church tells you whether your desire is valid or not valid. You do not tell the church what office you want to hold. They tell you what office you are qualified to hold.

That's the power of a community, but it's got to be a community that's thinking, not emoting only. You've got to have critical thinking. You've got to be observant.

And you've got to be able to stand outside yourself and see what your strengths and weaknesses are. You can desire it, but the church is the one who tells you whether you are. The private and independent mindset of American Christianity has abused this whole issue of gifts horribly.

We think that gifting is our decision, but it is not our decision. It is God's will and the church's recognition within the ministry context. Don't ask what your gift is.

Just get busy. Do something and watch it emerge. That's how it was done in the New Testament.

That's how it's done in the real world, even in the business world. You start as the male person in that big building, and your giftedness and your integrity help you to move up that ladder of activity and responsibility naturally, not because you're demanding it. 1 Timothy 3, you can desire, but the church appoints by evaluation.

That's sort of an overview of gifts. As we begin this chapter, we're going to come back to the next lecture on page 183 and look specifically at how the text unfolds these issues, particularly in a context where Paul has to make some corrections. Have a good day.

This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is lecture 28, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul's Response to the Questions Concerning Spiritual Gifts. Introduction to 1 Corinthians 12-14.