

# Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament Literature, Session 17, 1 Corinthians – Spiritual Gifts Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 17, 1 Corinthians – Spiritual Gifts, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Mathewson's lecture focuses on Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, particularly the issues surrounding spiritual gifts and the resurrection. The lecture emphasizes that the Corinthians were misusing spiritual gifts to promote social status distinctions, mirroring values from their surrounding secular culture. **Paul counters this by asserting that all gifts are equally manifestations of the Spirit, meant for the edification of the entire church.** The lecture further addresses the Corinthian denial of a physical resurrection. **Paul defends it as crucial to Christian faith and the defeat of death, aligning with God's original intent for humanity.** The lecture suggests that the overarching theme of 1 Corinthians is maintaining the purity of the church amidst a secular culture. **This is accomplished by not letting worldly attitudes infiltrate the church's practices.**

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 17 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Daniel).**



**Mathewson\_NTLit\_S  
ession 17.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 17, 1 Corinthians – Spiritual Gifts

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Mathewson's Lecture 17 on 1 Corinthians and Spiritual Gifts.

#### Briefing Document: 1 Corinthians and Spiritual Gifts (Mathewson Lecture 17)

##### Overview:

This lecture by Dr. Dave Mathewson focuses on specific issues within the Corinthian church addressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians, particularly those related to the Lord's Supper (Communion), spiritual gifts, and the resurrection. A central argument is that many problems stemmed from the Corinthian church allowing the values and attitudes of the surrounding secular Corinthian culture to infiltrate and influence their practices.

#### I. The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11):

- **Problem:** Socio-economic divisions prevalent in Corinthian society were being perpetuated within the church during the Lord's Supper. Wealthy members were arriving first, possibly eating better food in a separate room, while poorer members arriving later were given lesser food. This contradicted the purpose of the meal, which should have been an expression of unity in Christ.
- **Paul's Correction:** Paul instructs them to "wait for one another" (11:33) to eat together, emphasizing their equality as members of the body of Christ.
- **Self-Examination:** Mathewson emphasizes that the call to "examine yourselves" was not about confessing every sin. Instead, it was a call to ensure that participation in the Lord's Supper was not contributing to division within the church. "To participate in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner was to do so in a way that promoted division."

#### II. Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14):

- **Introduction:** Paul addresses the issue with the phrase "now concerning spiritual gifts" which is "kind of a signpost that Paul is introducing a new problem that he will now address."
- **Definition:** Mathewson defines a spiritual gift as "any ability supernatural or natural that is energized by the Holy Spirit and used for the building up of the entire church."

- **Problem:** The Corinthians were using spiritual gifts, particularly speaking in tongues, to reinforce social status distinctions. The "elite" likely viewed the ability to speak in tongues as a sign of spiritual superiority, mirroring similar status associations found in pagan religions.
- **Paul's Correction: Equality of Gifts:** Paul emphasizes that "no single gift is a sign that someone has the Holy Spirit more than any other." He lists various gifts (wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, interpretation) to demonstrate that all gifts are equally manifestations of the Spirit.
- **Body Analogy:** Paul uses the analogy of the body to illustrate the importance of diverse gifts working together. "If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be?" Each part is necessary for the body to function, just as each gift is needed for the church's health.
- **Confession of Christ:** Paul states, "no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." He emphasizes that the true sign of possessing the Spirit is the ability to confess Jesus as Lord, not the possession of a specific gift.
- **Prophecy as a "Greater Gift":** Mathewson suggests that when Paul urges them to "strive for the greater gifts," he specifically means prophecy. Prophecy is the ability to communicate an intelligible message to God's people.
- **Emphasis on Intelligibility:** Prophecy is considered more valuable because it builds up the entire church, whereas speaking in tongues, while not inherently wrong, primarily benefits the speaker. "Those who prophesy speak to other people for their up-building and encouragement and consolation... But those who prophesy build up the church." Paul wants them to "pursue those gifts that are intelligible and have an immediate effect of building up the entire body of Christ."
- **Chapter 13 (Love):** Mathewson addresses why this chapter is there. He argues that this chapter is "completely pertinent to what Paul is doing" and argues that it was "not wrong to take chapter 13 out and use it in other contexts about love. But ultimately, we have to remember why Paul put it here." He believes that because they have that kind of love, "then they'll use gifts appropriately in the church for the building up of the body of Christ, not for boasting about their spiritually elite statuses and things like that."

### III. The Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15):

- **Problem:** Some in the Corinthian church were denying the physical resurrection of believers, possibly influenced by Platonic dualism (the idea that the spiritual realm is superior to the physical). The denial was "not so much of a resurrection, but a physical resurrection, that the appropriate resurrection is going to be a spiritual one and not a physical one because of this kind of Platonic type thinking that the physical is not important."
- **Paul's Defense: Resurrection of Christ:** Paul argues that denying a physical resurrection for believers necessitates denying Christ's physical resurrection. "If Jesus didn't raise you from the dead, you're still in your sins."
- **Defeat of Death:** Paul asserts that the final enemy to be defeated is death, and this requires a physical resurrection.
- **Physical Existence:** Paul emphasizes that God created humanity for a physical existence on earth. Our ultimate destiny is not an immaterial, heavenly existence, but a transformed physical existence on a "new earth."

### IV. Main Theme of 1 Corinthians:

- Mathewson initially thought the main theme of the letter was unity, but now believes the main theme is "the church's purity in the midst of a secular culture." The problems in Corinth stemmed from allowing secular values to infiltrate the church. Paul's consistent message is for the church "to pursue purity...to remain pure in the midst of the secular culture in which it finds itself."

## 4. Study Guide: Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 17, 1 Corinthians – Spiritual Gifts

### 1 Corinthians: Spiritual Gifts and Church Purity

#### Study Guide

This study guide focuses on Dr. Mathewson's Lecture 17 on 1 Corinthians, specifically addressing spiritual gifts, the Lord's Supper, the resurrection, and the overall theme of church purity in a secular context.

#### Key Concepts and Themes

- **The Lord's Supper (Eucharist/Communion):** Understanding its intended purpose as an expression of unity in Christ, contrasted with its misuse in Corinth to perpetuate social divisions.
- **Spiritual Gifts:** Definition, purpose, and the problem of their misuse in the Corinthian church, particularly the elevation of tongues.
- **Hierarchy of Gifts:** Paul's attempt to level the playing field and emphasize the equal manifestation of the Spirit through all gifts.
- **Body of Christ:** The analogy used to illustrate the interdependence and equal importance of all members and their respective gifts.
- **Prophecy vs. Tongues:** Paul's emphasis on prophecy as a more beneficial gift for the entire church during worship.
- **Love (Agape):** The central role of love in guiding the use of spiritual gifts and preventing boasting and division.
- **Resurrection:** Paul's defense of the physical resurrection and its importance for Christian faith and the defeat of death.
- **Dualism:** Understanding how a Platonic dualistic worldview may have influenced Corinthian views on resurrection.
- **Church Purity:** The overarching theme of 1 Corinthians: maintaining purity amidst a secular culture by resisting the infiltration of worldly values and attitudes.
- **Context:** The importance of understanding the socio-economic, religious, and cultural context of Corinth in interpreting Paul's instructions.

#### Quiz (Short Answer)

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How were socio-economic distinctions affecting the Corinthian church's observance of the Lord's Supper?
2. According to Paul, what is the primary sin one commits when partaking in an unworthy manner?
3. How does Dr. Mathewson define a spiritual gift within the context of 1 Corinthians?
4. What was the specific spiritual gift that the Corinthians were elevating above others, and why was this problematic?
5. Explain the significance of Paul's analogy of the "body of Christ" in relation to spiritual gifts.
6. Why does Paul emphasize prophecy over tongues when the church gathers for worship?
7. Why does Paul insert the "love chapter" (1 Corinthians 13) into his discussion of spiritual gifts?
8. Why does Paul argue for the necessity of a physical resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15?
9. How does the concept of dualism relate to the Corinthian denial of a physical resurrection?
10. According to Dr. Mathewson, what is the main overarching theme of 1 Corinthians?

### **Quiz Answer Key**

1. The wealthy members were arriving early and eating better food in a separate room, while the poor members who worked longer hours were served lesser food later, perpetuating social inequality. This undermined the unity that the Lord's Supper should have symbolized.
2. The primary sin is partaking in a way that promotes division within the body of Christ. It is taking a meal meant to express the unity of God's people, but using it to promote socio-economic divisions.
3. A spiritual gift is any ability, whether supernatural or natural, that is energized by the Holy Spirit and used for the building up of the entire church.

4. The Corinthians were elevating the gift of tongues as a sign of their spiritually elite status. This was problematic because it created a hierarchy of gifts and excluded those who did not possess this particular gift.
5. The analogy illustrates that each member of the church, like each part of the body, has a unique and important function, and no single member or gift is superior to another. It emphasizes interdependence and the need for all gifts to work together for the health of the whole.
6. Prophecy is intelligible and immediately beneficial to everyone in the church, whereas tongues, without interpretation, is primarily beneficial to the one speaking. Paul wants the Corinthians to focus on gifts that build up the entire body of Christ during worship.
7. Paul inserts it to emphasize that love is essential for the proper use of spiritual gifts. Without love, gifts become instruments of boasting and division, undermining the unity of the church.
8. Paul argues that denying a physical resurrection also denies Christ's resurrection, which is the foundation of Christian faith. Moreover, the physical resurrection is necessary for the ultimate defeat of death, the last enemy.
9. Some in Corinth had accepted Platonic dualism which emphasized the spiritual over the physical. That influenced them to deny the importance of a physical resurrection.
10. The main theme is the purity of the church in the midst of a secular culture. This purity is threatened by allowing worldly values and attitudes to infiltrate the church, leading to division and misuse of spiritual gifts.

## Essay Questions

Consider these questions for deeper reflection and potential essay topics.

1. Analyze the socio-economic and cultural factors in Corinth that contributed to the problems Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 11-14. How might these factors be relevant to contemporary church contexts?
2. Discuss Paul's approach to spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14. How does he balance the affirmation of diverse gifts with the need for unity and edification in the church?
3. Explore the significance of love (agape) in 1 Corinthians 13 within the broader context of Paul's argument about spiritual gifts and church life. How does love serve as a corrective to the misuse of gifts?
4. Examine Paul's defense of the physical resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. What are the key arguments he uses, and what implications does this doctrine have for Christian hope and understanding of salvation?
5. Evaluate the argument that the main theme of 1 Corinthians is the purity of the church in a secular culture. How do the various issues Paul addresses support this theme, and what are the challenges of maintaining purity in a diverse and complex world?



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Agape:** Unconditional, sacrificial love; the highest form of love, often associated with God's love.
- **Body of Christ:** A metaphor used to describe the church as a unified body with diverse members and functions, all connected to Christ.
- **Dualism:** A philosophical or religious perspective that emphasizes the separation or opposition between two distinct entities, such as the physical and the spiritual.
- **Eucharist:** From the Greek word for "thanksgiving," referring to the Lord's Supper or Communion.
- **Lord's Supper/Communion:** A ritual meal commemorating Jesus' sacrifice and symbolizing the unity of believers in Christ.
- **Manifestation:** A visible or tangible expression of an abstract quality or power, in this context, the Holy Spirit.
- **Prophecy:** The ability to communicate a message from God to others, often for encouragement, edification, or correction.
- **Resurrection:** The act of being raised from the dead, particularly referring to Jesus' resurrection and the future resurrection of believers.
- **Secular:** Relating to worldly matters rather than religious or spiritual ones.
- **Spiritual Gifts:** Abilities or talents given by the Holy Spirit to individual Christians for the purpose of building up the church.
- **Tongues (Glossolalia):** The ability to speak in a language unknown to the speaker, often understood as a supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit.

## 5. FAQs on Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 17, 1 Corinthians – Spiritual Gifts, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions About 1 Corinthians and Spiritual Gifts

- **What was the primary issue Paul addressed regarding the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11?**
- Paul was concerned that the socio-economic divisions prevalent in Corinthian society were being perpetuated within the church during the Lord's Supper. Instead of expressing unity in Christ, the wealthy were arriving early and eating better food in a separate room, while the poor were arriving later and served less. Paul emphasized that the Lord's Supper should express unity and equality, urging them to "wait for one another" (1 Cor 11:33) and examine themselves to ensure they were not promoting division. To partake in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner was to do so in a way that promoted division, contrary to its purpose of expressing the unity of God's people.
- **What is a spiritual gift, according to 1 Corinthians 12-14?**
- Within the context of 1 Corinthians, a spiritual gift is any ability, whether supernatural or natural, that is energized by the Holy Spirit and used for the building up of the entire church. Paul emphasizes that these gifts are manifestations of the Spirit given for the common good (1 Cor 12:7).
- **What problem was Paul addressing concerning spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14?**
- The Corinthians were using spiritual gifts to further promote social and economic status distinctions. Some, particularly the socially elite and wealthy, were associating certain gifts, especially speaking in tongues, with a spiritually elite status. This created a hierarchy of gifts and led to boasting, undermining the unity of the church. Paul countered this by demonstrating that all gifts are equal manifestations of the Spirit and that no single gift is a sign of superior spirituality.

- **Why does Paul emphasize love in 1 Corinthians 13 within the discussion of spiritual gifts?**
- Paul inserts the chapter on love (1 Corinthians 13) to emphasize that love is the most important attribute, without which all other gifts are meaningless. If the Corinthians exemplified the kind of love described, they would not use their gifts to boast about their status but would use them for the building up of the entire body of Christ. Love should motivate the use of spiritual gifts.
- **Why does Paul call prophecy a "greater gift" in 1 Corinthians 14, even though he stresses the equality of all gifts?**
- While Paul emphasizes that all gifts equally manifest the Spirit, he calls prophecy a "greater gift" because it is the most useful gift for the entire church. Prophecy, understood as the ability to communicate an intelligible message from God for the up-building and encouragement of the church, benefits everyone present, unlike speaking in tongues, which primarily benefits the speaker (unless interpreted). Paul encourages the Corinthians to pursue gifts that are beneficial for the entire body of Christ when they gather for worship.
- **What is Paul's perspective on speaking in tongues in 1 Corinthians, and how does it relate to the Corinthians' practice?**
- Paul does not condemn speaking in tongues but emphasizes its proper function and context. He acknowledges that tongues build up the individual speaker but argues that prophecy is more beneficial for the entire church when they gather for worship. Paul's concern is that the Corinthians were overemphasizing tongues and using it as a sign of spiritual superiority, which promoted division. He wants tongues to be interpretable, to be beneficial to all.
- **What problem was Paul addressing in 1 Corinthians 15 regarding the resurrection?**
- Paul was addressing the denial of a physical resurrection within the Corinthian church. This denial may have been influenced by Platonic thinking, which emphasized the spiritual over the physical, or by the belief that those with certain gifts had already achieved a spiritually elite status. Paul argued that denying the physical resurrection undermined the resurrection of Christ and the ultimate defeat of death.

- **What is the overarching theme of 1 Corinthians, according to the lecture?**
- While unity of the church is a significant concern, the lecture suggests that the overarching theme of 1 Corinthians is the church's purity in the midst of a secular culture. Many of the problems in the Corinthian church stemmed from allowing the values, attitudes, and morality of the secular Corinthian culture to infiltrate the church. Paul consistently calls the church to pursue purity and remain distinct from the pagan culture in which they live.