

Sermon 7.29.12

### **Intro**

Good morning! My name is Joseph McMurry, and I am the student pastor here at Carmel. I am excited to share with you today what God has placed on my heart, as we continue to walk through 1 Corinthians together. This morning we'll be focusing on 1 Corinthians 12. If you have a Bible with you, go ahead and open 1 Cor 12.

**Story** When I was in the 5th grade, I was in Mrs. Richardson's class. Among with the many things I studied in the 5th grade in Mrs. Richardson's class, I studied the Constitution of the United States of America. I could recite the Preamble. I could explain the 3 branches of government, and of course, I could list those 10 amendments included in the Bill of Rights. On one memorable history test, my classmates and I were expected to be able to write summaries of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution of the United States. The 13th amendment Abolished Slavery. The 14th amendment guaranteed citizenship rights. The 15th amendment guaranteed citizens the right to vote, with no regard to race or previous servitude.

For some reason, as a 5th grader, I just couldn't keep those amendments straight. Was it the 13th that abolished slavery, or was it the 14th? Did the 15th guarantee the right to vote, or was it the 13th? I just couldn't seem to remember how they went. I was sweating having to take this test... not looking forward to it at all.

Mrs. Richardson told the class that the history test would be next, but before we did that we would take a restroom break.

As soon as she made that announcement, the wheels of deception began turning in my head. I thought, "if I can't get these amendments straight, I'm going to fail this test." Later in life I would learn to fail tests much more gracefully, but in the 5th grade I was still determined to do well in school. So, as the wheels of deception turned in my head, I concocted a plan to sneak a pen into the restroom with me, where I proceeded to write on my hand - 13 - slavery 14 - citizenship 15 vote. It was exciting to do something I knew was wrong. I was so scared of being caught, I threw the pen in the trash on the way out of the restroom, and kept my hands in my pocket all the way back to the classroom.

The test papers were distributed. I answered the fill in the blank questions, no problem; and criss crossed the matching section like it was 1st grade level work.

Then I got to the section that covered the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments. As I began to write, I realized that I knew the answers. I could remember which was which, and I could remember the summaries I had been challenged to memorize. I didn't even need the cheat sheet that was all over my left hand. This was going to be great.

Then, without warning, Mrs. Richardson was standing right in front of my desk. When I looked up, she didn't say anything. She simply smiled that sweet 5th grade teacher smile, reached out, took my left hand, and turned it over.

Look with me if you will in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, that is, if you have recognized your need for a savior, believe and confess that Jesus is Lord, and have submitted your life to his authority, then God has deposited in you the Holy Spirit, and you have been given a Spiritual Gift or Gifts. Your gifts

are not for you, they are for the body. This morning I want to ask you, "Are you aware of your spiritual gifts? And, how are you using them to benefit the church?"

Lets read together:

*The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?*

Love

*31 But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.*

## **Content 1. What is a Spiritual Gift?**

Background on Corinth. Over the past 7 weeks, Dr. Poplin, Dr. Barnes, and Pastor Rob Kelly have each given great background information with regards to the cultural climate and the situation within the church at Corinth, when Paul's letter to them was written.

In Acts 18 we find that there were Jews in Corinth who had been driven out of Rome, and who relocated in Corinth. Paul began the church at Corinth along with other believing Jews, Aquilla and Priscilla, with the intention of convincing the Jewish people there, that Jesus is the Messiah. Acts 18:6 says, "*But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."*

So while there were believing Jews in the church at Corinth, the fellowship was largely made up of non-jews or Gentiles, many of whom had come out of "little g, god" worshiping cults, as well as a Roman culture, which placed an emphasis on status and position. The standards of the

world in Corinthian culture, were creeping their way into the church, and the result was personal rivalries within the church, which of course led to division. One such division was concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and whose gifts were greater.

Chapters 12-14 of 1 Cor Make up a section in which Paul is lifting up for the Corinthians a lofty vision of what the church of Jesus Christ should be about. In order to communicate what that vision is, Paul uses a metaphor called “the body” to communicate that (1.) Believers all have different gifts. (2.) The purpose of gifts is to edify (or benefit) the body.

The topic of spiritual gifts is a complicated one and one on which we could spend a great amount of time; much more than we have this morning. I realize that in a crowd this large there is a wide range of understanding when it comes to spiritual gifts. I realize that there are some of you who know much more than I about spiritual gifts, and there are some of you who are looking at me and asking, “What is a spiritual gift?”

This morning as we look at the idea of spiritual gifts and their purpose within the church, we're going to take a brief overview and then talk specifically about the idea that you have been designed to contribute to the body of Christ.

So, What is a Spiritual Gift? Definition - “A characteristic or ability, given by the Holy Spirit according to His sovereign will, that empowers believers for service, and displays God’s presence in our lives.”

I want to share with you several scripture references, from which we gather a list of spiritual gifts. I’m not going to take the time to read each of these this morning, but I would encourage you to make a note of these, and investigate them for yourself.

Since our main text is 1 Cor 12, let’s look at the gifts mentioned specifically there, and at the end of the message, I’ll offer you a resource that you might use to investigate the other gifts.

In 1 Cor 12:8-10 we find

**Wisdom**, *the capacity to know the mind of the Spirit in a given situation and to communicate clearly to meet the need of the situation.*

**Knowledge**, *the capacity to receive supernaturally revealed truth in the word of God communicate it wisely.*

**Faith**, *capacity to recognize in a given situation that which God intends to do generally and to trust Him for it until He brings it to pass.*

**Healing**, *the supernatural ability to heal people of physical diseases in response to a laying on of hands, or praying, or commanding to be healed or some combination of them by the person having the gift.*

**Miracles**, *invokes the miraculous intervention of God to a given situation with the result that God receives recognition for the supernatural intervention.*

**Prophecy**, *the capacity to express truth (of a predictive nature as well as explanatory) from God in order to exhort, edify, or console believers and to convince non-believers of God’s truth.*

**Service**, *the capacity to unselfishly meet the needs of others.*

**Discernment**, *the analytical capacity to distinguish truth from non- truth*

**Tongues**, *an ability given spontaneously by the Holy Spirit to an individual to speak in a language unknown to the speaker.*

**Interpretation of tongues** *an ability given spontaneously by the Holy Spirit to translate the*

*utterances of one using the gift of tongues.*

1 Cor 12:28

**Apostle**, *one who has been selected as a representative of a local church for the purpose of beginning new churches and establishing and confirming leadership in these new churches.*

**prophet, Prophecy**, *REPEAT the capacity to express truth (of a predictive nature as well as explanatory) from God in order to exhort, edify, or console believers and to convince non-believers of God's truth.*

**teacher**, *one who has the ability to instruct, explain, or expose Biblical truth in such a way as to cause believers of a church to understand the biblical truth and to acquire the truth for their own use.*

**miracles**, REPEAT

**healing**, REPEAT

**helps**, *the capacity to unselfishly meet the needs of others through practical service.*

**administration**, *a capacity to manage details of service functions within the local church or mission structures.*

**tongues** REPEAT

Also worth noting is **Evangelism**, *which has to do with being burdened for those who are far from God, and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus in public and in private.*

It is important to note that Spiritual Gifts are not to be confused with:

Rewards - Earned or received in response to something you have done

Talents - A talent is natural, innate ability, due to physical, psychological, or emotional make-up.

Skills - A skill is a learned action: You certainly may develop a skill that corresponds to your Spiritual Gift. However, just because you have a skill, does not make that your Spiritual Gift.

Why go through all these definitions? Because, Paul is intentional about pointing out to us in various sections of his letters to the churches, and in 1 Cor in particular, that God gives gifts to be used in the ministry of the church. Are you aware of your spiritual gifts? And, how are you using them to benefit the church?"

In 1 Cor 12:7 he tells us that

*"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."* To each "one" what? To each believer in Jesus Christ who has the Spirit of God active in their lives. According to 2 Cor 1:22, *"(God) set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."*

If you are a believer in Jesus, then you have been given a spiritual gift that is intended to be used to strengthen the church and carry out the ministry of the church until the return of Jesus Christ.

Wayne Grudem says, that "Spiritual gifts not only equip the church for the time until Christ returns, they also give a foretaste of the age to come." In 1 Cor 13:10, which says, *"but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears,"* Paul reminds believers that spiritual gifts are

imperfect, but when the “perfect” way of knowing comes with the return of Christ, then these gifts will pass away. Just as the Holy Spirit himself is a “down Payment” of the work of the HS within us in the age to come, the gifts the HS gives us are like previews of what will be ours through the HS, in the age to come. In the age to come there will be no need for the gift of helps, because there will be no one in need of help. In the age to come, there will be no need for the gift of evangelism because there will be no one who doesn’t know Jesus. In the age to come there will be no need for the gifts of tongues or interpretation of tongues because everything will already have been revealed. What we will have from the HS in the age to come will out shine any gift we could possibly have in this age.

There simply isn’t enough time to discuss the thoughts and ideas of some about the miraculous gifts, but I will say, as I chase that rabbit, that I hold to an open but cautious view of the miraculous gifts and if you’ll invite me to breakfast or lunch, I’ll be happy to show you why.

For now, lets focus on the idea that whatever it may be, You have been given a gift.

**Commercial** - We have a rule at our house that you don’t have to share on the first day you get something. New toy, new bike, new game, whatever; on the first day you don’t have to share. The thing, whatever it may be, is special, and you get one day to enjoy it all for yourself. After that, sharing is required, or you may lose the joy of playing with whatever it is. That gift, while it is yours, is meant to be shared.

Your spiritual gift/gifts are not just for you to enjoy; they are for everyone’s benefit and to strengthen the church. You may feel like you want to keep your gift to yourself, but Paul shows us that it is best if we share that which we have been given.

As we look back at 1 Cor 12:12-14, some of you may be glad to know that  
Troy Bolten and the East High Wildcats hit the nail on the head, without even knowing it...

Everyone is special in their own way

We make each other strong (we make each other strong)

Were not the same

Were different in a good way

Together's where we belong

We're all in this together

### **Content 2a. We’re all in this together**

Look back at 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 -

*“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ”*

The use of the body metaphor is an image of diversity and of unity. Sure the body has many parts, but they make up the whole body. According to historians, this same kind of imagery was used in the ancient world as a way of talking about social, civic, and political life. Paul’s use of it

marks out an identity for the Christians as a new and different community, owing allegiance to a new and different Lord, rather than the Roman government.

Through a common belief in Jesus, believers have erased the boundaries of race and status, and have been united to one family by baptism, which naturally follows belief.

**Commercial 2a** - I sat mesmerized on my couch yesterday morning, my pulse increasing and my palms beginning to sweat, as I watched... women's fencing. You think I'm kidding. I have to confess that I love the Olympics; summer, winter, I don't care, I like them all. I think what I love about the Olympics is for these athletes... it all comes down to this. This is to what they have devoted their lives for the past 4 years; day in, day out, hours upon hours of training and practice. They've been to other competitions and tournaments, but this is the reason they do what they do - for a chance to be the best in the world. A chance to bring home the Gold Medal.

The Olympic games include both team sports and individual sports. Team sports obviously have togetherness built in. Coach John Wooden of UCLA basketball fame once said that any time a basket is scored, it took 10 hands to make it. Just like basketball or any other team sport, when a goal is scored, or a medal is won, it takes the whole team (everyone working together) to make it happen.

Just like with the church, and just like with a team sport, We're all in this together. Even an individual athlete needs a coach, a trainer, a training partner. In your relationship with God and your position in the body of Christ, you need others to push you, others to challenge you, others to make you better than you can be by yourself.

In this life as a follower of Christ, You are not alone. You were never meant to be alone! Listen to 1 Cor 1:1-3 *"Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, 2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours: 3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul is writing to the church, and he assumed that the church would be together, because you were never meant to live the Christian life on your own. We're all in this together!

Unity in the body is found in each member doing his or her part, and exercising their spiritual gifts. Are you aware of your spiritual gifts? How are you using them to benefit the church?"

Just as a team needs each position, just as an individual athlete needs a trainer, followers of Christ: We Need Each Other, and we need each other's gifts in order to complete the body.

### **Content 2b. We Need Each Other**

Look at 1 Corinthians 12:15-17 - *If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?*

Paul uses a series of ridiculous rhetorical questions here, to emphasize his point. The divisive issue that Paul addresses in this section of his letter (chapters 12-14) is that one gift was being elevated, or valued over all the others: the gift of speaking in tongues, *an ability given spontaneously by the Holy Spirit to an individual to speak in a language unknown to the speaker.* In this case, Paul was informing the church that one gift is no more important than the others because those who had the gift of tongues were using their gift to say “Nany nany boo boo” to those who didn’t have the gift. Problem was they were saying nany nany boo boo in a language everyone understood!

If we skip down to verse 21, Paul uses an example that seems funny to us. *“The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable”* He is saying, the ones with a certain gift (which just happens to be tongues in this case) can’t say to the others, “I don’t need you,” and someone with the gift of evangelism can’t say to the others, “I don’t need you.”

### **Commercial 2b.**

The human body is an intricate network of 10 systems that depend upon each other for everyday function. The first five are the skeletal, muscular, respiratory, digestive and excretory systems. You rely heavily on these systems from day to day. The other five, which include the nervous, endocrine, lymphatic, cardiovascular and reproductive systems, work more quietly in the background yet are just as important as the more obvious ones.

If one system is not running properly, your whole body will be affected.

Its almost like Paul knew what he was talking about when he compared the church to a body. We need each other. Each believer has an important role to play, and we need each other to do the job. God knows exactly what He is doing, and He puts the pieces together.

### **The next point I’d like you to see is that**

#### **Content 2c. God puts the pieces together.**

Look at 1 Corinthians 12:18-20 - *“But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

Just as God created the human body in Genesis, God has initiated the church with all its diversity.

Paul’s statement in verse 27 that each one of you is a part of it holds particular significance to the church at Corinth. It was only possible to take an active part in the life of Corinth if you were a male Roman citizen and had sufficient wealth to stand for public office. Everyone, however, could play a role in the life of the church. No one can say he or she does not have a part. Your contribution is Vital!

**Commercial 2c.** Earlier I said, “We’re all in this together.” Of course, by “this” I mean “This Christian life.”

Then I said, “We need each other.” And by that I mean, “believers depend on each other to do the work of the church.”

So, what does the work of the church really look like? One simple description is discipleship.

Here at Carmel that process is laid out in 5 steps: Worship, Connect, Grow, Serve, Tell. It is our hope that you and others would join this body of believers to Worship God, Connect in some type of small group of believers through which you might Grow in your relationship with God. Serve others in some capacity within the church and in the community through the church, and Tell others about what God has done in your life, so that they too might Worship, Connect, Grow, Serve and Tell someone else, who might Worship....

The process of discipleship here at Carmel is certainly not passive; it is active, and your contribution is vital.

**Finally,**

### **Content 3 Your Contribution is Vital**

I share with our students that I believe that one of the best ways of defining Christian discipleship is the process of moving from being a consumer to becoming a contributor. You could certainly say that is true of the Worship, Connect, Grow, Serve, Tell process here at Carmel. When we look back at the account of the fall in Genesis 3, we find the implications that the mistakes of Adam and Eve have on you and me, and the resulting separation from God because of sin.

Jesus Christ came, according 1 Cor 15:22 as our second Adam to undo what the first Adam had done, and to restore to us the kind of life that God created us to enjoy. Jesus came to move us from self-centered living back to God centered living. Jesus said that he came to give us life, and that we might have that life more abundantly. he came to move us from being consumers to becoming contributors.

How does that sit with you when it comes to the gift you have been given by the Holy Spirit? Are you a consumer, or are you a contributor? As a believer in Jesus you are an important part of the church, both here at Carmel and the church universal, and your contribution, through the use of your gift or gifts, is vital.

We're all in this together. We need each other. God Puts the pieces together, and your contribution is vital.

**Story Close** Without warning, Mrs. Richardson was standing right in front of my desk. When I looked up, she didn't say anything. She simply smiled that sweet 5th grade teacher smile, reached out, took my left hand, and turned it over.

I was busted. I tried to plead my case: "Mrs. Richardson, I know I tried to cheat, but I didn't even look at it during the test. I remembered without looking."

To which she replied something like, "well I'm glad you were able to remember, but you still cheated."

And in red ink, on the top of my test paper, I got a big... fat... F. She could have done any number of things to punish me: take away my recess, make me clean the erasers, stand in the corner, send me to the principal. Mrs. Richardson knew my currency, though, which means she knew what the worst possible scenario for me would be, and she acted on it. She called my Mom.

Looking back, I realize that I knew the answers to the test questions all along. I was nervous because I wanted to do well on the test, but had done the class work; I had studied. I knew the answers. Instead of being confident in what I knew and doing what I knew was right, I chose the



selfish way and tried to take the easy way out. And I suffered for it. Thanks Mom.

When it comes to your spiritual gift, realize that however you have been gifted, it is not for you alone, but for the good of the church. Withholding your gifts from use within the church is a lot like cheating on a test. It is taking a selfish or an easy way out, either because you lack the confidence to step out, or you are unwilling to contribute.

**Closure** As we close, I have a couple of Points of Action for you this morning:

1. There is not a science to discovering your Spiritual Gifts. Certainly prayer and wise counsel and good places to start. There are counselors who will be available today, who can certainly give you guidance. There are also 2 places on our church website that I would direct you.

You will find both of them at [www.carmelbaptist.org](http://www.carmelbaptist.org) Click on Serve

1. Discovering your Ministry - Great explanation of gifts and how they function that was compiled by some men you may know: Dr. Bolden, Dr. Hancock, Dr. Rosser and others.

2. Spiritual Gift Inventory - Dr. Barnes would instruct you to See what it says. Sit with it. Pray about it. Ask the 4 people who know you best, if they see that gift in you.

I took the inventory again in preparation for this message, and it came up with Pastor/Teacher. I'll be trying to find 4 of you who would confirm that after the service.

2. Fall is coming, along with Back to School season, and a new season of service here at Carmel. There are multiple ways that you can get involved, and the names and ministries you could contact are on the screen.

Scheduling is not easy. I know there are some of you who have been trying to get together with me to talk about student ministry, and I have been traveling the country doing student ministry. The next two to three weeks are critical for many of these ministries as we prepare for a new year of service. If the Lord stirs in your heart a desire to use your gifts through one of these ministries, reach out the ministry leaders. Don't be upset if they don't have available appointments when you are available... these people are certainly not building buildings or doing surgery, but they are very busy and get pulled in multiple directions every week!

Finally, for the person who is struggling with the idea of Spiritual Gifts because you are struggling with whether or not you believe: God loves you, and has made a way for you to know him through Jesus.

The Bible says that your sin separates you from God, and on your own there nothing you can do to be made right. But, because of his love for you, Jesus, God's one and only son, died on the cross in your place and mine to pay the penalty for our sin and make a relationship with God possible. He was buried, and on the 3rd day God raised him from the dead. The enemy has been defeated, your debt has been paid, and salvation is God's free gift. Your next step is to submit to His authority in your life, and commit to follow Him. Ask him to forgive your sin, and come into your life right now.

If what I said made sense, if you just asked Jesus to forgive your sin, and invited him to come into your life for the first time, then today you are In Christ. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17,

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”  
If that is you, we'll give you an opportunity in just a few minutes to come and share that with me or one of our counselors. Or if you'd like, you can make your way to the next step room after the service, where someone will be waiting to talk with you about taking your next steps with Jesus.  
Lets Pray.

Let's stand and sing together. If you need to share with someone a decision you've made I'll be standing here at the front or there are counselors on the sides. Step out as we sing.