

First and Second Corinthians

Spiritual Gifts

Lesson #6 for August 8, 2026

Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 12; 13; 14:1,27; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Peter 4:8-11; Amos 3:7.

1. What are spiritual gifts? Why should we have them? For what are we to use them?
2. God wants **unity in the church but not uniformity**. He has given spiritual gifts to church members to help promote unity so that the church can be like a well-functioning body.

[From the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=BSG:] Like a human body, the church is one but has many members, each with different roles, functions, and gifts. Practiced with love, these spiritual gifts promote a sense of unity that reflects the character of the triune God.

[In this lesson] ... we will survey 1 Corinthians 12–14 and its teaching on spiritual gifts. This section is part of a slightly larger unit, where Paul deals with **the expected Christian behavior in religious settings** (*1 Corinthians 11–14*). **Paul's primary concern has to do with the problem of disorderly gatherings**. His answer to this problem is that the church is a body whose parts have different functions that contribute to "the edifying of the body of Christ" (*Eph. 4:12, NKJV*). **In short, God gave the church spiritual gifts in order to promote unity through diversity.**—BSG* for Sabbath Afternoon, August 1.^{†§} [See also *Prophets and Kings* 177.1: <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.768&index=0>][‡]

Ephesians 4:11-13: ¹¹It was he who "gave gifts to people"; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. ¹²**He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ.** ¹³And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature.—American Bible Society. (©1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*^{®*} [GNT] (*Today's English Version*) [TEV], Second Edition (Ephesians 4:11-13). Philadelphia: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible-TEV*^{*} or *GNB-TEV*^{*}].^{†‡}

[BSG:] Certainly, Paul still has in mind the factionalism problem addressed in the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians, where the answer to the lack of agreement among church members is unity in Christ. Now, he develops that idea by presenting his understanding of the role of spiritual gifts. According to Paul, unity in Christ and the Spirit is the only means of avoiding schisms.—BSG* for Sabbath Afternoon, August 1.[‡]

Unity Through Diversity: One Body (One Orchestra)

3. God's goal for giving us spiritual gifts is unity in the church—unity of purpose.

[From the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=T-BSG:] Picture an orchestra in a grand concert hall and about to begin a performance. The musicians tune their instruments, and then the conductor raises a baton. The musicians begin to play their various instruments. The

violins, cellos, trumpets, flutes, drums, and other instruments collectively produce beautiful music as they follow the conductor.

Now, imagine if the violinist suddenly said, *“I don’t want to play because I’m not playing a trumpet. My part isn’t important.”* Or what if the percussionist decided to pound the drums or clang the cymbals as loudly as possible, drowning out all the other instruments? The beautiful harmony would turn into chaos!

In the orchestra, no instrument is unnecessary. Every musician contributes to the masterpiece. But the musicians must work together. If one person refuses to play, the music suffers. The musicians don’t play for themselves. They follow the conductor’s direction to create something greater than themselves.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses a different metaphor to emphasize the same truth. In the church, each believer has been given a different spiritual gift. Some gifts are more visible, while others work quietly in the background, but every one is essential.—*T-BSG** 80.†§

4. Paul used the metaphor of a human body to illustrate unity through diversity.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27: ¹²**Christ is like a single body, which has many parts;** it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts. ¹³ In the same way, all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free, have been baptized into the one body by the same Spirit, and we have all been given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴ For the body itself is not made up of only one part, but of many parts. ¹⁵ If the foot were to say, “Because I am not a hand, I don’t belong to the body,” that would not keep it from being a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear were to say, “Because I am not an eye, I don’t belong to the body,” that would not keep it from being a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were just an eye, how could it hear? And if it were only an ear, how could it smell? ¹⁸ As it is, however, God put every different part in the body just as he wanted it to be. ¹⁹ There would not be a body if it were all only one part! ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts but one body.

²¹ So then, the eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” Nor can the head say to the feet, “Well, I don’t need you!” ²² On the contrary, we cannot do without the parts of the body that seem to be weaker; ²³ and those parts that we think aren’t worth very much are the ones which we treat with greater care; while the parts of the body which don’t look very nice are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ which the more beautiful parts do not need....

²⁷ All of you are Christ’s body, and each one is a part of it.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.* [Think of the nervous system! How does it relate?][†]

[T-BSG:] As noted by New Testament scholar Jason Staples: “Paul takes this image a step further than its usual metaphorical or analogical sense. For the apostle, the ‘body of Christ’ is not just a metaphor for individuals unified by belief in Jesus but an ontological [Creator vs. created] and relational reality in which persons, receiving the ‘spirit of Christ’ (Rom 8:9),

thereby become incorporated into Christ himself. Believers actually become the ‘body of Christ’ by being ‘baptized into one body by one spirit’ (1 Cor 12:13).”—Staples, “Body of Christ,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2023), p. 83.

The use of the body metaphor highlights the oneness of the community, but also the oneness of the church with her Lord—especially in light of the fact that Christ is the head of the body (Col. 1:18, Eph. 4:15). In this sense, the body is not primarily a body of believers but the body of Christ; that is, the primary focus of the metaphor is the unity of believers with Christ. [Do all SDAs have the same beliefs?]

As Paul described in the chapter, this means that ethnic, gender, and social distinctions are irrelevant for inclusion in Christ’s body. This idea was not only countercultural but also subversive and dangerous to Greco-Roman society, where status, power, shame, honor, and gender played highly important roles.—*T-BSG** 82-83.†§

[T-BSG:] **Paul’s metaphor of the church as a body (1 Cor. 12:12–27) was countercultural. In Roman society, social class and status were rigid, with the wealthy and powerful at the top. The idea that every member of the church—rich or poor, slave or free, male or female—was equally valuable was revolutionary.** Paul emphasizes that, in Christ, all believers are interconnected and must honor one another, rejecting the world’s hierarchy.—*T-BSG** 82.†§

[T-BSG:] Note the following example taken from New Testament scholar Philip Ryken regarding perceptions about hierarchy, status, and gender in the world of the early Christian church: **“Consider the prayer, sometimes attributed to Socrates, in which a Greek man gave thanks to God ‘that I was born a human being and not a beast, next a man and not a woman, thirdly, a Greek and not a barbarian.’** Pagans generally despised their slaves and mistreated their women. In some places slaves were forbidden to enter pagan temples, while women were treated as chattel [personal possession].”—Philip Graham Ryken, *Galatians*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), p. 148. **Clearly, Paul’s message to the Corinthian church was countercultural.**—*T-BSG** 83.†§

Galatians 3:28-29: ²⁸So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are the descendants of Abraham and will receive what God has promised.—*Good News Bible-TEV.**

5. The language of *oneness* is introduced in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 with the following examples: “the same Spirit,” “the same Lord,” and “the same God,” That theme is seen repeatedly in 1 Corinthians 12. But, Paul goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 12 that despite the church being a single unity, the church is for people with diverse backgrounds.
6. Read **1 Corinthians 12:4-26.**

[BSG:] This unity amid diversity must reflect the character of God. The

Father is one person, the Son is another person, and the Holy Spirit another. The three maintain Their individualities while working together to edify the church and empower it for mission (*1 Cor. 12:4–6, Eph. 4:11–13*).—*BSG** for Monday, August 3.^{‡§}

7. One of Paul's most famous statements about diversity is **Ephesians 4:11-13** (in Item #2).
8. Paul obviously made an excellent point when he compared the church to a human body. Not only do we consider Christ to be the head of that body, but also each of us is an individual member of that body. If you are a member of a good functioning Christian church, then you also recognize that members depend upon each other.
9. The Holy Spirit gave many spiritual gifts to His children; we are to **use those gifts to unite the church and further the work of His church of spreading the gospel.**

1 Corinthians 12:27-31: ²⁷All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it. ²⁸In the church God has put all in place: in the first place **apostles [missionaries]**, in the second place **prophets**, and in the third place **teachers**; then those who perform **miracles**, followed by those who are given the power to **heal** or to help others or to direct them or to **speak in strange tongues**.... ³¹Set your hearts, then, on the more important gifts.

Best of all, however, is the following way [love].—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†‡}

[T-BSG:] Our human tendency is to put into hierarchical order the gifts that God has given the church as the body of Christ. Paul introduces the metaphor of the body and body parts to help his readers focus on unity and mission. Body parts, he writes, cannot excel on their own. In fact, they cannot survive on their own. The eye needs the eyelid; the head needs the neck; the foot needs the legs; and they all rely on the heart for sufficient oxygen and blood.—*T-BSG** 83.[‡]

Diverse Spiritual Gifts to Unify the Church

10. God has given many different spiritual talents or spiritual gifts to us through the Holy Spirit to promote unity in His church and so that we can share the gospel with the whole world.

[BSG:] **Read 1 Corinthians 12:1–6. What is the emphasis of this passage?**—*BSG** for Sunday, August 2.[‡]

1 Corinthians 12:1: ¹Now, concerning what you wrote about the gifts from the Holy Spirit.

I want you to know the truth about them, my friends.—*GNB-TEV*.^{*}

[BSG:] In 1 Corinthians 12:1, Paul introduces a new topic with the formula “now concerning.” Scholars discuss whether he is talking about “spiritual gifts” or “spiritual people” because the Greek phrase *tōn pneumatikōn* allows both interpretations. “Spiritual gifts” is preferable in light of 1 Corinthians 12:4, where Paul clearly refers to spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12:2, 3, Paul points out that the Spirit's first gift is the bold confession that Jesus is Lord. In New Testament times, **to say that Jesus is Lord is to say that Caesar is not (Acts 17:7; also John 19:12, 15). This was seen as sedition against the imperial power and, hence, was punishable by death.**—*BSG** for Sunday, August 2.^{†‡§}

[T-BSG:] “There was a danger—and in some cases a reality—of people claiming that they had a higher spiritual status within the community, which created disparity among the believers. Paul rejected this kind of mentality.”—“1 Corinthians,” in *Andrews Bible Commentary*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez et al. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2022), p. 1642. Instead of focusing on the gifts, Paul reminds his audience that they should rejoice when God’s Spirit convicts them to confess Jesus as their Savior (1 Cor. 12:3). No one who is truly Spirit-led can curse Jesus. In this sense, all believers are “spiritual” by virtue of the basic Christian confession that Jesus is Lord.—T-BSG* 81.^{†§}

[BSG:] **Read Ephesians 4:11–13** [See above in Item #2.] **and 1 Corinthians 14:3, 4. What do these passages say about the purpose of spiritual gifts in general and the gift of prophecy in particular?**—BSG* for Thursday, August 6.[‡] [To help us grow spiritually!][‡]

[T-BSG:] **One Spirit, Many Gifts:** Before elaborating on the different spiritual gifts, Paul makes a statement in 1 Corinthians 12:4–6 that includes all members of the Godhead, highlighting a diversity of gifts given by the Spirit, a diversity of services given by the Lord (i.e., Jesus), and a diversity of activities that is given by the “same God who empowers them all in everyone” (1 Cor. 12:6, *ESV*). The sequence here is thus Spirit–Son–Father. **Thus, the unity of the Godhead becomes the matrix or example against which the often-divided Corinthian church could measure itself.**

Paul reminds his readers that **the first gift** that God bestows on all believers is the confession of faith that “ ‘Jesus is Lord’ ” (1 Cor. 12:2, 3, *ESV*). This belief is in line with Jesus’ statement in John 6:44: “ ‘No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him’ ” (*ESV*). Even though we are given the freedom to choose, we must be drawn by the Spirit (or the Father) to make the first step of faith toward Jesus. [We need to make the choice.]

Paul then continues to describe the **diversity of spiritual gifts, as well as ministries and activities within the Christian community** (1 Cor. 12:4–11). **“Paul explains that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given for the benefit of the entire church (12:7).”**—“1 Corinthians,” in *Andrews Bible Commentary*, p. 1642. **Thus, gifts are not a sign of spiritual mastery or superiority, but tokens of God’s grace that empower us to serve one another and also the world around us. The variety of gifts described in the chapter (including spiritual inputs involving wisdom and knowledge, healings or working miracles, prophetic speech, spiritual discernment, languages, and more) are all given to bless the community of believers. None of the gifts should be considered higher or more important than any other.**—T-BSG* 82.^{†§}

1 Corinthians 12:4-11: ⁴There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. ⁵There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. ⁶There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to all for their particular service. ⁷The Spirit’s presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all. ⁸The Spirit gives one

person a message full of wisdom, while to another person the same Spirit gives a message full of knowledge. ⁹One and the same Spirit gives faith to one person, while to another person he gives the power to heal. ¹⁰The Spirit gives one person the power to work miracles; to another, the gift of speaking God's message; and to yet another, the ability to tell the difference between gifts that come from the Spirit and those that do not. To one person he gives the ability to speak in strange tongues, and to another he gives the ability to explain what is said. ¹¹But **it is one and the same Spirit who does all this**; as he wishes, he gives a different gift to each person.—*GNB-TEV*.^{*†}

[BSG:] The repetition of “varieties” emphasizes the multiplicity of gifts. What Paul names as “spiritual gifts” in 1 Corinthians 12:1 is developed in verses 4–6 [See just above.], **through three different angles: “gifts” (*charisma*), “services” or “ministries” (*diakonia*), and “activities” (*energēma*).** Although these words mean different things, it is important not to draw a fine distinction between them because of the parallelism of the passage. **One should also notice that the spiritual gifts are designed to promote unity based on the triune character of God (see also Eph. 4:8–11).** While the Spirit grants gifts to believers, it is God who empowers them to serve Christ in the community of believers (1 Cor. 12:5, 6). **Each believer is granted gifts individually (1 Cor. 12:11), but they all are to benefit the community of believers as a whole.**—BSG* for Sunday, August 2.^{†§}

[BSG:] **See the lists of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8–10, 28; Romans 12:6–8; and Ephesians 4:11. What is your gift? How can you use it to edify the body of Christ?**—BSG* for Monday, August 3.[‡]

[BSG:] Jesus and Paul emphasized that faith in God—even in the face of persecution and the threat of death—is a gift of the Spirit. Actually, faith is the most basic gift. Not surprisingly, faith is first on the list in 1 Corinthians 13:13. That faith is a spiritual gift is clear by Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 12:9. However, there are many other gifts. The fact that the Holy Spirit distributes the different types of gifts “to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11, *NKJV*) proves that all of them are necessary.—BSG* for Sunday, August 2.[§] [How can we recognize spiritual gifts in others?][‡]

11. Have you recognized your place and your gift in the church? What are you individually contributing to the unified whole?
12. Read Romans 12:6-8 and Ephesians 4:11.

Love (*Charity*) Is the Greatest Spiritual Gift—Discussed in the Next Lesson

The Spiritual Gift of Speaking in Tongues

[T-BSG:] **Historical Background of 1 Corinthians 12:** In first-century Corinth, **mystical experiences, such as prophecy and ecstatic speech, were common in Greek and Roman religions.** These experiences often were associated with divine possession, mystery cults, and oracles. The **Oracle of Delphi**, one of the most famous religious sites in Greece, featured a priestess (Pythia [*sic*]) who would enter a **trance-like state** in which she was believed to be possessed by the Greek god Apollo [*sic*]. In

this state, **she would utter ecstatic, cryptic messages**. These messages were then interpreted by priests. Other temples, such as the Oracle of Dodona [*sic*], also had prophetic practices in which priests or priestesses received divine messages through natural signs (wind, rustling leaves, etc.). **Such ecstatic speech was considered a sign of divine favor and insight, similar to how some Corinthians viewed speaking in tongues.**

Mystery cults such as those of Dionysus [*sic*] (Bacchus [*sic*]), Cybele [*sic*], and Isis [*sic*] involved rituals, music, and frenzied worship that often led to trance states, emotional highs, and perceived communication with the gods. In the Dionysian [*sic*] cult, worshipers engaged in ecstatic dancing and chanting, believing they were filled with the god's presence. **Some scholars suggest that certain Corinthian Christians, influenced by these traditions, may have associated spiritual gifts, such as speaking in tongues and prophecy, with similar ecstatic experiences.** This mindset likely contributed to divisions in the Corinthian church, as some believers ranked themselves as more “spiritual,” based on their gifts. Paul challenges this idea by emphasizing that all gifts come from the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4–11) and are meant for the benefit of the whole church, not for individual status.—*T-BSG** 81.†§ [Does the Devil try to produce “spiritual gifts”?]†

13. By comparing the **discussion of tongues** with other passages in Scripture, it is obvious that what **Paul was talking about was the speaking of other languages**. We do not know how many languages Paul spoke; but, it was certainly several. Shouldn't we recommend that people who speak other languages and who are prominent members of our church reach out to others who speak their language?

[BSG:] What about the gift of tongues? In line with the manifestation of the gift elsewhere in the Bible (*Mark 16:17, Acts 2:1–13, Acts 10:44–48, Acts 19:6*), **the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians is most likely the Spirit-granted ability to speak in foreign languages.**—*BSG** for Wednesday.†§

Mark 16:17: “Believers will be given the power to perform miracles: they will drive out demons in my name; **they will speak in strange tongues.**”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*†

Acts 2:1-13: ¹When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. ²Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then they saw what looked **like tongues of fire** which spread out and touched each person there. ⁴**They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.** [Did this affect only the disciples? Or, did it involve others also?] ⁵There were Jews living in Jerusalem, religious people who had come from every country in the world. ⁶When they heard this noise, a large crowd gathered. They were all excited, because **all of them heard the believers talking in their own languages.** ⁷In amazement and wonder they exclaimed, “**These people who are talking like this are Galileans!** ⁸**How is it, then, that all of us hear them speaking in our own native languages?** ⁹We are from Parthia, Media, and Elam; from Mesopotamia,

Judea, and Cappadocia; from Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰from Phrygia and Pamphylia, from Egypt and the regions of Libya near Cyrene. Some of us are from Rome, ¹¹both Jews and Gentiles converted to Judaism, and some of us are from Crete and Arabia—**yet all of us hear them speaking in our own languages about the great things that God has done!**” ¹²Amazed and confused, they kept asking each other, “What does this mean?”

¹³But others made fun of the believers, saying, “These people are drunk!”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*††} [Was it really the “gift of ears”?][†]

Acts 10:44-48: ⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who were listening to his message. ⁴⁵The Jewish believers who had come from Joppa with Peter were amazed that God had poured out his gift of the Holy Spirit **on the Gentiles also** [Cornelius and his family]. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in strange tongues and praising God’s greatness. Peter spoke up: ⁴⁷ **“These people have received the Holy Spirit, just as we also did. Can anyone, then, stop them from being baptized with water?”** ⁴⁸So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay with them for a few days.—*GNB-TEV*.^{*††}

Acts 19:6: Paul placed his hands on them [twelve men in Ephesus], and the Holy Spirit came upon them; **they spoke in strange tongues** and also proclaimed God’s message.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*††} [This is at least the third episode of the outpouring of the gift of tongues described in Acts.][†]

[BSG:] Paul mentions the gift of tongues in the list of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8–10 (see also 1 Cor. 12:28, 30; 1 Cor. 13:1, 8). However, he refers to it repeatedly in 1 Corinthians 14. Indeed, the Greek word *glōssa* (“tongue”) appears more than twenty times in 1 Corinthians 12–14, with fifteen occurrences in 1 Corinthians 14 alone. Besides these, the Greek word *heteroglōssos* (“another tongue”) also occurs, in 1 Corinthians 14:21. This **high number of references to the gift of tongues** suggests that this matter is of particular concern for Paul. **The misuse and abuse of this gift by the church in Corinth caused disorder and confusion in public worship** (1 Cor. 14:23, 27, 33, 40).—*BSG** for Wednesday, August 5.^{†‡§}

14. All one has to do to understand why the gift of tongues can be very disruptive in a church meeting is to attend an active Pentecostal meeting where people are speaking in tongues! And so, what information do we have about Paul’s advice regarding the gift of tongues?

1 Corinthians 14:5,13,26-27: ⁵I would like for all of you to speak in strange tongues; but I would rather that you had the gift of proclaiming God’s message. **For the person who proclaims God’s message is of greater value than the one who speaks in strange tongues—unless there is someone present who can explain what is said, so that the whole church may be helped....**

¹³The person who speaks in strange tongues, then, must pray for the gift to explain what is said....

[Order in the Church]

²⁶This is what I mean, my friends. When you meet for worship, one person has a hymn, another a teaching, another a revelation from God, another a

message in strange tongues, and still another the explanation of what is said. **Everything must be of help to the church.** ²⁷If someone is going to speak in strange tongues, two or three at the most should speak, one after the other, and **someone else must explain what is being said.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†‡}

15. Why do you think the Corinthians seemed to be attracted to the gift of tongues? Was it because such manifestations which were probably produced by the Devil himself were so prominent in other religious gatherings in Corinth?

The “Gift of Prophecy” Means to Strengthen the Church

[BSG:] The gift of prophecy occupies a prominent place in Paul’s discussion on spiritual gifts. Interestingly, the gift of prophecy is usually mentioned before the gift of tongues (*1 Cor. 12:10, 28; 1 Cor. 13:8*). When the gift of tongues is mentioned first, this is only to emphasize its relative unimportance compared to the gift of prophecy (*1 Cor. 14:4, 5, 6, 22*).—*BSG*^{*} for Thursday, August 6.^{‡§}

- 1 Corinthians 12:10,28:** ¹⁰The Spirit gives one person the power to work miracles; to another, the gift of speaking God’s message; and to yet another, the ability to tell the difference between gifts that come from the Spirit and those that do not. To one person he gives the ability to speak in strange tongues, and to another he gives the ability to explain what is said....

²⁸In the church God has put all in place: in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, and in the third place teachers; then those who perform miracles, followed by those who are given the power to heal or to **help others** or to direct them or to speak in strange tongues.—*GNB-TEV*.^{*†}

- 1 Corinthians 14:3-4:** ³But those who proclaim God’s message speak to people and give them help, encouragement, and comfort. ⁴Those who speak in strange tongues help only themselves, but **those who proclaim God’s message help the whole church.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

[BSG:] The gift of prophecy is meant to provide edification, exhortation, and comfort (*1 Cor. 14:3; compare with Acts 15:32*). This suggests that **prophecy is not so much about predicting the future as it is about how to live in the present.** The Greek verb *prophēteuō* can mean either “**to say something in advance**” or “**to say something on behalf of someone else.**” For instance, the first sense is seen in Acts 2:29–31 (*compare with Amos 3:7*), where the idea that David is a prophet is explained as “foreseeing.” The second sense is seen in Acts 15:32, where Judas and Silas are identified as prophets. Their “prophecy,” however, consisted in encouraging and strengthening “the brothers with many words” (*ESV*).—*BSG*^{*} for Thursday, August 6.^{†‡§} [Clearly, this was an issue in Corinth!][‡]

16. An example of **prophecy meaning “foreseeing” the event** is described in Acts 2:29-31 in which David was predicting the coming of the Messiah and all that happened to Him.

Acts 2:29-31: ²⁹“My friends, I must speak to you plainly about our famous ancestor King David. He died and was buried, and his grave is here with us to this very day. ³⁰He was a prophet, and he knew what God had promised

him: God had made a vow that he would make one of David's descendants a king, just as David was. ³¹David saw what God was going to do in the future, **and so he spoke about the resurrection of the Messiah when he said:**

'He was not abandoned in the world of the dead; his body did not rot in the grave.'—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

Amos 3:7: The Sovereign LORD never does anything without revealing his plan to his servants, the prophets.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*}

17. **Prophecy can also mean “to strengthen.”** See Acts 15:32 and 1 Corinthians 14:3.

Acts 15:32: Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, **spoke a long time with them, giving them courage and strength.**—*GNB-TEV*.^{*†}

1 Corinthians 14:3: But those who proclaim God's message speak to people and give them help, encouragement, and comfort.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*}

[BSG:] From Ephesians 4:11–13, we learn that the **spiritual gifts did not cease in the apostolic era. They should remain until the end (Acts 2:39).** However, **if someone claims to be a prophet, he/she must be evaluated based on the Scriptures.** Broadly speaking, four rules should be satisfied. **First, the unconditional prophecies always come true (Deut. 18:22; Jer. 28:8, 9).** **Second, the message agrees with that of previous prophets (Deut. 13:1–3, Isa. 8:20).** **Third, the daily life demonstrates a commitment to Christ (1 John 4:1–3).** **Fourth, Jesus said false prophets would be known by their fruits (Matt. 7:15–20).** This is also true concerning true prophets.—*BSG*^{*} for Thursday, August 6.^{†§}

Deuteronomy 18:22: “If a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD and what he says does not come true, then it is not the LORD's message. That prophet has spoken on his own authority, and you are not to fear him.”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

Read Jeremiah 28:8-9; Deuteronomy 13:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3; & Matthew 7:15-20.

Discussion

1. [T-BSG:] How can we apply the Pauline body metaphor to our church realities of competing programs and differing priorities?
2. What would you say to the idea that God wants to see a body, not body parts, in His church?
3. What does the metaphor of the church, as the body of Christ, say to people living in the twenty-first century?
4. What would be the best criteria to evaluate spiritual gifts and their importance to the church?
5. How can we discover our own gifts in the context of the mission of the church?
6. If possible, which gift would you like to have, and why?—*T-BSG*^{*} 83-84.[‡]

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