

01.16.11 / 1 Corinthians 12:1-27**Passage Insight**

These 27 verses contain an immense amount of material and say so many things about who the Lord is and what that means for us. For our purposes today we will be focusing on how several truths about God affect the way that we are called to operate as the body of Christ.

If we ask ourselves the question, "What does this passage say about God?" we see quickly that He is the God of unity. While His body of believers is created to be incredibly diverse, His Spirit is the constant in each one. His Spirit is also the very person of the Trinity who searches the human mind (1 Corinthians 2:10), leads us (Acts 16:10), speaks to us (Acts 8:29), loves us (Romans 15:30), and prays for us (Romans 8:26). This means that we can trust Him to communicate consistent truth to every member of the body without contradiction. It is this consistency, this constancy of God's Holy Spirit that unites us as His children. It is not our hopes, our dreams, or our actions. It is not our affinities, our preferences, or our desires. These things are not of themselves bad things. In fact, they may be of the Lord. But . . . they are not the ties that bind. God's Holy Spirit is, and this changes how we relate to one another with the gifts that He gives.

The Spirit of God manifests Himself in a variety of ways, unique to each member of the body of Christ, as we see in verse 7. We see in this same verse the purpose for such manifestation within the body, ". . . for the common good." We see the same truth in verses 24 and 25, which speak of the Lord's honor being given to all members of the body ". . . that the members may have the same care for one another." Consider also 1 Peter 4:10, which says, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." We would do well to be constantly on the lookout for how we can use our gifts to serve one another. To say it more strongly, if the Spirit of God manifests Himself in us for the purpose of serving one another within the body of Christ, this means that the Lord desires to meet our needs through the actions of other people in the body. The Lord lives in us and works through us. Powerful.

The implication here is that not only do we need God, but we need one another. Let me say that again. We NEED one another. Any of us who think we may live lives as isolated Christians are fooling ourselves and are swimming in the pride of self-preservation and self-sustenance. The Lord loves each of us and desires to bless us and meet our needs not always through our own actions, but rather the actions of others. In other words, He allows us to be limited in our capacity to take care of ourselves. This is not a jab at us, nor is it a denial of blessing, but rather it is evidence of the Lord's grace, creatively meeting our needs without allowing room for additional pride of self-provision. This is freeing. Praise the Lord.

Consider Acts 2:42-47. In verse 43 we see evidence that the Spirit of God is at work as He manifests Himself in the lives of believers in the form of wonders and signs, as He leads the followers to meet one another's needs very tangibly in verses 44 and 45, and as He encourages them to worship the Lord in verse 46. The outcome? Gaining the favor of those who were watching, who saw the love of God in action, who felt the tug on their hearts to believe in Jesus, and who responded in the affirmative and were saved. The way we love one another affects how those who don't know Jesus think about the Lord. We have an amazing opportunity in our Community Groups to love one another with the gifts that the Lord has given us, to meet one another's needs by the power of the Holy Spirit, and thereby demonstrate the love of God for those who don't yet know Him. As they pay attention, we have both the

responsibility and the privilege to explain the gospel of Jesus Christ to them and to make disciples of our Lord in the process. Would you pray that the Lord would do three things:

- 1) Mature your faith such that you honor one another and meet one another's needs by the gifts of the Spirit
- 2) Send non-believers to your group (this likely means you go out and look for them)
- 3) Unify your hearts toward a specific mission field where you seek to love others and make disciples of Christ

Application Questions / Prayer

Meeting the Needs of the Body

- 1) Tell about a time when you had a specific need that the body of Christ met. How did this change the way you saw the Lord?
- 2) If you struggle to ask for help, what might be at the root of this?
- 3) The Lord allows weakness in us that His power may be made perfect, and sometimes His power is demonstrated by the helping hand of another member of the body of Christ. How might this change the way you view your own limitations?
- 4) How might it change the way you view God and what you pray for?

Making Disciples / Reaching Outward

- 1) Where do you currently struggle to reach out to others who don't know Jesus?
- 2) Your CG may be the best environment imaginable for a non-believer to both see the love of Christ and to explore the truth about Him. What would it look like for you to invite your non-believing friends into the fold?
- 3) What do you long to see redeemed around you?
- 4) It's possible that the person sitting next to you at your weekly CG meeting longs for the same thing. How might the Lord be calling your group to "go" and make disciples in the Triangle beyond the walls of your CG meeting?
- 5) What help do you need in deciding what to do next? CG Leader, write this down and talk to your Coach about it right away. We want to help your group answer the specific call that the Lord has for your group.

Prayer

- 1) In light of the passage, encourage your group to pray together that the Lord would do the following things:
 - Mature the faith of the believers in the group such that you all honor one another and meet one another's needs by using the gifts of the Spirit
 - Send non-believers to your group (even if this means that YOU go out and look hard for them)
 - Unify the hearts of everyone in your group toward a specific mission field where you can love others and make new disciples of Christ

Sources

- Prayer
- Tyler Jones
- Wilmington's Book of Bible Lists