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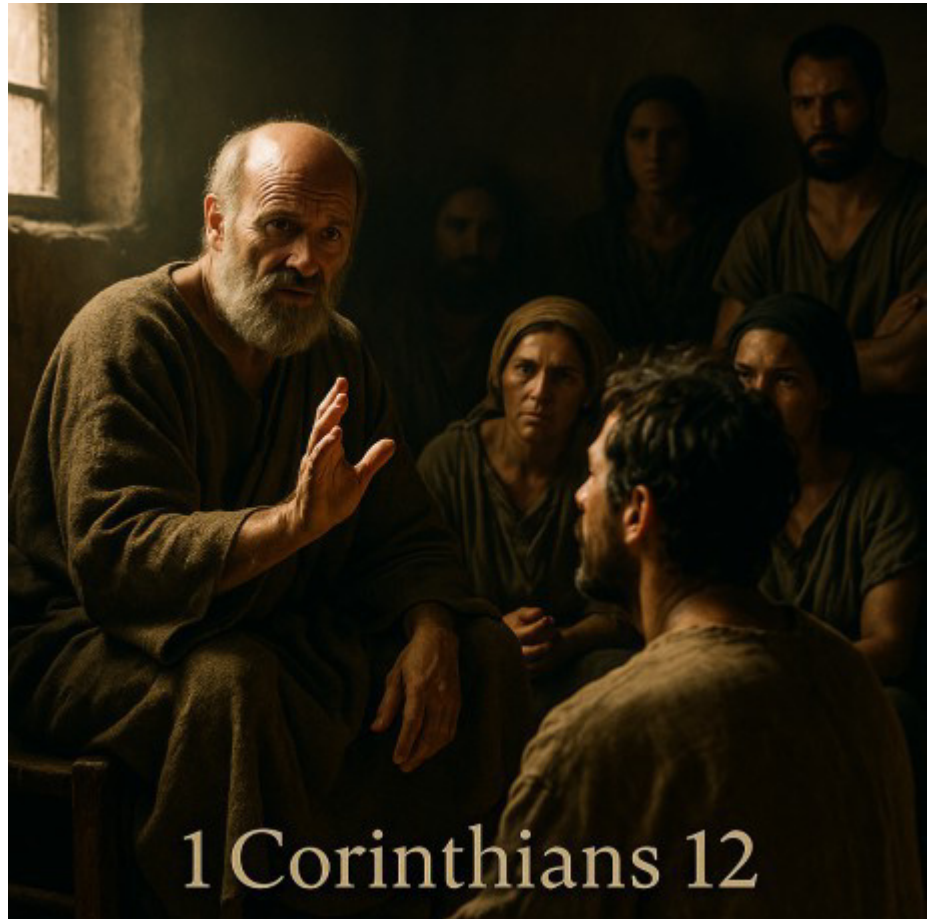
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1 Corinthians 12
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By Dan Maines

1 Corinthians 12

1 Corinthians 12:1-2

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be unaware. You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.

† Paul begins by reminding them of their past in idolatry.

† Spiritual gifts must be contrasted with lifeless idols.

† Justin Martyr (First Apology 9) mocked idols as powerless, showing Paul's contrast is consistent with early Christian

defense.

1 Corinthians 12:3

Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

† The true Spirit always glorifies Christ as Lord.

† Confession of Jesus as Lord is the Spirit's mark.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.

† The Trinity is active in distributing gifts: Spirit, Lord, and God.

† Diversity comes from one source, ensuring unity.

1 Corinthians 12:7

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

† Gifts are not for personal boasting but for the edification of the body.

† Every believer is given something useful to the church.

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

† Paul lists gifts to show variety within unity.

† These were foundational for the early church, confirming the gospel.

† Irenaeus (Against Heresies 5.6.1) spoke of these gifts in the apostolic era, affirming their reality.

1 Corinthians 12:11

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

† The Spirit sovereignly decides who receives what gift.

† Gifts are not earned, but bestowed.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one part, but many.

† Paul uses the body metaphor to illustrate unity in diversity.

† All believers, regardless of background, are one in Christ.

† Cyprian (On the Unity of the Church 5) later stressed the same metaphor to preserve unity.

1 Corinthians 12:15-20

If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has arranged the parts, each one of them in the body, just as He desired. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But now there are many parts, but one body.

- † Every member has unique value and purpose.
- † God Himself arranged the diversity of gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:21-26

And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," or again, the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, it is much truer that the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary, and those parts of the body which we consider less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor, and our less presentable parts become much more presentable, whereas our more presentable parts have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same care for one another. And if one part of the body suffers, all the parts suffer with it, if a part is honored, all the parts rejoice with it.

- † The weaker members are indispensable.
- † Honor is distributed to preserve unity and mutual care.

1 Corinthians 12:27-30

Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it. And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, and various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

- † Not all have the same gift, but all are essential to the church.
- † God sovereignly orders roles and functions.

1 Corinthians 12:31

But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And yet, I am going to show you a far better way.

† Paul points them toward love as the supreme way, preparing for chapter 13.

How it applies to us today

† 1 Corinthians 12 teaches the unity and diversity of Christ's body.

† Every believer has a role, and no gift or person is insignificant.

† God Himself designed the church to function in mutual dependence.

† The church must value all members, showing care and honor equally.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

Source Index

† Justin Martyr, First Apology 9 - idols powerless

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies 5.6.1 - gifts in the apostolic age

† Cyprian, On the Unity of the Church 5 - unity as one body

† Josephus, Antiquities 3.308 - Israel's idolatry (linked with warnings)

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