

Growth Groups Lesson

January 22-23

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

Big Idea: God's Spirit distributes gifts to believers, just as He desires. These spiritual gifts accomplish a variety of works in His church, so that all will be helped by them. These gifts enable His church to function like one body, as God empowers each person to experience and share His love with one another. By understanding that each member is needed for the body, we are better able to show honor and respect to one another. When this happens, unity occurs in His body, whether there is suffering or rejoicing.

Paul had several reasons for writing to the church in Corinth about spiritual gifts: **1)** To let the church know that they were not lacking in any gift. **2)** To be reminded that no man should boast in his own ability, since each gift is a demonstration of the Spirit's work and power. **3)** To help some overcome jealousy and strife. **4)** To prevent any divisions which might occur from those who were just concerned about the more "important" gifts.

Spend some time praying with your group and asking for help in understanding and applying His word. Review and reflect on the prayer requests shared the previous week. Give praise for the answers to your group's requests.

Read 1 Corinthians 12

Read 12:3

1. When you are led by the Spirit, what truth are you able to speak about Jesus that benefits the body?
2. How might this truth affect how you love others in your life?

Read 12:4-6

3. What is given to us by the Spirit and our Lord that benefits the body?
4. Who is at work in all of them? **v. 6**
5. Based on this, what do you think is the difference between a spiritual gift and a natural ability?
6. What would it look like for God to use your natural abilities as a spiritual gift? What has God done to enable you to minister at Good Shepherd? Share how He has used you to help other believers.

Read 12:7

8. What are the gifts given by the Spirit to be used for?
9. Since the Spirit gifts us to love and serve others, share one example of how the Spirit has used you to help another believer.
10. How do you remain humble as God works through you?

Read 12:8-11, 18

11. Who decides how gifts are distributed?
12. Each time you have observed how God has used you, what has been your immediate reaction? Please explain.
13. What questions do you have about spiritual gifts?

Read 12:12-14

14. Why is Paul so concerned about the oneness of the body? **Phil. 2:1-4, John 17:21**
15. How can you promote this oneness in your Growth Group this month?

Read 12:15-21

16. Are there any insignificant gifts? Why or why not? **v. 21**
17. Since God has a plan to use you at GSCC, describe what you have seen Him do through other Christians. Has God's work through you acknowledged or appreciated by others? If no one sees your ministry for Christ, what has been your initial reaction? Why?

Read 12:25-26

18. Since every gift the Spirit gives is needed, how do you see this benefiting the body?
19. Have you ever believed, in the past, that some gifts were more important than others? Explain. Does this chapter on gifts encourage or discourage you? Why?
20. How could you depend on God to use you to build up your Growth Group this week?

Read 12:27-31

21. In v. 31, Paul says to earnestly desire the higher gifts, and chapters 13 and 14 make clear that these are gifts that express God's love and build up the body of Christ. What do you think it means to "earnestly desire" spiritual gifts? **1 Cor. 14:1**
22. How does the concept of desiring spiritual gifts to love and build up others change the way you view situations where God might ask you to do something you don't feel naturally good at?

Pray for God's use of His gifts in your group and at Good Shepherd.