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## 1 Corinthians 12

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

# 1 Corinthians 12.

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## Topics.

- No-one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says, "Jesus is accursed!"
- There are varieties of gifts, but the same God empowers them all.
- The body is one and has many members.
- The eye, the hand, the feet, cannot say, "I have no need of you."
- If one member suffers, all suffer together.
- If one member is honoured all experience it together.
- You are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

**The previous chapter:** in the previous chapter Paul firstly spoke about, 'head coverings' and concluded that a woman's long hair is her glory and her covering and secondly he spoke about, 'the Lords Supper' and told the Corinthian brothers and sisters they were bringing judgment on themselves because of the unworthy manner in which they were eating the Lords Supper which was so bad that some were sick and others were even dying.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

- In certain chapters this letter is written as though Paul is having a conversation with the Corinthians (i.e., he asks them a question and then answers it etc.).
- Though Paul's letter is directed to the Corinthian church the content applies to any church or believer in the same situations.

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## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-3

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### **No-one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says, "Jesus is accursed!"**

- **1 Corinthians 12:1-3:** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup>You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. <sup>3</sup>Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

**Accursed:** (anathema) means putting a religious ban on a person or excommunicating them.

The Jewish religious leaders, (the scribes and priests) of the nation of Israel were esteemed by the great majority of the people of Israel as holy men of God, because they read and studied the scrolls and performed all the services of the temple. These religious leaders had great authority and power and claimed to be God's true representatives on earth, but not only denied Israel Messiah, the Christ the Saviour of the world, but actually plotted ways in which they could have him put to death. Paul is saying that it matters not how holy and religious men might appear, how glorious their building is or how much religious authority and power they have if they refuse to make Christ the center of their faith, they are not God's people. The words:

- No man speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus is anathema.

Means no one who has the Spirit of God dwelling in them would ever put a religious ban on Christ or excommunicate him from their services as the religious leaders of Jesus generation did and no one who has the Spirit of God will cast out from their services and from their fellowship those who are faithfully confessing and teaching Christ. The words:

- No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

Obviously does not mean that no one has the physical ability to say that Jesus is Lord unless aided by the Holy Spirit, since all people can say physically say Jesus is Lord. The meaning is that only those who are truly influenced by the Holy Spirit would willingly and joyfully acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is their King and Saviour. It means no one would acknowledge Jesus as their Lord who has does not know him as such and is not influenced by the Holy Spirit. Unless a man or woman has the Spirit of Christ and the word of Christ and his love and grace dwelling in them, they will never confess Jesus as their Lord.

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## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7

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### **There are Varieties of Gifts, but the same God Empowers them All.**

- **1 Corinthians 12:4-7:** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Within the global body of Christ there are a variety of gifts, services and activities which all flow from the Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is God who is the source of all gifts, services and activities and who empowers everyone with them to be used for the common good of every brother and sister in Christ. By extension all gifts are also to be used to benefit those outside of the Kingdom of God for the purpose of drawing them to God through the Lord Jesus Christ and delivering them from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of Light.

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## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:8

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### **The Gift of Wisdom and of Knowledge.**

- **1 Corinthians 12:8:** To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom (Word of wisdom in the KJV), and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

**Utterance of wisdom:** (Word of wisdom in the KJV) is the ability to speak, explain and clarify the word of God. During the New Testament era it would refer to the ability to explain the Old Testament Scriptures, the prophecies about Christ and the prophet's words of wisdom. It would embrace teachings that guided brothers and sisters to live a godly life and would also include the ability to explain the letters that Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul and others had written.

**Utterance of knowledge:** not only refers to the ability to teach and impart God's word and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal salvation, but also carries the idea that the one teaching the knowledge is speaking the correct and right knowledge and speaking it with total confidence and assurance that what they are saying is the absolute truth regarding the word of God i.e., it carries the idea of not only knowing with conviction and understanding but also of being absolutely convinced in mind and emotion that what a person is saying is true knowledge contrasted to speaking things that are incorrect or that one is not sure of or may have some doubt about (i.e. speculations and assumptions)

### The Variety of Gifts.

- **1 Corinthians 12::9-11:** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup>All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

**Faith:** biblical faith embraces two aspects:, firstly the absolute persuasion, assurance, trust acceptance, belief and moral conviction that the word of God is true especially the Gospel truth regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, and secondly it embraces the idea of a person totally placing their reliance for eternal life in the hands of Christ i.e., saving faith that leads to eternal life goes far beyond mental accent and intellectual knowledge since it carries the idea of surrendering one's life into the hands of another.

**Healing:** means, to effect a cure it can refer to making a person physically, mentally and emotionally whole or to making them spiritually whole.

**Miracles:** (dunamis) is not limited in its meaning to the performance of miracles, but can refer to person's ability and skill, acts courage and daring or a wonderful work that someone does i.e. amazing works of charity, benevolence and compassion etc.

**Prophecy:** is not restricted to foretelling (Scriptural or other) future events only it can refer to an inspired speaker, one who proclaims the word of God and by extension to a poet (see prophets in notes following (1 Cor. 12:27-31)).

**Distinguish:** (Discern in the KJV) means to tell apart or tell between it carries the idea of perceiving and judging a thing to be incorrect and deciding to thoroughly separate from it.

**Tongues:** (glossa) refers to a proper language or a dialect and in various New Testament Scriptures to a language that is not naturally acquired through learning. Literally it applies to the physical human tongue. For further information on tongues see (1 Corinthians 14).

- In Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**Interpretation:** means a translation or interpretation i.e., to translate or interpret a language that one knows to those who do not understand it.

**All Gifts are empowered by one Spirit:** the words, "All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills (v11) mean it is God who grants the gifts, abilities, services to those in the church.

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## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-20

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### The Body is One and has Many Members.

- **1 Corinthians 12::12-20:** For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. <sup>14</sup>For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an

eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? <sup>18</sup>But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup>If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

**The body:** refers to the local and global family of Christ, the body carries the idea of being a complete and sound whole though made up of many different parts. Paul is likening the worldwide family of Christ, the church to a human body in the sense that the church has many different members with all sorts of varying personalities and abilities yet they are all form one global body in Christ.

**All drank of the one Spirit:** means that all believe the same Gospel, all believe the same message of the cross and all believe and embraced the same 'Lord' and that all who believe this message and embrace Christ are brought by faith and love into the same Spirit which is the Spirit of God. It is God's Spirit that is the one Spirit and often called the Holy Spirit all who believe (Jews and Gentiles) and are baptise into Christ enter into the Spirit of God by faith and love. God the Father is building one family through his Son the Lord Jesus Christ, thus receiving and entering into the one Spirit also embraces the idea of being of one mind and one thought i.e., having the same focus, goals and purpose toward the same end which is to honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and not only do what one is able to do to benefit brothers and sisters in the family of God, but also do whatever will help rescue those in the kingdom of darkness and deliver them into the Kingdom of light.

**NOTE:** since God is love it could be said that through Christ all enter into one Spirit of love meaning they enter into the love of God and the love of Christ and from this love desire to do what honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Though this is a correct concept it is limited since the meaning of the words one spirit not only refers to entering into God's love but also entering into eternal life.

**Gifts and abilities:** in the global family of God everyone has varying abilities to offer, i.e., some its labour, others companionship, friendship, encouragement or administration and organising, with others it might be the ability to give financial, singing, playing music, writing books while with others it is speaking and preaching the word of God etc. It is important to always remember that whether a brother or sister is a great orator or head of a very large church does not make them of any greater value to Christ's family in God's sight since if all were gifted speakers and leaders who would be available to help the poor, comfort the sick or offer hospitality and friendship to the lonely etc. This is the reason Paul tells the Corinthian brothers and sisters not to judge each other according to their gifts, talents or abilities because it is God who is organising His family in the global Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ and who gifts those with the talents that they have which means not one of us can boast.

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## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:21-26

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### **The Eye, the Hand, the Feet, cannot say, "I have no Need of You."**

- **1 Corinthians 12::21-26:** The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." <sup>22</sup>On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup>and on those parts of the body that we think less honourable we bestow the greater honour, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, <sup>24</sup>which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honour to the part that lacked it, <sup>25</sup>that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup>If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.

**Honour:** in this context carries the idea of being valued, esteemed, and respected and given dignity.

**If one member suffers, all suffer together:** every part of the natural human body works together with all other parts of the body so that the entire body stays healthy and functions to its full capacity. If one part of the body gets sick, the entire body feels its pain and suffers even though the rest of the body maybe in a healthy condition. Likewise the spiritual body of Christ works in the same way both in the local and global family of God i.e., just as each part of the human body works together for the benefit of the rest of the body each brother and sister should be living to enhance the life of those in the body of Christ. It is interesting to notice that Paul points out that we give the weaker and less honourable parts of the human body more honour (meaning we cloth them whereas our more presentable parts do not require clothing so in this sense they are not given the same honour as the parts we cloth). Paul is saying that we should be applying this same principal to the weaker and less honourable within the family of Christ. Sadly many of us grossly lack in applying this principle since it is mostly the head minister, the great orator or brilliant musician and stunning singer etc., who we give the most honour too, yet Paul is saying like the more honourable parts of the human body they are not the ones that are in the most need to be esteemed, respected and valued since they have gifts that not only draw people to them, but naturally give them honour, acceptance and value, rather it is the weaker and those we might consider the less honourable who are in the greater need of being esteemed, valued and respected i.e., those who do the mundane things around the church, the poor and less fortunate and those who are struggling with difficulties etc.

**If one member is honoured all experience it together:** earlier in this letter Paul rebuked those in the Corinthian church who were boasting, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas" (1 Cor. 3:4, 21) and exalting men with great gifts and speaking abilities which resulted in the Corinthian church being full of division. Now in these verses Paul is saying it is not those with great gifts and talents that should be esteemed but those with the lessor gifts who should be given the more honour this no-doubt is because those with the greater gifts do not need to be esteemed since the great gift they have automatically brings attention to them and makes them valued, whereas those with lessor abilities are often ignored and feel less needed and less valued. Paul in these verses is levelling this offensive attitude of exalting people because of their gifts at the expense of those who lack by saying that brothers and sisters who belong to Christ's body should give more honour and value to those who are considered less honourable so that they do not feel they are of little worth, without value and not needed. Every brother and sister should treat each other with the same care, the same love, the same kindness and not exalt one above another no matter how spectacular their gift or talent may appear to be so that everyone in the family of Christ would not only know that they are accepted but would also feel worthy and needed and in this way the body of Christ would grow as a healthy and vibrant organism locally and globally.

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## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27-31

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### **You are the Body of Christ and individually Members of It.**

- **1 Corinthians 12:27-31:** Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. <sup>28</sup>And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup>Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup>Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup>But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

### **God has appointed in the church:**



**Apostles:** to qualify as an apostle they had to have seen Jesus when he was alive on earth and witnessed his death and resurrection so that they could testify to the reality of it. Paul was considered an apostle because Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus Road and in this miraculous encounter called Paul to be a chosen instrument of Christ's to carry his name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15).

**Prophets:** embraces Old and New Testament prophets, but the word prophet is not limited to those who received future predictions, i.e., Moses was a prophet of God yet much of what he spoke had nothing to do with future predictions thus the word prophet also embraces those who received inspired revelations of God's word regarding the LORD'S instruction, statutes, laws and promises. During the era of the New Testament and the book of Acts there was no written New Testament Scriptures for people to follow and therefore the word prophet embraced both those who predicted future events and those who received by the inspiration of God's Spirit revelations of the New Covenant and the Gospel of Christ.

**Today:** we do not need men who prophecy future events since all that the original prophets spoke by the inspiration of God's Spirit is now recorded in written form on the pages of the Bible concerning Christ's return and the end of this age as we know it. Therefore the word prophet now embraces whoever is teaching the word of God from the Bible because the words they are teaching are prophecy in print since they originated by the inspiration of the Spirit of God thus what is written in the Bible is inspired prophecy which embraces not only future predictions, but also God's laws, promises and revelations of the New Covenant and the Gospel of Christ.

**Teachers:** refer to those that are gifted with the ability to teach and expound the Scriptures in a manner that their audience clearly understands.

**Miracles:** refer to the wonders that the Old Testament prophets like Moses and Elijah performed through the power and Spirit of God and to men like Joshua who conquered Jericho by a miracle and stopped the sun and moon. Miracles refer to supernatural signs, wonders and healings the apostles performed and to Jesus who performed miracles that not only embraced supernatural physical and mental healing of all who came to him, but also to his miracles that bent the laws of creation as we understand them to be (i.e., creating fish to feed five-thousand out of nothing and controlling the wind and sea by speaking to them.) Modern day Christians do not fit into this group (see healing below).

**Gifts of healing:** refers to those during the time of Acts who had the gifts of healing to confirm that the word they spoke was from God. The people of Israel had been under the Old Testament ceremonial law for over four-thousand years and Gentiles had worshipped idols and pagan gods. Neither the people of Israel nor the Gentiles would have had solid confirmation that the new and radical teachings they were hearing were from God. Because of this God gave those that were introducing the New Covenant of grace and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ the ability to perform miracles that no-man could do apart from the power of God's Spirit being with them and in this way God confirmed the words the apostles spoke with miraculous signs and wonders. It is interesting to notice that amongst the many thousands that received the Good News of the Gospel of Christ only Paul the apostles and about two to three others they laid hands on actually performed any healing miracles.

**Helping:** this applies to every brother and sister throughout all ages since we are all able to help those who belong to the family of Christ in some manner.

**Administering:** refers to those who are gifted with skills of administration and are able to organise and delegate responsibilities to others.

**Various kinds of tongues:** refers to different kinds of languages (i.e. foreign languages and languages other than one's own native language) and dialects that certain people may have learned or received as a gift from God. It is interesting to notice that people listening to these languages understood them when they were spoken. For further information on tongues see (1 Corinthians 14).

- In Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**I will show you a more excellent way:** Paul's words, "Earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way (v31) shows that there is nothing wrong in desiring gifts, but there is one that surpasses and excels beyond them all which Paul refers to as the more excellent way. This of course is 'love' which Paul beautifully speaks about in the next chapter.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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