

## LIFE IN THE FAMILY

### ***LIVING CHRIST'S WAY WITH EACH OTHER HERE ON EARTH***



**The Father, the Son, and the Spirit together decided that we're to live life here on earth in a wholly different way to what we've known before. I'm so glad They've made this truth of the *Body of Christ* and *Spiritual Gifts* available as we live our *Life in the Family* together.**

*Margie Martin*

## Introduction - Hope

**Hope in this life comes from having a sense of involvement, significance, and value that comes by understanding how we live in the body of Christ by using our spiritual gift(s). This totally new concept started with the time the apostle Paul had with Jesus Christ while he was learning how to live a mature life of faith—so new and different from what he had known before he met Jesus on the road to Damascus.**

**So, how do we live this new way? In the study on *spiritual warfare*, we learned how to rethink our thoughts, protect ourselves from the evil one, and live a life of faith. But in this study on life in the body of Christ and using our spiritual gifts, we'll learn a unique way of how to live with other believers and care for the world around us.**

As I was growing in the Lord and had time to study because I was single, I was able to take advantage of a study program at our church, Peninsula Bible Church (PBC), in Palo Alto, California. During this 2-year program, one of the term papers I wrote was on spiritual gifts, so much of what I'm including in this study comes from this paper. The information in my paper wasn't original, however, because our lead pastor, Ray Stedman, had written a book named *Body Life* in the mid-70s, and how we lived at our church was based on his research, study, and teaching of scripture. Ray taught us how to use the gifts we've been given to further the life of Christ in us for the sake of the body of believers. Our Sunday night gathering was called Body Life and was so different from a normal church service: the music reflected the Jesus Movement, and we had a time of sharing needs, truth God had shared with us, and answers to prayer—it was really the body of Christ living together.

If this concept isn't familiar to you, get ready to learn how the Father wants you to live with other followers of Jesus and has gifted you to live in His kingdom. This way of living and His gifting gives us confidence and eliminates the need to compare ourselves to others.

This study is broken into 4 parts:

1. First we'll look at what life in the body of Christ is to look like.
2. Next we'll start out with the general concepts of spiritual gifts and how they're to be used in the body of Christ as described in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4.
3. Then we'll list the gifts in each letter and define them.
4. Finally, we'll finish with a test where you can begin to see what gift(s) you have.

Knowing your gift(s) and using them will help you understand how the Father wants to work through you in His kingdom with other believers and in the fallen world around us.

### How the apostles learned about and shared this truth

While Jewish believers had years of experience of meeting with other Jews in the temple in Jerusalem or synagogues in their local town and cities, Gentile believers needed to know what it was like for individuals who had the Holy Spirit in them to meet with other Gentile believers and eventually with Jewish believers. This corporate experience is what we call local churches, groups of believers, who meet together in homes or buildings. Believers in some cities quickly and thoroughly understood and incorporated what Paul was teaching them about the body of Christ and spiritual gifts; other believers struggled with this teaching.

Nowhere in the Gospels or in Acts do the authors mention spiritual gifts or how to live in the body of Christ. So where did Paul get this information? We aren't told specifically, so we'll have to come up with our own conclusions.

As we've seen previously, Paul and Peter covered these topics. Since Paul, who as the apostle to the Gentiles, is the one who told us the most, how did he learn about these new topics? If you haven't seen the study on the "Life of Paul" on our website, *WalksWithTheFather.com*, you may want to work through it. Paul tells us that what he learned came from Jesus Christ Himself rather than talking with the other apostles. This "Life of Paul" study tells us when this time with the Lord probably happened. Peter probably got his information from Paul.

### **Background to the Idea of the Body of Christ**

Paul would have included the topics of the body of Christ and spiritual gifts as he traveled around and taught the Gentile believers the truth about how to live in God's kingdom. Here are the times he wrote to the churches:

- *1 Corinthians 12-14*: The first time Paul wrote about the body of Christ and spiritual gifts was written during his third missionary trip; the believers in Corinth had heard about the gifts and the body of Christ from Paul numerous times when they were together, which is why they chose which gifts *they* wanted to emphasize, and Paul had to correct their thinking in this letter.
- *Romans 12*: While the believers in Rome hadn't met Paul before they received the letter he wrote to them that we'll be looking at, their friends Aquila and Priscilla, who were also close friends with Paul in Ephesus, had probably been writing to them and sharing this information.
- *Ephesians 4*: Paul lived and taught in Ephesus early in his ministry. About 7 years after writing to the Corinthians and the church at Rome, Paul wrote this letter to the mature believers in Ephesus when he was probably in Rome under house arrest (61-63 AD), listing the order of gifts that a new group of believers would need and writes about what happens when they use their gifts appropriately.

Since Paul and Peter had become friends over the years, Peter would have learned about these topics and so included them in his first letter to Jewish believers.

But as we concentrate on learning about spiritual gifts, it's important to remember that growing up as believers and learning how to walk by faith is far more important than learning about these gifts. If we look at the writing of Paul and the men who knew Jesus personally, we'll quickly see that the truth they give us far exceeds the information Paul and Peter give us.

Now on to our study.

## Table of Contents

*Introduction—Hope* ..... 1

**Section** **Page No.**

*Part 1: Body of Christ—What Does This Mean?* ..... 5

*Part 2: What are Spiritual Gifts and What’s Their Purpose?* ..... 8

*Part 3: Lists of Spiritual Gifts*..... 15

*Defining the Spiritual Gifts* ..... 18

*Part 4: Discovering Your Spiritual Gift(s)*..... 31

*Spiritual Gifts Test*..... 33

### Appendix

*Answers to the Spiritual Gifts Test*..... 36

*Answers to the Questions in the Study* ..... 36

*Part 1: Body of Christ—What Does This Mean?*

While the topic of finding out our spiritual gifts can sound so much more interesting than learning how to live with each other as Jesus Christ wants us to in the body of Christ, living His way really makes sense and brings involvement and significance to how we live. It’s almost like spiritual gifts are the frosting on the cake; they “taste” so much better when we have the depth that comes from the cake (body of Christ).

When I did a word search for body of Christ on Bible Gateway, 7 of the 20 references are for our topic. Let’s look at these references, all written by Paul, to see what he’s talking about. We’ll look at what’s happening before and after these verses as we proceed through this study.

What do you learn from these verses? (If you want to see my responses, go to the end of this study.)

1 Corinthians 12:27 - *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

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Ephesians 3:6 - *This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.*

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(A “mystery” in Paul’s letters means information that hasn’t been revealed before.)

Ephesians 4:12-14 - [Christ gave four roles to the believers] *to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.*

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Ephesians 4:15-16 - *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

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Ephesians 5:21-24 - *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. (Submitting isn't like being a doormat that is walked over.)*

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Colossians 1:24 - *Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.*

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Colossians 3:15 - *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

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*More from 1 Corinthians 12:*

Christ is the head of the body, His church (His followers), and we are all different members of this body. What does this mean?

Christ as head -

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Members of the body -

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- *Do you ever feel lonely or isolated?*  
You've been equipped to work together with others for His sake.
- *Do you ever feel insignificant?*  
Remember that we're all needed for what He wants to do to bring us to maturity and reach out to those who don't know Him yet.
- *Do you ever feel like you don't need anyone else to be significant or don't feel needed?*  
Remember that the weaker parts of the body are necessary.

As we learn more in this study about the body of Christ and our part in it through using our spiritual gift(s), we'll see how God wants us to live with each other and our lives will be richer and fuller.

## Part 2: What Are Spiritual Gifts and What's Their Purpose?

Here's how I defined *spiritual gifts* in my term paper:

Spiritual gifts are the visible expression of the Holy Spirit that are given to believers as special abilities that will benefit other believers, as well as potential members of the body of Christ. The results of all believers knowing and exercising their gifts are mature Christians and a body of Christ that functions properly.

So what is the meaning of "spiritual" and "gifts"? In a paper written by Ted Wise in 1978 for the singles group at Peninsula Bible Church, he defined these words that come from the Greek language that was used in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century:

*Spiritual* (pneumatikos): Things that have their origin with God, in harmony with His character. Men [and women] in Christ who walk so as to please God are "spiritual." The blessings that accrue to regenerate men [and women] at this present time are called "spiritualities" in Romans and Corinthians.

*Gifts* (charisma): A gift of grace, or a gift involving grace; hence, God's endowments upon believers by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the churches [group of believers]. A service, *not* for the individual's own edification, enjoyment or distinction—a grace is given for others, for the church. Grace is a disposition from which kindly acts proceed; a loving-kindness; that which bestows delight or occasions pleasure.

[Therefore,] a spiritual gift is a grace gift, an unearned, undeserved and freely given gift originating with God and being like God. It is intended for the building up of the church [the believers], not the individual.

(Who is Ted Wise? I just knew him as one of our teachers at PBC in the 70s and 80s. What I just learned while researching him online for this study is that he was one of the early leaders of the Jesus Movement that came out of the Haight-Ashbury District in San Francisco in the early 1970s. Talk about lives changing 180°, he and his wife, Elizabeth, turned from the hippie lifestyle to Jesus as they studied scripture and lived the truth they found there. We were so fortunate to have him be one of those teaching us, especially in our singles group, Careers Alive.

But what is *grace*? The definition I've settled on is:

**God's resources at Christ's expense**  
so we can do what God wants us to do when He wants us to do it.

(The first half of the definition is one I've heard for years; the second half is from an Andy Stanley message at North Point Community Church.)



Then we can be:

patient instead of \_\_\_\_\_

truthful instead of \_\_\_\_\_

*kind* instead of \_\_\_\_\_

*loving* instead of \_\_\_\_\_

a *one-person* man or woman instead of \_\_\_\_\_

*My conclusion:* the giving of these gifts isn't for our benefit, even though they help us to mature as believers; they're given so we can love those around us in such amazing ways that Jesus Christ is acknowledged.

### Spiritual Gifts general information

Before we get to the specific spiritual gifts, let's look at the *general information* Paul and Peter give us about the reasons for the spiritual gifts and how to use them from the four times these apostles write about them.

#### 1 Corinthians 12:1-7: Concerning Spiritual Gifts

Paul lived in Corinth for about 18 months after being in Athens (Acts 17) and became close friends with Aquila and Priscilla, fellow tentmakers, who had come from Rome when Claudius commanded all Jews to leave the city sometime between January 41 to January 53 AD. Many Corinthians believed in Jesus Christ because of Paul's teaching.

Eventually Paul left Corinth for Jerusalem by way of Ephesus. Sometime around 57 AD, while probably staying in Ephesus during his third missionary journey, Paul wrote his first letter to the immature Corinthian church about some serious problems that they were having; one problem was their arguing over which gifts they thought were more important. His response to them is in Chapters 12 and 14 that we'll be looking at. Between these two chapters, Paul sandwiches in his famous Chapter 13 on love. A mistake? No, I think he's making the point that the foundation of spiritual gifts is love for others.

Here's what Paul says about spiritual gifts and the work of the Trinity in 1 Corinthians 12:1-7:

*Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.*

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.*

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

**What conclusions do you make from these verses about the Trinity at work?** My conclusions are at the end of the study.

Spirit: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lord: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Father: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Each believer is given at least one gift that shows the work and love of the Spirit, and it's given for the good of all.



**1 Corinthians 12:12-26: Unity and Diversity in the Body**

*Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.*

*Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*

*The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*

**Conclusions: Body Life**

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- \_\_\_\_\_
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- \_\_\_\_\_
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1 Corinthians 14 tells us about the practicality of these conclusions: the gift of *tongues* (we’ll talk about this gift soon) is more obvious and “out there,” but the gift of *prophesy* is more important for the body of Christ.

**Romans 12:3-6: Humble Service in the Body of Christ**

Paul probably wrote this letter to the believers in Rome around 57 AD while he was in Corinth. Even though Paul had never met the believers in Rome, his closeness with them would have come from his friendship in Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla. What Paul wrote in Romans 12 summarizes what he had written in length to the Corinthians. Why did Paul write more to the Corinthians? Probably because they were having problems that he needed/wanted to address, while the believers in Rome weren't struggling with the same issues and needed more help. Also, Aquila and Priscila had probably been writing to their friends in Rome too and were sharing with them all they had learned from Paul.

*For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.*

**Conclusions: why is humility important for using our gifts?**

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. Philippians 2:3-4*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Ephesians 4:11-16: Using the Gifts Appropriately Helps Believers Mature**

Paul had lived and taught in Ephesus early in his ministry. It was one of the three major cities of the eastern empire and one of the capitals of the Roman province of Asia. With its strategic location, it became a center for Paul and his assistants who traveled through the valley evangelizing the local cities. About 7 years after writing to the Corinthians and the church at Rome, when Paul was probably under house arrest in Rome (61-63 AD), he wrote this letter to the mature believers in Ephesus listing the order of gifts that a new group of believers would need and writes about the results of using their gifts appropriately. We'll define these gifts later in this study, but for now we'll be looking at why the gifts being used in this order will help believers grow up.

*So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

*Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

**Conclusions: gifts help us all grow**

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

So why do you think these 4 gifts/roles are so important in a group of believers, especially when a new group is being formed?

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**1 Peter 4:10-11: Living for God**

Peter wrote his first letter primarily to Jewish believers around 65 AD, later than the other letters we've been studying. Commentators note his knowledge of Paul's early letters of 1 Thessalonians, Romans, and James' letter. Peter also seemed to be familiar with the letters Paul later wrote from prison: Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians. We also know that Peter and Paul knew and respected each other, starting with the Council at Jerusalem in Acts 15. Peter was able to build on Paul's teaching by dividing the spiritual gifts into 2 groups.

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.*

**Conclusions: how are we to use our gifts?**

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

*Two gifts?*

Often I've said in this study that we may have more than one gift. I came up with this idea because of what Peter wrote in this letter that there are serving and speaking gifts. What if we have at least one gift from each category?

We said in 1 Corinthians 12 that the Trinity was responsible for which gift(s) we have, where we use these gifts, and the results of the gifts being used in another's life. If the Spirit is the One giving out the gifts, He has the right to distribute gifts as He wishes.

Over the years I've felt that I had two gifts—one speaking and one serving—but was confused as to what my spiritual gift really was. When I realized that I may have two gifts given by the Spirit, and the Son and the Father determine the area of ministry and the results, life began to make more sense. I never know which gift will be needed or used; I just have to walk by faith and watch what the Father is doing.

## Part 3: Lists of Spiritual Gifts

First we're going to list the spiritual gifts from Paul and Peter. *If a spiritual gift has already been mentioned, the 2<sup>nd</sup> mention will be in italics.* Then we'll define the gifts and document some examples; I'll also include my thoughts on the gifts.

### 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

Remember that this information from Paul about spiritual gifts in this letter is the first that was written down for the groups of believers in different cities in the Gentile world. Also, the church in Corinth was having some serious problems, and Paul was trying to resolve these issues with them. Here is the first list of gifts that are given by the Spirit. These verses include the structure that Paul gave the believers for using these gifts.

*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*

1. Message of wisdom
2. Message of knowledge
3. Faith (what we call vision)
4. Healing
5. Miracles
6. Prophecy (Paul says it's the greatest gift of all; there's also the ministry of the prophets)
7. Discernment (distinguishing between truth and error before the difference is seen by the results)
8. Speaking in tongues
9. Interpretation of tongues

Ray Stedman in his book *Body Life* thinks that the gifts of *wisdom* and *knowledge* are twin gifts since they often appear together in a single individual who can organize Scripture and then use this truth when it's needed. for they are related to the same function. Ray also thinks that individuals with these gifts may also have the gift of *teaching* since the truth needs to be shared with believers. (*Body Life*, chapter 4, pages 43-44)

### 1 Corinthians 12:27-31

These next verses include the structure that Paul gave the church for using these gifts, reminding them (and us) that as a group we are the body of Christ, and each one of us is a part of this body. Some gifts are activities and others are roles.

*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts [in chapter 14].*

Apostles – a role or ministry (perhaps someone today with a pioneering spirit)

Prophets – a role or ministry (different from gift of *prophecy*)

Teachers – a role or ministry (different from role of pastor-teacher)

*Miracles*

*Healing*

10. Helping

11. Guidance/administration/governing

*Different kinds of tongues*

### 1 Corinthians 14:1-40

This chapter describes the difference between the gifts of prophecy and tongues and what the orderliness of worship services should look like.

### Romans 12:6-8

*If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*

*Prophecy - in accordance with faith*

12. Serving

13. Teaching (teachers)

14. Encouragement/Exhortation

15. Giving – generously

16. Leading – do diligently

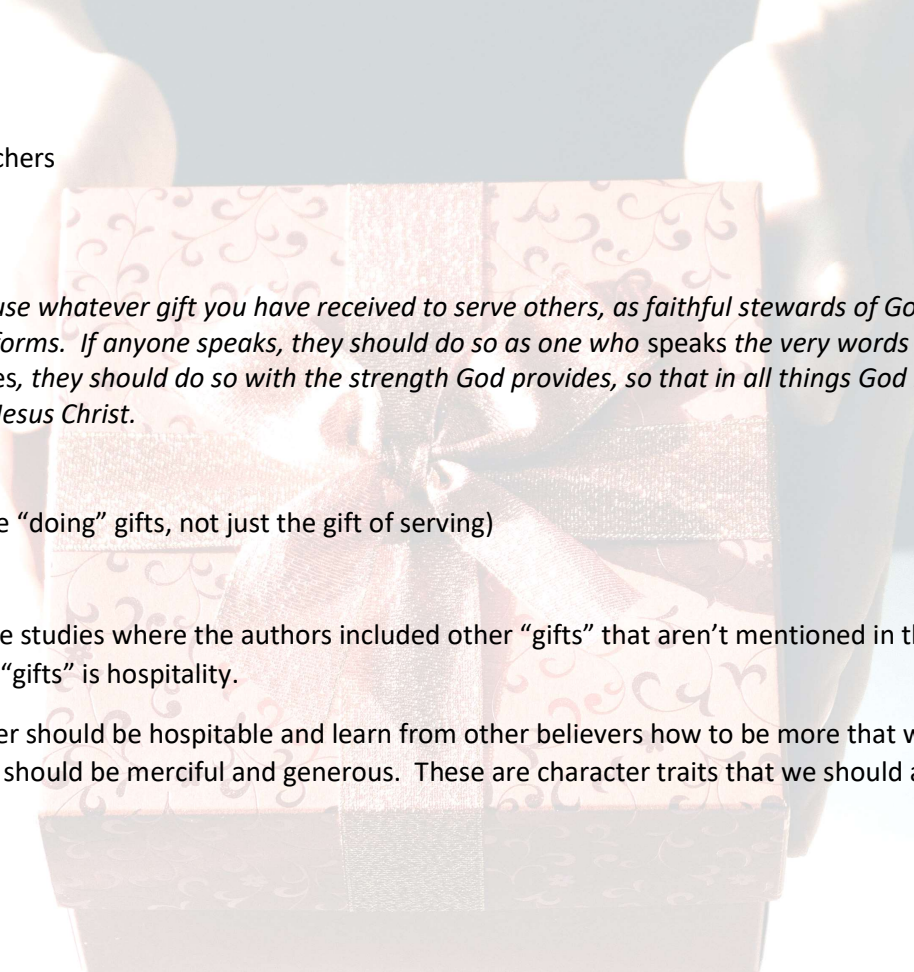
17. Show mercy - cheerfully



### Ephesians 4:11-13

*So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

These are the initial roles or ministries that need to be seen when a group of believers begin to come together to worship, learn, and have fellowship.

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18. Apostles
  19. Prophets
  20. Evangelists
  21. Pastors and teachers

### 1 Peter 4:10-11

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.*

1. Speaking gifts
2. Serving gifts (the "doing" gifts, not just the gift of serving)

### MARGIE'S INPUT:

I've read books and done studies where the authors included other "gifts" that aren't mentioned in these passages. One of these "gifts" is hospitality.

I think that every believer should be hospitable and learn from other believers how to be more that way. Likewise, every believer should be merciful and generous. These are character traits that we should all have.

## *Defining the Spiritual Gifts*

There are so many ways to organize the various gifts when it comes to defining them; I'm going to use these 4 groupings. *Church founding gifts* are those necessary when a new body of believers is being established; these gifts are probably given to missionaries as they reach out in new areas of the world where Jesus isn't known and build on the foundations that the original apostles established. The *working gifts* are used both in settings when believers are together and when they serve together in the world around them. *Administrative gifts* are the day-in and day-out gifts needed so groups of believers can function well in their group setting. *Sign gifts* are needed when missionaries are going into new areas where God's power and love draw new believers to Him and the written Word isn't available.

- *Church founding gifts*: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers
- *Working gifts*: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith or vision, discernment, helps, administration, exhortation, mercy with cheerfulness, teaching, and giving with simplicity
- *Administrative gifts*: service, administration or governings, leading
- *Sign gifts*: healing, miracles, tongues, interpretation of tongues

Most of the information in this section comes from the term paper I mentioned previously; the definitions came from the *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by W.E. Vine. I'm going to add some additional information from a paper Ted Wise wrote in 1978 for the Careers group of singles at Peninsula Bible Church in Palo Alto, California. I'll put his information in quotation marks, indent the paragraph(s), and add his name. I'm also adding information from Ray Stedman's book *Body Life*, and these references will be clear.

### **Church Founding Gifts**

Ray Stedman in *Body Life* says that the following church founding gifts are roles or ministries that are to be done by plain, ordinary Christians for the benefit of building up the local saints for the work of service so the body of Christ can be built up to maturity. (Ephesians 4:11-13) The instrument used for these four gifts to work effectively is the word of God. (*Body Life*, chapter 8, pages 87-89)

I lived during this time when Ray wrote this book and taught this truth on Sunday mornings and so experienced what being built up for the work of service meant. Of course, those of us hearing this had to put it into practice. I also saw others using their gifts for the sake of the body of Christ. Over the years many couples who lived under this teaching found themselves moving out of the area when their children were grown and out of the house. These couples ended up in smaller communities without good teaching, so they were able to share what they had learned with those who longed for this type of Christian community.

**APOSTLES** (*apostolos*) one who is sent forth

Definition: in NT times, they were men who were witnesses of the resurrection (*Acts 1:5, 1:21-22*); were commissioned and sent out by Christ (*Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:47*); had proof of their position by signs and miracles (*Mark 15:17-18, 16, 20*); had authority to preach the kingdom of God, plant churches, write scripture, and formulate doctrine on life, death, and the resurrection of Christ (*2 Peter 1:16-21, Mark 16:14-20, 1 John 1:1-4*); and who had been with Him in His ministry (*Luke 24:48*); Paul was an exception since the Lord commissioned him to go to the Gentiles.

Today there are no new apostles, but there are some who are given the pioneering spirit to plant new churches, especially in foreign lands; however, the foundations of these new churches today are to be the same foundations as the ones set forth in the first century by Jesus' disciples and Paul (Apostle to the Gentiles).

Examples: the original 11 apostles plus Paul; today, missionaries and men who start new organizations.

“One who is sent forth (*Mark 16:14-20, Acts 1:1-11*). Men gifted to lay the foundation upon which the rest would be built; personally commissioned and sent forth by Jesus Christ. Seeing that the originals still minister to us through the Scriptures, it is doubtful that there are Apostles today. There are still people whom God sends out with an Apostle-like ministry, but they build on the foundation of the Apostolic Word.” Ted Wise

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**PROPHETS** (*prophetes*) one who speaks forth or openly, to make it shine

Definition: a man or woman who can take the word of God and make it so clear that it seems to be shining. It would seem that they deal with large issues or themes rather than with prodding through a book, verse by verse. Their ministry is of a larger scope than just a local church.

The three results of their ministry are edification (to build up and strengthen), exhortation (to motivate), and consolation (to comfort). *1 Corinthians 14:3*.

Examples: a prophet named Agabus from Antioch spoke about a severe famine throughout Rome so the believers in Antioch should support the Jewish believers in Judea; Barnabas and Saul were to carry the money in *Acts 11:27-30*; the same prophet described what would happen to Paul in *Acts 21:7-11*.

“To speak forth or shine forth. A special spokesman of God who speaks to His people with authority and power. This gift might reflect special insight into the Truth that would result in men being called back to the obedience of faith. A prophet has a broader influence than a teacher. A prophet's ministry would be national, and he would be more of an exhorter than an instructor. A prophet is one who speaks forth the Word of God and makes it shine, not usually a foreteller of the future. However, sometimes prophets do foretell something God is going to do as an authenticating sign. There are not many prophets.” Ted Wise

NOTE: The gift of *prophecy* rather than the role of a prophet is included in the *Working Gifts* section.

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EVANGELISTS (*euangelistes*) a messenger of good news

Definition: one who has a unique ability to explain the gospel to non-believers, many of whom soon believe, and who can also effectively teach other believers how to share their faith and encourage them to do so.

Examples: Peter addressed the first crowd in Jerusalem when 3000 decided to believe in *Acts 2:14-29*; Peter's second sermon resulted in Peter and John being thrown into jail and 3000 more believers added in *Acts 3:11 to Acts 4:4*; after Stephen was martyred, Philip went to Samaria and began preaching with signs and healings and many believed and were baptized in *Acts 8:4-13*; an angel of the Lord told Philip to take a desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza and met an Ethiopian eunuch on his way back home and was reading Isaiah but didn't understand—Philip explained, the eunuch believed and was baptized in *Acts 8:26-40*

“A messenger and teller of Good News, a preacher of the Gospel. Those who have a unique ability to preach the redeeming story of Jesus Christ to non-Christians with convicting power. (*Acts 8:4-8*) Can be accompanied with signs, according to how God wants to do it.” Ted Wise

**MARGIE'S INPUT:**

The first time I met someone with the gift of *evangelism* (besides hearing Billy Graham on TV) was when one of our pastors, Ron Ritchie, spoke to our singles group, Careers Alive, in the mid-1970s along with Ted Wise. Those attending Careers in the early 70s grew from 50 to 120 in just one year because of Ron's biblical teaching couple with his gift of *evangelism*. The next year when he brought in some of the young men he was discipling, the numbers soared, and the restaurant's huge meeting room was filled because of his teaching and their lives. This was the first time a man my age asked me how he could pray for me and then followed up with me the next week on how I was doing. The quality of his life was a reflection of Ron's influence on his life. (This memory of the early 70s was reinforced by The History of Peninsula Bible Church 1948-1998 that's available on [pbc.org.history](http://pbc.org.history).)

Ron also started teaching periodically at our church, PBC, in the early 70s and the numbers of attendees from Stanford University and local engineering businesses grew because of his gift. When he left to go to another church a number of years later, it seemed like our numbers stagnated. My conclusion? Those with the gift of *evangelism* need to be plugged into local churches so all can benefit.

Ron's teaching helped me become more honest about my struggles so I could bring Jesus into these areas. I'm forever thankful for God bringing Ron into my life, and I know others feel this way too. Ron's with Jesus now.

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**PASTOR-TEACHER** (pastor – *poimen*) a shepherd, one who takes care of and leads a flock; (teacher – *didaskalos*) one who teaches God’s Word consistently in a local church

Definition: a pastor-teacher has two main responsibilities—constantly teaching God’s Word to the group he or she is responsible for and to individually and as a group encourage, direct, warn, and train the flock

Examples: Paul’s son in the faith, Timothy is a great example of a person with this gift. (1 Timothy 4:6, 11, 5:7)

“A shepherd, one who cares for, feeds, guides, directs and protects God’s flock. ‘Shepherd’ or ‘pastor’ is the job’s description, teaching is the way he [/she] fulfills this assignment. One who pastors and instructs from God’s Word. (1 Timothy 4:1-16) There are several pastor-teachers in any local body. It is one of the things elders are supposed to do.” Ted Wise

**MARGIE’S INPUT:** The gift of *teaching*, rather than the role of pastor-teacher, is included in the following *Working Gifts* section.

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**Working Gifts (“Ministering or Serving Gifts to Build Up Each Other 1 Cor. 12:8-11, 28-30, and Romans 12:7-8”)**

**WISDOM**, word of (*sophia*) the insight into the true nature of things

Definition: the ability to apply Scriptural truth to a situation because of seeing life from God’s perspective through knowing the Word and through experience.

Examples: Stephen in Acts 1:10, 7:1-53

“Insight into the true nature of things and the ability to understand how truth applies to specific situations. Seeing life from God’s point of view.” (Acts 6:1-15) Ted Wise

**MARGIE’S INPUT:**

If those who hear the word of wisdom spoken don’t want to know God’s perspective in their lives, they may turn their backs, so to speak, on the one with this gift. But if the person does want to hear from God, this wisdom may refresh them like a cool drink of water.

As mentioned previously, Ray Stedman said in his book that the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and teaching may be given to an individual for the benefit of believers.

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KNOWLEDGE, word of knowledge (*gnosis*) primarily a seeking to know, an inquiry, investigation, especially of spiritual truth

Definition: the ability to investigate and systematically organize God’s Word so that it is usable for the teachers, exhorters, and saints with the gift of *wisdom*.

Examples: probably all of the Gospel writers, those who researched and wrote biblical study books, and those who write Bible studies for other followers of Jesus

“Seeking to know, an inquiry or investigation of God’s Word so as to systemize facts, put them into manageable order and provide the raw material for teaching. To recognize and interrelate facets of Truth. (Acts 3:1-26)” Ted Wise

**MARGIE’S INPUT:**

The person with this gift will more than likely spend hours quietly studying and thinking. The result of this study will benefit many, but the one who has studied probably won’t be appreciated since they won’t be known.

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FAITH or Vision (*pistis*) a firm persuasion, a conviction based on hearing. In the NT it is always used as faith in God or Christ.

Definition: the ability to know that something which isn’t in existence will be and to trust God to work

Examples: Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia who begged Paul to come and help in *Acts 16:9-10*; the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision about not being afraid of the conflict around him, so Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months in *Acts 18:9-11*

“The gift of vision. The ability to see what God wants done, the courage and faith to take on a seemingly impossible job and accomplish it through faith in Christ, never in self. A vision accompanied with action. (*Acts 16:9-10, 18:9-11*)” Ted Wise

**MARGIE’S INPUT:**

The first example’s reference in Acts is Paul having a vision of going to Macedonia. The second reference in Acts 18 is about Paul realizing that a young slave woman who was yelling for a number of days about Paul being sent by God was annoying him; he commanded the spirit to come out of her, and it did. The owners of the slave woman realized their source of income was gone and they dragged Paul and Silas into the marketplace to face the authorities.

The gift of *faith* or *vision* is a God-given confidence that God will do something in the future.

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PROPHESYING (*propheteia*) the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God.

“PROPHESYING as a gift is the local rather than national ability to speak to men [and women] for God for their upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation. Also, to speak toward the unbelieving world, to convict, warn and bring to the worship of God. (*Acts 17:16-34*)” Ted Wise (Reference is when Paul was in Athens by himself.)

**MARGIE’S INPUT:**

The gift of *prophesying* is speaking out about what hasn’t been known to larger groups of believers. Over the years I’ve been fortunate to be under the teaching of those who have this gift of *prophesying* about issues. Ray Stedman was one of these teachers who taught and wrote about living in the body of Christ and spiritual gifts in *Body Life*. My current pastor, Andy Stanley, has been talking about issues that other teachers aren’t touching that help us connect with the world around us.

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DISCERNMENT (*diakrisis*) a distinguishing, a clear discrimination, judging; here, of discerning spirits, judging by evidence whether they are evil or of God

Definition: the ability to understand quickly what the problem is in a situation or in a sermon; to be able to pick up subtle points of error or to be able to clearly see motives of the flesh before the fruits are evident

Examples: Peter with Ananias and Sapphira in *Acts 5:1-11*; Peter in Samaria realizing that Simon, for his own financial benefit, wanted to be able to lay hands on people so they could receive the Holy Spirit in *Acts 8:14-24*

“To distinguish, to separate, the ability to distinguish between the spirit of Truth and the spirit of error on a subtle level. (*Acts 5:1-11*)” Ted Wise (Peter’s reference is Ananias and Sapphira.)

**MARGIE’S INPUT:**

If we’re not wanting to hear from someone with this gift of *discernment*, we probably won’t be happy with the truth being told—just like with the word of *wisdom*.

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**HELPS** (*antilempsis*) a laying hold of, and exchange, so as to support; here, one of the ministrations in the local church, by way of rendering assistance, perhaps especially of help ministered to the weak and needy; not official, rather done usually by individuals

Definition: the ability to see a need in another's life and to meet it in physical ways so that the person is helped and spiritually encouraged

Examples: Mary Magdalene and Joanna whose husband was the manager of Herod's household, Susanna, and other women who helped support the disciples' needs in *Luke 8:1-3*

"To lay hold of so as to support—to aid someone in need by lending a hand so that one is blessed and built up. (*Acts 6:1-5*)" Ted Wise (Reference is Stephen and six others were chosen to serve the physical needs of the large group of new Jewish converts in Jerusalem.)

**MARGIE'S INPUT:**

This gift of *helps* tends to be a one-time action that happens outside of the church setting by an everyday believer rather than the gift of *servicing*, which happens over and over in the local church and is an asset to the local body of believers.

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**EXHORTATION** (*paraklesis*) a calling to one's side and so to one's aid; encourage, admonish, exhort

Definition: the ability to motivate, encourage, comfort by friendship and by looking forward to what God promises He'll do in a believer's life

Examples: Barnabas stood up for Saul with the disciples in Jerusalem in *Acts 9:26-30*, went looking for Saul in Tarsus in *Acts 11:19-26*, stood up to Paul about taking John Mark with them in *Acts 15:39*; Peter warned and pleaded with Jews in Jerusalem to believe in Jesus in *Acts 2:40*; Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem with a letter about Gentile believers in *Acts 15:22*

"To call alongside, to admonish, exhort, to get people moving, to speak so as to motivate or encourage. (*Acts 2:40, 9:26-30* [see previous paragraph], *Acts 14:19-28*)" Ted Wise (The last reference is about how Paul kept on going during hardships and then taught believers to do the same.)

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**MERCY** (*eleco*) with cheerfulness (*hilarotes*) [came from hilarious?] to feel sympathy with the misery of another and to manifest it in actions

Definition: the ability to express compassion and love in actions to those who are really depressed or unlovely and to do so joyously

Examples: In Joppa, a disciple named Tabitha (Dorcas in Greek) was always doing good and helping the poor in Acts 9:36; what our Father wants is to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep ourselves from being polluted by the world in James 1:27

“Like helps, [mercy is] an outward manifestation of pity, the ability and resources adequate to meet needs joyfully. The compassionate, loving, lifting up of the downtrodden. (Acts 9:36)” Ted Wise (Reference is in previous paragraph.)

**MARGIE’S INPUT:**

One Sunday some of the leaders in our junior high group were going to take students to a nursing home to talk to the residents. This activity is one that is hard for me, so I decided to watch one of the leaders who had the gift of *mercy* as he interacted with these men and women and then imitate what he was doing. Suddenly, I started enjoying talking with the residents, and this ease of talking with people in difficult lifestyles has continued.

What I learned is that while we need to use our own gifts, we also need to learn how to be more merciful (in this case) from others with different gifts.

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**TEACHING** (*didaskalos*) one who teaches God’s Word consistently.

*Teaching* as a gift rather than as a role of pastor-teacher is giving instruction with the result that someone is learning the Truth of God. One who has the gift of *teaching* may not have the gift of *shepherding* a group of believers. Ted Wise (Reference is the believing Jews in Berea in Acts 17:10-15.)

**MARGIE’S INPUT:**

While most believers with the gift of *teaching* are also shepherds of their group (gift of *pastor-teacher*), some people are just teachers who write Bible studies and teach on podcasts. Often other gifts are often included with this gift of *teaching* (like *evangelism*).

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**GIVING** (*metadidomi*) to give a share of, impart; with simplicity (*haplotes*) single, single-minded so no mixed motives

Definition: the ability and capacity to share out of one's resources to give to another in such a way that they are spiritually blessed, God is glorified, and the one giving has no selfish motives in being generous

Examples: the Gentile churches giving to the Jerusalem church during the famine in *2 Corinthians 8*

"To give or impart (freely, without mixed motives). Someone called to be spiritually sensitive to needs and equipped with the resources or money to meet these needs. To make one's assets available for God's use. A freedom to give beginning with what one has." Ted Wise

**MARGIE'S INPUT:**

When our local church was just beginning here in Alpharetta, Ga., the story from our pastor is that local followers of Jesus gave from what they had. Some sold their possessions and gave. The giving just kept going, and all was anonymous. Their generosity encouraged others to give, and their example continues today after 30 years.

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**Administrative Gifts**—keep things in order through organization, planning, and execution of the plan: service, administration or governings, leading

**SERVICE** (*diakonia*) the office or work of the saint who is a servant of domestic duties

Definition: the ability to do a job for a long period of time that ministers to the whole congregations' physical and material needs

Examples: the first seven deacons that took care of the physical needs of new believers in Jerusalem in *Acts 6:1-6*

"Household chores, to meet the physical and practical needs of the congregation. Caring for the multitude of details around God's household. (*Romans 12:7*)" Ted Wise (Reference is "If gift is serving, then serve.")

**MARGIE'S INPUT:**

The physical running of a local church is done by those with the gift of *servicing*. Such people take care of the finances, make sure the meeting place is ready for group meetings, and whatever else is needed. These saints usually work behind the scenes and are not appreciated for all that they do. But they do their work willingly as servants of Jesus. They may be paid for their services, but they are exercising their gift of *service*.

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ADMINISTRATION or governings (*kubernesis*) to guide, steer, pilot; metaphorically speaks of those who act as guides in a local church

Definition: the ability to guide or steer a congregation by giving direction to the way it should go, especially during difficult times

Examples: Peter leading the discussion with other disciples in Jerusalem when Paul and Barnabas brought up the topic of Gentile believers in *Acts 15*

“Guiding or steering the affairs of a local church. A helmsman governs the course of the ship, but he does so under the direction of the captain. An elder or overseer. (*Acts 15:1-21*)” Ted Wise (Reference is in the previous paragraph.)

**MARGIE’S INPUT:**

Those with this gift are probably those men and women who give direction to their local group of believers in a loving and careful way. They oversee those who are responsible for various departments of the church.

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LEADING with diligence (*paraklesis*) to stand before and thus to lead, attend to with care and diligence

Definition: the ability to stand before a group and lead them through a meeting or service, earnestly concerned for their well-being.

Examples: In Antioch, the Holy Spirit set apart Barnabas and Paul for work in *Acts 13:1-3*, Peter leading the discussion in Jerusalem about Gentile Christians in *Acts 15*; Paul leading a discussion about him going to Rome and possible imprisonment in *Acts 20:17-32*

“To stand before and lead others with earnest concern for them” (e.g., chairing committees, leading meetings, etc.) (*Acts 15:12-21*) Ted Wise (Reference is in previous paragraphs.)

**MARGIE’S INPUT:**

Lots of men and women can lead worship services, meetings, and committees, but only when those being led feel loved and cared for is the gift of *leading* being used. Currently the woman leading our couples’ small group has this gift, and we all are benefiting from it.

## Sign Gifts

These gifts were first used with the Jews in Jerusalem after the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit came to the followers of Jesus who were hiding away. The first few days when the apostles were teaching around the temple, sign gifts were given them to prove the truth of what they were saying.

Later on, these sign gifts were given to the apostles as an indication to non-believers that God was working and they could believe in what the apostles were preaching.

Sign gifts are used when the truth of Jesus Christ hasn't been taught yet, especially during the 1<sup>st</sup> century before letters that became our scripture were passed from church to church. Sign gifts aren't needed as the church matures, but when missionaries go into new places in the world, sign gifts document their teaching.

### MARGIE'S INPUT:

After reading through the references of the sign gifts of *healing* and *miracles*, I was overwhelmed by how much God loved these Gentiles in the first century and wanted them to know Him. To prove his power and His love, Peter, the other apostles, and Paul were able to perform these sign gifts. The Jewish nation in Jerusalem, on the other hand, had seen God's power with the resurrection of His Son, Jesus the Nazarene. Jews from other countries may have needed this proof of the power of what the apostles were preaching.

**HEALING** (*iama*) the result of an act, to heal or the means of healing; to "make whole" either physically or spiritually

Definition: the ability to make another well physically, emotionally, or spiritually

Examples: Peter depended on the Spirit to heal a lame man, and the people who saw it were filled with wonder and amazement in *Acts 3:2-10*; apostles healed many and crowds came to them in *Acts 5:12-16*; Peter heals a man in Lydda who's been lame for eight years and those in Lydda and Sharon turned to the Lord in *Acts 9:34*, and these people believed.

"To make 'whole,' used in a physical as well as a spiritual sense, a supernatural ability to make one well emotionally, physically or spiritually. (*Acts 3:1-10*)" Ted Wise (Reference is in previous paragraph.)

### MARGIE'S INPUT:

After Peter healed the lame man in *Acts 3:1-10*, friends of Tabitha (Dorcas in Greek) pleaded with Peter to come to her in Joppa since she had recently died. Peter sent everyone out of the room, prayed, and told her to get up, which she did. Peter took her outside to her friends. Many people believed because of this in *Acts 9:36-43*.

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**MIRACLES** (*dunais*) power, inherent ability, is used of works of a supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural agents or means [the word dynamite comes from this Greek word]

Definition: the ability to do natural acts in a supernatural way, usually transitioning the time process (Satan often tries to counterfeit)

Examples: Philip, who's in Samaria, preached about the Messiah and performed signs so that impure spirits came out of many who were paralyzed, or lame, and they were healed—great joy in the city in *Acts 8:6-13*; in Ephesus, God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them in *Acts 19:11-12*

“Powerful works of supernatural origin as seen in Jesus’ life and certain Old Testament prophets as well as in the lives of the Apostles as recorded in the book of Acts. (Acts 9:36-43)” Ted Wise (Reference is the healing of Tabitha in the previous gift of *healing*.)

**MARGIE’S INPUT:**

See my input at the beginning of the Sign Gifts.

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**TONGUES** (*glossa*) the supernatural gift of *speaking in another language* without its having been learnt; here, is exercised at the gatherings of local churches (*1 Corinthians 14*)

Definition: the ability of a believer to speak praise to God in a known foreign language, but which is unknown to him/her, as a sign to unbelievers who know that particular language and understand that something special is happening; if it is done in a church, it must be interpreted by another believer so that the Body is edified. Prophecy is more important than speaking in tongues (*1 Corinthians 14*) since all benefit.

Examples: At Pentecost what seemed to be like tongues of fire came to rest on the disciples who were hiding, and the disciples began to speak in languages that they didn’t know; the God-fearing Jews who had come to Jerusalem 50 days previously from all over the Roman Empire to celebrate Passover heard the disciples speaking in their own language and declaring the wonders of God in *Acts 2:3-13*.

Peter was sent to Caesarea to visit Cornelius and his friends, when Peter began to speak about what happened at Pentecost, those believing Jews who were with Peter began to speak in tongues with the language of those in the home and they understood what was being said and believed and were baptized in *Acts 10:1-48*.

When Paul was in Ephesus, he spoke with 12 disciples who had been under the teaching of Apollos. He asked if they had received the Holy Spirit, which they hadn’t and said that their baptism was John’s baptism of repentance. Paul placed his hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues and prophesied in *Acts 19:1-7*.

“A Spirit-given ability (‘As they were moved by the Holy Spirit’), to speak in a foreign language unknown to the speaker. Speaking praises to God as a sign to the Jews that the prophecy of Joel was coming to pass. [Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18]; God was bringing God-fearing Jews to Himself in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-36) and bring Gentiles to Himself (Acts 10:1-48)” Ted Wise

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INTERPRETATION of tongues (*hermeneia*) denotes to explain, interpret, and is used to explain the meaning of words of a different language

Definition: the ability to explain to the congregation what is being said in the foreign language so that the believers are edified (1 Corinthians 14)

“A must or there will be no edification of the body. A Spirit-given ability to understand unknown languages.” Ted Wise

**MARGIE’S INPUT:**

While Paul spoke in tongues while in private, he wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:18-19 that interpretation was more important than speaking in tongues personally. His conclusion was that while speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift, it is not a requirement for entering heaven; only having the Holy Spirit in our hearts is necessary. (1 Corinthians 12:3)

## Part 4: Discovering Your Spiritual Gift(s)

All of us are called to be generous, helpful, merciful, full of faith and discerning. But each one of us is gifted by the Holy Spirit to excel without effort by exercising a spiritual gift. Since the Father, the Son, and the Spirit determine the effects of our gifts, the area of ministry for exercising our gifts, and the gifts themselves, we need to keep our hands open to where and how we're to live as followers of Jesus and leave the results of how we love to the Father. (1 Corinthians 12)

*Do you know someone who has the gift of mercy and can cheerfully go into a nursing home and talk with those who live there? The rest of us can watch this person, imitate what's being done, and become more merciful.*

*Do you know someone who has the gift of giving and is so gracious with what the Father has given that possessions and/or money are quietly shared with others in need? The rest of us can watch this person, imitate what's being done, and become more giving.*

While spiritual gifts are given to help the body of Christ grow into maturity, they are also given so that other believers can learn how to be more that way. When we see someone who exercises their gift(s) well, we should let them know, because they are probably unaware of what the Father is doing through them.

One of the best ways to discover your spiritual gift(s) is to watch yourself wanting to love another person in the midst of a difficult situation. For example, you come across a car crash, do you:

Action	Gift in action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pray, knowing the Father will bring the right people to help those involved in the crash?</li> </ul>	Faith
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call 911 so those who have been trained can come quickly?</li> </ul>	Leading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize others around to help people get out of the cars?</li> </ul>	Administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use your medical knowledge and experience to triage care until the professionals come?</li> </ul>	Discernment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comfort those who aren't hurt so badly that they can talk?</li> </ul>	Mercy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop traffic so emergency vehicles can get close to the crash?</li> </ul>	Helps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Etc.</li> </ul>	

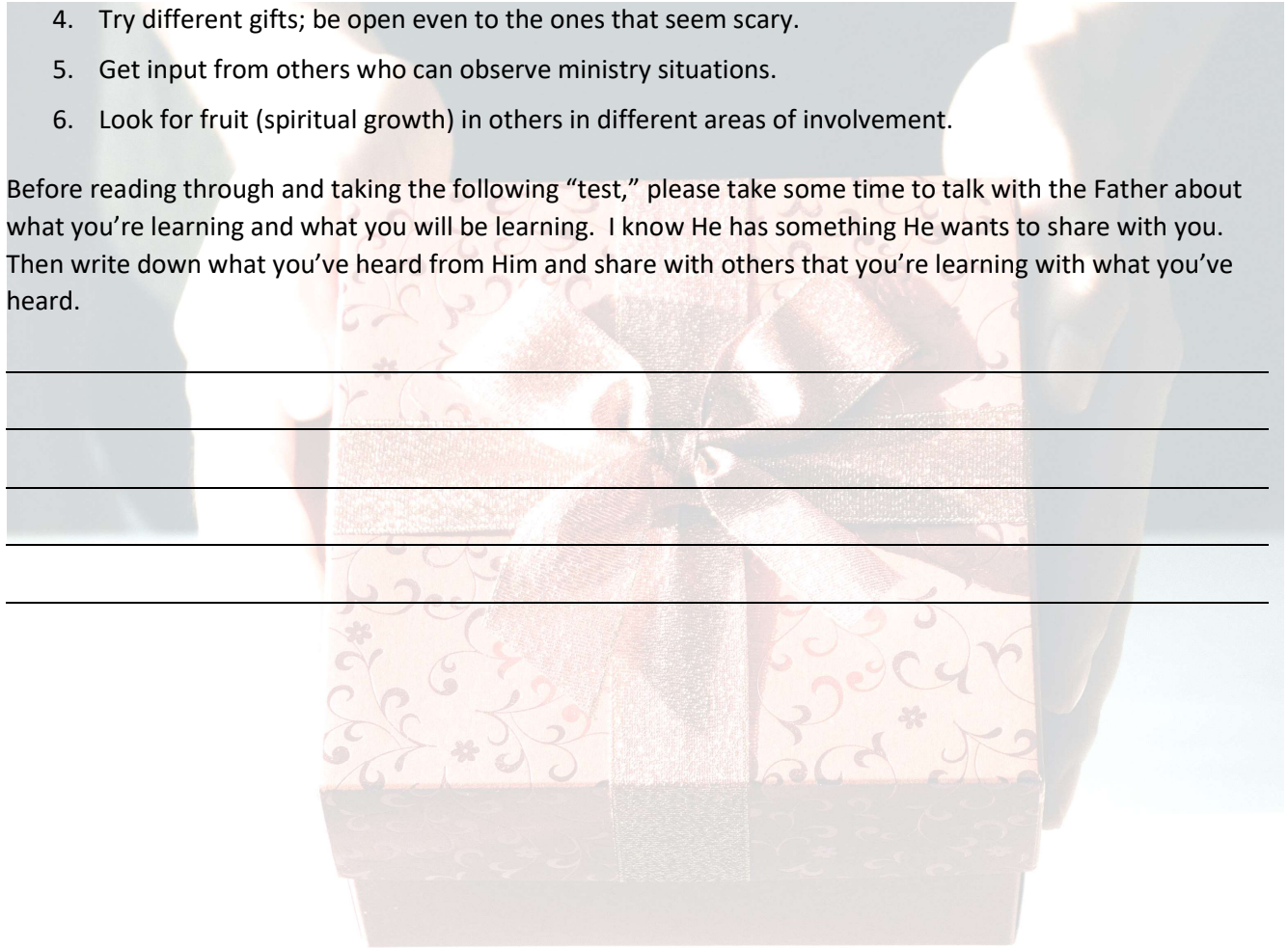
All of these actions can show how you want to love when love is needed. Remember the two chapters in 1 Corinthians (Chapters 12 and 14) when Paul taught them (and us) about these gifts, and which are the most important? Paul knew that we always needed to be reminded of the importance of loving those around us, so he inserted his famous (to us) Chapter 13 on what love really looks like in action.

The best way to find which gift(s) in your life is to seek to love others and then observe the ways that you love, because the gifts are God’s way for us to express active love to the Body and to those who aren’t believers yet.

Here are some other ways you can discover your spiritual gift(s):

1. Ask the Father for opportunities to use the gift(s) that you’ve been given.
2. Be involved with people and see what form that involvement often takes.
3. Look for the ways of serving that are the most enjoyable.
4. Try different gifts; be open even to the ones that seem scary.
5. Get input from others who can observe ministry situations.
6. Look for fruit (spiritual growth) in others in different areas of involvement.

Before reading through and taking the following “test,” please take some time to talk with the Father about what you’re learning and what you will be learning. I know He has something He wants to share with you. Then write down what you’ve heard from Him and share with others that you’re learning with what you’ve heard.



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## *Spiritual Gifts Test*

While a number of spiritual gifts tests are available online, I've found that the gifts they're testing for aren't always the ones listed in the Scriptures we've studied. Therefore, the test I'm including is the one that Ted Wise had in his study that we've been using. He hadn't included all of the gifts, so I've added the rest of them in these descriptions. The total number of gifts we've been looking at is 21.

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The following paragraphs are personal descriptions. As you read through them all, find the one that you feel best describes you, and place an A in the blank next to it. Continue ranking until you have A-F (or A-D).

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. What a joy it is to be a Christian, so much so that you are rarely bogged down by the anxieties and worries that come from living in this world. This attitude often reflects itself in a variety of ways: a committed prayer life often with answers to prayer; starting projects that seem impossible to others; participating in projects that others have given up and then usually seeing results.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. You seem to put great emphasis on analyzing motives or determining attitudes in order to assess the truth or error being presented. You have a great desire to identify where power comes from in the most difficult of situations. This desire may take the form of being able to really see the potential of those around you, or a certain uncomfortableness that you sense when you hear errors in doctrine being spoken in an apparently truth-like-manner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. You find yourself doing things that don't attract much attention or acclaim to you personally, including carrying out duties and functions that have been decided on by others. You may also find yourself being particularly attracted to assisting those who are either temporarily or permanently unable to do so for themselves. Along with this, you've possibly experienced great frustration because of the "red tape" that may encumber you; however, you may still find difficulty in saying "no."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. You often find yourself wondering, either with individuals or in group situations, "Now how would God see this?" and/or thinking, "It seems the Lord would look at this problem in this way." Perhaps on occasion you have had an inner urge to say something that you feel is from the Lord and would specifically resolve a conflict. You may even find yourself relatively quiet in the midst of such discussions, waiting for the right time and the right way to speak to complex questions in a short, concise way that would result in the spontaneous agreement of others to your scriptural insight.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. You have had occasion in a group of Christians to speak in a known foreign language that was previously unknown to you. At the same time, someone was present to interpret your speech for the spiritual building up of those in the group because the content of what was being said was praise and worship of God.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6 You seem to be attracted to people who are experiencing tremendous emotional or spiritual conflicts, people for whom others seem to shy away. You also seem to be able to sense another's feelings by non-verbal communication more than other people do. This sensitivity may seem to reflect itself in your being able to distinguish between the person and his/her actions. In other words, you would find it easy to forgive the person without condoning what's been done, resulting in people feeling accepted by you despite their actions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7 In reading the Word, you realize that you have a great desire to clearly and thoroughly understand theological concepts, and that you want to put in order the facts in Scripture that make those theological notions more readily understandable to others. Maybe you have even noticed that you will take these concepts and translate them into modern thinking without changing their meaning so that these ideas may make sense to others. Your experience might even be that people talk with you about these theological precepts of the faith and that your answers seem to enlighten them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8 You seem to particularly notice how projects or events are carried out with a desire for them to run smoothly and efficiently. You might be thinking about ways in which meetings could be run better and/or you might be especially sensitive when things get "off course" or distracted from what their original intent. You seem to be able to see beyond all the details that bog others down by giving clear responsibilities to certain people while you watch the overall progress. You may even sense a joy in seeing others grow from the responsibilities you have given them. You'd rather oversee a church or a large organization than a smaller meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9 You have had the experience of being with a group of believers when someone spoke in a known foreign language and found yourself able to explain its meaning of bringing praise to God; although, prior to that event, you did not know the language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10 Repeatedly you find yourself thinking about how certain events fit into God's overall plan for humanity or how certain Scripture passages, which have seemed hidden or vague to others, reveal to you God's will for man. In your daily life you might have encountered people asking you if a certain solution to an issue is God's will or not. This may also have exhibited itself in an interest in politics, debate, or being asked to speak to groups of people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11 When you listen to teaching or reading the Word yourself, you find yourself particularly looking for ways in which principles will be applicable to life. This emphasis leads you to want to set an example of right-living for those around you; others may have even told you that your example strengthens and encourages them. When you share with people, you enjoy using personal experience to illustrate Biblical truths. Others may often come to you when discouraged, and the advice you give causes them to new action of obedience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12 You've discovered that you're very free with your possessions (they don't seem to possess you) and your viewpoint is that everything belongs to God. So whatever resources you have, you enjoy putting them at His disposal for the furtherance of His work here on earth. You find yourself responding freely to individuals or situations in need and experience joy in doing so—you don't need to be asked. Surprise gifts may be one expression of this.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 13 When you study the Word, you find yourself absorbed with accurate word definitions, historical settings, contextual problems, and Biblical principles that all explain truth. From this you draw illustrations about right-living for the believer. Both your explanation of Biblical truth and contemporary applications result in others understanding the character and word of God and His Son Jesus Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14 Possibly because of some deep hurt in your own life, you find it easy to identify with those who are also hurting. People seem to feel free in talking with you about their low self-images, feelings of guilt, or worthlessness, and you are able to communicate with them how God sees them, resulting in them having a healthier view and a new freedom never before experienced.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15 Out of the blue, you think of doing something for someone that no one else has thought of. This action brings joy to the receiver since the action shows that the Father has been thinking of them and knows their needs. This action is a one-time event rather than ongoing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16 In a part of the world where Jesus isn't known, you find that you're able to do something instantly that normally takes a long time. This action convinces those around you that God knows them and loves them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17 In a part of the world where Jesus isn't known, with a pioneering spirit you're drawn to plant a new church based on the biblical foundations already established in the first century.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18 You've been called by God to make clear on a national or worldwide basis issues or themes that aren't clearly expressed in Scripture. What's presented is so clear that it's like the truth is shining and can't be hidden. The results of this ministry are to build up and strengthen the church, motivate believers, and comfort those who need comfort in the world in which they're living.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19 You have an amazing ability to so explain the Gospel to those who don't know Jesus Christ that they can't help but believe. It seems like every time you're in this situation, the family of God expands. While your relationships tend to take you outside of those in the faith, part of your role is to effectively teach other believers how to share their faith and encourage them to do so.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20 You've been called to lead, encourage, warn, and care for a group of believers in the same way a shepherd takes care of his flock, as well as constantly teach God's Word when they're together so they've been trained to do what God has called them to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21 You're most comfortable when in front of others and care about those being led. These smaller situations may be when you're chairing committees or leading meetings rather than being in charge of a local church.

## Appendix

### Answers—Spiritual Gifts Test:

1. faith/vision	2. discernment	3. service/serving	4. wisdom	5. speak in tongues	6. mercy	7. knowledge
8. governing/ administration	9. interpretation of tongues	10. prophesy	11. exhortation/ encouragement	12. giving	13. teaching	14. healing
15. helps/helping	16. miracles	17. apostle	18. prophet	19. evangelist	20. pastor-teacher	21. leading

### Answers—Questions in the Study:

#### Body of Christ—what does this mean?

1. 1 Corinthians 12:27 - We are each a part of Christ's body.
2. Ephesians 3:6 - Christ's resurrection brought together the Gentiles and the believing Jews into one body so they can share in the promise in Christ Jesus.
3. Ephesians 4:12-14 - Christ gave four roles to His followers to equip them for works of service so we can all reach unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God. This maturity in the fullness of Christ means we'll no longer be like infants who can be tossed back and forth by the waves in a storm, and cunning and crafty people can't throw us off course by their deceitful scheming.
4. Ephesians 4:15-16 - By speaking truth lovingly, we will grow up into a mature body like our head, Jesus Christ.
5. Ephesians 5:21-24 - We are to submit ourselves to each other like we do to Christ. Wives submitting to their husbands shows the non-believing world how we're each to submit to Christ. (Submitting isn't like being a doormat to be walked over.)
6. Colossians 1:24 - Paul's suffering is for the sake of Christ's body, the church (group of believers), and he endures this suffering willingly.
7. Colossians 3:15 - As members of Christ's body, we are called to peace (lack of warfare with others), so the peace of Christ should rule our hearts, and we should be thankful.

#### Christ is the head of the body and we're all members; what does this mean?

The head tells the body what to do, where to go, how long to stay there, etc.

Being part of the body means we're to work together to reflect His life as He lived here on earth.

#### Using spiritual gifts – a “grace” gift so we can be:

*patient* instead of blowing our top

*truthful* instead of humoring another

*kind* instead of saying cutting words

*loving* instead of being angry or critical

and a *one-person man or woman* instead of flirting.

### **1 Corinthians 12:1-7 – work of the Trinity**

- The Spirit distributes the different gifts to the believers as He wishes [and perhaps will give a different gift at a different time whenever He sees the need].
- The Lord (Jesus Christ) determines the area of ministry/service where the believer will work [and the Lord has the right to change the area of ministry/service whenever He sees the need and it's not up to use to determine where and when we use the gift(s) we've been given].
- The Father has the right and responsibility of determining the results of the gift(s) being used whenever and wherever the other members of the Trinity are involved [which means we're not responsible for any results of using our gift(s)].

### **1 Corinthians 12:12-26 – unity and diversity in the body**

- Some gifts are more visible than others (an arm vs. a heart), but both are important for the body to work.
- If we were all the same part of the body, where would it be? If all eyes, we couldn't hear.
- The Father has placed us where He wants us to be; many parts but one body.
- Parts that seem to be weaker are indispensable, etc. God has put the body together to give greater honor to the parts that lack it so there shouldn't be any division in the body, and we should have equal concern for each other.
- If one part suffers [like an ingrown toenail], every part suffers with it, and vice versa.

### **Romans 12:3-6—humble service in the body of Christ**

- Think of ourselves with sober judgment rather than thinking we're better than others because of the faith the Father has given to us
- Remember that as a person, our body has many members and they don't all work the same way, so in Christ, we all form one body, and each part of the body belongs to all the others.
- We each have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us by the Spirit.

### **Ephesians 4:11-16 – gifts and maturing believers**

- Goal is for the body of Christ to be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God.
- We're to become mature in the fullness of Christ.
- No longer are we to be like infants, tossed back and forth by the waves and by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.
- We're to speak the truth in love so we will all grow to maturity in every area to be like Christ, the head of the body.
- From Christ, our head, we're to be joined and held together by supporting ligaments so we grow and be built up in love as each part of the body does its work.

**1 Peter 4:10-11 – living for God**

- Gifts that we receive are for the purpose of serving others as stewards of God’s grace.
- Speaking gifts are actually saying the very words of God.
- Serving gifts are to be done with the strength that God provides so that He may be praised through Jesus Christ in all things.

