

## Gift list descriptions in 1 Corinthians 12

*Paul does not elaborate the specific characteristics of any of these grace-gifts. The following are descriptions of how we see spiritual gifts functioning in the New Testament church. More noticeable gifts are listed alongside of less spectacular ones, equally valued and valuable. All references by chapter and verse only are found in 1 Corinthians.*

Message of wisdom—speech that is Christ-exalting with practical advice and application (see 1:24 and 2:7)

Message of knowledge—mysteries known only by special insight given by the Spirit for the common good (see 13:2 and 14:6)

Faith—not saving faith common to all Christians, but extraordinary faith for specific needs (see 13:2)

Gifts of healings—a variety of gifts (pl.) for healings (pl.) of various kinds of sickness and disease

Working miracles—actions of God in and through the church to demonstrate His power for His purposes and glory

Prophecy\*—speaking forth from the Bible, words of Scripture that touch hearts, bringing conviction and change (see 14:1, 3, 24-25)

Distinguishing between spirits—judging both whom to listen to (see 1 John 4:1-6) and also what is said (see 1 Thes. 5:20-21)

Speaking in kinds of tongues—there is much debate whether this refers to known or unknown (ecstatic) languages. Most likely unknown to the speaker, but intelligible to God (see 14:2 and 28)

Interpretation of tongues—a necessary gift, always paired with the ‘speaking in tongues’ in order to benefit the church (see 14:26-28)

Helps—used only here in the NT, means “coming to the aid of” and likely refers to assisting the poor, needy, sick, and distressed

Governance—also used only here in the NT, means directing people and administrating projects toward a spiritual goal

\* <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/piper-addresses-strange-fire-and-charismatic-chaos>  
(recommended reference article)

## Spiritual Gifts in Theology and Practice

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

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**Def. Spiritual Gifts are powerful expressions of God’s Spirit graciously given through a believer for the good of the Body.**

### THEOLOGY

1. All spiritual gifts are to **exalt** Jesus as Lord (1-3)
2. “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.” (4-11)

ALL CAPS (different gifts)		<i>italics</i> (single source)
DIVERSITIES of gifts	there are, but	<i>the same Spirit</i>
DIVERSITIES of service	there are, but	<i>the same Lord</i>
DIVERSITIES of workings	there are, but	<i>the same God</i>
TO ONE is given	a message of wisdom	<i>through the Spirit</i>
TO ANOTHER	a message of knowledge	<i>by the same Spirit</i>
TO ANOTHER	faith	<i>by the same Spirit</i>
TO ANOTHER	gifts of healings	<i>by the One Spirit</i>

“The one God who is Himself characterized by diversity within unity has decreed the same for His church” (Fee, 1987).

### PRACTICE

3. Diversity is essential in the **church** illus. body (12 – 20)
  - a. **Many** parts make up one body of Christ (12, 14, 20)
  - b. Every Christian is a member of the body of Christ (13)
  - c. Diversity without **unity** is a monstrosity (17, 19)
  - d. God places people in church and **blends** them together just like He wants (11, 18, 24, 28)
4. Diversity is not meant to **divide**, but to unite (21 – 26)
  - a. The **necessity** of different gifts
  - b. The **honor** due to different gifts
  - c. The **concern** shown for different gifts
5. Spiritual gifts are given to and through **people** (27-31)