

# NWC Questions

for Personal Study and Small Groups 8/28/11

## Spiritual Gifts

1 Cor. 12.27-31

**Focus:** to call the church to willingly embrace the work of the Spirit in being the body of Christ, using our gifts to serve one another in love.

Read 12.27-31. From throughout 1 Cor. 12, what does Paul have in mind when he calls us "the body of Christ"? What must we do to truly "be the church" in that sense? (solicit teachings about the body from throughout the chapter, e.g. we must not be divided from v. 25)

Which of these teachings about the body of Christ is most significant for you? why?

How does unity (v. 25) differ from uniformity (v. 29, 30)? How do you build unity and protect the diversity of the body?

Have people in your group share what they believe to be their spiritual giftedness and how they discovered that. How do you think we should best "earnestly desire the higher gifts"?

Ask them to interact with this quote from John Piper. Do you agree or disagree? If his counsel is good, how should this affect us?

What do you need to do to see the Spirit manifest Himself in you for the good of the body?

# NWC Questions

for Personal Study and Small Groups 8/28/11

## Spiritual Gifts

1 Cor. 12.27-31

**Focus:** to call the church to willingly embrace the work of the Spirit in being the body of Christ, using our gifts to serve one another in love.

Read 12.27-31. From throughout 1 Cor. 12, what does Paul have in mind when he calls us "the body of Christ"? What must we do to truly "be the church" in that sense? (solicit teachings about the body from throughout the chapter, e.g. we must not be divided from v. 25)

Which of these teachings about the body of Christ is most significant for you? why?

How does unity (v. 25) differ from uniformity (v. 29, 30)? How do you build unity and protect the diversity of the body?

Have people in your group share what they believe to be their spiritual giftedness and how they discovered that. How do you think we should best "earnestly desire the higher gifts"?

Ask them to interact with this quote from John Piper. Do you agree or disagree? If his counsel is good, how should this affect us?

What do you need to do to see the Spirit manifest Himself in you for the good of the body?

*I think it would be fair to say... that you shouldn't bend your mind too much trying to label your spiritual gift before you use it. That is, don't worry about whether you can point to prophecy, or teaching, or wisdom, or knowledge, or healing, or miracles, or mercy, or administration, etc., and say, "That's mine." The way to think is this: The reason we have spiritual gifts is so that we can strengthen other people's faith; here is someone whose faith is in jeopardy; how can I help him? Then do or say what seems most helpful, and if the person is helped, then you may have discovered one of your gifts. If you warned him of the folly of his way and he repented, then perhaps you have the gift of "warning." If you took a walk with her and said you knew what she was going through and lifted her hope, then perhaps you have the gift of "empathy." If you had them over to your home when they were new and lonely, then perhaps you have the gift of "hospitality." We must not get hung up on naming our gifts. The thing to get hung up on is, "Are we doing what we can do to strengthen the faith of the people around us?"*

*I really believe that the problem of not knowing our spiritual gifts is not a basic problem. More basic is the problem of not desiring very much to strengthen other people's faith. Human nature is more prone to tear down than it is to build up. The path of least resistance leads to grumbling and criticism and gossip, and many there be that follow it. But the gate is narrow and the way is strewn with obstacles which leads to edification and the strengthening of faith. So the basic problem is becoming the kind of person who wakes up in the morning, thanks God for our great salvation, and then says, "Lord, O how I want to strengthen people's faith today. Grant that at the end of this day somebody will be more confident of your promises and more joyful in your grace because I crossed his path." The reason I say becoming this kind of person is more basic than finding out your spiritual gift is that when you become this kind of person, the Holy Spirit will not let your longings go to waste. He will help you find ways to strengthen the faith of others, and that will be the discovery of your gifts. So let's apply ourselves to becoming the kind of people more and more who long to strengthen each other's faith.*

*I think it would be fair to say... that you shouldn't bend your mind too much trying to label your spiritual gift before you use it. That is, don't worry about whether you can point to prophecy, or teaching, or wisdom, or knowledge, or healing, or miracles, or mercy, or administration, etc., and say, "That's mine." The way to think is this: The reason we have spiritual gifts is so that we can strengthen other people's faith; here is someone whose faith is in jeopardy; how can I help him? Then do or say what seems most helpful, and if the person is helped, then you may have discovered one of your gifts. If you warned him of the folly of his way and he repented, then perhaps you have the gift of "warning." If you took a walk with her and said you knew what she was going through and lifted her hope, then perhaps you have the gift of "empathy." If you had them over to your home when they were new and lonely, then perhaps you have the gift of "hospitality." We must not get hung up on naming our gifts. The thing to get hung up on is, "Are we doing what we can do to strengthen the faith of the people around us?"*

*I really believe that the problem of not knowing our spiritual gifts is not a basic problem. More basic is the problem of not desiring very much to strengthen other people's faith. Human nature is more prone to tear down than it is to build up. The path of least resistance leads to grumbling and criticism and gossip, and many there be that follow it. But the gate is narrow and the way is strewn with obstacles which leads to edification and the strengthening of faith. So the basic problem is becoming the kind of person who wakes up in the morning, thanks God for our great salvation, and then says, "Lord, O how I want to strengthen people's faith today. Grant that at the end of this day somebody will be more confident of your promises and more joyful in your grace because I crossed his path." The reason I say becoming this kind of person is more basic than finding out your spiritual gift is that when you become this kind of person, the Holy Spirit will not let your longings go to waste. He will help you find ways to strengthen the faith of others, and that will be the discovery of your gifts. So let's apply ourselves to becoming the kind of people more and more who long to strengthen each other's faith.*