

**I. “Thank you for taking the gifts inventory”**

- A. Welcome any outstanding responses
- B. Have additional inventories for anyone who would still like to participate

**II. Seven Questions and Four Questions**

**A. Seven Questions for 1 Corinthians 12-14**

1. What is a spiritual gift?
2. Why tell us there are varieties of gifts?
3. What does “manifestation of the Spirit” mean?
4. What is the common good God accomplishes with spiritual gifts?
5. What gifts has God appointed here at Cornerstone?
6. What role does love play in spiritual gifts?
7. What does edification of the church mean and why is it the primary goal of spiritual gifts?

**B. Four Questions to Answer the Sixth Question**

1. What does Paul mean when he writes “earnestly desire the higher gifts?”
2. What does love have to do with higher gifts?
3. What does any of this have to do with us?
4. What are some ways we can put this higher gift into practice?

**III. Answer to the First Question**

**A. What does Paul mean when he writes of “higher gifts”?**

1. From *mega*
  - a. Examples
    - (1) 7-11
      - (a) Regular/Large/Big Gulp
      - (b) 2014 Mega Big Gulp (150 oz) - 128 oz = gallon
    - (2) Megalodon = massively big
      - (a) Megalodon, meaning "big tooth", is an extinct species of shark that lived approximately 23 to 3.6 million years ago, during the Early Miocene to the end of the Pliocene. It was formerly thought to be a member of the family Lamnidae, making it closely related to the great white shark.
      - (b) The largest megalodon tooth ever found was 6.9 inches long.
  - (3) Usually think of mega as the ultimate superlative
- b. Of elevated status
- c. Higher is not about superlatives but about Corinthian abuse of gifts.
- d. They created the problem by esteeming one gift over another when all gifts are equal at an ultimate level.

- (1) **1 Corinthians 1:10 (ESV)** *I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.*
- (2) Throughout the letter Paul has dealt with a Corinthian tendency to improperly exalt person/practice over another when they should be esteemed equally or else subordinate only to Christ
- (3) **1 Corinthians 2:2 (ESV)** *For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.*
- (4) **The only “mega” worthy of Christian devotion and effort is Jesus Christ himself and whatever concerns him**
2. Modern Christians sometimes interpret verses in a way that perpetuates the Corinthian error in reverse.
- We don't want to elevate tongues so we read this like Paul is teaching that prophecy is “higher” than “tongues.”
    - 1 Corinthians 14:5 (ESV)** *Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.*
      - Paul uses the word “mega” for prophecy but
      - He introduces a condition that equalizes “mega” - building up the church
    - 1 Corinthians 14:12 (ESV)** *So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.*
      - Eager/Strive to excel = “earnestly desire”
      - Before he gets to the content of ch. 14 Paul introduces the flow of his argument at the end of ch. 12: “A more excellent way”
  - Paul constructs his teaching in these three chapters (and in the whole letter for that matter) to demonstrate that divine love alone, active in and through the lives of believers, validates the life practice of faithful believers**
    - Contextual flow of the passage
      - Gifts exalt Christ 12:1-3
      - Gifts arise from a single source for a single purpose 12:4-11
      - Integration esteems all gifts 12:12-31a
      - Love exceeds any giftedness 12:31b-14:1
    - In practice
      - Raise every conflict in the church to the level of divine love and every conflict finds resolution

- (b) Raise every relationship to the level of divine love and every relationship will reflect the divine glory
- (c) Raise every sin to the scrutiny of divine love and both sin and sinner will melt away to holiness
- (d) Raise every ministry to an effort to adequately express divine love and every gift and giver will be equally esteemed.

**B. Point of “Higher Gifts”**

1. **“If you Corinthians insist on esteeming one gift over another then esteem love over all of them.”**
2. This is not to say that spiritual gifts are meaningless or inferior
  - a. **Once you understand love is the motive for giving the gift and the motive for using the gift you exalt all the gifts to equal station.**
  - b. Paul’s recognition
    - (1) Paul recognizes all gifts of equal stature on the basis of source and purpose
    - (2) Paul recognizes all gifts of equal stature on the basis of divine love: the motive and purpose of each and all gifts
    - (3) Paul recognizes all gifts are of equal stature on the basis of expected outcome: build up the church.

The Spirit, the Body, and the Gifts: Love and the Gifts (Part 2)

1 Corinthians 12:31b-14:1

**IV. Remaining Questions**

**A. Questions**

1. What does love have to do with higher gifts?
2. What does any of this have to do with us?
3. What are some ways we can put this higher gift into practice?

**B. What does love have to do with higher gifts?**

1. The relationship of love and spiritual gifts
  - a. The absence of love negates the presence of gifts      13:1-3
    - (1) Tongues but no love? Nothing
    - (2) Prophecy but not love? Nothing
    - (3) Knowledge but not love? Nothing
    - (4) Faith but not love? Nothing
  - b. Generosity but not love? Nothing
2. Love possesses quantifiable measurements      13:4-8a
  - a. Patient
  - b. Kind
  - c. Content
  - d. Humble
  - e. Self-controlled

- f. Thoughtful
  - g. Gracious
  - h. Calm
  - i. Reasonable
  - j. Holy
  - k. Heavenly
  - l. Longsuffering
  - m. Trusting
  - n. Hopeful
  - o. Enduring
  - p. Eternal

3. Love characterizes the mature 13:8b-12

4. That which is highest/greatest is love. 13:13-14:1

  - a. The word “greatest” is the same word Paul uses in 12:31b translated “highest.”
  - b. The expression and application of genuine, divine love is the greatest, highest gift the church can give to one another.
  - c. When Paul says, “The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in a tongue . . . so that the church may be built up,” demonstrates that applied love builds the church through applied gifts. (14:8)
  - d. 14.1 & 14.12 carry the same message: devote yourselves to building up the church
    - (1) Many tear down the church because the church focuses on the ethics of others rather than its own ethical development
    - (2) We do need to conduct ourselves in the world for God’s glory but not in such a way that the church is sabotaged.

C. What does any of this have to do with us?

D. What are some ways we can put this higher gift into practice?

1. How can Cornerstone Christians love one another?

  - a. Stop gossiping.
    - (1) Talk to one another not about one another.
    - (2) If you must talk to someone about someone else, let God be your listener as you intercede for the other person.  
Guaranteed to squelch gossip!
  - b. Make the effort to get to know the brothers and sisters around you.
  - c. When a brother or sister identifies a burden in their life with which you can assist, do not withhold from your brother what they need if it is in your power to give it.
    - (1) No one can do everything
    - (2) Everyone can do something