

FOR PASTORS!

I Corinthians

Chapter 12

**The Key to the Success
of Your Church**



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**I Corinthians 12 is the “key to success”
for the Local Church**

**Diversity + Unity + Godly leadership +
Obedience**

**Guarantees Success in a
New Testament Church**

CHAPTER ONE

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

I Corinthians 12:1-3

One of the great failures of the New Testament Church has been the failure of the leadership to get EVERY person in the church involved in the ministry. I am sure you have heard it said, "Ten percent of the people in the church do ninety percent of the work." That is true, or at least close to true. However, that is not entirely the fault of the member in a church. In some cases, it is the fault of the leadership of the church. In Chapter #3 of this book I will give you the "**plan**" God has for getting everyone involved. God not only gave us a plan, but He gave us a "**pattern**" which I will explain in Chapter #2 of this book.

To begin our study, we will look at "Spiritual Gifts" which God gives to every believer at the time of salvation. In chapter two we will also study how God not only gave a special gift to every member, but He also ENABLED EVERY member of the church to have a part in the church. Please stop and have a short prayer before continuing to read and ask God "to make it real to you that you are a vitally important person to your church."

First Corinthians Chapter 12 is the greatest, clearest, and most detailed study in all the Bible concerning how God equips the saints with "spiritual gifts" and enables them to be greatly used in their church. It explains how those gifts are for the work of the ministry and for the success of the local church.

Paul begins his teaching on "spiritual gifts" by first pointing out that there was a great deal of ignorance in the church at Corinth concerning the subject of "spiritual gifts." He said, "*I would not have you ignorant ...!*" Sad to say that is still true today. There is much ignorance in churches today about spiritual gifts in spite of the subject being presented in several passages. Many Christians have never heard a message, heard a lesson, nor read a book about "spiritual gifts."

Not only does the Bible teach that God has given a special "spiritual gift" to EVERY Christian, but Chapter 12 of First Corinthians also gives us a picture of the local church and explains that at the TIME OF SALVATION, every Christian was "PLACED IN A CERTAIN PLACE" in the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. This will be explained as you read and study this book. However, for now, if you do not get anything else out of this book, I hope you will make a note and remember this. According to this chapter in the Bible, YOU ARE A VERY IMPORTANT part of the church of which you are a member. You are a very important part of the work of Christ around the world. Yes, YOU! - the person sitting in YOUR seat, the person reading this book - you are a VERY IMPORTANT person to Jesus Christ. You may be asking, "Why?"

In eternity past, before the foundation of the world, God had a plan for YOU and for YOUR life. From the time I was saved at the age of 12, I was never taught that God had a plan for my life. I have wished SO MANY times that someone, a Sunday School teacher, a pastor, a Christian friend, anybody, would have told me that God had a plan for my life and that me "getting in on God's plan" would be the only place I would ever find true happiness! I did not learn that until I was 27 years old and heard a Sunday school teacher at Second Baptist Church in West Helena, Arkansas named Windon Baker share with me that God had a plan for my life and that I was important to Jesus Christ. I was saved, but I always thought of myself as a "nobody." It never

entered my mind that the God who created the heavens and the earth could possibly have a plan for a "nobody" like me.

Please remember this! Not only does God have a plan for you and your life, God has also done something VERY SPECIAL to enable you to fulfill the plan He has for your life. You most likely did not realize it, but at the second you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, God did two things for you: (1) God, by His sovereign will, placed **you** "in a certain place in the body of Christ" and He did that because He has a certain thing for which He plans to use you! (2) God gave you a "spiritual gift" to enable you to do what He has planned for you to do. I assure you that you will understand that as we study First Corinthians Chapter 12.

I was always of the opinion that "the pastor, the deacons, and the teachers" were important. However, I would never have believed that "I" was equally as important as they were had I not seen that truth in the Bible. Remember - YOU HAVE A SPECIAL GIFT!

Before beginning our study of the "spiritual gifts" let me share with you a "brief" list of what the "spiritual gifts" are. The clearest list of those gifts is found in [Romans 12:3-8](#).

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts (Charisma) differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."

A BASIC LIST OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

There are several other gifts named in other Scriptures, but those can be listed under one of these seven categories.

1. Prophecy: This gift is not like those who prophesied in the Old Testament. Those men "foretold" future events. The New Testament gift of Prophecy is given to men to "tell-forth truth, stand for truth, and defend truth." They will declare the "Will of God" in a given matter, or in general matters from the Bible.

2. Ministry: The word "ministry" in Verse 7 is misleading. The word "ministry" is translated from the Greek word "**diakonia**" which means "one who serves." Strong's Concordance states the meaning of that word as "...as a servant, etc.); aiding, service, gives relief)." This is NOT the position of a "deacon." This applies to any person in the church that enjoys and is motivated by "serving."

3. Teaching: The person with the motivational gift of "teaching" is interested in "giving you facts" and spiritual light. They are not necessarily interested in trying to motivate you. They are motivated by truth and facts and not by exhortation (Preachers generally use both).

4. Exhortation: Paul is the Bible example of the "exhorteth." He wrote "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom: that we may present every man perfect (mature) in Christ Jesus."

5. Giveth: Matthew was a tax collector when he received Jesus. This is an example of God using natural ability with your gift. Matthew, as a Roman tax collector, had great ability with money.

Matthew's Gospel has more to say about giving and receiving than any other of the other Gospels.

1. He points out that we are to lay up treasure in Heaven (Matt. 6:19-21).
2. He gave the parable of the Vineyard and Laborers (Matt. 20:1-16).
3. He gave the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30).
4. He is the one who speaks of secret giving (Matt. 6:1-4).
5. He points out concerning the tribute money (Matt. 17:24).
6. He relates the details of the thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:14).
7. He tells what happened to the thirty pieces (Matt. 27:3-10).

APPLICATION: Because of the difference in the use of English words from 1611 to the present (our generation), there is some misunderstanding concerning the word "giveth." It comes from the Greek work "metadidomi." According to Strong's Greek Dictionary, it means "to give toward or to impart." From a study of the word and how it was used in Scripture, a definition that gives a better understanding are the words is "One who distributes funds."

6. Ruleth: The Greek Word "proistemi" gives the meaning of "ruleth" as: "One who is out front or leads the way."

The person with the gift of "ruling" (leading the way) is often misunderstood because people tend to think that those people want to run everything. The very opposite would be closer to the truth. They are interested in seeing that the job is completed. They care very little about who gets the credit. In the New Testament church, this begins with the pastor. (Hebrews 12: 7 & 17).

7. Sheweth Mercy: In all of his writings, John displays the kindness, tenderness, and the love which surpasses all of the other disciples.

Only John refers to the Holy Spirit as the "Comforter." (John 14:16, 26: 15:26, & John 16:7).

Some tend to think of this gift as a gift of weakness. It is not! It is not a gift which is given only to women, as some think or may tell us. This is the last gift in the list of seven. God no doubt put it last to illustrate that it is the gift which provides and balances all the other gifts. We would be in serious trouble if we did not have people with this gift.

NOTE: They are sometimes difficult to identify because generally they prefer to use their gift to work "behind the scenes" and do not like to be recognized. The people with this gift do not like to take credit – even when they have helped a person.

In the second chapter of this book we will return to these "gifts" and give the "characteristics" which will help you identify the gift God has given you. It is worth noting that as you grow in the faith and are faithful to use your gift, God may add other gifts to you and your ministry.

In this section, we will examine the characteristics of "spiritual gifts," how you received them, and how they are to be used.

Number One
THEY ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS
(I Corinthians 12:1)

Many people confuse "spiritual gifts" with "natural abilities." Natural abilities are such things as a good appearance, good health, ability to make money or have material gain, or many other types of abilities. Christians are to do "all" that they can for the cause of Christ. However, God has given every Christian a "special spiritual gift." These gifts are always used in the power of the Holy Spirit. This will be further explained in point Number Two of this study.

The word "spiritual" in verse one is translated from the Greek word **pneumatikos** or **Charismata**: The definition of both of those words is: non-carnal, not human, divinely supernatural and spiritual.

Number Two
THEY ARE SUPER-NATURAL GIFTS
(I Corinthians 12:4)

The word "gift" as stated comes from the word "**Charismata**," which means "a grace gift." These are "grace gifts" that God GIVES you. These gifts cannot be bought - at any price. They cannot be earned - they cannot be learned. You cannot go to a Bible College or Seminary and learn them. They are "free gifts" given to you by God to enable you to function and do the part God has planned for you to do in "His body."

Example of a spiritual gift: There are two types of people who sing specials in almost every church in America.

First, there are people who took voice lessons, attended and majored in music at a good Bible college, have worked hard and practiced long, learning to sing. Those people sing very beautifully and very professionally. They hit every note. I am not criticizing those people who have trained and sing perfectly. Certainly, they have an important part in the church. However, many times they will be asked to sing a special just before the pastor comes to the pulpit to preach. As professionally as those people sing, the song they sing may never touch the hearts of those in the congregation and will not prepare them for the preaching of the Word of God that follows.

However, another person, one who has been given a "spiritual gift" which comes under "ministry" but has never been to college, has never taken any type of music lesson, but will sing a special before the pastor comes to preach, and the hearts of the people in the congregation will be touched – many times even bring tears to their eyes. When the preacher comes to the pulpit – the congregation is ready! That person has the "super-natural" gift to sing and to be used of God to "minister" to prepare the hearts of people for the preaching of the Word of God.

Number Three
THEY ARE SALVATION GIFTS
(I Corinthians 12:12-13)

The very second you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior you are "baptized into the body of Christ." That applies to every person who has ever trusted Christ as Savior since the "age of Grace" began. [I Corinthians 12:13](#) states:

*"For by one Spirit are **we all baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

In language we understand, when you received Jesus Christ as your Savior, God placed you in the body of Christ. [I Corinthians 12:18](#) states:

*"But now hath God set the members **every one of them** in the body, as it hath pleased him."*

At the same time that you were placed into the body of Christ you were also "indwelt" by the Holy Spirit of God ([John 14:16-17](#)).

*"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; **for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**"*

If you have not understood that truth, you need to let God make it real to you. The "all mighty" Holy Spirit of God dwells in your body. ([I Corinthians 6:19-20](#))

At that time, you received "ALL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT POSSIBLE - AND YOU RECEIVED ALL THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!" When the Holy Spirit came to dwell in you, [I Peter 4:10](#) states that you received a "gift."

*"As **every** man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifest grace of God."*

The words "the gift" is translated from the Greek word "**Charisma**." The definition of the word **Charisma** is: A divine gratuity, a spiritual endowment, a religious qualification, a miraculous faculty, a free gift.

Every Christian in every church needs to realize that "THEY have a very special spiritual gift which God gave them the second they trusted Him as their Savior." They need to realize that God gave them that special gift because He has a particular place in the local church, and - that God has special plans to USE THEM! Most Christians think like this - God has a plan for "so and so" but I am just a "nobody" and God cannot use me. The exact opposite is true! God has a plan for EVERY member of every church. EVERY person who has trusted Christ as Savior has been baptized into the "body of Christ." Therefore, EVERY person (including the person reading this book) is vitally important to Christ and to the local church of which they are a member. This will be covered in the second chapter of this book titled, "God's Plan for The Local Church to Be Successful."

Number Four
THEY ARE SOVEREIGN GIFTS
(I Corinthians 12:11)

The word "sovereign" means that "God" decided which gift each believer would receive. If you will look in Verse 11, you will see that God and God alone through the Holy Spirit, decides which of the spiritual gifts is given to each individual believer. That verse states:

*"But all of these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to **EVERY** man severally **as he will**" (I Corinthians 12:11).*

Now, let us go down to Verse 18, which states: *"But now **hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.**"*

As you read those verses, it should excite you, and should excite every other believer, to realize that God has "personally" chosen a gift - a very special gift - just for you! It should excite you to realize that God has placed you into a very special place in the "body of Christ, a place which He personally selected just for you. It should excite you to know that God is planning on using you in a special manner. Therefore, He has equipped each of us with a gift to enable each of us to do exactly what He wants each of us to do, to do it a manner that will please Him, and to accomplish what God wants to accomplish.

Number Five
THEY ARE SERVICE GIFTS
(I Corinthians 12:7)

Many times, this verse is misunderstood. Spiritual gifts are not given to you or to me "for our good." They are not given to each Christian "to show-off" how good we are at a certain thing. They are not given to us for our benefit. They are "service gifts." The understanding of that word "profit withal" may have been clearer in 1611 when our King James Bible was translated and preserved. The two words "profit withal" comes from the Greek word, "**sumphero**" Strong's Concordance gives the definition of that word as: (to bear together. to contribute, to advantage: to be better for, to bring together, be expedient for good, to be profitable.)

I have no way of knowing exactly what people understood that phrase to mean in those days. However, putting this verse in context with the passage and with the entire Bible, the verse might be para-phrased as:

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man in order that all other members of the church will profit, from that particular person's gift." Spiritual gifts are given to every member that every other member will profit.

I heard of a story that illustrates this truth. There was a very serious accident involving two vehicles. As a result of the accident there were a couple of people who were injured very seriously, even to the point that either person might die if they did not receive medical help immediately. Ambulances were called but they had not arrived. A police officer asked if there were any doctors or medical people in the crowd. No one responded, but they saw a young lady sitting on the ground, her knees were spread apart, and she had leaned forward and put her head between her knees, with

her hands clasped behind the back of her head. The officer thought she might have been hurt in the accident; therefore, he rushed over and asked her if she was all right. She responded, "Oh, yes sir. I'm fine. I was not involved in the accident." The officer asked her why she was sitting in that position. She responded, "I went to medical school and in one of the classes they taught me that if I felt faint or strange, if I would quickly sit down, spread my knees apart, lean forward, put my head between my knees, and clasp my hands behind my head that I would not faint!"

That is not the purpose of the gift which God gave you. God gave you a "spiritual gift" in order that you could "minister to and be profitable to others." God gave you a spiritual gift, not for enjoyment, but for employment!

In the following chapter, we will explain "God's plan" for how every member of the church plays a vitally important part in the function and the success of the church. PLEASE keep this thought in mind as you read. YOU ARE IMPORTANT! Without you the church will NEVER reach the full potential which God has set for it to accomplish.

In you do not get anything else out of this chapter - PLEASE let God make it real to you that HE HAS GIVEN YOU A SPIRITUAL GIFT AND THAT GIFT IS FOR SERVICE IN YOUR CHURCH!

CHAPTER TWO

GOD'S KEY TO SUCCESS FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

As stated before, the primary purpose of this book is to show beyond any doubt that EVERY MEMBER of the local church is vitally important. Far too often the pastor will ask a member of his church to do a certain thing or to get personally involved in the ministry and the person will respond by saying, "I can't." I can understand their feeling that way. Most people generally feel that they do not have the abilities to be used in the church other than to attend and be faithful. I will explain.

As I write this book, I have just celebrated 50 years in the ministry. Those fifty years have been in foreign missionary work. I served in the country of Mexico for about 10 years, planted a New Testament church and did the work of a pastor. I have served in the Home Office of two different Mission agencies for the last 40 years. In those 40 years I have traveled, preaching in Mission Conferences from Maine to California. I have been in hundreds of good Bible-believing Baptist churches. I shared that to say this. I imagine that most people who attend a good Bible-believing Baptist church have heard it said, and I repeat, "10% of the people in the church do 90% of the work. As sad as it may be, I have found that to be true in most churches - 10% of the people are involved and do at least 90% of the work, and sometimes more. The Scripture is clear beyond doubt that this is NOT GOD'S PLAN for any local church!

I was back in the country of Mexico recently (October 2019) and preached the 15th anniversary for the "Baptist Church of the Open Door" which my son-in-law and daughter, Mike and Teresa Denison, were used of God to start 15 years ago. I had preached there before and the people who attend that church knew me. This was a special anniversary service, therefore, there were five other pastors who attended at the invitation of the pastor, Israel Villalobus. I knew a couple of those pastors and there were a couple of other pastors, who I discovered later, had read a book I wrote several years ago on "Faith Promise Giving."

After the service, those pastors gathered around to talk and renew our fellowship. During that time, one of the pastors asked me a question in which all the other pastors quickly joined in. He/they asked, "Brother Gambrell, can you tell us anything that will help us get our people involved in the ministry? They attend faithfully, but we have a difficult time getting them involved." They all have congregations that number from 75 to 150 plus.

For several weeks I had been praying that God would show me or reveal to me what, if anything, that He would have me do in these later years of my life besides only being involved as President of Fundamental Baptist World-Wide Mission. When I returned to my hotel room that night, I sat down and begin to review all that had happened that night. It was a great night and I was rejoicing to have been a part of it. The church seats 150 people and it was "standing room only." Not only was it "standing room only" but the building is located on a main four-lane street in Aguascalientes and has four metal doors, about 10 feet wide, that roll up and down for security at night. That night they had the doors open and people were standing outside listening! Amen!

As I sat in the room talking with my wife, Barbara, and my son-in-law and daughter, God clearly answered my prayer and impressed on my heart what He wanted me to do. He spoke to my heart and impressed on me that I should "use the 50 years of experience I have and write more books that might help local churches, as well as missionaries and pastors such as those who had

gathered around me that night with questions. I felt it was especially true that I translate those books into the Spanish language as there is a GREAT lack of fundamental Bible material in the Spanish language. Most all materials you find in Spanish are mixed with the contemporary movement and they "skip over" many of the important issues, especially if those issues are controversial. I said that to say this. I am writing this book because God burdened my heart to put something in writing that will help pastors get EVERY member of their church involved, and to help EVERY member of every church to understand that in spite of what they think, THEY are vitally important to the cause of Christ and to the local church of which they are a member and are important to their pastor. Once written it will be translated into the Spanish language. With that said, let us look at "God's Plan and Pattern for the Success of the Local Church." The passage is presented in two parts.

PART ONE GOD'S PLAN FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

We have already addressed God's "plan" for the Local Church in Chapter One of this book. God's plan is that EVERY member of the church is to have a part in the local church of which they are a member. This part has been covered and is "short and sweet." Now let's move to:

PART TWO GOD'S PATTERN FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

God knows that because we have a finite mind, at times it is difficult for us to fully understand some of what He desires us to understand. Therefore, a number of times in Scripture God has used a "picture" or a "pattern" of something that we do clearly understand - to teach us something that otherwise could be confusing. In this passage, God uses something very simple and easily understood; the "human body." We all live in a "human body;" therefore, it is something we easily understand. Once we "get the picture" of how our "body" functions we will easily understand how God wants the local church to function. As we continue our study, be sure and keep in mind that God is using the manner in which "the human body" functions to show how HE wants our churches to function.

Paul begins this section by saying, "For as the body is one..." There are two applications to the term "...the body." Both are Scriptural.

First: There are about 6-7 places in the Bible where it refers to "the body or the church". In those 6-7 places it is referring to "every Christian who has been saved since Christ died on the cross" and the "church age" began. It extends to the time Christ calls us to Heaven in the rapture. That body is referred to as "The Bride of Christ." That "body" has never met together for a church service. That "body/church" has never taken an offering. That "body/church" has never sent a missionary to the field. That "body/church" has never baptized anyone. The first time that "body/church" will ever meet together will be in heaven after the rapture. Some call that "body/church" the "universal Church" but I prefer to call it the "Body of Christ."

Second: There are about 107 places in the Bible where the words "the body" are referring to "a local church body." In the passage in I Corinthians 12, it is clear that Paul is writing to a "local church." He is teaching the "church at Corinth" the truth which I am writing about in this book. That is clear because Paul is talking about "every" member, inter-acting with every other

member in "complementing and serving" together. It would be impossible for Paul to be explaining this in the manner he explains it if a large majority of the believers are not in the church at Corinth.

As we study, please keep in mind that in this passage where it speaks of "the body" it is speaking of "a local church" and it is teaching how a local church is to function. Please keep that in mind as you open your Bible to:

I Corinthians 12 and let's read verses 12 - 26

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

PART ONE

A BODY REPRESENTS A PERSON

I am sure that each one reading this book can understand this truth. You are a real person. I am a real person. However, all you can see of me is **the body I live in**. All I can see of **you is the body you live in**. I do not see the "real person, who is you." You do not see the "real person, who is me." The person, the real you, lives inside of your body.

I can see you looking at me, but you are looking at me from "behind two eyes" that are on your face. Your face and your eyes are "parts of your body." But you, the person, is inside - behind those eyes, It is like you are "looking out at the world through a window."

During my years in the ministry, I have spoken at a number of funerals. When speaking at a funeral of someone I know was a Christian and when they died, they went to Heaven, I always ask a question to get people's attention. About 5-6 years ago I did the funeral services for Carolyn, a girl who was a classmate of mine and my wife's. We all graduated together from Messick High School in Memphis, Tennessee in 1953. I said to the people attending, "I hope everyone here today realizes that the person in that casket is not Carolyn." They will say (or think) "Sure it is! That's Carolyn in the casket." I say, "No, that's not Carolyn in that casket." They say, "If that is not Carolyn, then who is it the casket?" I say, "Nobody! There is no one in this casket. The only thing in the casket is the 'old house' that Carolyn used to live in." Then I quote the Scripture in I Corinthians 5:1

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

From that point on I continue to explain that Carolyn is in Heaven - she has a "new house" to live in, one that God prepared for her. She is at home with the Lord and is rejoicing and walking on streets of gold. You see, Carolyn was only "living" in that old body. But, Carolyn had been sick and having physical problems for the last 4 or 5 years. She had been to doctor, been treated, taken medicine, but this time, when she came down sick, God said to Carolyn, "Carolyn, we have patched up and repaired this old house you have been living in for 75 years for a long time. It just continues to get worse and worse. This time I think it is just not worth 'patching up anymore.' I'm going to move you into a 'new house' that I prepared for you a long time ago!" That day, Carolyn moved out of her body, her old house, and moved into a brand-new house on "Hallelujah Avenue."

God, through the pen of Paul, is using the "human body" as an illustration of the "local church" and how it is to function. Christ is the "head" of the body and every member makes up His body, but "the body" represents the "person of Jesus Christ". At the time of our salvation, we are baptized into the "body of Christ!" The Scriptures make that clear in verses 12 & 13.

*"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: **SO ALSO IS CHRIST!**" For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."*

All Christians, including you and me, form the "body of Christ," on this earth. We are Christ's hands. We are Christ's feet. We are Christ's ears. We are Christ's eyes. We are Christ's mouth...etc. Jesus is known to the people of the world by "what they see." The only thing the world sees is you and me and Christians like us. The point Paul is making here is:

- (1) The body of Christ is "one body" (verse 12);
- (2) The body of Christ has "many members" (verse 12);
- (3) The many members of that body make up "one body" (verse 12).
- (4) That "one body" is the Body or Person of Jesus Christ (verse 12).

As we continue the study, Paul will make it a **STRONG** point to help us understand that **EVERY MEMBER** of "the body of Christ" is **vitaly important**. That means **YOU!** Just as your human body functions, and every member of your body is vitally important, you are a vitally important part of the body (the church) of Jesus Christ.

PART TWO

THE BODY HAS A PURPOSE

The one and only purpose of the body is "to serve the person" that lives within. The body has "no mind" of its own. The body has "no will" of its own concerning what it should do. Again, look at your body. What is the purpose of **EVERY** member or part of your body? Every part of your body is "to serve **YOU**." Stop and think about your body. The purpose of every part of your body is to "co-operate with every other part of your body" as you "tell it what you want it to do." Your body has no purpose of its own! Your body always responds 100% to what you tell it to do. The members of your body never ask you any questions about what you want them to do. The

members of your body never voice any objections to what you tell them to do. No part of your body ever tries to tell you what "it" wants you to do or have them do.

For example: I am 84 years old. The sole purpose of my body is to serve me, and to do what I ask/want it to do. At breakfast, I tell my hand to put a spoon full of food in my mouth. My hand co-operates with me and does what I ask it to do. When I finish, I tell my legs and feet to carry me to the living room. Immediately my legs and feet do what I tell them to do. Every other part of my body is the same. Not once in my life has my hand or my foot ever refused to do what I ask them to do. My hand and my feet have "no will of their own!" No part of my body has a "will of its own."

You and I are "members of the Body of Christ, which is the local church. Therefore, we are to "serve Christ." Christ does everything He does "in and through the local church." We are to do what Christ asks us to do. We are to do it gladly. We are to do it without asking any questions. We are to do what He asked us to do and we are never to rebuke or rebel against the "person" living in the body. And, EVERY part of our body is to co-operate with every other part of the body in accomplishing what "the head"(Jesus Christ) asks us to do!

PART THREE

THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE POWER TO SERVE

Verse 13 states, *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

At the time of your salvation you were baptized into the body by the Holy Spirit. You were baptized into a particular place in the body. At the very same second, the Holy Spirit of God came to "dwell in you." This is true of EVERY person who has ever trusted Jesus Christ as Savior. [John 14:17](#) states that truth.

"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

The entire body of Christ is **energized** by, and guided by, the Holy Spirit of God. Please remember, we are not an "organization." We are "a body." We are different from any other group of people, club, or organization in the world. We are the BODY of Christ and Jesus is the HEAD of the body!

Again, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit came at the second of salvation. Do not let anyone deceive you into thinking that you need "a second blessing." When you trusted Christ as your Savior you immediately were indwelt by the Holy Spirit and you have ALL the Holy Spirit that is possible. Let's read [I Corinthians 6:19](#).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

You have all the Holy Spirit living within you that you will ever have. The power of the Holy Spirit living within you is all the power you will ever need to use the gift God gave you and to do the part God has assigned you to do in His body!

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to do ALL that "the head - Jesus Christ" directs us to do. How does He do that? He does that by using you, with the "Spiritual Gift" that he gave you. The Holy Spirit knows what gift you have been given. That Spiritual Gift enables you to do what God has designed you to do in "the body" of Christ. (We explained those gifts in Chapter One. I will give you the characteristics of each gift in Chapter Three to help you identify which gift or gifts you have. The Holy Spirit lives within you to give you the power to serve by using that gift.)

The following verse will tell you very clearly that "the Holy Spirit of God" is all you need to serve Him and to do what He asks you to do.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." (Ephesians 3:20)

Jesus, in [Matthew 28:18](#), *"...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore..."* (Jesus has "all power in heaven." That means that he has power over the angels. Jesus has "all power in earth." That means that He has power over ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING that you will face while serving Him here. - THAT is sufficient power to enable you and me to do anything and everything God expects us to do.)

PART FOUR **THE BODY HAS A DIVINE DESIGN**

As I shared in the introduction, there are about 105 to 107 places in the Bible where the word "body" or "church" is referring to "a local church - the church you can see!" In the passage we are studying, [I Corinthians 12](#), it is clear that Paul is writing to a "local church." He is teaching the "church at Corinth" the truth which I am writing about in this book. That is clear because Paul is talking about "every" member inter-acting with every other member, "serving together." It would be impossible for Paul to be explaining this in the manner he explained if a large majority of the believers were "world-wide" and not in the church at Corinth.

We will now look at God's "design" for the **local church**, being as that is the only church that has, and continues to "meet together" to serve Christ. Today, God does all that He does - in and through the local church. For the church to have God's blessing, the church has to follow God's plan. In order to have God's blessing, there must be

Diversity with Unity

Verse 3 tells us that "there are diversities of gifts." Members of every church have different gifts. Also, the exercising of gifts is different. Every gift is given by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). Every gift is designed to (1) Glorify God. No gift is given to glorify any individual: (2) Every gift that is given to every member of the church is for the common good of every other member (I Corinthians 12:7) *"...but the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit with all."* That is, the gifts are given for the good of every other member of the church.

Paul stressed unity when he used, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the figure of the human body to teach on this subject. This is more than an illustration. This is a "true life picture"

of the spiritual relationship that every member of the church should have with every other member. Paul used a basic lesson to teach the church in Corinth about unity.

First, Paul used the "body is one" but has many members (12:14). If the "body" is going to function properly, it has to function "as one." Every member must realize that they need every other member. That includes what some in the church may consider as "feeble" and "less honorable" (12:22, 23). They are still part of the body!

Second, every member needs to learn from "the illustration which God gave of the body" that no member should despise his gift and no member should covet the gift of any other member. No one member can say, *"I have no need of thee"* (12:21). No one member is any more important than any other member. *"If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it pleased Him"* (12:15-18).

No Christian should be displeased with the personal gift they have been given. If for no other reason, they should "love and appreciate" their gift based on the truth that "God Himself" picked out their gift and placed them in the church as it pleased Him. THAT should be sufficient for us to be satisfied! Why? Because God makes no mistakes! Because what God does is perfect. Because what God does is for the good of the church. Because what God does is for each individual member's good. In (12:25), we are exhorted to be at peace with every other member of the body. *"That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another."* In Ephesians 4:3 God said, *"...endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."*

There is no individuality in my body. There is no individuality in your body. There should be no individuality in the "body of Christ." There can be no individuality in the church! We are "one body with many members." From a willing heart, every member of the church should accept and embrace God's plan of "Diversity with Unity!" If there is not "unity" in the church, it is not because of "diversity." It is because someone's heart is not right, and they are in rebellion toward God and His plan and pattern for the church. God Forbid!

As the Title states, there can be no "unity" in the church without leadership. Jesus Christ is the "head of the church." That has always applied, and still applies, to the "entire body of Christ" which is made up of believers around the globe. I trust that everyone understands that - that there is "no design" for that church to function because that church has never met together for a service and is clearly not pictured in this chapter of I Corinthians chapter twelve!

Jesus Christ is the head of the "world-wide body of Christ." However, God has a design for the "local church that is here on earth;" the church that meets together every "LORD'S DAY." Christ is also the head of the local church here on earth. However, when Jesus Christ ascended back to Heaven, God designated "a man" to be the head of the church and to "act in Christ's place" and to lead the church. That man is called "the pastor." The pastor is the "under shepherd of God," who is responsible to **find the will of God** and then **lead the church body accordingly**. Every part of "the body" is to respond to the "pastor" of the church. The pastor is "God's designated head and leader of the church."

God made that clear in the following verses. The pastor is both scripturally and "in practice, the head of the local church." Every member of the local church body is to respond and follow the pastor. With all of the "diversity of parts in the body" there can be no "unity in the body" without a "head" to lead the body! But God designed the church to have "diversity with unity."

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" (I Timothy 3:1-5)

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the LORD, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves." (I Thessalonians 5:12-13)

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. (Acts 20:28) (I realize this is written to the "elders" in the church at Ephesus. However, today we do not believe in or practice "elder rule" but rather "pastoral rule.")

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Hebrews 13:7).

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

God's design for the local church is that EVERY member is to respond and co-operate with the "head of the church" (which is the pastor) just as EVERY member of your body responds and co-operates with "your head." It is the responsibility of the pastor to seek and to find the "will of God" and then lead the church accordingly. It is not unscriptural for the pastor to consult with other members and request their advice and prayers, but the final decision remains with the Pastor. As you well know, "a body has only one head." If any human body has "two heads" that would be extremely abnormal and cause great and continued confusion. Once the pastor is settled and confident of God's will, EVERY member of the church should co-operate willing WITH THE "human head" that God has called and placed in the church and should do that with all their heart - JUST as every member of **your body** co-operates WILLING with **your head**!

With that said, allow me to address pastors. A pastor, by no means, should use his authority to be a "dictator." Jesus Christ, while here on earth, was not a "dictator." He certainly had the power and authority to be "dictator" but He was not. He was a "Leader." That is pictured in John 10:1-4. A pastor is to be a "leader. He is to "find the will of God." He is to assure and explain how and why God is leading him and the church in the direction He is leading. A pastor must remember, those of his flock are "sheep." Sheep must have a leader - and sheep must be led and - when the Holy Spirit has led a pastor in a certain matter, - the sheep WILL FOLLOW!

Paul taught this principle in [I Corinthians 11:1](#) *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."* If this is not true, the problem is not that there is not "unity" in the church. The problem

is a "heart problem." Someone's heart is not right with God - Someone is IN REBELLION against God, against God's plan for the church, and against God's "divine design" for the local church. God help that person! If God's plan is not followed - there will be "disunity" in the church, but no unity!

GOD'S PATTERN FOR THE CHURCH TO FOLLOW

God's design, that is explained in I Corinthians 12:12-27, is a picture from the Old Testament Tabernacle which dates back to about 1490 BC. That picture is found in Exodus 26:26-30.

"And thou shalt make bars of shittim wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the two sides westward. And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end. And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount."

In verses 15-25 God gave Moses directions to build "boards" on both the north side, the south side, and the west end of the Holy Place. The "boards" picture the members of the New Testament Church. There were 20 boards on the north side, 20 boards on the south side and 8 boards, counting the "corner boards," on the west end of the Tabernacle. Those "boards" were made of "shittim wood" and overlaid with gold. The wood pictures "humanity" covered with gold which pictures "deity!"

Those "boards" were all connected by "five bars" down the inside of the Holy Place (verses 26-27). Apparently, there were "2 bars" toward the top of the boards and "2 bars" toward the bottom of the boards. The fifth bar was "in the midst" of the other four boards. Again, the boards were made of "shittim wood" covered with gold which pictures "humanity" covered with gold which pictures "deity." Each of those bars were connected to each board by "gold" rings ([Exodus 26:29](#)).

Numbers in the Bible are vitally important. In this case "numbers picture a pattern" for the local church to follow. As stated above, there were "5 bars down each side of the walls of the Tabernacle" which "attached and bonded" each board to the entire group. The number 5 stands for "The Grace of God" in Scripture. Then, as stated, there were two bars at the top and two bars at the bottom, with "one bar" in the center. The number "two" in the Bible pictures "companionship and union."

"...they shall be one flesh." ([Genesis 2:18-24](#))

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" ([Amos 3:3](#))

The number "one" in the Bible stands for "Union and Oneness." It pictures the "Union and Oneness of the Godhead - as one."

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD." ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#))

"I and my Father are one." ([John 10:30](#))

"...there is none other God but one." ([I Corinthians 8:4](#))

"...God is one." ([Galatians 3:20](#))

This pictures for us diversity in the church as each board is an individual board, but each board is very dependent on every other board, as they were "bound together in unity" by the bars of pure gold and gold rings. Please note that the rings which held the members together, had NO WOOD, but were made of "pure gold" which pictures "God holds the members of the church together in unity." No board in the walls of the "Holy Place" (a picture of the New Testament church) can say to any other board, "I have no need of thee." Every board is "strengthened by" every other board in the Holy Place! Therefore, even with every board being an individual board, God bound them together in "unity!"

THIS IS THE PATTERN THAT GOD EXPECTS THE CHURCH TO FOLLOW!

Last, but not least, the instructions which God gave to Moses in the "building of the Tabernacle" firmly states that he was to "follow the pattern." [Exodus 25:9](#) states, "*According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.*"

This phase is repeated in [Exodus 25:40](#) and in [Exodus 26:30](#). This clearly tells us that God "gave the vision" to Moses and only to Moses. Therefore, Moses had the responsibility to "give those instructions" to the craftsman who did the actual work. The craftsman were to build the Tabernacle "exactly" as they received instruction from Moses! This "command" is repeated several times when God gave Moses instructions. ([See Deut. 12:32](#))

God works in the same way today. God reveals His will to the "leader of the church," which is the pastor. His leadership from God may be confirmed by Godly men in the church, but God always starts with the pastor. God gives him "the vision" of what and how God wants his work to be done. The pastor is then responsible to pass that vision on to those who will do the actual work. Moses could not keep silent concerning the vision God had "shown" him, or the work would never have gotten done. The pastor has that same responsibility for the "work of the church" of which he is pastor. as Moses had for building the Tabernacle.

Remember, the "will of YOUR own body" is to do "the will of the person which the members of your body serve." The person who lives in YOUR body - is YOU! Your body does not have a will. Your body is to serve you. The individual members of your body have no will of their own. There is no "individuality" in your body. The same is true with the church. EVERY member of the church should "willingly accept, respond and co-operate" with the "will of the head of the church" which is the pastor. There is no such thing as "individuality" in the local church. If your body had two heads, there would be a continual problem! The same is true in the local church. The church can only have "one head - one will."

That is clearly "God's design for the local church." That is the ONLY way for the church to have God's blessings and for the church to be successful. If at some time the pastor makes an honest mistake and is wrong concerning the will of God, the pastor will be held accountable, not the members. If the pastor has been honest in seeking the "will of God" and makes an honest mistake, God is able, willing, ready, and WILL intervene and correct the pastor's mistake. God will turn his mistake around and make it "work together for good."

We will develop this further in the study, but one of the main purposes of this book is to clearly show that EVERY member of the church is extremely important. Also, if the church is to function and be effective, the church must follow "God's design for the church." That plan has

already been pictured in the "pattern" that God gave in [1 Corinthians Chapter 12](#) instructing us how the body functions. I am lumping all of this together and calling it "God's Design for the Local Church." That leads us to the last point in the chapter.

PART FIVE

EVERY MEMBER OF THE BODY IS VITALLY IMPORTANT

The same is true with the "local church." It functions the same as "our body." This passage clearly teaches us that EVERY MEMBER is **vitaly important** to the function of the local church.

Most members of good, Bible believing, fundamental Baptist churches do not view themselves as important. Most Christians say, "The pastor, oh yes, the pastor is important." They say, "The deacons, oh yes, the deacons are important." "The teachers, oh yes, the teachers at our church are vitally important." However, the same people, if asked about **their** part in the church will generally say, "Who me? I am not important. I'm just a member." Sad to say, that is the attitude of most Christians in most churches today. That is one of the BIGGEST mistakes a Christian can make. If you do not realize this truth - you will end up wasting your life. That is one of the biggest problems the church faces today.

Please stop and think about this. Stop and ask God to "make it real to you." "You" are just as important to the church of which you are a member as every other member that is in your church. You are as important as the teachers. You are as important as the deacons. You are as important as the pastor. In verse 12 God said, "...and ALL members..." In verse 13 God said, "...we are ALL baptized..." Again, in verse 13 God said, "...And have been ALL made to drink into one Spirit." When God says, "ALL" He means ALL! "ALL" includes YOU!

I am sure you realize this, but I will point it out again. God KNOWS that we sometimes read over Scriptures and sort of "miss the importance" of what He is teaching. Therefore, in this case, after telling us the above, God said, "I'm going to give you an illustration of what I am telling you so you can clearly understand what I just told you!" God divided that "illustration" into two parts.

The first segment is found in **verses 15-21**. We do not generally think of God "asking us" (you and me) questions, because we know that God already knows all things. However, please take note that in this illustration He is trying to "make us think" by asking us to answer several questions. Let's look at those verses.

(Verse 15) *"If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?"* (The answer is, "Yes Mr. Hand, you are of the body.")

(Verse 16) *"And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?"* (The answer is "Yes Mr. Eye, you are of the body.")

(Verse 17) *"If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?"*

Suppose the above were true - that the body was all one part. What would you think if "the pastor" came to the pulpit on Sunday morning and when you looked at him, he was nothing but

ONE GREAT BIG EYE? What would you think if he came to the pulpit and he was nothing but ONE GREAT BIG EAR?

(Verses 19-20) *"And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they MANY members, yet one body!"*

God continues by stating a fact in **verse 21**: *"And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee."*

PLEASE note that in verse 21 God changed from comparing the "eye to the hand" to the "foot to the hand" in verse 15, and from "the ear to the eye" in verse 16 and even from the "eye to the hand" in verse 21. In the latter part of verse 21, God extended the illustration from "the head to the feet" which covers the ENTIRE body - and includes EVERY MEMBER! That clearly means that EVERY MEMBER of the body is vitally important.

In verses 22-24 God extends the illustration even further to show that EVERY part of the body is vitally important.

(Verses 22 - 24) God says, *"Nay, ***much more*** those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary; And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but **God hath tempered the body together**, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked..."*

God said, the parts of your body that SEEM to be more feeble - ARE NECESSARY! Those verses, which God is using as an illustration, refer to "the parts of the body" which are UNSEEN. They are necessary - they are absolutely necessary! Consider the parts of the human body, which God is using as an illustration to help us understand how important every member is. There are parts in my body and your body that no one has ever seen. They are our liver, our gallbladder, our pancreas, our stomach, and several other parts, including our heart that are NECESSARY! If you do not believe this, wait until you get a bad "tooth-ache" and see how badly it affects your whole body!

These verses clearly teach us the importance of EVERY member of the church - from the head to the feet - and EVERY part in between the head and the feet! That means you and that means me. That clearly tells YOU that - YOU are important.

We will conclude this chapter by again pointing out that EVERY MEMBER was placed in the position they are in **"by the sovereign will of God."** Think about this. God personally placed you in the body at a certain place. God personally placed you in that place for a certain purpose. This was done "by the sovereign will of God." God did the same for you as He did for the pastor, for the deacons, for the teachers, and for all other members of the church. Also, think about this. God, in eternity past, knew how vitally important YOU are to the church - because of that, He placed you in that certain place in the body where you are today. EVERY part is vitally important, and every part is greatly necessary.

CONCLUSION

Several years ago, Dr. Vance Havner shared this story with me. Dr. Havner was the pastor at his church in Hickory, North Carolina. One day, while sitting in his office, one of the ladies of his church called him. She said, "Pastor, I have a problem and I need to talk with you." Dr. Havner graciously invited her to stop by the church and he would be glad to try and help her.

A short time later she arrived at the church, entered his office and sat down. He asked her, "Sister, tell me - what is your problem?" She began by saying, "It's like this, Pastor. I am 32 years old, going on 33, and I am not married yet. I'm afraid I am going to end up an 'old maid.'"

Dr. Havner looked at her and said, "Sister, this is God's plan. There is one man for every woman and one woman for every man. Sister, that's God's plan. You can't improve on it." She looked back at him and said, "Pastor, you don't understand my problem. I'm not trying to improve on God's plan - I'm trying to 'get in on it.'"

Some things in your life can be replaced. I heard a story a few years ago about a young couple who had only been married for a few weeks. One morning the husband had breakfast with his wife, told her how much he loved her, kissed her good-bye and went to work.

After he left, his dear wife sat there and thought about how much she loved him. As she thought, she said to herself, "I would like to do something to show him how much I love him." She said, "I know what I'll do! I will make him a big batch of home-made cookies." She worked all day, made a big batch of cookies and put them on the table to cool. While she was waiting the phone rang. It was one of her best girlfriends. She got distracted, turned her back and talked to her friend. While she was talking, the dog got on the table and ate the cookies.

When she saw the dog had eaten her cookies, she sat down and began to cry. About that time her husband came in the back door. He saw her crying, ran over and put his arms around her and said, "Honey, what's wrong? Why are you crying?" She responded and said, "After you left this morning, I just wanted to do something special for you - I wanted to show you how much I loved you, so I made a batch of home-made cookies. When they were finished, I put them on the table to let them cool and the phone rang. I was on the phone talking and while I was talking the dog got on the table and ate the cookies." She was crying her eyes out. Her husband hugged her tighter and said, "It's okay, Honey. We can get a new dog." I said that to say some things can be replaced. However, your life is not one of them.

It is clear beyond any question that God has a plan for the life of EVERY member of the church. God has a plan for you to have a part in the ministry of your church. That's God's plan. You can't improve on it. Your part is not to "improve on it, but to "get in on it." What will you do? Will you "get in on it?" or, will you miss out on God's plan for your life?

Dear Pastor, it is your responsibility to "teach" God's plan to your church. It needs to be taught in possibly 2 or 3 sections to be sure it is clearly understood. For years I have used a "brief pattern" in developing a message from the book of Nehemiah. I would encourage you to use that pattern. It is found in Nehemiah 8:8 Where Nehemiah was teaching the people of Israel.

1. He read the Scripture distinctly
2. He gave them sense (made it real to them)
3. He caused them to understand (He explained how it applied to them.)

I would encourage everyone to "get in on God's plan" for your life. If you do not get in on God's plan for your life, you will one day reach the end of your life, look back on it and say, "It was all I had, and I wasted it."

CLOSING EXHORTATION

Before moving to the closing chapter of this book, let me challenge you with a very serious matter, called THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. II Corinthians 5: 8 states:

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that EVERY one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

When God gave a person a "spiritual gift" He gave it with the purpose of that person "using that gift." God expects EVERY Christian to use the gift He gave them. God help the person who understands that they have been given a very special gift that they are to use to serve God and who does not use it as God expects.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ ...

- (1) We will give an account for the things we **have done** in the body, whether they be good or bad.
- (2) We will ALSO give an account for the "things we could have done, and should have done, but would not do and did not do.

In the following chapter, "THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS" is written to help you identify the gift which God gave you when you trusted Him as Savior.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH SPIRITUAL GIFT

Before we move to the study of the characteristics and how to identify the gift God has given you, you need to understand that there are "three gifts" which God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, has given every believer. Every believer has these **three** gifts. **First**, there is the gift of "ministry" which means serving and helping in many and various ways. **Second**, there is the give of "giving" which God has given to every Christian. **Third**, there is the gift of "mercy" which God has given to every Christian.

Every pastor has at least four of these gifts. **First**, the pastor has the gift of "Prophecy." As stated, "prophecy" in the New Testament is not "foretelling." Prophecy in the New Testament is "forth-telling." (Declaring truth from the written Word, to the congregation). **Second**, a pastor has the gift of teaching. Every message preached by a pastor should "teach" the congregation something! **Third**, the pastor has the gift of "exhortation." As he preaches/teaches, he must always "exhort" the congregation to do what they have been taught. **Fourth**, the pastor has the gift of "mercy." Everything he does in dealing with members of his congregation must be done with mercy.

THE FOUNDATION FOR DETERMINING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT

Information

There are at least two major passages that speak and name the various gifts. In seeking to find your gift, I suggest that you "study" those passages carefully. They are Romans 12:8-10 and I Corinthians 12:8-10. Acquaint yourself as much as possible with the gifts and what they are used for.

Please keep this in mind as it is important to you as you seek God's will concerning which gift He has given you. Keep in mind that at least three of the gifts have "ceased." The gifts that are listed in I Corinthians 12:8-10 which have ceased are: (1) The gift of healing. We believe in "divine healing" but not in "divine healers." (2) The gift of tongues: (3) The gift of interpretation of tongues. Those gifts ceased after the Scriptures were complete.

Inclination

One of the key elements in determining which "spiritual gift" God has given you is to determine "which of these gifts motivate you." Many people have natural abilities and can "fill a need" when asked to do so, but it is something they do because there is a need. For example, one of the Sunday School teachers is sick and will not be in church on the coming Sunday. The pastor or Sunday School Superintendent may call a certain person they know who can study, prepare and teach a class. The person selected agrees to "fill in and teach the class." That person will study diligently, prepare a lesson and do a good job teaching the class. However, that person is "glad when it is over." He has done a good job - but teaching does not motivate and excite him.

The person who was the regular teacher, and has the gift of teaching, is the opposite. That person loves the class! They hate to miss a class. They thrive on preparing and teaching the class. That person has the "gift of teaching" and is therefore motivated! Preparing and teaching is never like "just filling a need." They love it! Please keep that truth in mind as you review the characteristic of each gift, since it is the major key to discovering the "gift" which God has given you.

Investigation

Make an appointment and discuss this important matter with your pastor. Ask him to please pray with you about, (1) Your understanding which gift God has given to you: (2) Ask him for his advice or opinion what he sees in your life that might guide you to understanding which gift you have, and, (3) Ask him where he thinks you would "fit" into the body of the local church, which is under his leadership. Proverbs 11:14 states: *"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."*

Spend time in prayer and ask God to give you wisdom in knowing which gift He has given to you. God promised He would do that. James 1:5 states: *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."*

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY (Example – Peter)

This gift is not like those who prophesied in the Old Testament. Those men "foretold" future events. The New Testament Gift of Prophecy is given to men to "tell-forth truth, stand for truth, and defend truth." They will declare the "Will of God" from the written Scriptures.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. Has a driving compulsion to speak-out! This is done sometimes rather suddenly. It is especially true where protection of truth is involved.
Examples: Acts 2:12-16 & Acts 4:5-12
2. Has the ability to detect evil. This person has the spirit of "DISCERNMENT," and can generally read a wrong or selfish motive in another person immediately!
Discerner of spirits. (I Cor. 12:10)
Example: Acts 5:1-3 – Ananias and Sapphira
 - A. At times they will seem to be harsh when they have no intention of being harsh.
 - B. They see a problem. They are not harsh. They simply want the problem corrected.
 - C. Men who have this gift are **EXTREMELY** important to a church. The church should utilize these people for the protection of the truth and for protection of the church.
3. They are open to self-correction. They are willing to humble themselves and change when they see themselves wrong. When they see wrong in themselves, they correct it immediately, just as they want it corrected in others.
 - A. They see the "long-range" effect of almost any problem and do not hesitate to correct it.
Example: Luke 5:4-8 – Out fishing
Example: John 13:5-9 – Washing feet

4. Have a strong, heart-felt conviction concerning the work of God. They will be very defensive about God, His Word, and His work.
Example: [Acts 3:10-12](#) – Credit given for a lame man healed
5. They are painfully direct in correcting problems in others.
 - A. **This is important!** They have no intention of being harsh. One will be hurt if he/she does not understand them. They see a wrong and only want it corrected because they know it will hurt and maybe destroy the character of the person involved, or perhaps hurt the church.
Example: [Matthew 16:21-22](#) – Peter rebuked Jesus

Note: Again, it is of great profit to the church, but it is ALSO VERY IMPORTANT that the church and the man's family understand why he does what he does. **Why?** Because he is doing exactly what God gifted him to do!
6. Has a strong dependence on the Word of God.
 - A. They will correct or state what is wrong and immediately say, “Let’s look at what the Word of God says about this.”
Example: [Acts 2: 16, 25, 32-36](#)
7. He/she shows great loyalty.
 - A. When they believe in a person, they are very loyal. Many times, being loyal, they will stand by a person when they are wrong because the person has been deceived.
Example: [Matthew 26:51](#); [John 18:10](#) – names the man as Peter!
8. They usually are quick to speak. They make split second judgments and speak! They are very impulsive.
 - A. They always have to put their “two-cents” in if TRUTH is involved.
 - B. They are uncannily correct! (Far more often than not.)
Example: [Matthew 14:28](#) – Peter walked on water.

THE GIFT OF MINISTRY

Example: Timothy and Many Others

The word "ministry" in verse seven is misleading. The word "ministry" is translated from the Greek word "diakonia" which means "one who serves." Strong's Concordance states it as:

"...attendance - as a servant, etc. — aiding, - service - gives relief, service(-ing)."

EVERYONE in every church, in one way or another, fits into this category. Many can fill a need when asked to do so. However, there are some people who are gifted to "be of service, aid, and giving relief to others." Those who "fill needs" do the work, but they labor at it. Those who are gifted in service are motivated by being asked to help and, especially, want to be a blessing to others by filling a need and helping another person.

Example: A person with this gift may have the ability to teach and if asked, could substitute as a teacher and most likely do a good job. However, he/she would not feel comfortable and would not fully enjoy teaching as much as a person with the gift of teaching. This person is serving by filling a need - but is not motivated by teaching. This person would much rather be doing something with his/her hands in a practical way. (If you reverse the circumstances, the same would be true.)

This is one of the more important gifts of the seven. Those whom God has gifted for administration or leading, could not and would not carry on the work given them without many of those who have the gift of service. Any employer in the business world would love to have a complete staff of people who have the spiritual gift of service.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. They have the alertness to detect practical needs and have the desire to meet that need. They are "motivated," and receive great satisfaction when they fulfill a need.
 - A. They will always notice things that need to be done.
 - B. If a need is mentioned, they will think about how they may help.
 - C. They delight in and are motivated by knowing they have helped the cause of Christ.

Example: Timothy - [Philippians 2:19-21](#)

2. They receive joy in knowing they have freed others to do things they cannot do.
 - A. They are grieved if the person they helped wastes the time they saved for them.
 - B. They are delighted when they see that person accomplishing other work.
3. They tend to disregard their own selves in order to meet the needs of others in the work of Christ.
 - A. They will help in spite of their physical condition.
 - B. They will work past being tired if they are able to get the job done.

Example: Timothy - [I Timothy 5:23](#) (Often sick and weak)

4. They need to know that they are appreciated and that they are needed.
 - A. Willing to give and give, but they need to be told they are needed.
 - B. They need to be told that they are part of the/your ministry.
 - C. They must be encouraged, and they need it often.

Example: Timothy - [I Corinthians 16:10](#) - Paul said of Timothy, "He works for the Lord just as I do." Paul was letting everyone know that Timothy was an equal part of the ministry.
5. They have a strong desire to be with others.
 - A. This is "on and off" the job. They are not "loners."
 - B. They do not particularly like to work alone and work much better if they have someone to work along-side them.
6. They enjoy "short-range" projects.
 - A. They are frustrated with any long-range projects or responsibility.
 - B. They like jobs they can finish in a day.
 - C. They generally like to be given one job at a time and become discouraged when they are given several assignments at one time.
 - D. They will complete a "year-long" project if you assign it a "bite at a time."
How do you eat an elephant - One bite at a time.
7. They tend to feel inadequate or unqualified for spiritual leadership.
 - A. Many people have the gift of service. They are spiritual people. They are just as spiritual as those who have the gift of teaching. However, if you ask them to lead in a three-month Bible study, etc., they generally decline. They feel inadequate. They generally say something of this nature, "I will get everything ready and you can have it at my house, I will even provide refreshments, but let someone else lead."
 - B. You will wipe them out if you ask them to lead.
 - C. Do not judge them to be unspiritual. They are spiritual, but they are not motivated in this area. God made them for other types of service.

TEACHING

(Example – Luke)

The person with the motivational gift of "teaching" is interested in "giving you facts" and "spiritual light." They are not necessarily interested in trying to motivate you. They are motivated by facts and not by exhortation. (Preachers generally use both.)

CHARACTERISTICS

1. The desire to present truth in a clear, systematic, chronological manner.
 - A. They will have the subject and all points in correct order.
 - B. They will give it to a class in chronological order - A spoonful at a time.
Example: [Luke 1:1-4](#)
2. They will put the emphasis on words, meanings, and shades of meaning.
 - A. They will stop the advancement of the lesson and spend much time on details.
3. They delight in study, research, and reporting.
 - A. The Gospel of Luke gives more details about each subject than the other writers.
 - B. This is also true in the book of Acts, also written by Luke.
 - C. [Acts 1:1-4](#) (From Resurrection – forward - Acts has no ending) See [Acts 28:25 & 30-31](#). The closing of Acts indicates that the work of the Apostles is not finished.
4. When another is speaking, they are alert to notice details. They are looking for 100% truth.
 - A. They are looking for "the facts."
 - B. They notice details and ask questions about things which they did not see.
 - C. They will tend to frustrate a teacher by wanting details! Say for instance, “**Could you qualify that?**”
5. They are forever questioning the statements made by others.
 - A. They force you to defend your position.
 - B. They want to know if you are qualified.
 - C. They want to know where you found a certain teaching you presented.
 - D. They will cause you to think they do not believe you. (They believe you but want you to be very exact! VERY exact!)

6. They will generally avoid using any illustration apart from those found in the Scripture
 - A. They will not generally use stories to make a point.
7. Generally, they will remain silent in a discussion until all other have "had their say...!"
 - A. They generally give their opinion last and are generally thought to be wise and also more authoritative. (They like being thought of in that manner.)
8. They will establish truth by using other truths from the scriptures.
 - A. Their rule is: Compare Scripture with Scripture.

EXHORTATION (Example – Paul)

"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom: that we may present every man perfect (mature) in Christ Jesus."

A. Colossians 1:28-29 & Colossians 4:12

The person with the gift of exhortation is motivated differently from those who have other gifts.

- A. Prophet – Keep people walking in TRUTH.
- B. Ministry Service – Help get the project finished.
- C. Teacher - Give them the facts – in a clear and organized manner.
- D. Exhorter - Get them to grow and mature in their Christian life.
 - 1. They are interested in converts becoming disciples & living according to the Bible.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. They desire to motivate you to do your very best in your life.
 - A. Romans 12:1-2
2. They have the ability to talk with you for a short period of time and determine where you are and where you COULD be if God had 100% of your life.
 - A. They can picture you in their minds, ten years from now.
 - B. They imagine great things for you.
3. They will ask questions about your Christian life to determine where you are in your spiritual life and growth.
 - A. What do you do in/with your personal Bible study?
 - B. What is God doing in your life today?
 - C. Do you know what you need to do next?
4. They can, without thinking, give you certain steps that you need to follow which will help you to mature in your Christian life.
 - A. They will give you a clear path to follow and make it seem simple.
 - B. One of the greatest problems in preaching today is: The preacher tells us where we need to be, but he does not tell us how to get there. He makes "no personal application" and never says, "Are you doing this particular _____?" If no, why not?

5. They tend to welcome personal problems in their lives and also in the lives of others.
 - A. They are willing to suffer because they know God is working.
 - B. They are willing to see others suffer, for the same reason.
Example: II Corinthians 12:9
 Why? For what purpose? - **I Corinthians 1:4**
6. They try to avoid and dislike all teaching, preaching, or other systems of information which do not include a personal application to help people.
 - A. Prophet says - "Keep them walking in TRUTH."
 - B. Service says - "What can I do to help?"
 - C. Teacher says - "Is what you're doing according to the facts?"
 - D. Exhorter says - **"When are you going to tell them how to fix it?"**
7. They will seek out people in trouble, and seek to encourage and help them through the problem – because they thrive on watching people grow.
 - A. They are the opposite of the teacher.
 1. The teacher tells you what the Bible says and leaves the application to you.
 2. The exhorter will take your personal problem and tell you what the Bible says and what you need to do to fix the problem.
8. They delight in getting right in the middle of a problem.
 - A. They evaluate the situation.
 - B. In a family problem, a group problem, a church problem, or whatever, they want to help solve the problem and move forward. Generally, they will help and their answer(s) will seem so simple.
9. They receive their fulfillment in finding people who want to grow.
 - A. If the person is not interested in growing – they do not want to waste their time.
 - B. They will spend hours with a person who will let them help in their Christian life.
10. They tend to disregard feelings and are more interested in giving this person some long lasting help.
11. They are more interested in saved people who need help, rather than in lost people who have problems.

Paul, in his epistles, dealt almost 100% in trying to help the churches grow. Paul sought to win the lost throughout the book of Acts. However, in his epistles to the churches, he has very little to say to the lost. He is always trying to work with the believers to help them to grow and to please God.

GIVING

Example: Matthew

Matthew was a tax collector when he received Jesus. This is an example of God using natural ability with your gift. Matthew, as a Roman tax collector, had great ability with money.

Matthew's Gospel has more to say about giving and receiving than any of the other Gospels.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. He points out that we are to lay up treasure in Heaven | (Matt. 6:19-21) |
| 2. He gave the parable of the Vineyard and Laborers | (Matt. 20:1-16) |
| 3. He gave the parable of the talents | (Matt. 25:14-30) |
| 4. He is the one who speaks of secret giving | (Matt. 6:1-4) |
| 5. He points out concerning the tribute money | (Matt. 17:24) |
| 6. He relates the details of the thirty pieces of silver | (Matt. 26:14) |
| 7. He tells what happened to the thirty pieces | (Matt. 27:3-10) |

APPLICATION: Because of the difference in the use of English words from 1611 to the present (our generation), there is some misunderstanding concerning the word "giveth." It comes from the Greek word "metadidomi." According to Strong's Greek Dictionary, it means: "to give toward or to impart." From a study of the word and how it was used in Scripture, a definition that gives a better understanding are the words **"One who distributes funds."**

1. Those who have this gift are individuals who are gifted in distributing the funds of the church in a Scriptural and wise manner. They are men who should be given the responsibility of distributing church funds.
2. The word, "...let him do it with simplicity" has several meanings. In this context, one of the more important meanings is: "...without dissimulation," implying that they are to distribute the church funds without "self-interest" nor with respect of persons, especially personal friends.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. They have great ability in making wise purchases and in the overall use of money.
 - A. They appear to be able to make a dollar go farther.
 - B. Their motive is not to save money or get rich. Their motive is in order that the money they distribute will be invested wisely and there will be a good return on the investment.
 - C. They are ALWAYS thinking ahead. (II Corinthians 9:6) This is:
 1. True in their home
 2. True in the ministry
2. They desire to distribute to worthy projects.

- A. They do not like gimmicks.
- B. They are grieved by gimmicks and generally will not give.

THEY TEST "GIVING" BY THIS PRINCIPLE:

Jude 1:3

- A. They do not like to give money to things that are not “**100%** right, according to the Scriptures.”
 - B. They do not agree to give to projects/organizations that are questionable.
 - C. They feel they are compromising and are not “earnestly contending for the faith” if they give to “people, projects, or ministries” that are not - **100%** - “earnestly contending for the faith.”
3. They consider requests carefully and do not respond to pressure.
 - A. All they want is information. They will distribute as God directs them.
 4. They desire that others be motivated to give as they see money being used by the church, wisely.
 - A. Those who have the gift of distributing realize that as they distribute wisely, according to the Scriptures, they receive a return.
 - B. They know that the same principle will work for everyone and hope that all will be motivated to give more because they see money being used wisely.
[See II Corinthians 8 & 9:1-5.](#)
 5. They are alert to see financial needs which most people do not notice.
 6. They test the faithfulness and wisdom of others by the manner they handle money.
Example: [Luke 16:10-12](#) (Faithful over little things...)
 7. They tend to practice a very simple lifestyle.
 - A. They will live nicely, but without being extravagant.
 - B. They will always seek to distribute for quality things, which they consider a good investment for the church, but they will always search out the best price and value.
 8. They receive great joy when they discover that the money they distributed, small or great, was to meet a valid need and did well.
 - A. They are blessed when it is confirmed that they understood God's leadership.
 9. They often depend on others who have this same gift and same position.

- A. God will always lead Godly men with this gift to the same conclusion.
 - B. Often one of them will have a question mark about the project and they will use each other as a check point.
 - C. They are always concerned about giving to right projects, and organizations.
10. They are motivated to distribute to the same project again when they see the money used wisely.
- A. They are grieved when the person, group, or church does not use the money given wisely and according to the Scripture.

Note: These people should be recognized and sought out to be put in charge of distributing the funds of the church.

RULETH **(Organization - Leading - Administration)**

The Greek word gives the meaning of "ruleth" as: "One who is out front or leads the way."

The person with the gift of "ruling" (leading the way) is often misunderstood because people tend to think that they want to run everything. The very opposite would be closer to the truth. They are interested in seeing that the job is completed. They care very little about who gets the credit.

(It is important that we understand each gift and why people act the way they do.)

Who or whom do we think of when we talk about "ruling" in the church? **They** look at the "over-all" picture - Watch the "body" come together and function! They have great pleasure in relieving the pastor from spending his time on "a project" when he could be in study and prayer.

Turn to Ephesians 4:11

- A. Men given to the church (body of Christ):
 - 1. Apostles – Ceased to exist (Only those who were alive when Christ was on earth.)
 - 2. Prophets (Foretold future) – Ceased to exist when written Word came into existence.
 - 3. Evangelists – Church planters (Missionaries).
 - 4. Pastors/Teachers
 - a. Teachers - are an extension of the pulpit.
- B. God's plan and purpose:
 - 1. Perfecting of the saints
 - 2. Work of the ministry
 - 3. Edifying of the church
- C. What are pastors to do? ([Acts 3](#))
 - 1. Pastors are to give themselves to prayer and study of the Word.
- D. What are people with gifts to do?
 - 1. They are to relieve the pastor of ALL the functions of the church apart from study, prayer, and preaching.
- E. (**READ**) [Ephesians 4:12-16](#)

It is of vital importance that every church, no matter how small or large, has someone who can lead and organize the work.

CHARACTERISTICS

- 1. They are able to see quickly the entire picture, know exactly what needs to be done, and to visualize the final results of a major project.
 - A. When a job is discussed and a goal is set, in their minds they can see it as finished.

2. They can break down the entire project into smaller sections which can be assigned to various ones to accomplish the task.
 - A. They are never discouraged by the size or length of a job. They visualize it in “small parts.”
3. They are self-starters. They are motivated to organize the job and put it into action.
 - A. If you present to them the goal, they will quickly plan it in their minds and visualize it as finished.
4. They have the ability to determine who and what is needed, and who can do each part to complete the job in the shortest possible time.
 - A. They do not like negative people.
5. They have the ability to know what can and what cannot be delegated to others.
 - A. Why would a person with this gift delegate anything?
 1. There are many things which they do not know how to do.
 2. They recognize the abilities of others.
6. They will relieve themselves of distracting details and focus on the main goal.
 - A. They delegate work to others who are truly skilled, and they really do not want to hear about it until it is finished.
 - B. They do not want a part of the project to become the major part.
7. They are willing to endure criticism from others.
 - A. They stay focused on the "finish-line."
8. They enlist people who will cooperate with the entire project.
 - A. They feel that EVERYONE should be extremely interested in the project.
 - B. They realize that many goals which could be accomplished are not being done.
9. They have a desire to complete a task as orderly, as well and as quickly as possible – then move on to the next project.
10. They receive satisfaction from seeing the job completed.
 - A. Generally they are unconcerned regarding who gets the credit.

MERCY

Example - John

In all of his writings, John displays the kindness, tenderness, and the love which surpasses all of the other disciples.

Only John refers to the Holy Spirit as the “Comforter.” (John 14:16,26: 15:26, & John 16:7)

Some tend to think of this gift as a gift of weakness. It is not! It is not a gift which is given only to women, as some think. This is the last gift in the list of seven. God no doubt put it last to illustrate that it is the gift which allows and balances all the other gifts. We would be in serious trouble if we did not have people with this gift of mercy!

NOTE: They are sometimes difficult to identify because they generally prefer to use their gift to work “behind the scenes” and do not like to be recognized.

A. They do not like to take credit – even when they have helped a person.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. They have the ability to detect that someone is hurting when they enter a room.
2. They are deeply concerned and endeavor to understand the mental and emotional need of the person.
 - A. They feel that if they are able to identify the hurt – **they are sure they can comfort the person.**
3. They desire to bring healing, relief, and to restore joy to a person rather than to look for any benefits from the suffering.
 - A. They never say, “You will profit from this.”
4. They are generally able to bring some type of relief.
5. They are not interested in who is right or wrong.
 - A. They are only concerned about **stopping the hurt.**
 - B. They ALWAYS think the best concerning everyone.
 - C. They never make any negative remark about anyone.
6. They are not generally interested in the outward or physical conditions.
 - A. Their interest is caring about inward problems.
7. They are very sensitive about words spoken which would hurt a person.

- A. They are very apt to correct you in a spiritual way.
- 8. They are very loyal and will react harshly when one of their friends is rejected.
 - A. They want everybody to get along with everybody!
- 9. They have the ability to detect true Christian love, and even a greater ability to **detect lip service**.
- 10. They are hurt very easily and deeply over the lack of showing love.
 - A. The Prophet: "The truth is....." - **Mercy says**, "You didn't have to say it that way!"
 - B. The Exhorter: "This is going to help you." – **Mercy says**: "That will come later – right now, he is hurting."
 - C. The Teacher: "The fact is...." – **Mercy says**, "Don't bother me with the facts...."
- 11. They have a great need for deep friendships and relationships.
 - A. They need to give and have commitments.
 - B. They are not "loners." They must be around people.
 - C. They are willing to commit totally of themselves to a friend.
- 12. They measure love by quality time together.
 - A. Everyone has problems and situations which drain them either physically or emotionally, or both.
 - B. People with the gift of mercy are drained emotionally by the lack of a close, personal relationship.
 - C. They feel rejected if a close friend has other people with them, with whom they spend more time.

CONCLUSION

After understanding that you are not only "a part" of the body of Christ and, that you have been given a very "spiritual gift" which God Himself picked out "special just for you," which makes you a "very important part" of your church, I would admonish you to

1. Re-study the "characteristics" of each of the spiritual gifts in this chapter and to do so while "in prayer" with God, asking Him to impress on your heart which is the gifts He has given you. I assure you that God, after going to the point of picking out a special gift to give to you, that He will gladly guide you and help you understand your gift.

2. Make an appointment and discuss this important matter with your pastor. Ask him to please pray with you about, (1) Your understanding which gift God gave you: (2) Ask him for his advice or opinion what he sees in your life that might guide you to understanding which gift you have, and, (3) Ask him where he thinks you would "fit" into the body of the local church, which is under his leadership.