

Title: CONCERNING SPIRITUAL MATTERS, 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1 – 11  
(Chatham, NJ; 01/17/16, AM) [Pc – Topical]

Theme: In speaking about spiritual gifts Paul also implies some important principles about spirituality in general.

Purpose: To reveal the importance of spiritual gifts and how they are exercised.

Introduction:

1. Spirituality: pertaining to spiritual matters that transcend the world we can experience with the senses.
2. Man will never outgrow his search for something more than the material world.
3. The Bible never questions the existence of such things like some people do today.
4. In the passage before us, Paul addresses his audience about spiritual gifts, and these gifts represent some significant features about Christian spirituality.
5. To understand and exercise these things is to grow spiritually.

## I. Spirituality Is Christ, 1-3

### A. Paganism and “mute” idols

1. Only two sides to choose from in this discussion: Christ and idols
2. The apostle talks about them as mute or dumb: they cannot speak
3. Jeremiah 10:5 calls them “scarecrows” who cannot speak and even have to be carried since they cannot walk on their own
4. Isaiah 46:7 makes the same criticism
5. Habakkuk 2:18-20, though idols are speechless, we are called to be silent before the living God in his temple

### B. Speaking by the spirit

1. The spirit of God is present with the testimony about Jesus: he is Lord
2. One way to tell the difference between that which is truly spiritual and that which is false spirituality is by what it says about Jesus: is he Lord or is he not?
3. Not sure exactly what was happening among the Corinthians when they gathered, but Paul clearly draws a distinction between those who curse Jesus and those who pledge loyalty to him

### C. God speaks

1. One of the contrasts here is that the Spirit speaks, whereas pagan idols cannot produce speech
2. They cannot provide moral instruction or encouragement or insight into the meaning of human life
3. The Spirit’s words are intelligible
4. By God’s word the world was created and is sustained
5. Idols don’t even have any life in them: as Isaiah says they are nothing more than a block of wood

## II. Spirituality from the Spirit, 4-6

### A. Spiritual gifts are empowered by God

1. Gifts – same Spirit
2. Service – same Lord
3. Activities – same God
4. Paul not only emphasizes variety, but more importantly he emphasizes the one, true source of all of these things
5. The transcendent God is the source of all things pertaining to spiritual man

6. Unless we tap into that source, all other spiritual sources are either from inside the mind of man or from pagan gods and pagan thinking

B. The source of power

1. More than a comforting, nebulous force field
2. God empowers us to live a moral, righteous life
3. It is the love of Christ that fills us with the fullness of God, Eph. 3:19
4. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. 2:3
5. God's power is in Christ and the all-encompassing power given to him, Eph. 1:19-22

III. Spirituality for Everyone, 7-10

A. God apportions his gifts with a purpose

1. Genuine spirituality is not the cultivation of private emotional highs, mystical thrills, or an exclusively individual serenity.
2. Christianity is not a religion of spiritual Lone Rangers or narcissists.
3. The gifts are given for "the common good," 7
4. They are not merit badges or signs of approval from God
5. Though society may exalt individualism, the church is a community where the common good must be considered a priority
6. True spirituality is selfless

B. The list is not exhaustive

1. Lists that Paul mentions elsewhere are the same in some ways, different in others
2. God apportions them according to the needs of the community
3. We should focus less on the "miraculous" or "charismatic" gifts (not available today)
4. The list here anticipates the further list at the end of the chapter where numerous, "ordinary" gifts are also mentioned: helping, administration
5. And where he points to an even better way of love, 31 into chap. 13

Conclusions:

1. Spirituality is Christ: unless you have confessed Jesus as Lord, believed in him, and been baptized to wash away sins and receive the Holy Spirit, your spirituality is not based on God but something more sinister.
2. Spirituality comes from God: He is the source and power by which we grow spiritually.
3. Spirituality is not only for every individual, but it is for the common good.
4. A spirituality that doesn't consider others is not genuine.