



“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

Disciplemaking 1 - Abiding in His Word

LESSON 9 - IN THE BODY

“We are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love,” Ephesians 4:15-16

Our spiritual birth delivered us into the family of God ... into the Body of Christ. Tremendous and wonderful things happened when we *believed in* Jesus Christ. Before that we were dead ... and then we became alive. We were enemies of God ... and afterwards we became His friends. We were in darkness ... and then we came into the light. However, our new life has much more significance than just the personal, individual changes. We also became part of His Body. We became equal and important parts in the Body with other Believers.

Our life in the Body with other Believers has particular privileges and responsibilities. The Bible gives us several illustrations to help us understand what it means to be in the Body. We are part of the Body of Christ ... the family of God ... the bride of Christ ... the house of God ... the temple ... the light ... a nation ... the vine ... and a flock. Understanding the implications of these illustrations helps us function properly as members of the Body.

The Bible gives us clear directives on how to function in the Body. In obedience to God’s Word, we should follow our spiritual birth with water baptism as an outward sign of our identification with His death, burial, and resurrection. Moreover, we need to be together ... sharing our resources ... being taught ... worshipping ... praying ... and remembering His death through communion. We are also commanded to love one another, to preserve unity, to be pure, and to put love into action.

God has given us the resources that we need to function properly in the Body. Jesus has given four kinds of *specialized people* to equip us. In addition, the Holy Spirit gives *special abilities*, spiritual gifts, to Believers ... empowering us to do our part in the Body of Christ. Our proper use of these resources, as we fit into our proper place in His Body, causes the whole Body to grow up in all aspects to bring honor to Christ.

NINE ILLUSTRATIONS OF LIFE WITH OTHER BELIEVERS

These illustrations give understanding about our position, privileges, and responsibilities in the Body of Christ. There are implications of each of these illustrations that apply to our relationship with God ... with other Believers ... and with lost people.

1. Body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Body, Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18. No other member is the Head ... only Jesus is. Each believer is an important part of the Body, Romans 12:4-5, Ephesians 5:30, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. There are many different parts of the Body. All parts are not identical. Each part must do its own job. There is no place for individualism or favoritism. Our goal is growth in love until the Body reaches full stature matching the Head, Ephesians 4:11-16.

2. Family of God. God is our father, Matthew 6:9, 23:9, 2 Corinthians 6:18. We are His children, Galatians 3:26, 1 John 3:1-2. Jesus is our first-born brother, Hebrews 1:6, 2:17. First-born is a position of authority in the family ... it does not imply that Jesus did not exist before Bethlehem. He was born there as the God-man. He was born as our first-born brother. However, He always existed. In addition, we are fellow-heirs with Him, Romans 8:14-17, Galatians 4:7. We have fellowship with the Father, Jesus, and each other, 1 John 1:3, 1 Corinthians 1:9, Matthew 23:8. We are part of the wonderful family of God. And in that context, Jesus said, "Do not call anyone on earth your father" for One is your Father, He who is in Heaven," Matthew 23:9.

3. Bride of Christ. Jesus is the bridegroom, John 3:29, Matthew 25:1-13, Luke 5:34. We are the bride, betrothed to Christ, preparing for the wedding, 2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:25-33. This illustration is one of anticipation. We are waiting for our Bridegroom's return and the marriage supper of the Lamb, Revelation 19:7-9.

4. House of God. We are being built to be His dwelling place. God is the builder of His house, Hebrews 3:2-6. Christ is the cornerstone ... and the apostles and prophets are the foundation, Ephesians 2:19-22. We are the living stones used to build His house, 1 Peter 2:4-5. The house of God is not made of bricks and sticks. God's house is being built of flesh and blood. "*You also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit,*" Ephesians 2:22. "*But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house, whose house we are,*" Hebrews 3:6.

5. Temple of God. Israel had a temple. However, we are a temple. Jesus is our High Priest, Hebrews 3:1, 4:14-15, 5:5-6, 9:11-12. And we are individual priests representing ourselves directly to God. As priests in His Temple, we should offer *six sacrifices*.

Sacrifice 1 is our bodies as living sacrifices ... holy and acceptable to God, Romans 12:1.

Sacrifice 2 is our praise ... our grateful acknowledgement of God for who He is, Hebrews 13:15.

Sacrifice 3 is *our good works* ... as our response to salvation, Hebrews 13:16.

Sacrifice 4 is *our koinonia* ... a Greek word for believer's participation in shared resources and fellowship, Hebrews 13:16.

Sacrifice 5 is *our broken and contrite hearts* ... lowly, bruised, and crushed, Psalm 51:17.

Sacrifice 6 is our fruit of new Believers ... those that we help come to faith in Christ, Romans 15:16.

NINE ILLUSTRATIONS ... continued

6. Light. God is light and in Him there is no darkness, 1 John 1:5, Revelation 21:23. We are sons of light, 1 Thessalonians 5:5. John stated that Jesus was the true light, John 1:4-5, 9.

Jesus described Himself as the light of the world, John 8:12, 12:46. He said, "*While I am in the world, I am the light of the world,*" John 9:5.

At His ascension, we became the light of the world. Jesus said, "*You are the light of the world,*" Matthew 5:14. We must walk in the light, Ephesians 5:8, 1 John 1:7. We are lights shining to a world living in darkness, Matthew 5:14-16, Philippians 2:15.

7. Nation. Israel is a special nation to God ... the apple of His eye, Zechariah 2:8. The Church is also referred to as a holy nation, 1 Peter 2:9. That does not mean that Israel and the Church are the same ... they are not.

As Believers, our citizenship is in Heaven, Philippians 3:20. We, as Christians, are fellow-citizens with the saints, Ephesians 2:19.

Moreover, we are aliens and strangers in this world. We are in the world ... but not of the world, John 17:14-16. We are on assignment in this foreign land as ambassadors of the King, 2 Corinthians 5:20. As ambassadors, we have both the ministry and message of reconciliation, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.

8. Vine. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches, John 15:1,5. This illustrates our dependency on Him. It also points to our responsibility to bear fruit, John 15:1-16. We glorify the Father by bearing fruit, John 15:2 ... much fruit, John 15:8 ... and fruit that remains, John 15:16.

Our Father is the vinedresser, John 15:1. He prunes us , sometimes painfully, to bear more fruit, John 15:1-2. And bearing fruit enhances our prayers, John 15:16.

9. Flock. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, 1 Peter 5:4, Hebrews 13:20. He is the Good Shepherd, John 10:14-16. He is the door of the sheep, John 10:7. We are His sheep ... following His voice, John 10:3-4, 27-28.

The Shepherd leads and protects His sheep. He gave His life to protect us from the eternal danger of sin, John 10:11. God's wonderful care for His sheep is explained in Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34:1-31, and John 10:1-30.

God said, "*As for you, My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God,*" Ezekiel 34:31. God is our shepherd ... that is a great comfort. One day we will become one flock with Israel, John 10:6.

LIFE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Birth. Our starting point is spiritual birth. Jesus told Nicodemus, “*You must be born again,*” John 3:7. No one is part of the Body until he or she is personally born again. We are born into the Body of Christ. Paul described this as a spiritual baptism in 1 Corinthians 12:13, “*By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body*”. From that beginning point, each believer needs to grow to become a properly functioning part of the Body ... fitting in ... serving and being served.

Baptism. Water baptism is the outer demonstration of the inner spiritual baptism of our salvation. Jesus was baptized, Matthew 3:13-17. Every believer should be baptized. The Great Commission includes the commandment for “*baptizing them in the [singular] name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,*” Matthew 28:19. Water baptism is a statement of our identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, Romans 6:1-7. A simple application of this Biblical commandment is baptism by immersion after spiritual rebirth.

Early Church Examples. The early church gave good examples to us ... examples of what our collective lives should include.

Gathering together, Acts 2:1.

Being taught, Acts 2:42.

Fellowship, Acts 2:42.

Breaking bread [the Lord’s Supper], Acts 2:42 & 46.

Praying together, Acts 2:42.

Sharing their material resources, Acts 2:44-45.

Eating regular meals together, Acts 2:46.

Praising God, Acts 2:47.

Growing in numbers ... the fruit of new Believers, Acts 2:47.

Worship. Worship is an important part of our lives as Believers ... alone or together. The men and women of the Old and New Testaments worshipped God in many different places and situations. Worship can be in spoken word or song. Jesus said, “*God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth,*” John 4:24.

Communion. The example and teaching of Christ at the Last Supper, and Paul’s explanation, established communion as a special time of remembrance for Christians when we gather together. When we eat the bread and drink the cup at communion, we look back at Christ’s sacrifice of His body and at the shedding His blood for us. We commemorate the great price He paid for us. In communion, we also should look inside ourselves in self-examination ... and we should look forward to the day when we will share this meal with Jesus in His kingdom, Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:14-20, and 1 Corinthians 11:23-24.

Four Commandments. Jesus proclaimed that, *“If you love Me, you will keep my commandments,”* John 14:15. These four commandments are very important for the Body to function properly. These commandments are both individual and collective. The Body functions properly if each part individually works properly in coordination with the other parts, Ephesians 4:16. We are commanded to love one another ... to preserve unity ... to be pure ... and to put love into action.

Commandment 1 ... Love one another. Jesus said, *“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you,”* John 15:12. This commandment is the basis of the next three. Love should be our individual and collective attitude. It should be the motivation for all of our actions toward our fellow-Believers. God loved us ... therefore, we should love each other, 1 John 4:11. We should love each other fervently from the heart, 1 Peter 1:22. As Christ laid down His life for us, we should lay down our lives for each other, 1 John 3:16. The world will know that we are His disciples because of our love for one another, John 13:34-35. Loving each other begins with an attitude change. *“With humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself,”* Philippians 2:3. We are commanded to put that love into action. *“Through love serve one another,”* Galatians 5:13.

Commandment 2 ... Preserve unity. We are not commanded to create unity. Unity comes from the Spirit ... and not from us. Individually and collectively, we must be *“diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,”* Ephesians 4:3. Jesus prayed that we would be one, John 17:11,21-23. His prayer in verse 23 was literally that we would be perfected into a unit so that the world would believe that He came from the Father. We are to be of one heart and one soul, Acts 4:32, Romans 15:5. We are to be of one mind, 1 Corinthians 1:10. Preserving unity is not easy. Preserving unity takes continuous action.

“Pursue the things which make for peace,” Romans 14:19.

Show *“forbearance to one another in love,”* Ephesians 4:2.

Accept one another, Romans 15:7.

“Let us not judge one another,” Romans 14:13.

Do not put *“a stumbling block in a brother’s way,”* Romans 14:13.

Don’t let liberty be *“a stumbling block to the weak,”* 1 Corinthians 8:9.

“Let no one act as your judge,” Colossians 2:16-17.

Don’t show *“personal favoritism,”* James 2:1-9.

“Do not speak against one another,” James 4:11.

“Do not complain ... against one another,” James 5:9.

Do not *“bite and devour one another,”* Galatians 5:15.

Be *“subject to one another in the fear of Christ,”* Ephesians 5:21.

Commandment 3 ... Be pure. *“Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?”*, 1 Corinthians 5:6. This rhetorical question stresses the effect of an individual’s sin on the group. Love does not mean overlooking sin and the damage it causes. Unity is not unity if it requires the sacrifice of purity. We must love one another and preserve unity ... in part by dealing effectively with the sin in our midst. Three types of sin must be purged from the Body ... our personal sin ... each other’s sins ... and the sin of a divisive or unrepentant man.

First ... we must confront our personal sin. One person’s sin can devastate the group as it did in Joshua 7 ... where one man’s greed brought defeat to the entire army of Israel. The Body can be hurt by lying to one another ... and by immorality, impurity, greed, filthiness, silly talk and coarse jesting, Colossians 3:9, Ephesians 5:3-4. In addition, the believer who commits sexual immorality transgresses and defrauds his brother, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6. There is a cure for our personal sin ... God will forgive and cleanse us if we confess our sins, 1 John 1:9.

Second ... we must confront each other’s sins. In doing this we need to *“put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other,”* Colossians 3:12-13. Sometimes someone must be rebuked. *“If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him,”* Luke 17:3. There is a three-step Biblical process for rebuking a brother, Matthew 18:15-17. First, confront him individually. If he repents, forgive him ... and it is finished. This is private. It is not to be public in any way. If this attempt fails then go on to step two. Confront the brother again ... but this time with one or two witnesses. These are more than witnesses of the confrontation. They must be witnesses of the sin of the brother. If the brother repents, forgive him ... and it is finished. This is also a private event. Finally, if the problem is still unresolved, *“tell it to the church”*. If the brother repents, forgive him. *“If he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and tax-gatherer”* ... that is as an outsider, Matthew 18:17. The goal of each of these steps, including step 3, is to *“restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness,”* Galatians 6:1. In every step of this process keep verses like Ephesians 4:26,32 and 1 Peter 4:8 in your mind and heart.

Third ... we must confront the sin of a divisive or unrepentant man. An unrepentant, immoral, or a factious man cannot be tolerated. We are instructed to *“reject a factious man after a first and second warning,”* Titus 3:9-11. We are to *“turn away from them,”* Romans 16:17. However, a factious man is not necessarily just someone who disagrees with the pastor or priest. We are instructed to *“keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life,”* 2 Thessalonians 3:6. We must *“remove the wicked man from among yourselves,”* 1 Corinthians 5:11-13.

Commandment 4 ... Put love into action. *"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and in truth,"* 1 John 3:18. Love without action is not love at all. Real love is more than words. Real love results in real action. Jesus was the ultimate expression and example of love. He laid down His life for us, 1 John 3:16. To be like Jesus, we should give our lives away in serving one another. To serve one another in love we need to be with one another. We should gather together with other Believers. Do not try to live the Christian life alone. We must not be *"forsaking our own assembling together,"* Hebrews 10:25. This means much more than attending religious meetings. A believer could have a perfect attendance record at Church meetings but have never truly assembled together in the Body. We should *"pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart,"* 2 Timothy 2:22. Jesus said, *"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst,"* Matthew 18:20. He is with us when we are gathered together in any place or in any location ... not just when we meet in a religious building. Gather together with other Believers ... and put love into action. The following are some of the ways to put love into action:

Admonish one another, Romans 15:14.

Be hospitable, Romans 12:13.

Build up one another, Romans 14:19.

Comfort one another with words of His return, 1 Thessalonians 4:18.

Do good to each other, Galatians 6:10.

Encourage one another, 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

Meet each other's material needs, Romans 12:13.

Rejoice and weep together, Romans 12:15.

Sing together, Colossians 3:16.

Stimulate one another to love and good deeds, Hebrews 10:24.

Suffer with one another, 1 Corinthians 12:26.

Support teachers and workers, Galatians 6:6, 1 Corinthians 9:11,14.

Support widows, 1 Timothy 5:8-12.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

God provides two kinds of gifts to His Body. Jesus gives specialized people “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service,” Ephesians 4:12. In addition, the Holy Spirit gives special abilities for service ... varied abilities to each believer. What we know about both categories of gifts we know from the Bible. We cannot allow our experiences or those of others determine what we believe about gifts.

Specialized people ... given by Jesus ... to equip the body. These are specialized people ... the equippers described in Ephesians 4:11-16. Every believer is not one of these four. These are not positions or offices to which people are elected. Only some Believers are these specialized people. They are given by Jesus to equip Believers. They are not professional workers hired to do the ministry for us. They are given to equip us for the work of service. The four types of leaders are apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers. Apostles are those that are sent out to be foundational in beginning ministries. Prophets declare God’s Word to the Body. Evangelists declare His Word to the lost. Pastor-teachers watch over and feed God’s people. To understand a leader’s role in the Body, consider the evangelist. The evangelist should do the work of evangelism ... and he should equip Believers to do evangelism.

Special abilities ... given by the Holy Spirit ... to empower the body. These special abilities, given by the Holy Spirit, empower believers ... enabling them to do the work of service. These gifts are not to be confused with natural or learned abilities and talents. For example ... some Believers may have a God-given talent of singing. They may have learned much about music. They may have trained and exercised their voices. However, those Believers do not have the spiritual gift of singing ... there is no such gift. Certain Biblical facts are true about Spirit-given spiritual gifts. The Bible defines these spiritual gifts. Our beliefs, experiences, and church leaders do not redefine spiritual gifts in any way that contradicts or adds to the Bible.

Every believer is given at least one spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit,
1 Corinthians 12:7, and 1 Peter 4:10.

The gifts are given at the Spirit’s desire rather than our own desire,
1 Corinthians 12:11.

They are for the common good rather than individual benefit, Romans 12:4-5
1 Corinthians 12:7 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

There is a possibility that they may be lost, Matthew 25:14-29.
Note: Romans 11:29 deals with Israel, not the Body

The spiritual gift(s) that you have been given is (are) determined by the Spirit,
1 Corinthians 12:4.

The ministries where you use them are determined by Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:5.

Your gift’s effectiveness is the Father’s work, 1 Corinthians 12:6.

Your responsibility is obedience.

Discovering your spiritual gift(s). Determining which gift(s) you have takes time and experience. You can discover your gift(s) by first learning what the Bible says about those gifts ... by being involved in ministry ... and then by evaluating what God is doing through you. Make an educated spiritual guess as to which gift may be yours ... get involved in that type of ministry ... give it some time ... and then evaluate what God has done. Your gift(s) will become obvious as you minister.

The Bible's definitions. Spiritual gifts are described in the Bible in two major references, Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12-14. Knowing our natural tendency for divisiveness, the Holy Spirit put the great chapter on love, 1 Corinthians 13, in the middle of His teaching on gifts. Let the Bible define spiritual gifts. Pray and study the Bible to form your beliefs about spiritual gifts. Don't decide by osmosis ... absorbing your beliefs from your spiritual environment. Let the Bible invade your experience. Don't let your experience invade the Bible. Each believer has been given one or more spiritual gifts. These special abilities are listed below in general alphabetical order ... not in any order of significance. Each believer does not have all of the gifts. However, all Believers have responsibilities in each of these areas.

1. Discerning of Spirits. Some have a special ability to distinguish between good and evil ... between that which is of God or of the world, the flesh, and the devil. All Believers should be discerning, Hebrews 5:14, 1 John 4:1.

2. Exhortation. This is a special ability to incite, urge, or encourage others. In part, it could be called the gift of encouragement. Some have this gift ... but all Believers should encourage one another, Hebrews 3:13, 10:25.

3. Faith. This is an extra ability to trust God steadfastly for the humanly improbable or impossible. It might be seen when someone holds on when others let go ... or lets go when others hold on. This faith is not forming an image of something in your mind that obligates God to give it to you. This faith is not *naming* something that obligates God to give it to you because you have spoken. This faith is whole-hearted trust in Him to do what He chooses. Some have this gift ... but all should have faith, 2 Corinthians 5:7.

4. Giving. This is the special ability to give back to God, through others, what He has given to us. This is a special ability to know what to give ... to whom to give it ... and when to give. It has more to do with the quality of the giving than it does with the quantity of the gift. Sometimes God combines the gift of giving with extra material resources ... an awesome opportunity and responsibility for the person with this spiritual gift. Some have this gift ... but all should give, 2 Corinthians 9:7.

5. Healing. This is the special ability to be used by God in physical, emotional, or spiritual healing. Do not expect all Believers to be physically healed. Paul was not healed, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Trophimus was not healed, 2 Timothy 4:20. In addition, we have never seen the great men and women of faith healed of the diseases of old age ... all eventually die. Sometimes God heals some people through those with the gift of healing. All do not have this gift ... but all can seek healing, James 5:14-16.

6. Knowledge. This is a special ability to understand God's Word. If it is some knowledge directly given by God, it would be uncompromisingly consistent with the written Word. If it is inaccurate, or if it contradicts the Bible in any way, then the knowledge is not from God. Paul wrote that this gift would be done away with at some time, 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. Some may have this gift ... but all should pursue greater knowledge of God's Word, 2 Timothy 2:15, Colossians 1:9-10.

7. Leadership. This is the special ability to lead others in accomplishing God's work. Look behind you. Is anyone following? Are you effectively leading others to accomplish God's will? Leadership ability in the world is not the same as the gift of leadership. Being an elected, or appointed leader in the church does not mean that one has the gift of leadership. This gift is given to some Believers ... but all have leadership influence on the people around them, Proverbs 12:26.

8. Mercy. This is a special ability to perform deeds of love. Mercy is active compassion directed to the undeserving ... whether or not they are unlovely, destitute, or humanly distressed. Only some Believers have this gift ... but all Believers should be merciful, Jude 1:2-23.

9. Miracles. This is the special ability, given by the Holy Spirit, to perform humanly impossible acts of power. However, the power to perform miracles can come from other sources, Exodus 7:10-13, Matthew 7:21-23. All Believers don't have this gift ... but we all do have power, John 14:12, Acts 1:8.

10. Prophecy. This is a special ability given to some to declare God's Word. Prophecy may be an authoritative declaration with the force of *thus saith the Lord* ... as it was with the New Testament authors. In addition, prophecy may be the divine prediction of future events. Foretelling the future *in the name of God* is dangerous, Deuteronomy 18:22. It seems to be limited, Revelation 22:18-19. And Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 that this gift would be done away with at some time. Prophecy may simply be the forth-telling, or declaring of God's Word ... similar to preaching or public declaration. All believers should do some of forth-telling, Psalm 145:4-12.

11. Serving. This is a special ability for helping and assisting others. It is not limited to helping those in ministry ... but it is certainly needed in that context. This kind of ministry can be a way to get involved... and from it grow into other areas as other gifts become apparent. Philip did this when he helped serve food to the widows ... and in doing so took a burden off the leaders which gave them time for prayer and the Word, Acts 6:1-6. A short time after that Phillip was an evangelist giving the Gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch ... and then to the people along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea from Azotus to Caesarea. Some have a special gift of serving ... but we should all serve one another, Galatians 5:13.

12. Teaching. This gift is the ability to help others learn and apply God's Word. Biblical teaching is more than the public declaration of facts ... it is making disciples. Mentoring, tutoring, and apprenticing can be part of this process. Teaching can be to large groups, to small groups, or to one person at a time. Numbers and popularity are not the measure of good teaching, 2 Timothy 4:3. The true measure of good teaching is in changed lives. Some have the gift of teaching ... but every believer should teach someone, Matthew 28:18-20.

13. Tongues. The spiritual gift of tongues is the ability to speak in a real language, which is unknown to the speaker. Tongues are not messages from God to man ... but are prayers addressed to God, 1 Corinthians 14:2,14. The gift of tongues is a sign for non-Believers, 1 Corinthians 14:22. It does not edify the Body ... but does benefit the speaker, 1 Corinthians 14:4. Tongues are limited to two or at most three in one meeting ... spoken one at a time ... and spoken only and always with interpretation, 1 Corinthians 14:27-28. Use of the spiritual gift of tongues should not be frenzied or chaotic ... but should be used properly and in an orderly way, 1 Corinthians 14:40. Paul wrote that the gift of tongues would cease at some time, 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. All Believers do not have the spiritual gift of tongues, 1 Corinthians 12:30 ... but all Believers should control their own tongues, James 1:26, 3:5-6.

14. Interpretation. This is the Spirit given ability to translate someone else's gift of tongues into the language of the hearers. It is not clear Biblically if the interpreter knows either or both languages. Tongues should never be used without interpretation, 1 Corinthians 14:27-28. At the time that tongues cease, interpretation would obviously cease as well.

15. Wisdom. This is a special ability to apply knowledge of God's Word to the complexities of life. Some have this gift ... but we all should conduct ourselves with wisdom, Colossians 4:5. If we lack wisdom we should pray for it, James 1:5.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ... Questions and Answers

Answers to questions about gifts and signs. There is misunderstanding and disagreement among Christians about signs, wonders, and the gifts of the Spirit. God used gifts and signs in the early church to confirm His message, Hebrews 2:2-4. Since then, the church has given them varying emphasis ... from ignoring them to misuse. Use the Bible as the basis for what you believe about these things. Several common questions are answered below. Don't adopt these answers as your beliefs simply because they are written here. Moreover, don't reject any of these answers simply because they contradict your experience or that of your friends. Form your own beliefs through prayer and Bible study. Be a Berean. And don't be involved in any experience that is inconsistent with, or contradicts, Biblical truth. Be very careful about any experiences that are not in the Bible ... certainly do not emphasize them.

1. *If I don't have the gift of evangelism should I witness anyway?* You should witness. You are commanded to witness. Moreover, you do *not* have the gift of evangelism. No one has that gift because there is no gift of evangelism. There are evangelists, given by Jesus to equip Believers, Ephesians 4:11-13. But the Bible never mentions a Spirit-given gift of evangelism. Evangelism is a responsibility ... not a gift.

2. *Are gifts of the Spirit available today?* Some believe that the gifts were given only to the first century church. They use Hebrews 2:2-4 to include signs, wonders, miracles and gifts in the founding of the church. Then they extend their interpretation of those verses to exclude these things from following generations. They point to a pattern of miraculous events concentrated at times of change ... the Exodus, the prophets, the life of Jesus, and the formation of the church. However, there is no convincing Biblical evidence that these things were only for the first generation of the church. Moreover, if we are in the *end times*, then this too is a period of change.

3. *Are all the gifts available today?* Christians disagree about the availability of prophecy, knowledge, tongues, and interpretation ... coming from contradictory interpretations of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13. Those verses state that these gifts would end when the "*perfect*" comes. One opinion is that the *perfect* was the completion of the New Testament, noting Revelation 22:18-19 as the close of prophecy, and therefore these four gifts are no longer available. The other opinion is that the *perfect* is the return of Christ, and therefore these gifts will be available to Believers until He returns. The Bible is not clear on what the "*perfect*" is ... or when it has or will come. Therefore, there is some doubt about the availability of these gifts. It isn't clearly defined. Therefore, it is best to base our obedience and experience on a full application of the Bible's rules and limitations. If a gift is available today, and is from Him, then all His directives for that gift will be met. If they aren't met, the gift isn't from God.

4. *Are all signs, wonders, and miracles of God?* No they are not! Satan's agents can do the miraculous. Pharaoh's magicians duplicated Moses' miracle, Exodus 7:10-12. Simon, an unsaved man, astonished people with his magic arts, Acts 8:9-13. And Satan disguises himself as an angel of light and his servants disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, 1 Corinthians 11:13-15. These and false apostles and deceitful workers can perform signs and wonders, Matthew 7:22-23. Many false religions and cults include signs, wonders, and even speak in tongues as enticements to attract people away from the true God.

5. *What do people mean when they justify their experiences with the phrase ... God is not the author of confusion?* Their experience may or may not be of God. However, their use of that phrase to defend some experience is illogical. It is true that God is never the author of confusion, 1 Corinthians 14:33. However, there are other authors. There are deceitful spirits and doctrines of devils, 1 Timothy 4:1-3. There are

false teachers, 2 Peter 2:1. The Bible should be the basis of experience. Experience, even in the name of Christianity, is not self-authenticating.

6. *Is being slain in the Spirit of God?* Being *slain in the Spirit* refers to someone falling over at the touch of a leader. *Falling down in the Spirit* is a similar experience without a leader's touch. Nonbelievers falling to the ground, John 18:6, and the Spirit snatching Philip away from the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8:39, are not examples of being *slain in the Spirit*. There are no Biblical examples of, and no Biblical teaching about, this phenomenon. The phenomenon of what is called being *slain in the Spirit* is extra-Biblical ... something being seen in experience but not found in the Bible.

7. *Shouldn't tongues be as popular today as it was in the book of Acts?* About 30 years of early church history are recorded in the book of Acts. More than 50 geographical locations are mentioned in Acts. And Paul's missionary travels covered more than 7500 miles [12000 km]. In all of that, miraculous tongues are mentioned only three times ... at Pentecost in Jerusalem, Acts 2 ... and when the Gospel came to Gentiles, Acts 10:43-48 ... and in Ephesus when some of John the Baptist's disciples believed in Jesus, Acts 19:1-7. Tongues are *not* common in the book of Acts.

9. *Are tongues a real language or can they be any kind of verbal utterances?* There is nothing in the Bible that indicates that tongues would be anything but a real language. The word *unknown* was used in conjunction with the word tongue several times in the King James translation of 1 Corinthians 14. However, there is no Greek word for *unknown* in those original verses [2,4,13,14,19, & 27]. The language of tongues was unknown to the one speaking ... but probably not unknown in the history of mankind. Some say it might be in the language of angels, 1 Corinthians 13:1 ... but there is no indication that angels speak in some disorganized babbling. Angels in the Bible spoke coherently, Luke 2:8-14, Revelation 5:11-12. The Greek word in the Bible used for tongue(s) means either the physical organ in one's mouth ... or it means language as used in Revelation 5:9, 13:7 and 17:15.

10. *How do I know if a manifestation of the gift of tongues is real?* The source of tongues is important. Real language tongues may come from the Holy Spirit or from Satan. Chaotic, frenzied, babbling-type tongues may be from the emotional side of the flesh or from Satan. Be a Berean, Acts 17:11, search the Bible. Tongues from the Holy Spirit will be consistent with *all* the Bible's rules for tongues.

Tongues are prayers addressed to God, 1 Corinthians 14:2,14.

Tongues are a sign for non-believers, 1 Corinthians 14:22.

There are three tongues maximum per meeting, 1 Corinthians 14:27.

Tongues are spoken one at a time, 1 Corinthians 14:27.

Tongues are spoken only with interpretation, 1 Corinthians 14:27-28.

Tongues should be used properly and in order, 1 Corinthians 14:40.

And tongues from the Spirit will be consistent demonstrations of the fruit of the Spirit, "*Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control,*" Galatians 5:22-23.

11. *Should I seek the gift of tongues?* All Believers are not given the gift of tongues, 1 Corinthians 12:30. And all the spiritual gifts are given at the Holy Spirit's desire rather than at our desire, 1 Corinthians 12:11. Paul listed several gifts ... putting tongues at the end of the list. Paul wrote *"but earnestly desire the greater gifts,"* 1 Corinthians 12:28-31. Paul put love above tongues, 1 Corinthians 13:1. Paul wrote that he preferred prophecy to tongues, 1 Corinthians 14:5. He also wrote that he would prefer to speak five words with his mind than 10,000 words in a tongue. Paul acknowledged the gift of tongues in the lives of others and in his own life. However, he often warned of the misuse of this gift. Paul wrote, *"Do not forbid to speak in tongues,"* 1 Corinthians 14:39. A good attitude toward the gift of tongues is this ... *be very careful, seek not, and forbid not.*

12. *What about private prayer tongues?* Some Christians experience mysterious language when they pray alone. Romans 8:26 teaches that the Holy Spirit prays for us ... not through us. Jude 1:20 teaches that we should pray in the Spirit ... but we should do all things in the Spirit. Justifying private tongues from these verses is an interpretive stretch. Paul wished that all spoke in tongues, 1 Corinthians 14:5. However, all cannot speak in tongues. Tongues are limited to two or at the most three in a meeting ... spoken in turn ... and spoken only if someone interprets, 1 Corinthians 14:27-28. From verse 28, *"If there is no interpreter, let him speak to himself and to God."* That refers to the two or three people with a public tongue who are silenced by the absence of an interpreter. In that situation, those specific people are told to pray privately rather than publicly. This falls significantly short of teaching private prayer tongues as a normal activity for all Believers. Some say that private prayer tongues were so popular in the early church that there was no need to document them in the Bible ... however, that kind of logic is foolishness.

13. *Why is there so much disunity about signs, wonders, and gifts of the Spirit?* Paul put the great verses on love, 1 Corinthians 13:1-8, in the middle of his teaching about gifts. Lack of love *and* lack of knowledge causes much disunity in the Body. Some have gained their opinions on these subjects by osmosis from other Christians rather than from an unprejudiced study of the Word ... promoting disunity from lack of Biblical knowledge. In addition, some Christians have adopted the opinions of their leaders or favorite authors ... rather than forming their own opinions through prayer and study of the Word. Persuasive shepherds can divide the flock ... promoting disunity because of their personal opinions.

14. *Why do the gifts exist?* The Holy Spirit has given us *special abilities* to empower us. And Jesus has given us *specialized people* to equip us. The gifts of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of Jesus make it possible for us to live successfully in the Body of Christ so that we can *"grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love,"* Ephesians 4:15-16.

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Disciplemaking 1 - Review questions

Lesson 9 - In the Body ... pages 118 - 131

Part of learning is review ... storing new knowledge into your long term memory. Print this review test or use separate paper to answer the following questions. Then repeat this test, open book or closed book, until you can accurately and easily answer all the questions. These *review exams* are available with correct answers on VirtualBibleAcademy.org.

LIST 9 ILLUSTRATIONS OF OUR BODY LIFE AND THE EMPHASIS FOR EACH.

1. Illustration: _____ Emphasis: _____
2. Illustration: _____ Emphasis: _____
3. Illustration: _____ Emphasis: _____
4. Illustration: _____ Emphasis: _____
5. Illustration: _____ Emphasis: _____
6. Illustration: _____ Emphasis: _____
7. Illustration: _____ Emphasis: _____
8. Illustration: _____ Emphasis: _____
9. Illustration: _____ Emphasis: _____

10. List the six sacrifices that we as individual priests should offer to God.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____

11. Who is the *light of the world*? _____

12. Who was and is the *light of the world*? _____

13. What four general commands tell us how to function together as believers?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

14. The 3 steps in confronting each other's sins described in Matthew 18:15-17 are:

- a. Go _____ to the person.
- b. If still unresolved, go with ____ or ____ _____.
- c. If still unresolved, _____.

15. We learn about God's "gifts" to the Body directly from the _____.

16. Jesus has given _____
to _____ Believers.

17. The Holy Spirit has given _____
to _____ Believers.

18. The four kinds of equippers in Ephesians 4:11-16 are:

- a. _____ b. _____
- c. _____ d. _____

19. *True or False*: These equippers do the ministry instead of us. _____

20. *True or False*: These equippers are given to train us to do the ministry. _____

21. Determining what gift(s) a believer has takes _____ and
_____.

22. The major Bible references on spiritual gifts are _____,
_____, and _____.

23. *True or False*: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 is important in Spiritual Gifts. _____

24. *True or False*: Evangelism is a Spiritual Gift given by the Holy Spirit. _____

Disciplemaking 1 - Answers to Review questions

Lesson 9 - In the Body ... questions pages 132 - 133

Do not use these answer sheets to find your answers. Please use them only to check your answers. Go back into the lesson to find the information to correct your answers. Repeat the test until you can accurately and easily answer all the questions. All the lessons, review tests, and answer pages are available on VirtualBibleAcademy.org.

LIST 9 ILLUSTRATIONS OF OUR BODY LIFE AND THE EMPHASIS FOR EACH.

1. Illustration: Body of Christ Emphasis: Unity & growth
2. Illustration: Family of God Emphasis: Fellowship & intimacy
3. Illustration: Bride of Christ Emphasis: Anticipation
4. Illustration: House of God Emphasis: God's dwelling place
5. Illustration: Temple of God Emphasis: Sacrifices & worship
6. Illustration: Light Emphasis: Evangelism
7. Illustration: Nation Emphasis: Citizenship in Heaven
8. Illustration: Vine Emphasis: Fruit
9. Illustration: Flock Emphasis: The Shepherd

10. List the six sacrifices that we as individual priests should offer to God.

- a. Our bodies
- b. Our praise
- c. Good works
- d. Koinonia (true fellowship)
- e. Broken and contrite hearts
- f. New believers

11. Who is the *light of the world*? We are as believers

12. Who was and is the *light of the world*? Jesus

13. What four general commands tell us how to function together as believers?
- Love one another
 - Preserve unity
 - Be pure
 - Put love into action
14. The 3 steps in confronting each other's sins described in Matthew 18:15-17 are:
- Go alone to the person.
 - If still unresolved, go with one or two witnesses of the sin.
 - If still unresolved, take it to the church for resolution.
15. We learn about God's "gifts" to the Body directly from the Bible.
16. Jesus has given specialized people (leaders) to equip Believers.
17. The Holy Spirit has given special abilities to empower Believers.
18. The four kinds of equippers in Ephesians 4:11-16 are:
- Apostles
 - Prophets
 - Evangelists
 - Pastor-teachers
19. *True or False:* These equippers do the ministry instead of us. False
20. *True or False:* These equippers are given to train us to do the ministry. True
21. Determining what gift(s) a believer has takes time and experience.
22. The major Bible references on spiritual gifts are Ephesians 4:11-16, Romans 12, and 1 Corinthians 12 - 14.
23. *True or False:* 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 is important in Spiritual Gifts. True
24. *True or False:* Evangelism is a Spiritual Gift given by the Holy Spirit. False