

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians

Things Pertaining to the Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:1-3

1. Do Not Be Unaware

Thus far in his letter, Paul has addressed several areas where the Corinthians have been in serious need of correction including their divisions into prideful factions (1 Cor. 1:12), their inability to deal with blatant sin in the fellowship (1 Cor. 5:1), their misunderstanding and misuse of Christian freedom (1 Cor. 8:1), and their selfish partiality (1 Cor. 11:20-22). Paul now begins to address their general misunderstanding and mishandling of things which pertain to the Holy Spirit and His ministry through them. The church's collective experience of the amazing works of the Holy Spirit in their midst has not prevented them from significant error in need of correction (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1).

2. Do Not Be Led To a Dead End

The gentile world has been diverse and factious since the time of the tower of Babel (cf. Gen. 11:8-9). The one thing that bound the nations together and set them apart from Israel was their persistent commitment to idolatry (Lev. 18:3, 24-30; 20:23; Ezek. 20:7-8). Though fallen angels at times play-acted in the guise of the nations' false gods (cf. 1 Cor. 10:20), the idols and the deities which they represented were mute, deaf, blind and dead (cf. 1 Sam. 5:1-5; Isa. 44:14-17). Israel had too often also been brought to worship these gods who could not hear or help them (cf. 1 Ki. 18:25-29). Paul was instructing the Corinthians in order that they not make the same mistakes.

3. Do Not Be Led By a Dead Word

It is of paramount importance for the Corinthians to not be naive about spiritual matters. Faithfulness to God is always to be measured by the measuring rod of His Word (Ps. 119:9). Anyone who claimed to speak on God's behalf was to be held accountable to what God had already said (cf. Lk. 4:1-13). The penalty for the false prophet was severe, but the consequences for following a false prophet were far worse (Deut. 30:15-20). The primary ways to discern the true prophet or teacher from the false was see if their teaching was theologically orthodox (Deut. 13:1-5; 2 Pet. 2:1), their life was conducted with moral integrity (2 Pet. 2:2-3, 12-15), and if there was any predictive prophecy that it would be absolutely accurate (Deut. 18:18-22).