

## **The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians**

### **Variety and Unity**

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

#### **1. What Spiritual Things Are We Talking About?**

Paul is describing the things which pertain to the Spirit (v.1) in a variety of ways, and each highlighting a specific aspect of their intended purpose. First, they are called from the Holy Spirit (v.4), and are not natural abilities or some sort of earned reward. They are special graces imparted from God to the believer (Rom. 12:6; 1 Pet. 4:10). Second, they are also described as ministries (v.5). A ministry is a service done for the benefit of others (cf. Acts 6:4; 1 Cor. 16:15). Finally, Paul describes them as effects (v.6). This word (which is only used one other time, v.10) highlights the results of the activities which are done by God's people with the gifts that He gives them.

#### **2. From Whom Are These Things Given?**

All of these gifts, their use, and their various manifestations before the church are given from God. It is likely that Paul is highlighting the fact that it is God who is the giver of these gifts without emphasizing one of the divine Persons over the others. The key point is that while there are many manifestations of the unique gifting of God to believers (vs.8-10; Rom. 12:6-8), all of these are gifts from God for the same ultimate purpose (cf. 1 Pet. 4:11).

#### **3. To Whom Are These Things Given?**

The Corinthian church had a problem with highlighting and emphasizing the more dramatic gifts and those to whom these gifts were given (cf. vs.14-26). Before he addresses this issue directly, Paul reminds them, twice, that God has given gifts all of them (v.6) which are evident in each one of them (v.7).

#### **4. Why Are These Things Given?**

All of the gifts of God are for the benefit of the body (v.7). Individual believers may benefit differently, but no gift is designed primarily for a personal benefit alone. The gifts are given to all believers in the local church so that they will be used for the good of all of the believers in the local church.