

LESSON 9-10

DIVISIONS OVER GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

1. Here is an imaginary conversation between two Christians from different denominations: 3.

CHRISTIAN A: We had a wonderful service last night. There was this evangelist from Australia. He called people out to the front to receive the Holy Spirit. When he put his hands on them, they all fell down on the floor. Some people were crying, some were speaking in tongues. The Spirit was really there. 4.

CHRISTIAN B: I don't like that kind of service. It's too emotional. Your church is too noisy. People always seem to be shouting and talking at once. When I go to worship God, I want to be quiet, and think and hear God speaking to me.

CHRISTIAN A: Your church is dead. You haven't been baptized by the Holy Spirit. When you have the Spirit, there are all kinds of miracles, people are healed, and speak in tongue. These are the real signs of the Holy Spirit.

CHRISTIAN B: People in our church have been given the Holy Spirit too. But the Spirit leads us to love one another, and care for people. That's more important than shouting and jumping about in church.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What church do you think Christian A belongs to? What about Christian B?
2. Is it right to say they are both Christians?
3. What does A see as signs that a person has the Holy Spirit? What signs does B see?
4. Who is right? What are the most important gifts of the Holy Spirit?
2. The Church in Corinth had similar divisions to these shown above. Some members claimed they were spiritually better than others because they spoke in tongues, could heal, or could prophesy. Paul deals with this problem in Chapters 12 and 14.

3. Read I Corin. 12: 4-11

- (a) Does each Christian have a spiritual gift? (v7)
- (b) Do they have the same gift? (v11)
- 12 (c) List the different gifts Paul mentions in v.8-10 and in Romans 12: 6-8.
- 12 (d) Who gives those gifts? (v4,6)
- 11 (e) Why does God give these gifts to people? (v7)

4. Now read I Corin 12: 14-21.
Which gifts are the most important?

This picture of a body shows that every gift is important and the church needs all of them. Some Christians in Corinth must have been saying like in verse 21 that their gift was more important than others, but Paul emphasizes that all gifts are equally important.

H/W ACTIVITY Draw a picture of a body. Label some of the parts with some of the gifts you listed in step 3. eg. on the mouth write preaching on the hands, helping etc.

5. SPEAKING IN TONGUES is something that happens in many different religions. (Christian and non-Christian)
The person "speaking" is not in control of what is happening. Strange sounds come out of his mouth which neither he nor anyone else can understand.

Read I Corin. 14: 1-5, 18-19.

- (a) Did Paul speak in tongues? (YES)
- (b) Did Jesus speak in tongues? (NO)
- (c) Should all Christians have this gift? (see also 12: 29-30) (NO)
- (d) What is a more important gift, according to Paul? (PREACHING)
Why? (It helps others: speaking in tongues only helps one person).
- (e) What is the most important gift that all Christians should have? (see 13: 1-3, 14:1) (LOVE)

H/W ASSIGNMENT: What would you say to Christians A and B?
Write an imaginary conversation between yourself and them.
(work in groups of three).