

## The Lord Jesus said ... My Sheep

To be sure, the Holy Spirit does indeed lead and empower every believer (Rom. 8:12,13). The Holy Spirit also engifts every believer for spiritual service to the body of Christ (1Cor. 12:11). But does the Holy Spirit of God work apart from the orderly control and discernment of the human mind renewed in Christ?

### Is the Holy Spirit of God some mystical force that does what He wants, when He wants, and how He wants with no Divine authority over Him?

Because the Corinthian believers were accustomed to the pagan spirit world, the Lord's apostle wrote 1Cor. 12-14 to help them correctly discern the working of God's Spirit in *His* church.

1Cor. 12: #1,2 Now concerning *spiritual* [that which involves God's Spirit] gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

Paul the apostle is contrasting the work of God's Spirit against their former pagan religious ways. At that time, they were simply "carried away" – *led* like a blind person. They followed "dumb idols" without understanding, and they were "led" without intellect by seducing spirit powers and guides. Their practices were illogical and unexplainable, but were all attributed to the "power of the force" – whatever that was.

But now the apostle is informing their ignorance. The Holy Spirit of God does not work the same way. And in these three chapters he will reveal seven regulations on the workings of God the Spirit in the church. These seven regulations are meant to provide a criteria to evaluate the true workings and style of *God's* Spirit.

1. governed by the Lordship of Jesus (12:3)
2. governed by differences of function (12:4-27)
3. governed by order of value (12:28-31)
4. governed by a higher principle: love (13:1-13)
5. governed by purpose (14:1-12)
6. governed by the mind (14:13-25)
7. governed by written commandments (14:26-41)

## hear my voice, and

### 1. Governed by Lordship

12:3



Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that **Jesus is the Lord**, but by the Holy Ghost (:3).

The Holy Spirit never defames the Name of Jesus. Rather, He will give the enlightenment to confess Jesus as Lord. The Spirit of God is naturally on the "same page" as the Son of God and God the Father. God's Spirit is occupied with the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The role of the Spirit is not to point to Himself but to the Son. The Spirit does not lead one to confess the Spirit as *Lord* (though He is God) but the Son as Lord.

**First, they were to understand that the authority of the Christian assembly was not the Spirit – but the Lord Jesus Christ – as confessed by the Spirit** (1:10, 12:3, 14:37).

#### The Protocol of the Tri-Unity

**Father** gives all things to the Son (Jn. 3:35, 16:15)

**Son** instructs the Spirit what to say (Jn. 16:14)

**Spirit** never speaks on His own authority – only what He hears from the Son (Spirit has role of a messenger) (Jn. 16:13, 15). Spirit's role is to reveal the glory of the Son. When one is "spiritual," that one will be occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ – not the Spirit (Jn. 16:14).

It is to the Son that the Father has exalted to His right hand. It is the Son that every knee is to bow and every tongue is to confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philp. 2:9-11). It is the Son that has been declared Lord by resurrection (Acts 2:36). It is the Son to Whom the Father hath given authority to execute judgment (John 5:27). And it is the Son Who was set far above all principalities and given authority as "head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:20-23).

## they follow me ... John 10:27

### 2. Governed by Differences

12:4-27



Now there are **diversities** of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are **differences** of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are **diversities** of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all (:4,5,6).

The apostle shows that the Spirit gives believers different gifts. Also, the authority structure of the Lord Jesus and God the Father administrate and operate those gifts in different ways. The key point is *differences*.

He likens the church to a physical body. Though a body is one, it has many different members. The difference of each member makes its successful functioning dependent upon the knowledge of those differences. One will kick with their foot rather than their nose because of difference. Unlike a floating bubble, differences require a body to move with controlled order.

God's Spirit does not work like crowd hypnosis where the whole group mystically acts or speaks in unison. As a human body, the members of the spiritual body do not do the same thing – for the gifts are different.

### 3. Governed by Value

12:28-31



And God hath set some in the church, **first** apostles, **secondarily** prophets, **thirdly** teachers, **after that** miracles, **then** gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues (:28).

Here the authority of the Godhead takes the gifts that the Spirit gave and assigns them an order of importance. Their value to the assembly as a whole to help the body grow will govern which ones the church gives prominent attention and importance.

Apostles were given the new covenant revelation from the Lord to write the Scriptures. Obviously with such authority apostles would be given first place in the early church. Tongues (different languages) were a sign for the unbeliever (14:22), making their value to the Christian assembly minimal.

## "He that hath an ear,

For example, consider a family that has two cars – a new one and a junker. The value placed on each car will govern which one they use for vacation and which for running errands.

The local church is to desire, according to God's order of value, the best gifts for its functioning. But as important as the gifts are, there is even something of higher value that will benefit the church (12:31).

### 4. Governed by Love

13:1-13



And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the **greatest** of these is charity [love] (:13).

Yet I show you "a more excellent way" said the apostle concerning the gifts of the Spirit. That higher principle is Christ-like love. First he shows the futility of gifts without love.

- 13:1 Ability (tongues of angels) without love and I accomplish nothing.
- 13:2 Academics (all knowledge) without love and "I am nothing."
- 13:3 Actions (giving to the poor) without love and I acquire nothing.

Secondly, the apostle demonstrates how Christ-like love acts: does not seek its own, rejoices in the truth, bears and endures all things, etc.

Thirdly, he shows that the "exciting" gifts are temporary – unlike faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these three eternal things is love. Hence, the assembly should be showing love, not glorying in any gifts with their "freedom." *Love* is to control the use of gifts.

### 5. Governed by Purpose

14:1-12



Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to **the edifying of the church** (:12).

Though love is the higher principle that is to be employed, spiritual gifts are still to be desired by the assembly (14:1). But they are to be desired to fulfill a goal: edification – the building up of the body of Christ.

let him hear

To show that spiritual gifts are for the edification of the whole assembly and not the individual, the apostle contrasts prophesy (proclaiming God's revelation) with tongues (a sign for them that believe not). He shows that prophesy can be understood; tongues can't except when interpreted. Like a musical instrument, Paul teaches, if the notes aren't distinguishable in sound, there is no understanding of melody. Therefore if words aren't easily understood *the assembly* is not edified.

**Purpose controls usage.** A carpenter will determine which tool he uses based on purpose. If he is to install new window panes then he does not employ the hammer to shape the glass.

By understanding God's purpose of why they assemble together – to remember the Lord and to edify the whole assembly – a church will know what is to be accepted and what isn't to be.

## 6. Governed by the Mind

14:13-25



What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the **understanding** [mind] also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also (:15).

Here, while still teaching the goal of edification, the Lord's apostle brings out the role of the mind in working with what the Spirit gives and how He leads.

**Being in God's Spirit is not being outside the understanding and control of one's mind.**

Therefore, a believer must understand with his mind what he is saying, whether praying or singing. Thus if he is speaking in a foreign language then he must pray that *he* can also interpret so he and other believers can use their minds to understand correctly.

The Lord's apostle also adds that one unlearned or an unbeliever who visits the assembly, by *understanding* will bow down and worship God. But by not understanding the language he would leave thinking they were all crazy. Man would not be edified and *God would not be glorified*. For good reason the Spirit does not expect us to throw away our minds in His Name.

what the Spirit saith

## 7. Governed by the Word

14:26-40



If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I **write** unto you are the **commandments of the Lord** (:37).

Here the Lord's apostle gives at least **5 specific written commandments** that will regulate the use of gifts (speaking) in the public assembly meeting (14:26).

1. If one did speak in a foreign language (tongue) it could only be two, *at the most* three in a meeting – and only one at a time. No mass disorder in the Name of the Spirit (:27a).

2. There *must* be an interpreter for foreign languages or the person *must* be silent. (He is not to give the Spirit credit for “coming over him” to justify his disobedience) (:27b, 28).

3. Only two or three prophets were to speak in one meeting. The other was to *judge* what he said (using the mind's understanding of God's Word) (:29).

4. The prophets also must speak one by one (in orderly turns) (:29-31). And “*the spirit of the prophets, are subject to the prophets*” (:32). It is not the Spirit Who should be blamed when a person is disorderly and passes it off as being “in the Spirit.” There is no excuse for disorder. A person has control over his or her own spirit if it is truly the Spirit of God at work. (“For God is not the author of confusion”) (:33).

5. The women are to be silent in the churches (public assemblies). They are not permitted to speak in any form – not even to ask a question. “It is a shame for women to speak in the church” (34, 35). This is not based on Corinthian culture. It is based on God's creative choice of headship, also exemplified in the law. And this is for *all* the “churches” (chapter 11 & 14:34b, 4:17). A Christian sister is never in the “power” of the Holy Spirit or in the will of the risen Lord Jesus when speaking in the church.

unto the churches.” Rev. 3:22

(Scriptures also teach that some gifts are only connected with the foundation of the church but it's not in the scope of this article to deal with that) (Eph. 2:20, etc.).

**Who is the authority?** Since the Corinthians were functioning differently from all other churches, Paul wants to know why. Was it because the Corinthians were their own authority or did they have a special connection to God to receive things no one else did? (14:36).

**The only authority.** The Lord's apostle then reveals that what he is *writing* is not personal opinion or man's tradition but “the commandments of the Lord” (14:37). Hence the Lord Jesus Christ is the authority via His historical written word.

**The criteria for one's claim of being “spiritual” is not the power of their gift or crowd approval. It is their submission to the Lordship of Christ in His written commandments to His church.**

This section ends the way it started: Jesus is Lord. This governs the “spiritual.” Now we see that Christ's Lordship is not a feeling or mouthing words but is expressed in written form. To say “the Spirit led me” when you violate His written Word is to be greatly deceived by another spirit or the pride of your own mind.

**The safeguard.** God has given us a criteria for believing or disbelieving someone's claim to be a prophet or spiritual. If that person ignores the written rules of the Lord, then he is to be ignored in his claim (:38).

**Conclusion.** The assembly was being abused by the Corinthians due to misguided zeal and ignorance. But Paul does not do away with the free expression of gift by *all* brethren (14:26, 39). Rather, he insists upon decent order under the Lordship of Jesus Christ (:40).

Chronicle #2 of *The Disciple's Walk* series looks at forgiveness; God's style.

*Mailing list - Information - Copies*

**R. P. Amos**  
**c/o Northgate Gospel Fellowship**  
**240 McGuire Rd.**  
**Rochester NY 14616**



The Chronicles of the

*Disciple's Walk*

1

## “The Spirit” made me do it

The Chronicles of the ‘Disciple's Walk’ are various exhortations. The goal is to encourage the believer in the Lord Jesus to *follow Him* according to His Word rather than tradition or popular thinking.

Many are familiar with the worldly saying, “the devil made me do it.” By that, people usually mean that it wasn't their intention to do wrong but the enticement of the evil one overpowered them.

In Christian circles, the Holy Spirit is often given credit when actions are called into question. Phrases such as, “the Spirit led me” or “the Spirit came upon us”, are used to settle arguments and quench any doubts. If it was the Spirit's doing, the logic goes, how can the action possibly be questioned as wrong?

A similar attitude occurred in the days of Israel's apostasy. The Lord said, “Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! ... whereas ye say, The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken” (Ezek. 13:3,7).