



WEEK 22

2ND SEMESTER · DISCIPLESHIP & SERVICE

Ministries & Gifts in the Church

One Body, Many Parts – Serving Together with What God Has Given

SPIRITUAL THEME

Ministries & Gifts in the Church

PERSONAL THEME

Discovering and developing my gifts

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PART 1

Foundations – Why God Gives Gifts to His Church

This lecture belongs to the second semester, "Discipleship & Service". Last week we learned what the Church of Jesus is. This week we ask: How does this Church work? How does every member find his place and his task? Next week we will look at biblical leadership.

Seminar plan (about 90 minutes):

Time	Section	Focus
5 min	Welcome and introduction	What are "ministries" and "gifts"?
20 min	Lesson 1 – One Body, Many Parts	1 Corinthians 12:4–27
20 min	Lesson 2 – The Gifts God Gives	The gift lists of the New Testament
20 min	Lesson 3 – Gifts That Build the Church	Ephesians 4:11–16
20 min	Lesson 4 – Discovering and Developing My Gift	Romans 12, 1 Peter 4, 2 Timothy 1
5 min	Closing, reflection and prayer	

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LESSON

One Body, Many Parts

MAIN IDEA

To show that every follower of Jesus has received at least one gift from God, that all gifts come from the same God, and that they are given for the good of the whole church – not for the honour of one person.

Part A: Introduction to the Topic

Welcome, students. Today we study a topic that will change the way you see yourself and the way you see your church. Many Christians think: "The pastor does the ministry. I only come, sit and listen." The Bible teaches something very different. In the Church of Jesus, *every* member is a minister. Every member has received something from God to give to the others.

Let us begin with two simple definitions.

Ministry (Greek: *diakonia*) simply means "service". A ministry is not a title or a position. It is a service that we do for God and for other people. When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, that was ministry.

Gift (Greek: *charisma*) means "a gift of grace". It is an ability or a task that God gives to a believer by His grace, so that he can serve the church. You did not earn it. You did not buy it. God gave it.

Why is this topic so important for us here in Bwembe? Because a church where only one or two people serve will stay small and weak. But a church where every member knows his gift and uses it will grow strong, like a healthy body. And for you as students: God did not bring you to this Bible school only to fill your head. He brought you here to prepare you for service.

Part B: Detailed Exposition of Key Scripture – 1 Corinthians 12:4–7

1. Scripture Reading

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:4–7)

2. Context: A Gifted Church with a Big Problem

The church in Corinth was a church full of gifts. Paul says himself that they "do not lack any spiritual gift" (1 Corinthians 1:7). But this gifted church had a big problem: pride and division. Some members thought their gift was more important than the gifts of others. The ones who spoke in tongues looked down on the ones who served quietly. There were groups, jealousy and competition.

So Paul writes chapters 12 to 14 of this letter to correct them. Notice the order: chapter 12 explains the gifts, chapter 14 explains how to use them in the meeting, and in the middle, chapter 13, stands the famous chapter about love. This is not an accident. Paul wants to say: Gifts without love are nothing. The purpose of every gift is love.

3. Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

Verses 4–6: "different kinds ... but the same Spirit ... the same Lord ... the same God." Three times Paul says "different kinds", and three times he says "the same". This is the heart of the passage. The gifts are *different* – God loves variety. But the source is *one*. Look carefully: the Spirit, the Lord (Jesus) and God (the Father) are all named. The whole Trinity is involved in giving gifts to the church. So when you look at a brother with a different gift, you are not looking at a competitor. You are looking at another work of the same God.

Paul uses three words for the same reality: *gifts* (what God gives), *service* (what we do with it) and *working* (what God does through it). A gift is never only for me. It always becomes a service, and God Himself works through that service.

Verse 7: "to each one ... is given ... for the common good." Three important truths in one short verse:

- **"To each one"** – no believer is left out. Every Christian has received a gift. Not only the pastor, not only the teachers. Every mason, every carpenter, every mother, every young student in this room.
- **"Is given"** – it is a gift. You cannot boast about it. Paul asks later: "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7).
- **"For the common good"** – the purpose is not my own honour, not my own comfort. The purpose is that the whole church is helped. A gift that only serves myself is being misused.

4. The Picture of the Body (1 Corinthians 12:12–27)

After these verses Paul gives one of the most famous pictures in the Bible: the church is a body. Let us take three lessons from it.

- **A body has many different parts (verses 14–20).** The foot must not say: "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body." Some of you may think: "I cannot preach, so I am not important." Paul says: If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? God has placed every part exactly where He wants it (verse 18).
- **No part can say to another: "I do not need you" (verses 21–24).** The eye cannot say to the hand: "I do not need you." Even the parts that seem weak are necessary. The one who preaches needs the one who cleans the room. The one who leads worship needs the one who prays quietly at home.
- **The parts care for each other (verses 25–26).** "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it." This is the opposite of the pride in Corinth. When my brother's ministry is blessed, I rejoice. When he struggles, I carry him.

And then verse 27: "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." Notice: Paul does not say "you *should be*". He says "you *are*". This is who we are already.

5. Key Word Studies

Key Word (English)	Greek (Transliteration)	Strong's No.	Core Meaning & Significance
Gift	<i>charisma</i>	G5486	From <i>charis</i> , "grace". A gift that comes freely from God's grace – never earned, never deserved. The same root as the word for God's saving grace. Our gifts are grace in action.
Service / ministry	<i>diakonia</i>	G1248	Practical service, like serving at a table. In the New Testament every ministry – from the apostle to the helper – is called <i>diakonia</i> . There is no "high" ministry that is not service.
Working	<i>energēma</i>	G1755	The effect or result that God produces. Our word "energy" comes from this root. The gift is ours to use, but the power and the result belong to God.
Common good	<i>sympherō</i>	G4851	Literally "to bring together" – what is useful and profitable for all. The gifts bring the church together; they never divide it.

Main Truth: Every follower of Jesus has received a gift from the same God, and every gift is given for the good of the whole body – never for the pride of one member.

2

LESSON

The Gifts God Gives

MAIN IDEA

To give an overview of the gifts and ministries named in the New Testament, to show that the lists are examples and not a closed catalogue, and to show that every gift – whether speaking or serving – is equally from God.

Part A: Review and Connection

In Lesson 1 we saw the principle: many gifts, one Source, one purpose. Now we ask: *Which* gifts does the Bible actually name? Let us look at the five main passages together. As we read them, notice one thing: the lists are all different. No list is complete. God is not giving us a catalogue; He is giving us examples so that we recognise His work among us.

Part B: The Five Gift Passages

1. Romans 12:6–8 – Seven Gifts for Everyday Church Life

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully." (Romans 12:6–8)

This list is very practical. Look at the gifts: serving, encouraging, giving, showing mercy. Most of them are quiet gifts. Nobody claps for the one who shows mercy to a sick neighbour. But God calls it a *charisma*. Notice also how Paul describes the *manner*: give generously, lead diligently, show mercy cheerfully. The gift is from God; the attitude is our responsibility.

2. 1 Corinthians 12:8–10 – Nine Manifestations of the Spirit

Here Paul names: the message of wisdom, the message of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. These are often called the "manifestation gifts", because verse 7 calls them "the manifestation of the Spirit". They show the presence and power of the living God in the meeting of the church. We will study these nine gifts in detail in Week 25 ("The Gifts of the Spirit"). Today we only note: they belong to the same list as serving and teaching. They are not a higher class of gift.

3. 1 Corinthians 12:28 – Gifts and Persons

"And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:28)

Here Paul mixes *persons* (apostles, prophets, teachers) with *abilities* (miracles, healing) and with very simple *services* ("helping", "guidance"). The word "helping" (*antilēmpsis*) means to take hold of someone to support him – practical help. God places the helper in the same sentence as the apostle.

4. Ephesians 4:11 – Ministry Gifts Given by Christ

Here the gifts are not abilities but *people*: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Christ gives these people to His church to equip all the others. We will study this passage in Lesson 3.

5. 1 Peter 4:10–11 – Two Families of Gifts

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 4:10–11)

Peter gives us the simplest summary in the Bible. He puts all gifts into two families: **speaking gifts** and **serving gifts**. And he gives one rule for each. If you speak – speak as if God Himself is speaking, with reverence and faithfulness to His Word. If you serve – serve with God's strength, not your own. And the goal for both: "that in all things God may be praised."

Part C: Overview Table

Passage	Gifts and ministries named	What we learn
Romans 12:6–8	Prophecy, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, showing mercy	Quiet, everyday gifts are real <i>charismata</i> .
1 Corinthians 12:8–10	Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits, tongues, interpretation	The Spirit shows His power in the meeting (see Week 25).
1 Corinthians 12:28	Apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healing, helping, guidance, tongues	Persons, powers and practical help stand side by side.
Ephesians 4:11	Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers	Christ gives leaders to equip the whole church (Lesson 3).
1 Peter 4:10–11	Speaking gifts and serving gifts	Every gift belongs to one of two families; the goal is God's praise.

Part D: Three Important Observations

1. The lists are different – so the lists are open. If God wanted to give us a closed catalogue, all lists would be the same. They are not. So do not say: "My ability is not in the list, so it is not a gift." Skill in building, in farming, in music, in hospitality, in organising – if it is used to serve the body under the Lordship of Jesus, it is a gift of grace.

2. Speaking and serving are equal. In Corinth the speaking gifts were admired and the serving gifts were despised. Peter and Paul put them side by side. The one who repairs the roof of the church building serves the same Lord as the one who preaches under it.

3. The Old Testament confirms it. Listen to Exodus 31:1–5. When God wanted the tabernacle to be built, He said about Bezalel: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with

understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills – to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood." The first man in the Bible who is described as "filled with the Spirit of God" was not a prophet. He was a craftsman – a worker in stone and wood. Students of Bwembe: your hands can be Spirit-filled hands.

Part E: Key Word Studies

Key Word (English)	Greek (Transliteration)	Strong's No.	Core Meaning & Significance
Steward	<i>oikonomos</i>	G3623	The manager of a household who handles the property of his master. Peter says our gifts belong to God; we only manage them. One day we will give account (Luke 16:2).
Helping	<i>antilēmpsis</i>	G484	Literally "taking hold of" someone to support him. Simple, practical help is listed by Paul as a gift placed in the church by God Himself.
Various forms	<i>poikilos</i>	G4164	"Many-coloured", like a cloth of many colours. God's grace does not come in one colour only. Your gift is one colour in God's picture.

Main Truth: The New Testament names many gifts, in different lists, so that we learn: God's grace comes in many colours, and speaking and serving are equally His work.

PART 2

Growing – Using the Gifts to Build the Church

3

LESSON

Gifts That Build the Church

MAIN IDEA

To show from Ephesians 4 that Christ gives leaders to the church not to do all the ministry themselves, but to prepare every member for ministry – so that the whole body grows up into maturity in Christ.

Part A: Review and Connection

We have seen that every believer has a gift (Lesson 1) and that God gives many kinds of gifts (Lesson 2). Now we ask: What is the goal of all these gifts? Where should they lead the church? Paul answers in Ephesians 4. This passage is the key to understanding the relationship between leaders and members in a healthy church.

Part B: Detailed Exposition of Key Scripture – Ephesians 4:11–16

1. Scripture Reading

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11–13)

2. Context: The Gifts of the Risen King

Ephesians chapters 1 to 3 explain what God has done for us in Christ. Chapters 4 to 6 explain how we should live because of it. Chapter 4 begins with a call to unity: "one body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (verses 4–6). Then Paul quotes Psalm 68: when a king won a victory, he went up in triumph and gave gifts to his people (verse 8). Jesus is that King. He has risen, He has ascended, and now He gives gifts to His church. The gifts in this passage are *people* – leaders whom Christ gives to His church.

3. Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

Verse 11: "Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers." Five ministries are named. Let us understand them simply:

- **Apostles** – "sent ones". The first apostles laid the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20). Today we use the word for those who are sent to plant churches where there is no church.
- **Prophets** – those who speak God's message to the church for strengthening, encouragement and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3). Every prophecy must be tested by the written Word (1 Thessalonians 5:20–21).
- **Evangelists** – those who bring the good news to people who do not know Jesus, like Philip in Acts 8.
- **Pastors and teachers** – in the Greek these two are closely joined; the shepherd who cares for the flock and the teacher who feeds it with the Word. A shepherd who does not teach lets the sheep go hungry; a teacher who does not care lets the sheep get lost.

Verse 12: "to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." This is the most important verse of the lecture. Read it slowly. Who does the "works of service"?

Not the leaders alone – "his people", all the saints. The leaders are given to *equip* them. In many churches the picture is upside down: the pastor does everything, and the people watch. Paul's picture is: the pastor prepares, and the people serve. A church of 100 members should have 100 ministers – and a few leaders who train them.

Verse 13: "until we all reach unity in the faith ... and become mature." The goal of the gifts is maturity. Not more programmes, not more activity, but grown-up Christians who know the Son of God and become like Him.

Verses 14–16: The result. Mature believers are "no longer infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching" (verse 14). In Uganda, as everywhere, false teachers come and go – promising money, promising miracles, twisting the Word. A church where every member is equipped is a church that cannot be blown away. And verse 16: the body "grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." Each part. Not one part. Each part.

4. Key Word Studies

Key Word (English)	Greek (Transliteration)	Strong's No.	Core Meaning & Significance
Equip	<i>katartismos</i>	G2677	Used for mending fishing nets (Matthew 4:21) and for a doctor setting a broken bone. Leaders "mend" and "set" the believers so that they become useful and fit for service. Training, not replacing.
Works of service	<i>ergon diakonias</i>	G2041 / G1248	"Work of ministry". The same word <i>diakonia</i> from Lesson 1. Ministry is the work of the whole people of God, not of a small class of professionals.
Built up	<i>oikodomē</i>	G3619	The building of a house, stone on stone. The church is a building that is still under construction – and every member is both a stone and a builder (compare 1 Peter 2:5).
Mature	<i>teleios</i>	G5046	Complete, grown-up, having reached the goal. The opposite of "infants" in verse 14. The aim of every gift is grown-up disciples.

Main Truth: Christ gives leaders to His church to equip every member for ministry, so that the whole body grows up into maturity and cannot be blown away by false teaching.

4

LESSON

Discovering and Developing My Gift

MAIN IDEA

To help every student take practical steps to discover the gift God has given him, to develop it faithfully, and to use it in love – with humility, not pride, and with diligence, not neglect.

Part A: Review and Connection

Now we come to the personal theme of this week: *Discovering and developing my gifts*. Perhaps you are asking: "How do I know what my gift is?" This is a good question, and the Bible gives practical answers. But let us first look at the attitude God wants before we look at the method.

Part B: The Right Attitude – Romans 12:3–8

1. Scripture Reading

"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you." (Romans 12:3)

2. Analysis

Before Paul lists the gifts in Romans 12, he gives a warning about our thinking. Two dangers stand on the left and the right of the road:

- **The danger of pride:** "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought." Some believers think their gift makes them important. They want the visible gifts, the platform, the microphone. Paul says: your gift is grace; you did not earn it.
- **The danger of false humility:** "Think of yourself with sober judgment." Other believers say: "I have nothing to give." This sounds humble, but it is also wrong thinking. God has given you something (verse 6: "we have different gifts"). To say "I have nothing" is to say that God forgot you. He did not.

Sober judgment means: honest, clear, realistic thinking about yourself – not too high, not too low, but true. This is the starting point for discovering your gift.

Part C: Five Practical Steps to Discover Your Gift

1. Pray and ask. James 1:5 says: "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God." Ask the Giver what He has given you. He is not hiding it from you.

2. Start serving – now, where you are. Gifts are discovered by serving, not by sitting and waiting. A man does not find out whether he can swim by reading about water. Serve in the church, in the school, in your family. Try different things: teach a children's class, help a sick neighbour, organise a work day, lead a prayer time. You will notice where God's blessing is and where your heart comes alive.

3. Look for fruit and for joy. When you use your gift, two things usually happen: other people are helped (fruit), and you feel God's pleasure (joy). If you teach and nobody understands, maybe teaching is not your gift – and that is fine. If you show mercy and people are comforted, and you come home tired but full of joy, pay attention.

4. Ask the body. Your gift is for the body, so the body can often see it better than you can. Ask your pastor, ask mature brothers and sisters: "Where do you see God using me?" In 1 Timothy 4:14 Paul reminds Timothy of the gift that was given him "through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you". The church recognised and confirmed Timothy's gift.

5. Be faithful in small things. Jesus says: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much" (Luke 16:10). Many want a big ministry but neglect the small task in front of them. God tests us in the small before He trusts us with the big. Clean the room well. Come on time. Finish the work you started.

Part D: Developing Your Gift – 2 Timothy 1:6–7 and 1 Peter 4:10–11

1. Scripture Reading

"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." (2 Timothy 1:6–7)

2. Analysis

A gift is like a fire. God lights it, but we must keep it burning. Timothy had a true gift, but he was young, shy, and under pressure. The fire was becoming small. Paul does not say: "Wait until God does something." He says: "You fan it into flame." Developing a gift means:

- **Use it regularly.** A fire that is not fed goes out. A gift that is not used becomes weak.

- **Learn and study.** Timothy was told to "devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching ... Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress" (1 Timothy 4:13–15). Progress! A gift can grow. That is why you are in this school.
- **Overcome fear.** Verse 7 says the Spirit does not make us timid. Fear is the biggest enemy of a gift. "What if I fail? What if they laugh?" The Spirit gives power, love and self-discipline.
- **Serve with God's strength.** Peter says: "If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides" (1 Peter 4:11). We do not serve out of our own strength until we burn out. We serve out of His strength – in prayer, in dependence, in rest.

3. The Guard Rails: Love and Order

Two guard rails keep us safe on the road. First, **love** (1 Corinthians 13). Paul says that even if I have all knowledge and faith to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. Your gift is measured by love, not by size. Second, **order** (1 Corinthians 14:40): "Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." Gifts are used under the leadership of the church, in a way that builds up, not in a way that draws attention to me.

4. The Warning: Do Not Bury Your Gift

In Matthew 25:14–30 Jesus tells the story of the talents. Three servants received money from their master. Two invested it and were praised: "Well done, good and faithful servant!" One buried his talent in the ground out of fear, and the master called him "wicked and lazy". Notice: he did not steal it, he did not waste it – he simply did not use it. God takes it seriously when we bury what He has given. But notice also the reward: it was not about the size of the gift. The servant with two talents received exactly the same praise as the one with five. God rewards faithfulness, not size.

5. Key Word Studies

Key Word (English)	Greek (Transliteration)	Strong's No.	Core Meaning & Significance
Sober judgment	<i>sōphroneō</i>	G4993	To think soundly, with a clear and healthy mind. Neither inflated by pride nor crushed by false humility – seeing yourself as God sees you.
Fan into flame	<i>anazōpyreō</i>	G329	Literally "to make the fire live again", to stir up glowing coals. The gift is already there; our task is to keep it burning through use, study and courage.
Timid	<i>deilia</i>	G1167	Cowardice, fearfulness. Not the same as healthy respect. The Spirit of God is never the source of the fear that stops us from serving.

Key Word (English)	Greek (Transliteration)	Strong's No.	Core Meaning & Significance
Steward	<i>oikonomos</i>	G3623	(From Lesson 2.) The manager who will give account to his master – the servant of Matthew 25 who must show what he did with what he received.

Main Truth: God has given you a gift. Discover it by serving, develop it by faithful use and study, guard it by love and order, and never bury it out of fear.

Part E: Synthesis – Core Truths of This Lecture

- Every believer has a gift.** "To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given" (1 Corinthians 12:7). No one in the body of Christ is without a task.
- All gifts come from the same God.** Father, Son and Holy Spirit give them (1 Corinthians 12:4–6). There is no competition in the body.
- All gifts are for the common good.** They are service (*diakonia*), never a platform for self.
- Speaking and serving gifts are equal.** The carpenter and the preacher serve the same Lord (1 Peter 4:10–11; Exodus 31:3).
- Leaders equip; the whole body serves.** The goal is maturity, unity and stability in the truth (Ephesians 4:11–16).
- Gifts must be discovered, developed and guarded.** By sober judgment, by serving, by fanning the flame, by love and order – and never buried (Romans 12:3; 2 Timothy 1:6; Matthew 25).

Part F: Questions for Personal Reflection and Group Discussion

Take ten minutes in small groups. Then pray for one another.

- Which of the gifts in the lists we studied have you already seen God use in your life – even in a small way? Which one do others say they see in you?
- In Corinth some gifts were admired and others despised. Which gifts are admired in our churches today, and which are overlooked? How should we change this?
- Ephesians 4:12 says leaders should equip the members for ministry. Is this how your home church works? What would change if every member were a minister?
- What is one concrete way you can "fan into flame" your gift this week – at school, in the church, or in your family?
- Is there a fear that keeps you from serving? Share it with your group and pray about it together.

Closing prayer. Father, thank You that You have not forgotten anyone in this room. Every one of us has received something from Your grace. Show us our gift, give us courage to use it, keep us



humble, and let everything we do bring praise to You through Jesus Christ. Amen.