

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Interactive Sunday school Outline

TOPIC: What Are Spiritual Gifts?

TEXT: 1 *Corinthians* 12:1-11

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: The topic of spiritual gifts can usually be counted on to stimulate vigorous discussion. What is their purpose? How should they be manifested in the church today? What should be done about certain controversial gifts which may seem divisive? This study introduces us to a vital, growing church in which spiritual gifts were prominent. Here we can begin to get answers to some of our questions.

1. As you begin this study, what or concerns do you have about spiritual gifts in the church today?
2. Read 1 Cor 12:1-11. What do we learn about the Corinthians' former religious experience (w. 1-2)?
3. What is Paul's main point about the relationship between the Holy Spirit and what people say about Jesus Christ (v. 3)?
4. What do verses 4-6 teach about the unity and diversity of spiritual gifts?
5. In verses 7 and 11 what do we learn about the nature and purpose of spiritual gifts?
6. Paul gives a sample list of nine gifts (w. 8-10). How would you explain the meaning of each one?
7. How might any of these gifts serve the common good in strengthening your church or fellowship group?
8. What manifestations of the Spirit have you experienced or witnessed? What were the results?
9. Give a brief summary of what Paul has taught so far about spiritual gifts.
10. How does his teaching compare with ideas about spiritual gifts you have encountered?

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TOPIC: The Body & Its Members

TEXT: 1 *Corinthians* 12:12-31

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: Today we are exposed to a variety of models for the church. The old hymn *Onward Christian Soldiers* likens it to a mighty army. Christian management manuals compare it to the modern business organization. Here the apostle Paul uses the model of the human body, a complex arrangement of many different members designed to contribute to the well-being of the whole. This passage can answer questions you might have about the ways you function in the body of Christ.

1. What different ethnic and social groups are represented in your church?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. What do all Christians have in common, regardless of their gifts, race or social status (w. 12-13)?
3. Why do you think certain Christians feel inferior to others in the body of Christ (w. 14-20)? How does Paul encourage such people?
4. How might an attitude of superiority arise among certain members of the body (v. 21)?
5. With which group (inferior/superior) do you tend to identify? Explain.
6. According to Paul, how can we make every member of the body feel special (w. 22-25)?
7. In what specific ways have you recently had the experience of either suffering or rejoicing with another member of the body of Christ (v. 26)? Which do you find easier to do? Explain.
8. Notice the gifts Paul mentions in verse 28. In what way could each of those gifts contribute to the Christian community?
- 9- Why is it important to remember that we don't all manifest the same gifts (w. 29-30)?
10. Verse 31 is better translated: "You are eagerly desiring the greater gifts, but now I will show you the excellent way" (to manifest them). How can the model of the body keep us from selfishly seeking what *we* consider the *greater* gifts for ourselves?
11. Describe one positive way this passage could affect relationships in your church or fellowship group.
12. What light has this passage given to your own role in the body of Christ?

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TOPIC: Preparing God's People

TEXT: *Ephesians 4:1-16*

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: We are accustomed to having special areas of our life taken care of by professionals: doctors, lawyers, accountants—and ministers. Most churches, in line with the professional-organizational model, expect one or more clergy to perform the necessary religious services for the laity. In this study we will compare that model with the one explained by Paul.

1. The church has been compared to a football game: twenty-two players desperately in need of rest are being watched by thousands of fans desperately in need of exercise. To what extent does this illustrate your church?
2. Read Ephesians 4:1-16. As you read through these verses, what impresses you about the kind of unity and diversity Paul desires for the church?
3. What qualities does Paul urge the Ephesians and us to exhibit (w. 1-3)? How would each quality build unity in a church?
4. How have you recently been able to demonstrate one of these attitudes or actions in a difficult situation?
5. In what ways do verses 4-6 stress the unity of the body of Christ?
6. Paul compares Christ to a triumphant conqueror who gives gifts (the spoils of victory) to his people (w. 8-10). What are some of the gifts he has given (v. 11)?
7. How might each of these individuals (w. 11-12) prepare God's people for service? (Give some practical examples from your own experience.)
8. Describe in your own words the ultimate goal Jesus Christ desires for his church (v. 13).
9. What are some marks of spiritual infancy (v. 14)?
10. Today what "winds of teaching" and "deceitful scheming" do you see blowing the church off course?
11. What does it mean to speak the *truth in love* (v. 15)? How can speaking the truth in love help spiritual infants to become mature?
12. Paul states that the body grows and builds itself in love "as each part does its work" (v. 16). What "work" can you do to help the body of Christ grow?

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TOPIC: Power for Mission

TEXT: Acts 1:1-11; 2:1-13

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever wondered how a small group of Galilean fishermen, in a remote country of the Roman Empire, were able to "turn the world upside down"? Have you also wondered how you might be effective in the church's mission? In this study we look at how Jesus empowers his followers to be his witnesses in their own country and to the far comers of the earth.

1. Describe a situation in which you felt the need to be empowered for an effective witness to Jesus Christ.
2. Acts 1:1-11. As he begins his second book, what does Luke say about Jesus' earlier ministry (w. 1-3)?
3. "What command and promise does Jesus give the apostles (w. 4-5)?
4. What is foremost in their thinking now that the Lord has come back to life (v. 6)?
5. Instead of answering their question (v. 7), why do you think Jesus turns their attention back to the Holy Spirit (v. 8)?
6. What further information does Jesus give the apostles about the Holy Spirit and their mission (v. 8)?
7. Jerusalem was the capital of the region of Judea. Samaria was an adjoining region to the north. What are your "Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria" for Christian witness?
How are you carrying out a witness in your "Jerusalem"?
8. How do you think the final word from the two men affects the disciples (w 10-11)?
9. Read Acts 2:1-13. Imagine that you are present on the day of Pentecost. Describe what you would hear and see (w. 1-4).
10. What is the reaction of the crowd, and how do they explain this strange phenomenon (w. 5-13)?
11. The pilgrims present on the day of Pentecost were from fourteen different geographic areas which spread out in all directions from Jerusalem. What is the purpose of the disciples' speaking in the languages of these pilgrims? How does this event begin to fulfill Jesus' words in 1:8?
12. In what practical ways can you begin reaching beyond your Jerusalem to "the ends of the earth"?

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TOPIC: Evangelism

TEXT: Acts 2:14-41

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: The essential difference between Christianity and all other religions is the resurrection of the founder. Jesus Christ not only died and was buried, but also rose from the dead to be the living Lord of his church. No wonder, then, that Peter's first sermon featured the good news of the resurrection, not the good advice of the Sermon on the Mount. As we study Peter's message, let us be alert to how we can be more effective in presenting the good news of Christ.

1. If you were to ask your non-Christian friends to state the essence of the Christian message, what answers might they give?
2. Read Acts 2:14-41. Filled with the Spirit, Peter now speaks in the power of the Spirit. What explanation does he give to the crowd about the strange phenomenon they have heard (w. 14-16)?
3. According to the prophet Joel, what do the events on the day of Pentecost signify (w. 17-21)?
4. Have you ever heard what you considered to be a genuine prophecy? Explain. What was its effect on the Christian community?
5. What did the crowd already know about Jesus, and what did they need to know (w. 22-24)?
6. What arguments does Peter use to convince the crowd that Jesus has been raised from the dead (w. 25-32)?
7. How are Peter's arguments, both here and earlier, well suited to the beliefs and concerns of his Jewish audience?
8. What are some of the beliefs and concerns of our society to which we can relate the gospel of Christ?
9. What connection does Peter see between Christ's resurrection and the pouring out of the Spirit on Pentecost (w. 32-35)?

How do these two events demonstrate that Jesus is both Lord and Christ (v. 36)?

10. In your own words explain the command and promise Peter gives to the people who were "cut to the heart" by his sermon (w. 37-41)?
11. Look back over Peter's sermon. What can we learn from this evangelist about both the *method* we use and the *message* we present today?

Take time to pray for several of your non-Christian friends. Ask the Lord to provide an opportunity to share the gospel with one of them this week.

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TOPIC: Teaching & Preaching

TEXT: Acts 18:1-28

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: Why do many who start the Christian life fail to become mature believers? One reason is a lack of consistent teaching. On his missionary journeys the apostle Paul not only preached the gospel of Christ but also took pains to provide his disciples with thorough instruction in the faith. In Acts 18 we see how those who are taught can begin to pass on the teaching they have received.

1. As you think of those who have taught you the Scriptures over the years, whose ministry do you especially appreciate? Why?
2. Read Acts 18:1-28. What different types of preaching and teaching ministries does Paul have in Corinth (w. 1-11)?
3. What do we learn about Aquila and Priscilla as they come into the orbit of Paul's ministry (w. 1-4)?
4. How can Paul, supporting himself as a tentmaker (v. 3), be an example for us in using the gift of teaching?
5. Why do you think Paul's teaching provoked such opposition (w. 6, 12-17)?
6. As we preach the gospel and teach the Scriptures, what aspects of our message might provoke opposition today?
7. How would the Lord's words in a vision have encouraged Paul (w. 9-10)?
8. After spending more than 18 months in Corinth, what places did Paul visit, and why (w. 18-23)?
9. What guidelines can we use to determine how much time to spend teaching an individual or group—and when it's time to move on?
10. What does Luke tell us about Apollos, who appears on the scene in verses 24-25?
11. As a result of their long discipleship with Paul, how were Priscilla and Aquila able to help Apollos (v. 26)?
12. What were the results of this discipling in the ministry of Apollos (w. 27-28)?
13. What experience have you had with teaching a new Christian who needed further instruction in the faith?
14. What basic biblical teachings are most needed in today's culture with its non-Christian pressures and values?

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TOPIC: Healing (Part 1)

TEXT: Mark 1:21-45; James 5:13-20

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: Throughout the Bible God demonstrates his concern for the whole person. To Israel he proclaimed, "I am the LORD your healer" (Ex 15:26). The greeting "shalom," meaning peace, is far more than an absence of conflict; it involves inner tranquility, health, wholeness, integration of life—even when surrounded by turmoil. Jesus' concern for the whole person is demonstrated from the outset of his ministry, in the first half of Mark's gospel, as much space is devoted to Jesus' healing as to his teaching. The Lord also gave his disciples this ministry, which was then carried on by the church.

1. How do you respond when you or someone close to you becomes seriously ill?
2. *Mark* 1:21-45. Describe Jesus' actions in the synagogue and the response of the people (w. 21-28).
3. How is the healing of Simon's mother-in-law (w. 29-31) similar to and different from the previous miracle in the synagogue?
4. What impresses you about the people's various needs and Jesus' response to them (w. 32-34)?
5. After such a busy day, why do you think Jesus rises so early to pray (w. 35-39)? How should this be an example for us?
6. What is remarkable about the way Jesus cares for the man with leprosy (w. 40-45)?
7. How can we also meet people at the very point of their need for healing?
8. Read James 5:13-20. What does the range of situations needing prayer show us about God's concern for our lives (w. 13-15)?
- 9' What advice does James give to those who are sick (w. 14-15a)?
Have you ever taken his advice when you were sick? Why or why not?
10. What responsibility do Christians have for each other in connection with our sins (v 15-16, 19-20)?
11. What sins of attitude or action have a harmful effect on our physical and/ or emotional health?
Explain.
12. What instances have you seen of prayer for the sick or other manifestations of healing gifts?

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Interactive Sunday school Outline

TOPIC: Healing (Part 2)

TEXT: John 21:1-19

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: Dr. Charles Mayo, of the Mayo Clinic, concluded that seventy-five per cent of all physical disease is related to emotional or spiritual illness. Many people, including those who have been Christians for years, suffer from emotional wounds of the past. As a result, they have feelings of guilt, anger or bitterness which need to be healed. In this study we consider Jesus' concern for a disciple who desperately needed such healing.

1. What are some of the major causes of emotional wounds in our society?
2. Read John 21:1-19. Describe the characters and setting given in verses 1-3-
3. What impresses you about Jesus' approach to his disciples in this disheartening situation (w. 4-6)?
4. What reactions did the various disciples have to the large catch (w. 7-8)?
5. If you had been there on the beach (w. 9-14), how would you have responded to seeing Jesus?
6. What memories of Peter's past were evoked by the charcoal fire and Jesus' questions (w. 15-17; See John 13:36-38; 18:15-18, 25-27)?
7. What memories of past hurts in your life have been triggered by a sudden sound or sight or smell?
8. How would Jesus' conversation with Peter bring not only pain but also healing?
- 9- If Jesus were to talk with you about some of your past hurts, what do you think he would say?
10. Why did Jesus tell Peter something about the way he would die (w. 18-19)?
11. What do you think it may cost you to be a faithful follower of Christ?
12. In a few moments of silent prayer, picture the Lord Jesus standing by you and give him the memories of any painful experiences that still need to be healed.

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TOPIC: Prophecy & Tongues

TEXT: *1 Corinthians 14*

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: We often have difficulty bridging the gap between principle and practice. In chapter 12 Paul gave us extensive teaching about the nature and purpose of spiritual gifts. In this chapter he gives us practical advice on how the gifts of tongues and prophecy are to be manifested in corporate worship.

1. What are the advantages of both orderliness and spontaneity in church services?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 14. As you read through the entire chapter, what impressions do you get of the worship service in Corinth?

How would you have reacted if you had been present?

3. What does the gift of prophecy offer that *un-interpreted* tongues does not (w. 1-5)?
4. How does Paul illustrate the problem of un-interpreted tongues from daily life (w. 6-12)?
5. What does Paul recommend for those who speak in tongues (w. 13-17)?
6. What does it mean to pray and sing both with our spirit and with our mind?
How can we emphasize both the spirit and the mind in our corporate worship today?
7. Why is meaningful worship important not only for believers but also for unbelievers (w. 20-25)?
To what extent would a non-Christian coming into your worship service respond, "God is really among you" (w. 24-25)?
8. How might the model of worship mentioned in verse 26 strengthen the church?
9. What experience have you had in a meeting where everyone had the opportunity to contribute?
10. What guidelines does Paul give for using the gifts of prophecy and tongues in church (w. 27-33, 39-40)?

11. What does Paul say about the source and authority of his teaching (v. 37), and how does he expect his readers to respond?
12. What misunderstanding or misuse of tongues and prophecy exists in some churches today?
13. How do various contemporary reactions to such abuses compare to Paul's solutions in this chapter?

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TOPIC: Various Spiritual Gifts

TEXT: *Romans 12:1-16*

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: Spiritual gifts flourish in the soil of commitment to Christ and in the climate of love. In Romans 12 Paul sketches what is involved in our preparation for the manifestation of spiritual gifts. In a day when certain gifts are accorded special prominence, the list appearing in this passage may offer a few surprises.

1. What motivates you to serve Jesus Christ?
2. Describe in your own words what is involved in the commitment Paul urges in verse 1.
3. In what ways are we tempted to "conform to the pattern of this world" (v. 2)?
Give specific examples of how we can "be transformed" by the renewing of our mind.
4. How can Paul's model of different members with a variety of gifts help us have a realistic view of ourselves (w. 3-5)?
5. In what way is each gift in verses 6-8 valuable to the body of Christ?
6. Which of these gifts seem to depend on some natural ability possessed by the individual?
7. Which gifts apparently can be manifested by anyone as the occasion requires?
8. In what ways have any of these spiritual gifts been manifested through you to strengthen, encourage or comfort others?
9. According to Paul, what are some of the ways that love—a fruit of the Spirit—should be manifested in the body (w. 9-12)?
10. Give one recent example of how you have been able to demonstrate love to others.
11. What attitude or action in verses 14-16 do you need to cultivate in your present situation at home, work or school? As you conclude this study, ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance and grace to grow in that area.

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TOPIC: The Fruit of the Spirit

TEXT: Galatians 5:13-26

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: Our technological society places a high premium on productivity. We are often valued and rewarded for what we produce, with little regard for the kind of people we are. The same can be true in the church. We often value charisma more than character. Yet our interest in the gifts of the Spirit must be matched with an equal concern for the fruit of the Spirit. In this study we will examine how the fruit of the Spirit contrasts with the acts of our old sinful nature.

1. How does it harm the cause of Christ when people displaying spiritual gifts also reveal serious character flaws?
2. Read Galatians 5:13-26. Identify the various actions of the Spirit.
3. What does the apostle Paul teach about the relationship between freedom and love (w. 13-15)? Give an example of how we can use our freedom in a loving way.
4. How does Paul describe the conflict we face in our daily life (w. 16-18)?
5. In what area of life have you recently been able to resolve a spiritual conflict?
6. In Paul's list of sinful acts (w. 19-21), which are attitudes or thoughts and which are actions?
- 7- Why is it so important for our thought life to be under the control of the Spirit?
8. Which of these symptoms of the sinful nature seem to be most prominent in modern society?
- 9- How would you define or illustrate each quality in Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit (w. 22-23)?
10. What does it mean to have crucified our sinful nature with its passions and desires (v. 24)? Give specific examples.
11. According to this passage, we *live by* the Spirit, are *led by* the Spirit, bear the *fruit* of the Spirit, and should *keep in step* with the Spirit. How do these descriptions help us understand the Spirit's multifaceted role in our lives?
12. How can Paul's teaching about the fruit of the Spirit relate to what he has said about spiritual gifts?
13. Think about which fruit is most needed in your life at present. Spend time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to cultivate it in you.

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Interactive Sunday school Outline

TOPIC: The Excellent Way of Love

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 13

INSTRUCTIONS: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

INTRODUCTION: The profound truth and literary beauty of Paul's discourse on love stir the imagination and probe the heart. This "hymn to love" is often used in wedding ceremonies. Yet it is by no means sentimental or idealistic. Here is a vital, practical link between Paul's teaching about the nature and purpose of spiritual gifts in chapter 12 and his instruction for their use in chapter 14. In this study we see how love, the most important fruit of the Spirit, acts and reacts in daily life to produce unity and strengthen the body of Christ.

1. In popular songs, poetry and everyday conversation, how is love viewed in our culture?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 13. How do verses 1-3 illustrate the crucial importance of love in the use of spiritual gifts?
3. What impresses you about Paul's portrait of love in verses 4-7? Which are actions we initiate, and which are reactions to what others are doing?
4. How does this picture of love differ from our culture's view of love? (See question 1.)
5. What positive evidences of love have you experienced recently?
6. In what way is love different from spiritual gifts (w. 8-10)?
7. How does Paul illustrate the difference between our present and future circumstances (w. 11-12)?
8. How would you summarize Paul's statements about when and why spiritual gifts will cease (w. 8-12)?
- 9- What will happen "when perfection comes" (v. 12), and when do you think that will occur?
10. How does it encourage you that God fully knows you and your present situation (v. 12)?
11. From what Paul has taught in this chapter, why is love greater than faith or hope (v. 13)?
12. Of all the qualities of love mentioned in this chapter, which do you need to develop most?
13. What have you appreciated most about your study of spiritual gifts?
14. What conclusions have you come to about the ways God wants to use you in building up the body of Christ?