

Small Group Study Guide

Snowflakes and Ice Cubes

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Introduction: Today we return to our study through the book of 1 Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 12:1, Paul uses the phrase, “Now concerning,” which indicates that he is turning his attention to yet another of the questions that the Corinthian church had posed to him. This question was about spiritual gifts. To answer their question, Paul will take the next three chapters to teach on spiritual gifts and their role and purpose within the church. That Paul would spend three chapters on this topic indicates that it is important and so may we, through our study today and the coming weeks, gain all that Paul desires for us to understand about spiritual gifts.

Question: Paul says that he does not want the Corinthians to be unaware of spiritual gifts (12:1). In your own spiritual journey, when did you begin to be aware of spiritual gifts?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

1. What truths does Paul teach about spiritual gifts?
2. What truths does Paul teach about the Holy Spirit?
3. What truths does Paul teach about believers?
4. What core truth is Paul stressing in verses 4-6?
5. What does Paul mean when he says that “to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit (i.e. gifts) for the common good?”

Steve said:

D.A. Carson points out that “The Triune God loves diversity – so much so . . . that when he sends a snowstorm he makes each flake different. We manufacture ice cubes” (Showing the Spirit, p. 32). Nowhere is this more evident than in the body of Christ. Next week when we consider the rest of the chapter, we’ll see how Paul says that two believers can be as different as an eye and an ear. Thinking that all Christians should have the same gifts and the same ministries and the same works is like thinking that eyes and ears should perform the same function in the human body! The Triune God is the One who has intentionally built variety/diversity into the body of Christ.

6. Why do you think God built diversity into the body of Christ?
7. Why would uniformity be bad for the church?
8. Why is diversity in the church so hard for us at times?
9. In the midst of all the diversity that God has built into the body of Christ, where do we find our unity? What does this passage say about this?

Steve said:

This [i.e. that diversity exists in the body of Christ by God’s design] means first of all that we need to avoid projecting our specific gifts, ministries, and effects on other people.

10. In what ways are you tempted at times to “project” your own gifting onto others in the church?
11. Have you ever felt that you needed to be like someone else in the church in terms of his or her gifting? If so, what does this passage say about this?