

GAMMA 2017

STUDY 13

1 Corinthians 12a

Women and Head Covering

Introduction

Chapters 12-14 represent a new section in the epistle with Paul addressing the very heart of the problems they have been facing in the church.

In verse 1 "Now about the gifts of the Spirit" Paul is addressing spirituality.

The original word is "pneumatikon" which can be translated as "spiritual people" or "spiritual gifts" and most scholars are evenly split along these two alternatives. Taking the meaning to be spiritual people or spirituality does however make more sense of the ensuing passage.

Consistent with the rest of the epistle there those who advocate a spiritual elite amongst the church recognised on the basis of their various allegiances to a particular leader like in 1 Cor 1:12-13, 3:1-5. They think that they have arrived at the higher spiritual plane (1 Cor 4:6-8).

It is obvious that Paul's dealing with the various spiritual gifts in Chapters 12-14 indicate that their estimation of their own spirituality lies in primarily upon their spiritual gifting. The spiritual gifts that have a more supernatural dimension or is far more visible like tongue speaking in particular is valued above and beyond the other mundane natural talents. This narrow view obviously is the basis of their deep divisions and thus Paul addresses these problems by first explaining the actual basis of spirituality which is broader than what they have envisaged and the diversity in giftings existed for the benefit of the body and not as a measure of the superiority of one gift over another in chapter 12. In the next chapter he emphasizes love in Chapter 13 in the practice of these gifts and in Chapter 14, he homes in specifically on the problems of the gift of tongues and basically advocates gifts that edify the body most.

Case 1

Rodney had left the 3rd Baptist Church as he found that the church was spiritually "dead". He joined the Church of the True Spirit in Damansara which was a large mega church. There he discovered he had the gift of tongues and prophecy and felt the power of God in his life. He met a few of his former Life group members from the 3rd Baptist Church and encouraged them to join him. He told them that their church was dead as they only had bible study and teaching but none of the miraculous gifts. In his

new church they had these amazing gifts and these were tangible evidence of the power of God. You want to be in a church where God is moving! He challenged them

- a. Look at verses 1 Cor 12: 4 -6 and can you discover what Paul is trying to say about spirituality? Is Rodney correct in his attitude towards spirituality?

- b. Rodney's former life group leader asked him " How are you serving in your new church now Rodney? Rodney became defensive and said " Well I am too busy with work and supporting my family. I have a lot of new businesses coming up the church is not my priority for the time being. I just go there because of the discovery of spiritual gifts and the worship in church is exciting with the drums and music not like the boring 3rd Baptist Church with its hymns and you guys don't even have violinist but my new church they have an orchestra. Look at 1 Cor 12 : 7 What important two lessons can be drawn from this verse

CASE 2

Karen Liew is a talented and hardworking auditor who works for Ernst and Young as a manager and recently became a Christian. She was actively involved in the Connect Corner ministry speaking to newcomers. She was very intrigued after attending the Gamma Bible Study on spiritual gifts but became very sad because she did not see any of her gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. She desperately prayed for the gift of tongues as that would be such a wonderful manifestation of the Spirit but became despondant when she did not get it. She felt that she was not spiritual and God was far away.

- a. How can we encourage her by showing her the New Testament Lists of Spiritual Gifts Below?

New Testament Lists of Spiritual Gifts

1 Cor. 12:8—11	1 Cor. 12:28	Rom. 12:6—8	Eph.4:11	1 Peter 4:11
word of wisdom	apostles	prophecy	apostles	speaking
word of knowledge	prophets	service	prophets	service
faith	teachers	teaching	evangelists	
gifts of healings	workers	exhortation	pastors	
working of miracles	giving	teachers		
prophecy	helps	leadership		
distinguishing of spirits	administration		showing of mercy	
kinds of tongues				
interpretation of tongues				

- b. Karen Liew then wondered if she could help out in the church doing accounts but held back because there was no gift of accounts or auditing in any NT list of gifts. This auditing was part of her natural talent and hence not a spiritual gift. If she used this gift it would be using her natural talent and effort and not the Spirit of God. If you were her leader how could you counsel her?

- c. Karen Liew had prayed for the gift of tongues and did not get it . She asked “ Was I wrong to ask for it? Why didn’t God give it to me? Am I unworthy of the gift?

Look at verse 11 and compare this to 1 Corinthians 12:31, 14:1,39 and provide some answers for Karen

- d. Look at 1 Cor 12 :22-25 we are asked to treat the people with the more mundane gifts with greater honor and regard them as indispensable so that in the end everyone is treated the same. The leaders of Karen’s church wanted to publically thank the choir director with a bouquet of flowers at the end of the Easter presentation. A church member objected because she said every one should be treated equally hence all should receive a bouquet or none at all.

What do you think?

How can we as a church improve on treating the members with less spectacular gifts with greater honor? List your suggestions and present them at next Gamma meeting

What would be the effect of outsiders when they see how we treat our members with less spectacular gifts?