



Uncommon Sense 1 Corinthians
Wk. 32 God's Ordered Gifts for the United Body of Christ
By Pastor Jody May 01/18/2026

1 Corinthians 1:25 - For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Uncommon Sense - *"God's Wisdom over man's pride through a Flawed Church."*

[CALL TO HEAR]

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 ESV

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

**Pastor - "People of God, this is the Word of God."
People - "Thanks be to God."**

Pray

Illustration

When Heather and I were first married I was already working in the Palm Beach County School System and during our first 5 years of marriage I had a specialized job for the school where I was employed, called a Crisis Intervention Teacher or a CIT. A CIT in that day was someone who was first a licensed teacher, having met the qualifications by the state to hold a certificate for teaching; (student/intern teaching + a BA in education). I also held a MS degree in Special Education with an emphasis in Behavioral Modification or Education for students that needed special help in the Public School System. My third qualification for that position was that I was trained in three different forms of non-violent crisis intervention techniques, which certified me in restraining and transporting unruly minors and adults as



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needed. There is a last qualification that was sought after by school admin, but not listed on the job board, was that I was still young, fast and strong so I had the ability to handle high stress, dangerous, and high chaotic situations while keeping a modicum of professionalism under duress.

Different schools had the CIT position, but not all schools had our population. We housed for the county some of the most hardcore and violent kiddos around with severe disabilities. The position of CIT existed other places but the qualifications for this particular position at that school, required different giftings for that position at that time. When I left wouldn't you know it, they got rid of the units that housed all the real violent children? (I guess it was all about accommodations)

CIT is a **temporary position** for even the strongest and mentally toughest of teachers and is never offered as a permanent placement for anyone. And while it comes with a freedom that other teaches don't have; golf cart privileges, grab food when you want/can, small amount of teaching plans and grading, it does not have any more power than a normal teacher position. I couldn't suspend or expel a kid that was the position of an administrator. I was asked and counseled all the time what to do with an individual, but I had no power to do anything outside of a teacher. I was still just a teacher earning teacher pay.

That title doesn't travel with you to the next job. The position of CIT is based solely on student population and percentage of the severely emotionally disturbed in correlation to the rest of the population and according to legal recommendations provided in a student's IEP. When I left that school, I was no longer a CIT, I was just an ESE teacher that had a gifting for getting kids to learn even when they didn't want to. I moved to a High School near my house, and it was like a vacation for me. My last job I taught as an ESE teacher, Science and Algebra where I didn't have to chase or fight with violent individuals, and I got to coach the weightlifting team where the only people you compete with is yourself. I thank the Lord for that time because it was while I was there, I had to bury my parents, welcome my first two kids into the world, endure a string of Hurricanes, and went into full time ministry. The



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Lord IS good, His timing is always right, and He always uses prior experiences to prepare you for His future work.

Introduction

I bring that up today because Paul is introducing the concept that there are certain offices that function for the church but as we see today those positions are all not in play today. There are certain gifts that people have and there are certain offices for the church, and some of those with unique gifting may be called to those offices. BUT not all offices still exist, and offices don't follow you wherever you go, and not all offices require the same things, and just because you have a certain gifting it doesn't mean you should automatically be assumed for an office. That's why I used that example in the beginning, the school system mirrors the early church, where schools have a basic requirement, a teaching certificate, like a church, where it requires Salvation for membership as shown by the sign of Baptism. Then the school ascertains specialties and moves teachers into place, and so it is with the church. Some positions are temporary, and some are permanent until you leave, some we still use and some we don't, and it is dangerous thing if you don't understand which ones are which.

It was important for God to make the distinctions back then for clarity and proper administration and it is important for us now to know these roles for proper handling of scripture and correct elevation to ordained positions in the church.

This week we are going to summarize the main point of the text by highlighting the danger it exposes:

MP:

**Living as the Church; Accepting God's Allocation &
Rejecting Self-Recognition.**

We will do this by noting three things the text asks us to do in accepting Gods' design and rejecting our need for recognition. The first is a reminder from the last two weeks and it comes in v.27 and that is **live for Christ as one body**. We have heard the arguments of the, *all for one and one for all*, how God



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designs, and Jesus unites, and now Paul implores us in knowing that truth he calls us to live in a way reflecting those truths. Then secondly, we **honor God's order in the body**. That moves into what we introduced today, if we have determined already that gifts are for the common good, then we need to reject our need for position of power in the church, for those come from God alone. Lastly, **we accept our roles humbly for sake of the body**. All roles are important, but not all roles come with elevation in authority. That does not matter in God's church, what does matter is if you are doing it for the right reasons and that part starts next week when Paul describes, **there is still a more excellent way**.

1. Live for Christ as One Body.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Now - δέ (*de*), wouldn't you know it, the Greeks used this word just like we do in today's context. It just means *AND SO, because of, therefore...* This is when every southern pastor rambles on for about 5 minutes with what was just written in the text and there go to word is "Listen". This is where we get told **what to do in light of what you just learned**.

That means two things for us in Chapter 12. **Remember what I just said** and now **accept the clarification** I am about to give you. That all speaks into this problem of **speaking in tongues** (14:2), during service, doing it to attract attention to oneself, proclaiming things like, "*Christ is accursed*", bringing chaos instead of minimizing distractions, when people have come to hear the preaching of the Word. At this juncture this sermon/letter needs a, *LISTEN!*

Paul is saying if you really believe "*Jesus is Lord*" (v.3) then you will want to operate in a way that honors Him and remember **gifts are for the common good!** You were bought by Jesus, united in the Christ, put/baptized into the body through the Spirit, and bonded to it, so that your gifts are used for each other. For the Corinthian church this immediately says, HALT with the tongues, and start with alternate thinking which is **about others not self!**



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This is not just the summation of Chp. 12, this verse is the hinge for 12-14 and even works as a hinge for all of Corinthians. Up to this point it has been, *I hear you do these pagan practices, stop it! I heard about the Lord's Supper abuse, what were you thinking? I heard about you flaunting wisdom but what you're doing is all wrong!* So now we get to this pivotal moment in the letter, and Paul, after doing a lot of doctrinal work, steeped in OT beliefs, bordered with helpful sarcasm, he's at the point in his sermon, *LISTEN!* Then for the rest of Chp 12 he tells you why, and then Chp 13 is the how, and then 14 on is what it looks like.

Two reasons why it matters to Paul according to v. 27: **1st you represent Christ! - you are the body of Christ (27a)** - This is not just about you, but you proclaiming you are a part of this church, your attitude, your assumptions, you being all about this religious experience reflecting your persona, is a mark on the name of Christ. This will be dealt with, you will change, things will not remain as they are. How the church progresses in Corinth with the expansion of the Gospel is in correlation to how well you respond to this message. When you drag your feet, others suffer. When you act ungodly, others flounder. This is not all about you. There are no more accommodations, there is only a call to get in line or get out. We know that by the letter of 2nd Corinthians, the church got cleansed ([2 Cor 2:1-4](#); [2 Cor 13:1-10](#)).

2nd you have responsibilities to each other! - and individually members of it (27b) - The actions of church members, as we said the previous two weeks, are not about individual rights and wants, being a church member means you have a responsibility to those around you. You practice your gifts for the body, you represent Christ to each other, you don't avoid sin you confront it, so we all get better, you don't hide, for others are called to minister to you! Everything you have is not your own but has been provided to you for the sake of sanctification for the saints among the body. To live without care for fellow church members is sin, pure and simple.

Highlands this is a '**now moment**' for us as well. I know I don't have to say *listen*, because I am very well aware of what God's Word says without me even saying it but let me ask a couple of clarifying questions. Where have we made our lives here, being about us and our well-being? Where have we made this



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church family about our name and not Christ's? I think when we are honest, when we confess that willfully, we will receive grace freely. This morning HCC have you adhered to the message of Corinth so far, **that it's not about you**. If you have, you are ready now to hear why we need to accept that.

2. Honor God's Order in the Body.

²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

Ok so a couple of weeks ago we started Chp 12 with a discussion of spiritual gifts. Gifts are spiritual abilities that were mostly operated by the Apostles during the first century church. These gifts listed in beginning of Chp 12 did happen, they were miraculous, and their purpose was to give credence to a risen/living Savior and His power. There were some though outside the Apostles that did operate with some of these gifts. Put it this way, the Apostles operated using all the gifts while others were endowed with a singular gift for a singular time. Now, as the church, we hold to the view of **Cessationism**, or the view that this is no longer the "normative practice" of the church. It does not mean God cannot act miraculously but it happens very rarely and most of the time by request through prayer of a Christian. Power no longer flows through a person like an Apostle for an Apostles' miracle working was for the purpose of starting the church to show Jesus is risen and is at work among His new people!

That's important to know because Paul now goes into this discussion over **offices of the church**, and their place of importance. It is also important for us to take a moment and recognize what these offices were, their purpose, and if they are needed now. That also helps answer if we should be seeing these gifts today? When we fail to recognize rightly these things it typically leads to honoring those that should not receive it, and honoring people over God has never gone good in the church.

Ephesians 4:11 ESV (this passage broadens the topic)



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¹¹And **he gave** the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

God gave δίδωμι (*didōmi*). (made an offering) gifted men to the church, these things are not spiritual gifts, they are positions for the growth and care of the church. Two of those **no longer exist**, the office of **Apostle** and the office of **Prophet**, the other **three exist** within the realm of the church today; **evangelist, shepherds** (teaching/lead pastor), and **teachers**. Paul is recognizing these areas are positions. It is not to say people can't have proclivities toward a position, things that make them better suited for these offices, but they are assignments, like an ambassador. I was a teacher that got assigned the role of CIT, that was a temporary office, I do not hold onto the office of CITing ;). And I thank God for that!

Apostles:

All Apostles come from the first and great Apostle Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 3:1 ESV

3 Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the **apostle** and high priest of our confession,

The word Apostle comes from ἀποστόλος (*apostolos*). **Messenger**; it is one who is sent out from God to give God's Words, to shape doctrine, to start the church, they have the authority of the one who sent them. Jesus is the first one, He comes, he reveals the intent of the OT, He fulfills Law, He gives a New Covenant, He relays what is the will of the Father, He includes all the nations as promised in Genesis with the Abrahamic Covenant. There is nothing in between Him and His teaching, no greater authority on earth, what He says and does, it is what God wants done.

Then Jesus takes His power of authority, and He takes His power and gifting in the Spirit, and He puts those things on men who were called to the office of **Apostle**, and this has only happened once in history, and will never happen again.



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[Matthew 10:2](#), [Luke 6:13](#), (writers of the Gospel call them Apostles) and then in [Acts 1:25](#), ²⁵ *to take the place in this ministry and **apostleship** from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.* Luke uses a word to convey office. The intent of the word changes here, it goes from a general meaning of messenger to a messenger sent directly from Jesus, it gets a capital A now when used in reference to the original 12 disciples. It became a divine appointment/assignment. When somebody says, "Who is an Apostle?" The Twelve are called Apostles, that's who. Judas was replaced by Matthias in Acts 1. Then we have one other man in the New Testament, who falls into the category of official Apostle, who is Paul.

Apostles - were commissioned by God, saw the resurrected Jesus, and were given powers for miracles to image Christ for the witness of the Gospel and the birth of the church.

Some charismatic and Pentecostal churches use the word Apostle to describe certain men/women in their ranks that hold an office of top authority of which they will say points to their ability to plant churches. They look beyond the context of scripture of who was called an Apostle by the Apostles,¹ and they look beyond the safeguards that Paul uses around this word.

2 Corinthians 12:12 ESV

¹The signs of a **true apostle** were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

This particular brand of evangelicalism noticed this word was used a couple of times lesser individuals in the Bible, but only in relation to one sent out with man's authority and therefore chose to use the word for a church office of today. They then endow it with divine meaning when they should not by making claims that the Apostles should never be questioned. Again, the fact that they use it for women to have authority in the church when scripture is

¹ The NT uses apostolos in two ways: 1) Apostles of Christ: eyewitness-commissioned, foundational office (The Twelve plus others like Paul; likely also James the Lord's brother; certainly Barnabas in Acts 14:14). 2) Apostles of the churches: commissioned delegates/messengers (2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25). - Several coworkers (Timothy, Silas, Apollos, Sosthenes) are never explicitly called apostles. Andronicus and Junia remain a careful "possibly (broader sense)," not a settled "yes."



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clear about that as well tells you how one should take their hermeneutic principles.² It seems the reason they like using the term 'Apostles' is so they can change doctrine.

Prophets:

Comes from the word *prophētēs*, means one who speaks out. They speak forth for God not as an Apostle, aiding in the practice of doctrine by clarifying and proclaiming those ideas. Some prophets in the OT were given power to rule, like that of Samuel, who was also a judge, but Samuel never changed the teachings of God or instituted new ones, that is the job of an Apostle. The Office of prophet was also usually localized to an area, as into a certain region and spoke into specific issues. They stayed closer to home and usually identified more with the people they spoke to, than an Apostle.

The Bible even gave a test in the OT about a prophet so you can know if you actually heard from God or not.

According to Deut. 18:20-22:

1. He must speak in the name of the Lord, not some other god.
2. His message must be in accord with God's revealed truth in Scripture.
3. His predictions of future events must come true exactly as predicted.

Prophets - speaks for God, can have direct revelation from God, but there teaching never opposed Apostolic teaching.

So why is this office now done and gone? The scripture has been codified, there is nothing else to clarify in the giving of the Gospel. The Apostles have

² 1 Timothy 2:11-15 "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet." Paul roots this in creation order (Adam/Eve), not in local culture (vv. 13-14). This forbids women from the authoritative teaching/oversight of the gathered church.; 1 Timothy 3:1-7 (Elder/Overseer qualifications) - Elders/overseers (pastors) must be "the husband of one wife," "manage his household well," etc. The office is framed in male terms and tied to authority and teaching (v. 2: "able to teach"). Titus 1:5-9 (Elder qualifications) - Same pattern as 1 Tim 3: elders are male household heads who teach sound doctrine and refute error (vv. 6-9); 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 - In the context of regulating the public assembly, Paul commands, "the women should keep silent in the churches... it is shameful for a woman to speak in church." In context with 1 Cor 14, this concerns authoritative speech in the gathered worship (weighing/judging prophecy and ordering the service), not absolute silence in all settings; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 - Affirms creation-based headship (vv. 3, 8-9) and recognizes women praying/prophesying with a sign of submission. This shows women may speak in appropriate, non-authoritative ways; it does not place them in the elder/overseer role; Titus 2:3-5 - Positively directs women to teach what is good, particularly training younger women. This commends robust women's ministry within biblical boundaries. - The NT uses elder/overseer/pastor interchangeably for the same office (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet 5:1-4). That office entails authoritative teaching and governance in the mixed assembly. - Scripture restricts that office and its functions (authoritative teaching over men, governance of the gathered church) to qualified men (1 Tim 2:11-3:7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Cor 14:33-35), while encouraging women to teach other women and children and to serve in many vital ministries (Titus 2:3-5; 2 Tim 1:5; Acts 18:26 with Aquila and Priscilla together).



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spoken, they are dead, and the office of prophet has died with them. As a matter of fact, John gave us a warning about them or people pretending to be them.

Revelation 22:18-19 ESV

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

You don't add nor take away, it's all done, it's all clear. That's why people like Mohamad (Muslims) are false, Joseph Smith (Mormons) and Joseph Rutherford (Jehovah Witnesses) are false prophets. They have gone against doctrine, and they have added to it. Paul said,

Galatians 1:8 ESV - But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

Alright we have got to move on. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 Paul mentions more of what God has provided for the body: **third teachers**, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

Teachers is an office we have today, and along with shepherds and evangelists from Ephesians 4:11, these three **offices** the church still uses for church work and growth. Usually, an evangelist goes first into an unreached place or people group (Missionary or church planter), then teachers come along and support his efforts and start to help build that body up. Then traditionally this is when a shepherd comes in and takes over. A person who can teach the whole flock, steer them away from bad doctrine, and equip the saints for ministry. (We still use evangelists to do work, like when Tony goes to Ecuador or FCA, I have done some of that work as well)

Last thing I have time to point out here, whether it is healing or miracles or administration or helping all of those are important, and only a couple of those still happen today, but look at what's last on the list? Various kinds of tongues. As you will see Paul doesn't see much use in what they call tongues,



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because it is not used for the building up of the body just personal edification. (So, if the church declared, by a self-appointed Apostle of today, say tongues is a benefit in public church life, I guess by Paul's definition that person is accursed according to 1st century Apostolic traditions.)

Honor God's ordered body is 1st recognizing that not all the offices are currently active. Second that we should seek out those with the gift of evangelizing and shepherding if we want to see the body grow. And 3rd administrative and helping gifts are a must if the church is going to function responsibly. Finally, 4th realize that liking a doctrine outside what Paul and the Apostles taught usually means there is someone honor seeking and that never goes good in the church for God will not share glory with another!
(Isaiah 42:8)

3. Accept Roles Humbly for Sake of the Body.

²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

The questions put forth in the Greek all are asked with the intent to get you say a 'no'. (no-orientated questioning). BUT we are to earnestly desire higher gifts. So, what we will do is wrap this up in our call to obey to offer ways of how do we practice desiring higher gifting, gifting that promotes church, for that honors God with His ordering, and continues to unite the church in Christ.

[CALL TO OBEY]

1) Repent of self-exaltation; pursue unity as one body.

Take a tangible step towards not thinking of yourself so highly over others. Men sign up for clean-up duty in the church. Go talk to Tony about helping cut the grass before spring. **Don't wait on the church to create the position come to the church with ideas for what you want to do.** Start greeting people on Sunday, offer to hold a baby when a momma needs it, come and learn how to sing on Weds. We pursue unity by thinking of how we can unite



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the body through our service and rejecting the desires to wait for something that gets us noticed.

2) Submit to God's Order for Offices and Gifts

We receive and accept that God has already ordered the church a certain way and we live with it. We reject the ideas of pragmatic church work, easy solutions, and cultural pressures to change what the church does. **Test all claims to authority and practices by Scripture** (2 Cor 12:12; Eph 2:20; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1). It also may mean that you have to stop supporting, listening to, and generating money for churches and their music that promote self-honoring instead of God-honoring ways.

3) Earnestly desire the higher gifts that edify all.

Take your gifting seriously and begin to pray and ask God to show you where it is He has called you for service to this body. **Pray for gifts that build up this body specifically**, then ask the elders and church leadership to guide you into action. When you think you have discovered a placement, commit to it for 90 days and see how it works out.

By heeding the call to obey today I pray we all move a little closer to the point of our text this morning.

MP:

Living as the Church; Accepting God's Allocation & Rejecting Self-Recognition.

Let's pray now and ask God to lead us in His church, to accept what it is He wants us to do for this body, and to help us repent from our tendencies to honor ourselves above others.

Prayer

Communion

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ESV



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For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus which was lived for us. The Lord again was the very first Apostle, He was the messenger that was imbued with power to bring about His Father's will. He neither used that power or authority to bring recognition to Himself, instead He chose to point all recognition and praise towards Heaven. He never accepted the offer of the world or the Devil to take shortcuts in getting things done in an easier and less painful way. Praise be to the Son who suffered in life perfectly putting the causes of His Father first!

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. When we should have represented God to this world and failed, He took our punishment. When we were offered chances to come to the aid of His people we failed, and He absorbed our sin. When we were warned to turn away from self-glorifying behavior in scripture we would not listen, and He died so that we would be able to hear and obey. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love!

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder – **"Christians, what do we believe?"** Congregation – recites:

LBCF 1689 Chapter 27 Of the Communion of the Saints, Paragraph 2, Believers Have Obligations to Other Believers.

Saints by profession are obligated to maintain holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God and in performing other spiritual services



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that promote their mutual edification. 4 They should also help each other in outward things according to their various abilities and needs. 5 This communion should be especially shared in family and church relationships. 6 undefined 7 At the same time, according to the rule of the gospel, as God provides opportunity, this communion should be extended to all believers, to everyone in every place who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus. However, their communion with one another as saints does not take away or infringe on the title or property that people have in their goods and possessions. 8

4. Hebrews 10:24-25, 3:12-13; 5. Acts 11:29-30; 6. Ephesians 6:4; 7. 1 Corinthians 12:14-27; 8. Acts 5:4; Ephesians 4:28

[OFFERING+LAST SONG] "God of Wonders"

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that has ordered all things rightly so that all His children may find Him in His church.

Go in the name of the Son, that empowers all gifts and offices to bring about His will all for His name's sake.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that steers us away from pragmatic and self-glorifying living and helps us live a life that is a sweet sacrifice unto God alone. Now go and share this abundance with the world.



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[FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATIONS]

1) Body Identity and Unity - Read v.27. In what practical ways can our group better live as "one body" rather than a collection of individuals? Where have preferences or personal platforms eclipsed Christ's glory among us, and what repentance looks like this week?

2) God's Order vs. Self-Recognition - v.28 lists God's appointments. How does recognizing God's order for offices (and the distinction between foundational/temporary and ongoing roles) protect a church from confusion and status-seeking? Share an example (past or present) where ignoring God's order harmed unity.

3) Gifts for Edification, Not Elevation - Revisit 1 Cor 12:7, 27-28. Which "quiet" gifts (helps, administration, mercy, hospitality) most build up our congregation right now? What's one concrete way each person can step into a hidden, needed task this month?

4) Earnestly Desire the Higher Gifts - v.31 calls us to desire the higher gifts. What gifts in our body most edify the gathered church (cf. Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11-12; 1 Cor 14:12)? What training, mentoring, or oversight would help you pursue those gifts humbly and fruitfully?

5) The More Excellent Way—Love - Read 1 Cor 13:1-3. How can we test our ministry motives by love's standard? Share a recent service that may have lacked love's heart—and plan one unseen, costly act of love you'll do this week for someone in the church who cannot repay you.



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