**What Gift is Most Important?**

The most popular miraculous gift in the church in Corinth was “speaking in tongues”; speaking in a world language the speaker had never studied. It was so impressive that the tongue speakers seemed to get all the attention. Paul devoted three chapters of his first letter to the Corinthians to dealing with their childish preoccupation with the problem. The Christians in Corinth were more concerned about impressing others than looking out for the best interests of their brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Their childish attitudes led them to devalue some of their brethren.** Some with “lesser” gifts considered themselves worthless members. “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body” (1 Corinthians 12:15). Some with “important” gifts discounted others. “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’” (12:21). The worst thing the Corinthians could do was to rank miraculous gifts by how carnally impressive they were, then value one another by their miralculous abilities.

**God ranked gifts differently.** In 1 Corinthians 12:31, Paul told them to “earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.” He then proceeds to emphasize that love must be the motivation behind our service to God and others. The gifts we value and desire most should be those that serve others.

In Matthew 20, Jesus’ disciples were arguing about being the greatest in the kingdom, and His response turned the wisdom of the world on its head. “Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave” (vs. 26-27).

**Which of your brethren are really important?** Those who fulfill certain high-profile functions may come to mind; preachers, elders, deacons; perhaps Bible class teachers. To the extent that these folks are working to help others grow in grace and knowledge, they are engaged in important work. But we must take care to not discount the value of those who quietly and humbly serve their fellows. They too are among the greatest in the kingdom.

The love and humility of Christ will compel us to value every member of the His body. The love and humility of Christ will influence us to appreciate those things that edify and encourage the brethren. The spiritually mature are not enamored with the self-important, with charismatic eloquent speakers. They value every brother and sister as God does. They appreciate every kind act that brings glory to God and uplifts their brethren.

In short, the spiritually-minded Christian is motivated by sincere love, not selfish ambition. May we all continue to work toward higher levels of spiritual maturity. As we do, we will foster unity among brethren and bring glory to the name of Christ.

**John McKee**

**West Murray church of Christ**