CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

SEPTEMBER 05 2026

Scripture Story: 1 Corinthians 12:4-28.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 18-20.

you are gifted



Photo by Colleen Cahill

flashlight

"Like the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, the advent movement appeared in different countries of Christendom at the same time. In both Europe and America men of faith and prayer were led to the study of the prophecies, and, tracing down the inspired record, they saw convincing evidence that the end of all things was at hand. In different lands there were isolated bodies of Christians who, solely by the study of the Scriptures, arrived at the belief that the Savior's advent was near" (*The Great Controversy,* p. 357).

key text

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work."

(1 Corinthians 12:4-6, NIV)

what do you think?

Read the following definitions of "servanthood" and "stewardship." Then decide if you agree or disagree. Explain why.

Servanthood is all about our heart toward God and our attitude toward ministry. According to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, using our spiritual gifts without love accomplishes nothing. Authentic devotion to serving, honoring, and worshipping Christ is essential for effective ministry.

Stewardship has to do with accountability. Once we identify and grow in our understanding of our spiritual gifts, we must be responsible in the way we use them. First Corinthians 12:1 reminds us that it is our duty to identify what our spiritual gifts are because we will be held accountable for how we use them (1 Peter 4:10; Matthew 25:14-30).

did you know?

Each of us is truly unique. Did you know that each of us has 100 trillion cells in our body? And for each of those cells, there is a DNA strand that holds 6 gigabytes of memory. So, each of us has the potential to house 600 trillion gigabytes of memory! Amazing! Also, DNA molecules can combine in an infinite number of ways. The number is 10 to the 2,400,000,000th power. There is no one like you! God made you special.

You have a God-given personal style and ministry passion. Understanding your unique gifts and style will enable you to thrive in your relationship with God and in your ministry.

INTO THE STORY

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. . . . "

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues."

(1 Corinthians 12:4-13, 27, 28, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Circle the gifts that Paul lists in the passages above. Who gives these gifts? Which one is the best and/or most important? Reinforce your answer with biblical texts.

Find definitions/descriptions for the following spiritual gifts:

- Wisdom
- Knowledge
- Faith
- Healing
- Discernment (distinguishing between spirits)

Who is the minister at your church? Reread 1 Corinthians 12:7. What would Paul say about your answer?

What might some of your spiritual gifts be? If you don't know, how can you find out?

What do you think the church would look like if everyone lived out their spiritual giftedness?

punch lines

"Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back" **(Luke 6:38, NLT).**

"So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't" **(Romans 12:5, 6, *The Message*).**

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" **(1 Peter 4:10, NIV).**

"You shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother's womb" **(Psalm 139:13, *The Message*).**

"So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them." **(Matthew 25:28, 29, NIV).**

further insight

"Men are instruments in the hand of God, employed by Him to accomplish His purposes of grace and mercy. Each has his part to act."

—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 343

Sabbath

Read Matthew 25:14-30.

Complete the *What Do You Think?* activity. The words "servanthood" and "stewardship" are misunderstood by many people. For some, servanthood means to allow others to dictate how we live our lives. And for others, stewardship refers only to money.

How were the definitions for *servanthood* and *stewardship* similar to your current understanding? How were they different? How would you rewrite the definitions?

Servanthood: _____

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Stewardship: _____

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Sunday

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13.

Read the *Into the Story* section of this week's lesson, and answer the *Out of the Story* questions. The context in which the apostle was writing was that there were people in the church who thought that their spiritual gifts were superior to others' gifts. They had become proud. That's one reason he stressed love in 1 Corinthians 13. Without love, our gifts won't make an eternal difference.

But what do you do if you don't like the gifts you have? Or it seems as if everyone else has better ones? If we use our gifts out of a heart of love, can all giftedness—small or large—make a difference? Explain.

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To take a spiritual gifts inventory, go to https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/women-leadership-spiritual-gifts-growth-service (retrieved July 16, 2025). After you've tallied your results, review them with a trusted family member or teacher. Ask him or her for feedback: Which ones that you discovered do they see manifested in your life? How might they see you using your gift in service? What guidance might they have for you in regard to the "next step"?

Monday

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

Read through the *Key Text* for this week. It reveals a pattern to us:

Different gifts	Same Spirit
Different service	Same Lord
Different working	Same God

What does this tell us about the Spirit? About Jesus? About God?

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Tuesday

Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Read this week's *Flashlight* quotation. Ellen White tells us that Christians in different countries, who had no contact with each other, were coming to the same conclusions about Christ's second coming. Why? Because they were all studying the same book—God's Word—and were being led by the same Spirit.

At different times, in different places, God imparts the wisdom necessary for that situation. *Discernment* is one of the spiritual gifts that God promises to give. Do some research to determine what it means to have the spiritual gift of discernment. How can that gift be used to serve others?

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Wednesday

Read this week's *Punch Lines*. There are several themes that you will find throughout these Scripture texts. Match the text with the theme.

Matthew 25:28, 29	Givers receive more than they give
Luke 6:38	Serving grace
Psalm 139:13	I've got to be me
1 Peter 4:10	God's math sure is different than my math homework
Romans 12:5, 6	God knew me before I knew me

Thursday

Read Romans 8:14.

How would an understanding of your spiritual gifts influence your future—your choice of career, spouse, ministry?

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Friday

Read 1 Peter 4:10.

What God-given ability or personal experience can I offer to my community? In what ways can I see myself passionately serving others—and loving it?

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this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 18, 19, 20.

**Love Under Fire* is a special adaptation of *The Great Controversy*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.