



Spirit of God E11: A Spirit-Filled Body With Spiritual Gifts

Official Transcript

Speakers

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Credits read by audience members Tiana and Peter, and by BibleProject team member Joel

[Recap and Setup for the Church as a Body (0:00-11:01)]

[BibleProject theme song, "Defender" by TENTS]

Jon: Welcome to BibleProject podcast. We're in a series on the Spirit of God. In the opening of the scroll of Acts, God's Spirit descends on the followers of Jesus with fire, and they speak in foreign languages. And thousands of Jewish exiles who are in Jerusalem for Pentecost hear them and begin to follow Jesus. This is the start of something big.

Tim: [audio clips from the episode below] Something new has happened. The Spirit that animated Jesus is now filling his followers to continue the work of Jesus in the world.

Jon: The scattered tribes of Israel have been united, and God's temple has been restored in their midst. It's not a building, though. It's a community. The Apostle Paul will talk about this as being the temple. Today, we're going to look at another metaphor that Paul uses, describing the community not just as a temple, but as a body.

Tim: [audio clips from the episode below] In Paul's mind, talking about the Messiah's people as the new temple filled with the Spirit or a new body filled with the Spirit—two ways of talking about the same thing.

Jon: But why does Paul use the metaphor of a body? Is this random? Or perhaps, Paul's being a thoughtful Bible nerd.

Tim: [audio clips from the episode below] Where do you get the idea of a body being filled up with a Spirit so it can do the stuff that God called it to do? This is, like, page two of Genesis. [chuckles] There's a whole moment that pauses the story to meditate on a body being filled up with breath.

Jon: Remember, in Hebrew and in Greek, "breath" is "spirit." And after God breathes spirit into the human, he gives the human a task to work and keep the garden. In other words, God fills the human with spirit for a purpose.

Tim: [audio clips from the episode below] You have a calling: Take the breath that's given to you and use it for a purpose. What we're seeing here is the seedbed of the whole topic of spiritual gifts.

Jon: Today we look at First Corinthians 12, where Paul's discussing the gifts of the Spirit. He calls them simply "spirituals," and he lists over a dozen of them, emphasizing the diversity of ways that the Spirit empowers people to fulfill humanity's calling.

Tim: [audio clips from the episode below] And he says, "There's so many different kinds of work, but it's all from the breath of God." So again, it's like a new Adam being commissioned, getting the breath to cultivate and keep the garden.

Jon: When we talk about spiritual gifts, what we're really talking about is how a group of people can be empowered by God's Spirit to continue the mission of Jesus.

Tim: [audio clips from the episode below] The ways that the Spirit works are all a manifestation of the one body of the Messiah.

Jon: And what is the way of Jesus? How can you know you are united with the Spirit of God?

Tim: [audio clips from the episode below] All of those gifts and workings are going to have one main purpose: love.

Jon: Today, Tim Mackie and I explore how the Spirit of God fills the body of the church with gifts to serve one another and the world. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Musical break: BibleProject theme song, “Defender” by TENTS (2:57-3:00)]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Hi, Jon.

Jon: So we are working through the Bible—

[Tim laughs]

Jon: —talking about the Spirit of God.

Tim: As we do.

Jon: As we do. [chuckles]

Tim: About the breath of the Almighty.

Jon: Ooh. [chuckles]

Tim: The wind of—

Jon: Yeah, being clothed by power from the skies.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. Yeah, that’s right. Many names and images given to this mysterious, invisible presence of the most real thing—

[BibleProject theme song, “Defender” by TENTS, fades out]

Tim: —in the universe— [laughs]

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —otherwise known as the Holy Spirit.

Jon: Yes.

Tim: Yep. We have been exploring the role of the Spirit and the language and imagery used to describe the Spirit throughout the storyline of the Hebrew Bible. And now we’re a few conversations into surveying the same: the role and portraits of the Spirit throughout the New Testament.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And in the Hebrew Bible, everyone is sustained by God's *ruakh*, his —

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: —spirit-breath-wind-power-energy-life.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And we get stories of characters being endowed with more Spirit and the opportunity to be, like, supercharged. And it goes kind of one of two ways. Like, either that person then gets more in lined with God and beautiful things happen, or that person could actually use that in a way that leads to more trouble.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So more Spirit doesn't mean necessarily more goodness.

Tim: Mmm. Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] But then there's this hope that Moses had that then the later prophets have, which is that all of God's people will be filled with the Spirit. And when we get to the New Testament, we just start seeing immediately all these characters being filled with the Spirit, and then we get to Jesus who is conceived in the Spirit in a way that's category-breaking, and then led by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit, doing his ministry.

Tim: Mhm. Yes.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] And then his disciples getting to experience this and getting to participate in this. But you drew attention to the fact that in the gospel accounts, it doesn't ever say they were filled with the Spirit.

Tim: Yeah, it doesn't. Yeah. Which, you know, could be a deduction from silence.

Jon: Sure.

Tim: But it's very clear that after Jesus's death, resurrection, and ascension to the heavenly throne, that the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost, which we talked about in our last conversation, is marked as like a before-and-after line.

Jon: Yeah, something new has happened.

Tim: Something new has happened. The Spirit will come to be called in the story of Acts either "the Spirit," "the Holy Spirit," "the Spirit of God," or "the Spirit of Jesus" —

[Tim and Jon laugh]

Tim: —because it comes from Jesus. It's poured out from Jesus sitting on his heavenly throne. Peter says that at Pentecost. So it's: The Spirit that animated Jesus is now filling his followers to continue the work of Jesus in the world. And what we talked about last time was the way Luke uses temple imagery and language to describe the Spirit of Jesus filling up his followers. And then we saw how Peter and Paul in their letters in the New Testament just assume that new-temple language and imagery to describe the people of Jesus.

Jon: Yeah, so Jesus says, "I'm going to send you a gift, the gift that the Father promised. He's coming, the Holy Spirit." As an aside, I notice we keep saying "it" or "the Holy Spirit."

Tim: Mmm. Mhm. Yeah, it's interesting. Well, in Hebrew, *ruakh* is a feminine noun.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So whenever the Spirit is described, like, with pronouns in the Hebrew Bible, they're feminine pronouns, "she."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So you have that.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Then in the New Testament, you have variety. Greek actually has three grammatical genders to assign to nouns.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Masculine, feminine, or neither—

[Tim and Jon laugh]

Tim: —which is called "neuter"—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Is the technical term. And so "spirit" is referred to with both neuter—so just non-gendered pronouns—often in Acts, and then in John's Gospel, which we'll look at in a few episodes, with masculine nouns and pronouns.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So you have the whole variety.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It's a good reminder that God is not gendered— [laughs]

Jon: [chuckles] Yeah.

Tim: [chuckles] —right?—in that sense.

Jon: And it just feels weird to s—I guess maybe this is my tradition, I don't know—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: To refer to the Holy Spirit as “he” or “she.” And so “it” feels more comfortable, but then “it” is so depersonalizing.

Tim: Totally, yeah. So yeah, actually what I'd like to say for our last conversation a way to focus in on that question—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: —about the personal uniqueness, the personhood of the Spirit—

Jon: Yeah. Okay.

Tim: —as a topic of conversation, which is important. But you're right. Maybe the same variety we're employing is mirrored in the Bible, of: “he,” “she,” “it” are all—

Jon: It would be the neuter.

Tim: It would be the neuter.

Jon: Okay. [laughs] So that's the gift.

[Tim laughs]

Jon: The gift of the Holy Spirit comes—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] —communally fills the disciples of Jesus, individually hovers over them, and fills them. They speak in languages of all the scattering of Israel from all over. They can now hear the deeds of Jesus in their own language. And now they have this new identity that Peter would call being stones, living stones, being built up to be a priesthood giving sacrifices. So there's this—the taking all of the story of the Hebrew Bible and all of this symbolism and imagery and saying: “*This has culminated in what we're experiencing. It doesn't mean we need to abandon the temple.*” They would go and hang out at the temple.

Tim: Yeah, right.

Jon: But it was a much deeper sense of—of living into temple life that they were experiencing, being filled with this Holy Spirit.

Tim: Yeah, yep, that's right. So what I want to do now is highlight an image in the letters of the apostles, mostly, that's connected to that Spirit filling the temple, the followers of Jesus as the new temple. There's a closely connected idea, which is the followers of Jesus as new temple *and* as the "body" of the Messiah. And these ideas are closely joined together—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: —in the thought and language of the apostles. And I just had a deeper appreciation for how temple and body are connected in the Hebrew Bible that helped me see some new things in the New Testament. So that's what I want to show you. What I want to start with is a couple statements in Paul's letter to the Ephesians where new temple and new body language are connected to the Spirit in one letter.

Jon: Okay.

[“Grey” by Lofi Sunday feat. PAINT WITH SOUND. fades in]

Tim: So let's start there, and then I want to reverse engineer: How did somebody come to connect the followers of Jesus being described as a temple and as a new human body? Why would someone say something like that?

[Jon laughs]

Tim: Where would they get the language and imagery to join spirit and temple and body together?

Jon: Okay.

Tim: That's what I want to look at.

Jon: All right.

[Musical break: “Grey” by Lofi Sunday feat. PAINT WITH SOUND. (10:45-11:01)]

[The Church as a Spirit-Filled temple and Body (11:01-25:57)]

Tim: So Paul's letter to the Ephesians—whew, there's actually quite a rabbit hole associated with who in Ephesus he's writing to—

["Grey" by Lofi Sunday feat. PAINT WITH SOUND. fades out]

Tim: —if Ephesus was the original recipients of the letter—that's a whole rabbit hole—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: —we don't have time to talk about. I'm just going to say he's writing to the Ephesians, but there's a little bit of a—

Jon: [laughs] A little asterisk there.

Tim: A little asterisk there. So in Ephesians 2, he highlights that God has mercifully reached out to Israelites and non-Israelites who were all, he says, "dead in your sins and transgressions." However, "In the Messiah Jesus, he has made you alive with the Messiah. And guess what? If you're in the Messiah and among his people, you have a throne in Heaven, and you're sitting on it right now." Did you know that—

[Jon laughs]

Tim: —Jon? You're enthroned in Heaven right now.

Jon: I di— [pause]

[Tim laughs]

Jon: Well—

[Tim laughs]

Jon: —what do you mean by "know"?

[Tim laughs]

[Tim and Jon laugh]

Tim: You're sitting in a chair in front of me.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So in a way, you're enthroned here on Earth—

Jon: Oh. [chuckles] Yeah. Okay.

Tim: —in this moment. “Enthroned”—“enthroned” means sitting in a chair.

Jon: Sitting in a chair.

Tim: Yeah. So that's a whole thing he says. That's all connected to how he thinks about Daniel 7 as a framework for the Christian life. But that's a whole other thing.

Jon: Mhm. Yeah, that's a new theme study.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. What his focus is and what's remarkable is that it's both Israelites and *non*-Israelites who have been brought together by the Israelite Messiah as this joined people. And that's where I want to pick up the thread right here. Ephesians 2:18. he says, “For through the Messiah, we both”—and by both he means Israelite and non-Israelites—“have access in one *pneuma*”—spirit—“to the Father.” So even just—there's a little story: a group of people getting special entry access to the Father. He has a little temple diagram as the background for that language.

Jon: Oh, okay. Being priests of sorts.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. The language of coming near, like priests would come near and then enter into—get access to the holy of holies.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So he's swapped out—it's now anybody [laughs] through—

Jon: Mmm. Not just a select group of Israelites, but Israelites and non-Israelites.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. And that through the Messiah—so Israel's Messiah did something that opens up access to the Father, but then that access happens in or by means of one spirit.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Okay. “So then you”—I think here he means non-Israelites—“you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are brought in as fellow citizens with the holy ones.” That is, Israelites. “You belong to God's household family. And you've been built on the foundation of the apostles—”that is, Jesus's commissioned representatives—“and the prophets”—like the Hebrew Bible prophets—“with Messiah Jesus himself as the cornerstone.” So this is picking up from the last episode.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: He's using architectural temple language of a group of people as the stones with Jesus as the cornerstone. But then look what he says here. So he says, "You're built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Messiah Jesus is the cornerstone" —

Jon: So you're the building?

Tim: Yep. But then Messiah Jesus is the foundation stone that the building—"and in him, the whole building is being fitted together and is growing."

[Jon laughs]

Tim: [laughs] It's growing. [laughs]

Jon: [jokingly] This temple is alive.

Tim: [laughs] It is. "—into a holy temple for the Lord. And in him"—that is, in the Messiah—"you all also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Whew. He's packed it in. But—so there's—the temple imagery is right there.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But he adds a couple little words that make it feel like: What—this building's—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: [chuckles] —kind of wild.

Jon: New type of building.

Tim: Yeah. It's growing—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —which is the language of, like, what—

Jon: Like a tree.

Tim: —a biological organism does.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah, the word is *avxano* [also pronounced *auxano*], and—we'll just do a quick search here. Ooh, it's used in a parallel passage in Paul's letter to the Colossians. But here, he talks about a body that is held together by joints and ligaments growing with a growth that comes from God.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So this is the language of how, like, a—literally the body of a human or a creature grows.

Jon: That makes sense.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But this is for a building.

Tim: But it's for a building, exactly.

Jon: Buildings don't grow. Yeah.

Tim: That's right. So later on in chapter 4 where he says, "Hey, you know, I'm talking to a group of pretty diverse followers of Jesus, especially the culture divide of Israelite and non-Israelite"—so he opens chapter 4 saying, "I am a prisoner for the Lord, and I ask you to walk in a manner that is worthy of the calling that's been placed on you with humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance, love. . ." You know, the stuff people need to get along when they're not used to living with different languages and foods and—right?—cultures and family styles and—right? It's tough.

Jon: Yeah, that's a good point.

Tim: Yep. So "Be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in a bond of peace because there is one body and there is one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all"—

[Jon laughs]

Tim: —"and in all."

[Jon laughs]

Tim: So great, man. Paul's a poet. He repeats the number one seven times here.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism—

Tim: One God.

Jon: —and one God.

Tim: One God. And he saves "one God" for last—from the Shema, Deuteronomy chapter 6.

Jon: Oh. Hmm.

Tim: And then: “He’s the Father of everyone who is over everyone and everything, he’s through everyone and everything, and he’s in everyone and everything.”

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: There’s a—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: There’s a— [chuckles]

Jon: And so this is this idea of: God is Spirit.

Tim: Exactly. Exactly right. Yeah. So also there’s a trinitarian element here. There’s one Spirit, there’s one Lord, that’s Jesus, and then there’s one God, who’s the Father.

Jon: Mmm. But there’s also one body.

Tim: And there’s one body. So he doesn’t say there’s one temple.

Jon: Ah.

Tim: He uses body here.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So what’s interesting is his emphasis in chapter 2 was: “You all have access by one Spirit to the Father through the Messiah, and that makes you the new temple, but you’re a growing temple.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like a body.

Jon: Because bodies grow.

Tim: Because bodies grow. That’s right. And then in chapter 4, when he brings that all back again, he doesn’t use the building imagery.

Jon: Mmm. He just calls it “body.”

Tim: He just commits to the body metaphor.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So in Paul’s mind, talking about the Messiah’s people as the new temple filled with Spirit or a new body filled with the Spirit—

Jon: Yeah. Same category.

Tim: Yeah, two ways of talking about the same thing.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So it just struck me one day. I was thinking about these things, and then, all of a sudden, I was just like, “Whoa, where do you get the idea of a body being filled up with a Spirit so it can do the stuff that God called it to do?” And it just struck me, like, “Oh, this is, like—this is from page two of Genesis.” [chuckles]

[Jon laughs]

Tim: There’s a whole moment that pauses the story to meditate on a body being filled up with breath. So Genesis 2, the Eden story, which is the literary unit that comes after the seven-day creation narrative. And the Eden story begins in Genesis 2, verse 4 with a dry, dusty wilderness, no plants, no water, and no humans. So God provides a spring of water that springs up out of the ground. And in the narrative logic, if you have water on dry ground, it will make some clay. The next line, Genesis 2:7: “Yahweh Elohim formed the *’adam* from the dust of the *’adamah*.” So there’s one. He formed a body. But it doesn’t, like, get up and start walking around.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: There’s, like, a stage two of the creation step.

Jon: Mmm. Step two?

Tim: Mhm. “And Yahweh Elohim, he blew—”it’s a unique Hebrew verb, and it’s going to get hyperlinked in the New Testament in a really cool way. *Vayyipakh*—

[Jon laughs]

Tim: —is the Hebrew.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: To blow. [blows]

Jon: Okay.

Tim: To blow. The Jewish scholars who translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek a couple of centuries before Jesus used a Greek word, *enephusesen*.

Jon: Whoa.

Tim: *Enephusesen*.

Jon: *Enephusesen*. Man, they got some tongue twisters.

Tim: [laughs] I know. Yeah. *Enephusesen*. That's "blew," or "to blow out." "He blew out into his nostrils the breath of life." In Hebrew it's *nishmat khayyim*. In Greek, it's *pnoen zoes*.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: *Pnoen zoes*. And that *pnoen* is connected to the same root of *pneuma*, the *pn* of "breath," "wind," or "spirit." "And then the human became a living creature." And then in verse 15, Yahweh took the humans, put them in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: So you have a body filled with breath to do a task.

Jon: Yeah. And this is kind of the priestly task—

Tim: Mhm. Yeah, that's right.

Jon: —to work and keep.

Tim: To work and to keep. Yeah, that's right. But it just kind of struck me that—body filled with breath with a job description.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Now you have a calling.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: Like, take the breath that's given to you and use it for a purpose.

Jon: Yeah. Yeah.

Tim: [Jon agreeing throughout] And here the purpose is: This Heaven on Earth spot needs to be both maintained, cultivated, and guarded, keeping, so that it can continue to be what God has called it to be. And Eden is the primary image that's being symbolized in the temple as a micro-Eden, all the garden imagery, and plants, and so on—on the curtains and the building walls. So there's a close connection of Eden and the temple. And the temple's talked about in the Hebrew Prophets as being filled up with God's glory and presence and Spirit. But now we come back here, and we're like, "*Oh, it's the human that's filled*"—

Jon: Ohhh.

Tim: —"*with God's Spirit-breath*"—

Jon: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tim: —“*to be in the Eden place to do the job, do the work, use the borrowed breath to do the work.*” Oh, actually, the first builder of the first symbolic Eden was a guy named Bezalel in the book of Exodus.

Jon: Mmm. Oh, right.

Tim: We looked at him.

Jon: Mhm. And he’s filled with the Spirit.

Tim: He’s the second Spirit-filled human in the biblical story.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: Or maybe the f—if you count Adam and Eve as the first, then you have Joseph second—

Jon: Yeah. Okay.

Tim: Bezalel’s the third. And here, we’ll just look at it, because it’s relevant. God says that he’s filled this guy Bezalel with the *ruakh* of God in wisdom and understanding and knowledge and craftsmanship to make the designs for the—

Jon: For the tabernacle.

Tim: —tabernacle, yeah.

Jon: Which is the micro-Eden.

Tim: That’s right. That’s right.

Jon: Yeah. Okay.

Tim: Yeah. So what we’re seeing here is the seed bed of the whole concept of what will become in the history of Christian thought—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —the topic of spiritual gifts.

Jon: Oh. Yeah, yeah, you said that’s where we’re going to go.

Tim: Which is a topic of conversation, and depending on what church tradition you’re part of, this may be a big deal, this may not be.

Jon: Yeah. Right.

Tim: But it just struck me one day: Like, that whole conversation about the things—

Jon: Oh, the work. The—

Tim: —that the Spirit empowers people to do—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Where does that idea begin?

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: And it struck me that it really begins right here in the Eden story.

Jon: Oh, interesting. God's breath filling a body then for the task of being the Eden priests.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. So all of this is the connected set of ideas that the Apostle Paul just takes for granted and is going to build on and develop in three chapters of his letter to the Corinthians, chapters 12, 13 to 14—that are kind of like the foundational chapters for this whole topic and conversation around spiritual gifts. So what I find is that because spiritual gifts—so here—prophecies, speaking in tongues, and healing—right? —

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Manifestations of the Spirit that have become unfortunately controversial in many periods of church history.

Jon: Huh.

Tim: So I don't want to solve all that. [laughs]

[Jon laughs]

Tim: [laughs] I just want to make one contribution to say: I noticed that the deep connection between Spirit and body and this whole topic of spiritual gifts became interconnected in a way that I can't see them as separate anymore. And it just helped give an angle on the whole question of spiritual gifts that I had never heard anyone quite talk about it that way before. So that's what—I've already tilled the ground. But whatever we're talking about with the gifts of the Spirit, we're talking about the ways that the life of Jesus—

["Peace With You" by Lofi Sunday feat. Oly.Lo fades in]

Tim: —has been intimately joined to the life and bodies and collective body of his followers so that everything that a follower of Jesus does in the world has the potential to be super boosted by the very life-presence of the Spirit. And that is the way of

thinking about spiritual gifts that we find Paul talking about in this section of First Corinthians. So should we just kind of dive in?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Okay.

[Musical break: “Peace With You” by Lofi Sunday feat. Oly.Lo (25:27-25:57)]

[The Spiritual Gifts of 1 Corinthians 12 (25:57-45:30)]

Tim: So First Corinthians is actually broken up into sections because First Corinthians is actually not First— [chuckles] it’s not the first letter. It’s the second letter.

Jon: Oh, because he references another—

Tim: Yeah, it’s the second letter he’s written to them because he references the first letter—

[“Peace With You” by Lofi Sunday feat. Oly.Lo fades out]

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: —and then he references the fact that they wrote him a letter back to that first letter, and that’s what he’s responding to.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So he breaks up his discussion in terms of topics and sections, and he’ll be like, “*Now concerning this thing that you wrote about.*”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And “*Now concerning this. . .*” So chapter 12, verse 1 has one of those—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: —introductory headings where he says, “Now concerning a topic that you guys wrote me about.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So “Now concerning” — [exhales] the word that he uses is “spirituals.” [chuckles]

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Spiritual—

Jon: “Now concerning spirituals.”

Tim: “Things of the Spirit.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: What is so fascinating is it gets translated in all our English translations as, “Now about the *gifts* of the Spirit.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And—that’s what the NIV says.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It’s what the ESV says. New American Standard. NRSV. Even the King James. And the word “gift” is not present there.

Jon: Yeah. Oh.

Tim: The topic and that idea is going to be present in the chapter that unfolds.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And he will use the word “gift” later, but he doesn’t use it here.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So that’s just interesting. In the most technical sense, he just says, “Now concerning the things of the Spirit.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: That’s how he starts. He has this introductory thing that we could get lost—spend a lot of time here. [chuckles] It’s super interesting. [chuckles] He contrasts how most of the Corinthians were just polytheist Greeks and Romans worshiping idols, and at some

point, they made a confession that Jesus is Lord, the one true God—you know?—there is no other.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And his point in this opening paragraph is: “You know what, man? If you came to see that truth about reality, even your coming to grasp that truth is”—what he says—“by” or “in the Spirit of God.”

Jon: It’s a spiritual.

Tim: Yeah. “*You were led there.*”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: “*You might think that was just your apocalypse that you had, your realization, but even that realization is something God’s been doing in your mind and heart.*”

Jon: Mmm. It’s a gift.

Tim: Yeah, it’s a gift. Yep. So he says, “If you say Jesus is Lord”—that’s the basic confession of faith—“you’re doing that already just saying that confession. You’re already empowered by the Spirit”—as it were. That’s first point. Second point: “There are a whole variety of *kharisma*”—*kharisma*, “varieties of gifts.” Or actually the plural, *kharismata*. “There’s lots of ways that the Spirit has given gifts.” So it’s the word *kharis* or *kharis*, but—it can get translated as grace. But it’s also a concrete word for—

Jon: Oh, yeah. A gift.

Tim: Gift. Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: A grace. A gift.

Tim: A grace. Yeah. “*You didn’t pay me. I just*”—I give you something. And I want to both be generous, and then, like, establish a bond between us. And we have a reciprocal relationship, and I want to establish that with you. So that’s what you give a *kharis*. So what he says is, “There are all kinds of diverse gifts”—graces—“but one and the same Spirit. There are all of these different types of services”—or “ways of serving”—it’s the word *diakonia* from which we get “deacon”—“but the same Lord.”—*kurios*.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: “There are all of these different”—hmm—“*energema-s.*” Energies.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Powers.

Jon: This is different than *dunamis*?

Tim: Exactly. Yeah. But it is—God does stuff in the world.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: What are the types of things that God does? Wow, so many different things. But it is the same God working in all things and in all people. So what he wants to bring up is there are lots of different gifts and ways of serving and ways of working, making stuff happen—

Jon: Mhm. Okay.

Tim: —in and among the people of God. But the same—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And you got this little—

Jon: Spirit, Son, and Father.

Tim: Yeah, that's a great example of how Paul takes a trinitarian conception of God just for granted. He hasn't spelled out in all the details, but he just takes it for granted. So notice how the one and the many even here—the one God who is Father, Spirit, and Son, but all of these different things happening among the people of God. So it's one Spirit-Lord-God working all things and in all people. And there's varieties of gifts and serving and working. "But to each one, there is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." So think all the way back to the Eden story. The human was given the Spirit to cultivate the life of Eden.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The human didn't create the life of Eden. That was the gift of God. And then the human didn't create themselves, but they were given the breath, the spirit, to take the good that was already there and keep it going.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So that's the category here.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: [Jon backchanneling throughout] So he gives this list of nine different types of gifts and servings and workings. "To someone, there might be given a word of wisdom through the Spirit; to another, a word of knowledge according to the Spirit; to another person, trust"—faith—"by the Spirit; to another, gifts of healing"—like, physical, bodily healing—"to another, the working of, like, wonders"—category-breaking things. Miracles

would be another way to translate that. “To someone else, prophecy”—like speaking a word that comes from God to another person. “To another person, distinguishing between spirits; to another person, various kinds of languages, tongues; to another, the interpretation of languages. But it’s one and the same Spirit doing all these things and giving to each person individually just as he purposes”—desires.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So step one was: If you confess Jesus is Lord—

Jon: Hmm. That’s a grace.

Tim: —that’s a grace of the Spirit already.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Step two is: Once you have that confession of faith and you are giving all of your best mental energy and thought and your life, your job, your family, your friendships, all of it, you want to put under allegiance to King Jesus—“*what should I do with my life?*”

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: Like: “*What should I do?*”—

Jon: Mmm. “*What’s the work?*”

Tim: “*What’s the work I’m called to do?*” And he says, “There’s so many different kinds of work.”

Jon: [laughs] Yeah.

Tim: “And there’s so many ways you could serve. And there’s so many”—

Jon: Mmm. But it’s all from the Spirit.

Tim: But it’s all from the breath of God. So again, think in that—it’s a cool way to imagine it that it’s like a new Adam being commissioned.

Jon: Mmm. Yeah.

Tim: You’re like the new Adam getting the breath to cultivate and keep the garden.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But it’s going to look so different for everybody. And he just gives nine examples of difference. And I think he’s probably highlighting nine examples that some of which we know had become really problematic and controversial in the Corinthian house churches because he’s going to pick up certain ones of these. But the bigger heading is just: What do you do with the breath that you’ve been given to do what kind of work?

Jon: Yeah. Right.

Tim: And he wants these Corinthians to have just the broadest view of their whole life as a—like a palette—

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: —of potential options, but each of us has a slightly different set of colors on our palette based on our unique life history, but one and the same Spirit-Lord-God animating them all.

Jon: Yeah. And you—when we got to Bezalel, and he was filled with the Spirit with wisdom and knowledge, you said, “Hold on to that.”

Tim: Yes. Yeah. Yeah. Here we are.

Jon: So—and here we are. The first two are wisdom and knowledge.

Tim: Yeah. Yep. Yeah. So what’s great is: The discussion about trying to pin down each one of these throughout church history is very diverse. Like, what exactly did he mean?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And what’s the difference between [laughs] a word of wisdom and a word of knowledge?

Jon: Sure. Right. Yeah.

Tim: And so different church traditions have kind of provided a little more detail than Paul gives—

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: —to nail it down. But wisdom is about habit and skill through practice.

Jon: Yeah, it’s a craftsman word.

Tim: Yeah, you get so skilled and adept at working with a certain medium or topic. It’s about character, and you know how to make the right call. It’s built into you.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Knowledge is a little more oriented towards what we would call cognitive processing of information, whereas wisdom is more of a, like, applied skill and action word.

Jon: Hmm. Is that the difference in Greek? Because in Hebrew, the word usually translated “knowledge” feels like a catch-all kind of word usually.

Tim: Oh, I see. Yes. Yeah, the words are *sophia* is wisdom—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: —and then *gnosis*. And what's tricky is Paul's actually used both of these words earlier in the letters because there's a whole group that he names in the Corinthian church who think of themselves as, like, the people who are really wise and have superior knowledge and—

Jon: Mmm. Okay.

Tim: —it's leading them to alienate a whole bunch of other people in the church. And he's super bummed on that.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But some people, you know, are just super wise. And then you meet some followers of Jesus, and you're like, "*Whoa*"—

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: —"*I want to know what that person thinks about everything.*"

Jon: Yeah. [laughs]

Tim: [chuckles] You know what I mean?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And some people—I think wisdom would be: "*I want to know how that person*"—

Jon: Made that decision.

Tim: —"*makes decisions*"—

Jon: Yeah. Yeah.

Tim: —"*about, like, their money and how they*"—

Jon: Right. Yep. Yeah, how they choose between things. Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. And then others, like: "*I just—I want to know what they think about X topic.*"

Jon: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Right.

Tim: Yeah. And there are some people that just—that's how the Spirit is working with that person, and they are a gift. But to somebody else?

Jon: *They* are a gift?

Tim: Well, the Spirit is giving a gift to the body of the Messiah by uniquely working in that way through that person. But to someone else, it might be faith or trust, like somebody who just—*“I’m not sure that the situation’s going to work out. We prayed about it.”* And then this other person’s just like, *“It’s cool, man.”*

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: [Jon backchanneling throughout] *“God’s got it. Here, let me call you once a day to remind you that we’re going to trust God on this one.”* Right? Just you want somebody like that in your life.

Jon: Okay. Yeah.

Tim: I do. Healing—so all these are just—that’s what he’s talking about. And if you have the Jesus-is-Lord confession as the center—that’s like common denominator number one—that’s the most important one—then what else will the work of the Spirit bring about? These types of things. What’s interesting is, later in the chapter, he gives another list of ways that God has given gifts. And it’s a totally different list down in verse 28. He’ll say, “God has appointed for the assembly apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healing”—ooh: “acts of assistance”—helping people—

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: —“gifts of administration”—

Jon: Hmm. Yeah. Nuts and bolts.

Tim: [excited] Yeah. I love this, man. This is so cool. I love that he puts prophets and teachers alongside miracles and healing alongside assistants and administrative wizards, you know?

Jon: [chuckles] Yeah.

Tim: It’s so cool.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I think what he—it shows us one: these lists aren’t comprehensive. It’s not like he has a list of the seventeen gifts of the Spirit. What he’s just saying is, essentially, anything that a human can do can be put into the surface— [laughs]

Jon: Kind of reminds me of when we talked about Joseph so many episodes ago.

Tim: Oh, yeah. Yes.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] And you kind of were trying to nail down this point, which is: Joseph being full of God's Spirit didn't turn Joseph into a different type of person. He was a pretty, like, shrewd manager.

Tim: Yeah. He became an economic policy nerd and an administrative—right?

Jon: Yeah, like when he was in Potiphar's house, like, he just was a good administrator of his house.

Tim: Yeah. Yes.

Jon: Like, he had that gift of administration, I guess.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: And he was able to understand things at a deeper level. Just kind of the person he was.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. Yes.

Jon: So when Pharaoh called him out, it wasn't like the Spirit was like, "*All right, I'm going to do something completely new that this guy cannot comprehend.*"

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: It was super boosting who he already was.

Tim: That's right. That's great.

Jon: And—

Tim: And we could imagine a similar story for Bezalel, the maker of the tabernacle.

Jon: Yeah. Oh, sure. Yeah.

Tim: Mhm. Wisdom and knowledge.

Jon: Yeah, he wasn't a shepherd who suddenly was, like, zapped with the ability to sew like an artisan.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: [Tim backchanneling throughout] Now, when you talk about a gift like healing, it feels so supernatural that it's like: Yeah, you just got to be zapped with that to be able to, like, heal someone. For some reason, in my mind, some of the gifts feel that way.

Tim: Hmm. Yes. Yeah. You know—this is very anecdotal. This is very particular to my own life experience. So due to my parents' journey of following Jesus and then where my own journey's taken me and my family and the church community that we've been in

for a while, both of those backgrounds put me in church environments where people are really excited about the work and presence of the Spirit. And I have encountered people for whom prophecy or faith or prayer and then seeing dramatic results from prayer are like the administrative wizard.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: Like, it is natural to them.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And it's really remarkable to meet people like that.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And I guess what I'm saying is: You're right. In our minds, we might think, "*Well, miracles is a whole other level*"—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —"*because it's supernatural.*" But I think for me, what's so fascinating is Paul putting all these next to each other is—that there are some people for whom their life just tends to facilitate remarkable things happening in the lives of the people around them— [chuckles]

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: —because of their connection to Jesus. And I think it's precisely because they don't do it as a performance. It's just kind of what happens.

Jon: Sure. But what's the, like, pre-Spirit-filled version of miracles?

Tim: Ohhh. Good question.

Jon: Right?

Tim: Oh, that's a great question, Jon.

Jon: Or healing.

Tim: Man, I love—I love talking with you.

[Jon laughs]

Tim: [chuckles] That's a great—that's great. I don't know. I don't know.

Jon: Because someone could be administrative without being—

Tim: I see. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jon: —supercharged by the Spirit.

Tim: Okay, that's true. Yeah.

Jon: I—

Tim: Hmm. I don't know the answer.

Jon: I'm not saying you can't heal without being supercharged by the Spirit. I mean—

Tim: Yeah. Well, I think all over the world today, any place you go, and in the ancient world, human beings that are in tune with reality know that there's power animating the universe—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —and powers that you can tap into.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And there have been, and there are people that can tap into those powers unconnected to Jesus in any way and make those powers do stuff. It's just—that's a thing.

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: It's real. It tends not to be on the radar of many modern Westerners, but it's alive and well in most parts of the world, and it always has been. So I think that's what Paul's trying to name.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In fact, in Paul's mind, there are lots of healers—

Jon: I see.

Tim: —and people speaking oracles of the gods out there.

Jon: Uh—

Tim: That's why "Jesus is Lord" is his first—

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: —kind of identifier.

Jon: I see. Right.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Paul says: The first thing is to confess Jesus is Lord. In his context, there's going to be a lot of miracle workers. There's going to be a lot of healers.

Tim: Yes. Yeah, a lot of people spouting wisdom out there.

Jon: Okay. Yeah.

Tim: So for—what Paul means by Jesus is Lord, and this goes back to the first part of the letter he responded to, is Paul said, “I came among you, and I committed to know only Jesus as the crucified Messiah who gave up power as an act of love and surrender to elevate others as an act of other-seeking love. That’s the Jesus whose life model is ground zero for how we behave around here. And that’s the Jesus who shared his Spirit with us. That’s the Jesus whose Spirit has made us all his temple. And”—I haven’t gotten here yet, [laughs] but the thing he says right after offering the first nine gifts—

Jon: Okay. Mhm.

Tim: —is—he says: “Listen, just as the body is one—remember there’s all these kinds of workings, all these gifts from one Spirit, all these services from one Lord, all these workings or powers from one God. The body is one. Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, even though they are many, they are one body, so also the Messiah, because it’s by one Spirit that we were all baptized into one body. Whether you’re Jewish, whether you’re Greek, whether you’re slave, whether you’re free, we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

Jon: Mmm.

[Tim laughs]

Jon: “Drink of one Spirit.” [chuckles] Now the Spirit, you’re drinking.

Tim: Is a liquid. [laughs] I know.

Jon: Is a liquid.

Tim: [laughs] Well—

Jon: Which we’ve talked about this before.

Tim: First you were immersed in it.

Jon: Ah.

Tim: Baptism, right? By one Spirit, we were baptized to become one body.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And now he says we drink. So your body goes into the liquid—

[Jon laughs]

Tim: —and then the liquid goes into your body.

Jon: Mmm. Hmm.

Tim: So the things of the Spirit, confessing Jesus is Lord, the ways that the Spirit works are all a manifestation of the one body of the Messiah. So whatever we do—

[“Enveloped In Love” by Lofi Sunday feat. Yoni Charis fades in]

Tim: —with these abilities that we have, when they’re in the service of Jesus as Lord and animated by the Spirit of God, of Father, Son, and Spirit, all those gifts and workings are going to have one main purpose, which he’s saving for chapter 13.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Jon: [chuckles] Oh.

Tim: Which is love.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Which is love.

[Musical break: “Enveloped In Love” by Lofi Sunday feat. Yoni Charis (45:03-45:30)]

[Conclusion (45:30-54:23)]

Tim: There’s all these gifts from one Spirit, all these services from one Lord, all these workings or powers from one God. If any of those abilities is at work in and through your life and apart from some sort of dedication to love, you’re just making noise.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You're like the most annoying—he says gong.

[“Enveloped In Love” by Lofi Sunday feat. Yoni Charis fades out]

Jon: Mhm. [chuckles]

Tim: But I'm thinking of, uhm, a time I went camping last summer with my family and another family. And then in two spots down in the campground, this RV pulled up—

[Jon laughs]

Tim: —and then turned on a generator—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: —so they could, like, listen to music and watch TV inside their RV.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: And I'm just like, “What”—

Jon: “What are you doing out here?”

Tim: “Why are you here?”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “Go somewhere else.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I'm seeking Eden out there, and they bring the noisy generator. And that's what Paul says, is: Anybody putting their life-gifts—right?—given to them by the Spirit but not in the service of love is like that noise.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: So one temple, one body, one Spirit, [chuckles] and that breath animates each member of the body to do work, to cultivate and keep the garden. But if it doesn't follow the pattern of Jesus, which is self-surrender and service and love, you're preventing the body—

Jon: You're annoying everyone.

Tim: You're annoying everyone, you're counteracting the body, you're introducing—I don't know. We could take the metaphor lots of different ways. This is all one bundle of ideas in Paul's mind.

Jon: Yeah. Right.

Tim: Jesus as the Messiah is the new human. He has a body, which is a group of people. [laughs]

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And then each of them has a body that's filled with the breath to serve the body—
[Jon laughs]

Tim: —that's the whole, which is also a temple.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And that's all one set of ideas in Paul's mind.

Jon: Which is all unpacking this hope from the Prophets—

Tim: Yes. Yeah, yeah.

Jon: [Tim backchanneling throughout] —which was that we would all be filled with the Spirit, have a new heart, new breath, be indwelt by the Spirit in a new way. Like, when you read those, it's: Okay, well what's that going to mean? And then you get here, and this is what it means.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. And by giving just these two lists in chapter 12 here that are different from each other of ways—right?—that the Spirit can work, I think, is more meant to set our minds venturing out into thinking about any ability, interest, passion, opportunity that I have can potentially become a way of the Spirit working, a way of living out my confession to Jesus as Lord. And Paul is celebrating the unity of the body, the oneness, but simultaneously the diversity of that body, which is as diverse as the body of humanity, you know? There's eight billion of us now on the planet.

Jon: [exhales] So many people.

Tim: So many human beings.

Jon: It's a lot. It's—it's overwhelming.

Tim: [whispering] Yeah.

Jon: Every time I travel to a new city, I'm overwhelmed.

Tim: Yeah, you're just like: This many people here, too?

Jon: And how different we all are.

Tim: Yes, so different.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But also so similar— [laughs]

Jon: [laughs] Yeah.

Tim: —in other ways. There's some things that are universal, right? Living, breathing, need for food, clothing, shelter, needing a purpose—right?—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —needing a community where we feel safe and loved, feeling like you are welcome in the universe—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Have a reason, right? I think that's pretty universal. If a human doesn't have those, things go downhill pretty quick.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: That's what Paul's talking about. It's not infinite diversity, because there's not an infinite number of humans.

[Jon laughs]

Tim: Eight billion is a big number, but it's not infinity. But that's a lot of diverse expressions of the image of God. But each one of them has something unique. That's what Paul's trying to capture here.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And if that is put into the service and life model of Jesus, empowered by the Spirit, man—

Jon: With the confession of Jesus as Lord.

Tim: Yeah, man, that is—that's a beautiful thing. That's the goal. So the Spirit and the temple and the body and the gifts all fit into one bundle of ideas here. And that's what we've been tracing.

Jon: Hmm. What's the work to do?

Tim: What's the work to do? I can't tell you. I might get to know you as a person. And then maybe I could have some insight to offer you about how the Spirit could use your life.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And you could of mine. But uh, I can't presume to know that until I get to know you or share a table with you, right?

Jon: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tim: And—

Jon: But then in another sense, we do know what the work is.

Tim: Oh, yes.

Jon: Like, he ends with it.

Tim: Yeah, that's right.

Jon: Which is to love.

Tim: Which is—yeah, that's right. Yeah. And in First Corinthians 13—Paul didn't write it to be read at weddings, though it is wonderful to read at weddings.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: But he did write it to be read to a group of Christians around a table who are having a difficult time getting along. That's what First Corinthians is for.

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: And the Spirit is right there in the middle. Next, what I want to go is still tracking with this section of Corinthians, but then to go back to the book of Acts. There's one particular set of manifestations of the Spirit that we find in the New Testament that is all over the place in particular. And that is speaking words on God's behalf to other people, or prophecy.

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: We traced this in the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: Yeah, you said we were going to look at it again.

Tim: Yep. Prophecy in the Spirit in the Hebrew Bible is a really big theme. Prophecy in the Spirit in the New Testament is a really big theme. So that's just one of the gifts—right?—

Jon: Oh, right.

Tim: —in Corinthians, but it's a significant one.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: So I want to go back now and trace through, starting in Acts, and then back into the letters of Paul, the particular gift of speaking on God's behalf as a manifestation—

[BibleProject theme song, "Defender" by TENTS, fades in]

Tim: —of the Spirit, and a bunch of cool stuff we're going to see.

Jon: Awesome.

Tim: Great.

[Musical break: BibleProject theme song, "Defender" by TENTS (51:50-51:53)]

Jon: Thanks for listening to this episode of BibleProject podcast. Next week, we'll explore how the followers of Jesus spoke the words of God to each other in the Spirit, or what Paul calls "prophecy."

Tim: [audio clips from Spirit of God E12: The Spirit of Prophecy in the New Testament] He talks about how prophecy is for encouragement, for challenging, for instructing, and for building people up in love and faith.

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Joel: Hi, my name is Joel, and I live in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. And I support and lead the Product organization at BibleProject. So I've been doing computing technologies work for almost thirty years now. I grew up in this tiny town of, like, three hundred and fifteen people. I ended up accidentally stepping into computer science in college. But it was good. It motivated me to work harder and ended up being maybe one of the key drivers behind figuring out how to be successful in my working life. There's a whole team of us who help make the podcast happen every week. For a full list of everyone involved, check out the show notes wherever you stream the podcast and on our app.

[BibleProject theme song, "Defender" by TENTS, fades out]

[BibleProject sonic logo]