

Accurately Handling  
**The Word of Truth**

*By Gary Gilbertson*

**1 Cor. 12:28-31**

*Part 8*



I Cor. 12: 28 “God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, and after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”

- Three individuals – proclamation of the word
- Five functions – not proclamation of the word

“...God has set...” to bring to a place “God has brought to a place in the church...”

Emphasis on “God” not on the persons or grace-expressions.

“...some...” not in the original text. Ignore it. Implies God “sets” soe but not others.

“...in the church...” not talking about the world wide, universal church referring to all the Christians that meet together in a given location regularly.

*Ekklesia* = “a calling out” calling out people from their homes

*Collegia* = meeting to look after the needs of the members; unions

NT church was more like a Greek *collegia* than it was like a Jewish *synagogue*.

“...first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers...”

First in: a succession of events; time; before all others in a sequence; to arrive at a location; power and dignity

I Cor. 3:5-7 Paul was ‘first’ to plant, Apollos second to water...neither is he who plants and waters anything...

I Cor. 4:9 “...God has set forth apostles last...”

Mark 9:35 “if any man be first, let him be last...”

\***First** in the chronological order in the establishment of a sequence of events.

Luke 6:13 apostles. Acts 2:17-18 prophets Acts 2:42 teachers

- Founding a new local church:

first apostles church planters

second prophets to encourage, edify and comfort

third to accurately pass on the words of Jesus and the apostles

1)“...apostles...” The Twelve Luke 6:13 and Acts 1:21-22

Two requirements.

plus Paul Acts 26:19; I Cor. 9:15-16

Unrepeatable and irreplaceable.

2) Apostles – Rom. 16:7; I Cor. 9:5; 15:7; II Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25; Gal. 1:19

The founders of new local churches. Col. 1:7; 4:12 Epaphras

Only influence is in the churches that they originally planted.

“...prophets...” Necessary requirement for a prophet is inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Without revelation the prophet has nothing to say.

Source- the Spirit of Christ

Content – the Mind of Christ

“...teachers...” 1) accurately pass on the words of Jesus and the apostles  
2) Interpret their words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and in harmony with all the counsel of God found in the OT and NT.

“...after that... then...” Random examples of the wide variety of manifestation of the Spirit in a local church.

No ‘pastors’, ‘preachers’ or ‘elders’ are even mentioned.

v. 29-30 “Are all...? have all...? do all...?”

- Theoretically speaking, “yes”,  
but the question is not can they,  
the question is are they, have they, do they?
- Practically speaking, “No”

V. 31 “But covet earnestly the best gifts...”

- This is a contradiction to v. 4-30. There is no cause for ‘coveting’  
grace-expressions that one has not been given because it is God who  
decides.

*Zelou* = positively, to desire zealously

negatively, to burn with jealousy

‘Covet earnestly’ as an imperative = you must zealously desire

‘Covet earnestly’ as an indicative = you are burning with jealousy

They were jealously competing with each other over what they considered to be the “best” or the “least”.

“...the best gifts.”

If “best” meant ‘surpassing all the others’ he would have written *huperballo*.

But he wrote *kreisson* which means “advantageous and useful” depending on the situation.

“best” is situation specific.