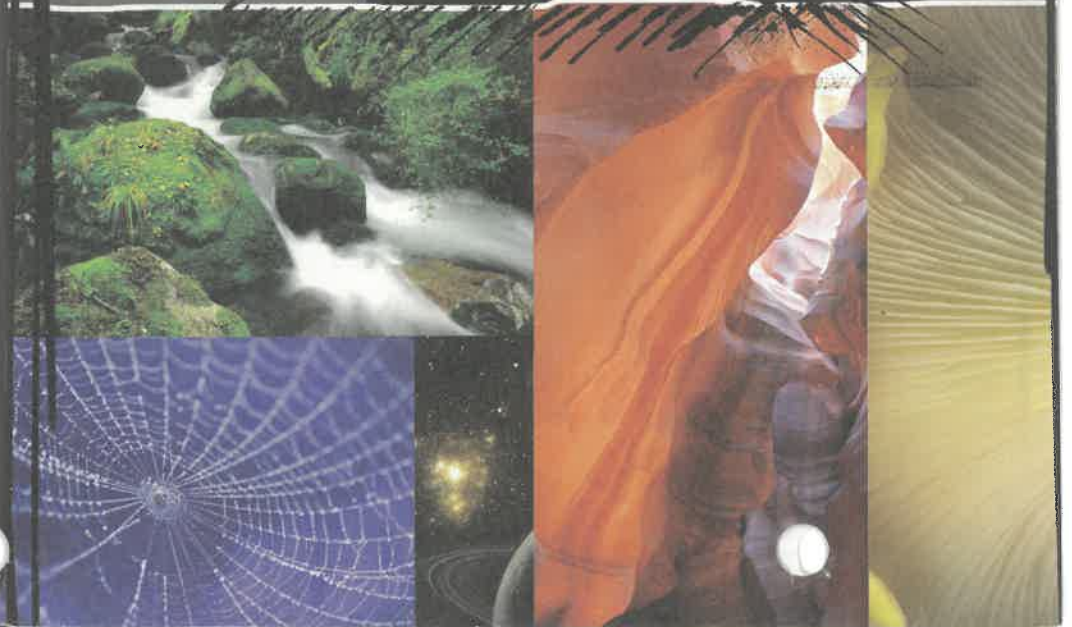
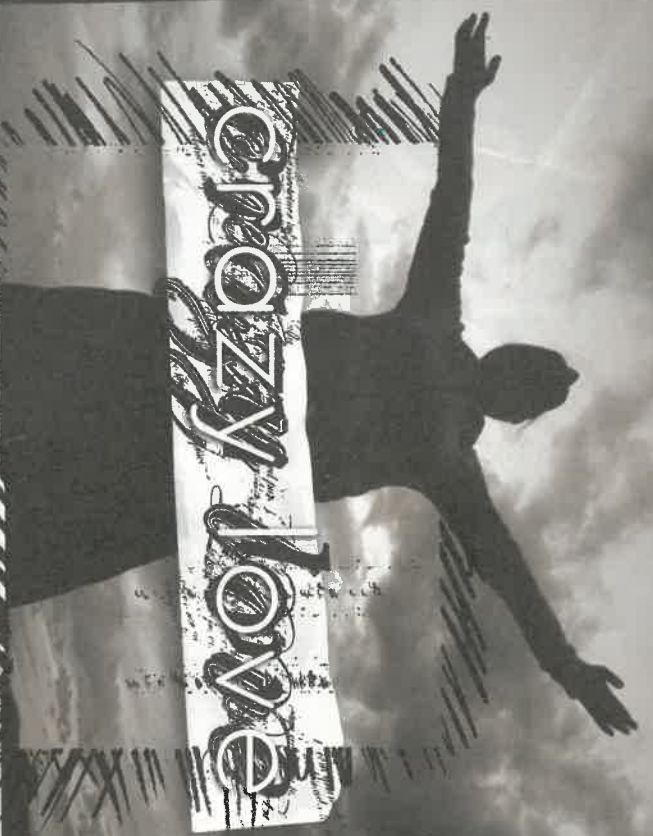


# the rack

crazy love







## **What if I said, "stop praying"?**

**what if I told you to stop talking at God for a while,  
but instead to take a long, hard look at Him  
before you speak another word?**

**Solomon warned us not to rush into God's presence with words.**

That's what fools do. And often, that's what we do.

We are a culture that relies on technology over community, a society in which spoken and written words are cheap, easy to come by, and excessive. Our culture says anything goes; fear of God is almost unheard of. We are slow to listen, quick to speak, and quick to become angry.

The wise man comes to God without saying a word and stands in awe of Him. It may seem a hopeless endeavor, to gaze at the invisible God. But Romans 1:20 tells us that through creation, we see His "invisible qualities" and "divine nature."

Let's begin this book by gazing at God in silence. What I want you to do right now is to go online and do an image search for "galaxy" or "universe." Look at the different pictures you find to get a taste of the awe factor of our God. Seriously—go do it.

**speechless? amazed? humbled?**

When I first saw those images, I had to worship. I didn't want to speak to or share it with anyone. I just wanted to sit quietly and admire the Creator.

It's wild to think that most of these galaxies have been discovered only in the past few years, thanks to the Hubble telescope. They've been in the universe for thousands of years without humans even knowing about them.

**R. C. Sproul writes,**

**"Men are never duly touched  
and impressed with a conviction  
of their insignificance, until they  
have contrasted themselves with  
the majesty of God."**

Did you know that a caterpillar has 228 separate and distinct muscles in its head? That's quite a few, for a bug. The average elm tree has approximately 6 million leaves on it. And your own heart generates enough pressure as it pumps blood throughout your body that it could squirt blood up to 30 feet. (I've never tried this, and I don't recommend it.)

Have you ever thought about how diverse and creative God is? He didn't have to make hundreds of different kinds of bananas, but He did. He didn't have to put 3,000 different species of trees within one square mile in the Amazon jungle, but He did. God didn't have to create so many kinds of laughter. Think about the different sounds of your friends' laughs—wheezes, snorts, silent, loud, obnoxious.

Why would God create more than 350,000,000,000 galaxies (and this is a conservative estimate) that generations of people never saw or even knew existed? Do you think maybe it was to make us say, "Wow, God is unfathomably big"? Or perhaps God wanted us to see these pictures so that our response would be, "Who do I think I am?"

Switch gears with me for a minute and think about the detailed intricacy of the other side of creation.

How about the way plants defy gravity by drawing water upward from the ground into their stems and veins? Or did you know that spiders produce three kinds of silk? When they build their webs, they create 60 feet of silk in one hour, simultaneously producing special oil on their feet that prevents them from sticking to their own web. (Most of us hate spiders, but 60 feet an hour deserves some respect!) Coral plants are so sensitive that they can die if the water temperature varies by even one or two degrees.

Did you know that when you get goose bumps, the hair in your follicles is actually helping you stay warmer by trapping body heat? Or what about the simple fact that plants take in carbon dioxide (which is harmful to us) and produce oxygen (which we need to survive)?

Continued on page 6.



*The Christians in the church at Corinth weren't getting along.*

*They didn't seem to care about working together. But if they didn't, how would they ever have a healthy church?*

*The apostle Paul wrote to remind them that they shared a common Lord who gave them a variety of spiritual gifts to help build up their church. Look into what Paul had to say to the Corinthians about how they had each been gifted by the same Lord to do different things.*

# Gifts

## Today's Scripture 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

<sup>1</sup>Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup>You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. <sup>3</sup>Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. <sup>4</sup>There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup>There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

<sup>7</sup>Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup>To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to

**1 Look at 1 Corinthians 12:1-3.** Underline the words and phrases that describe things that would be evidences of an unhealthy spiritual life. Circle any evidences of a healthy spiritual life.

**2 Sum up 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 in your own words.** Why do you think it might be important for people in a church who aren't getting along to think about these verses?

**3 Read 1 Corinthians 12:7.** In your opinion, how can you tell when someone is using his or her gift from the Holy Spirit? Why do you think God gives gifts to every believer?

**4 Circle each of the gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.** How many gifts did you find? What gift listed sounds most interesting to you? Why?

**5 What one gift in the list helped the Corinthian church most? Why?**

**6 Check out 1 Corinthians 12:11.** Why do you think it was so important that the Corinthians hear this verse? Put this verse in your own words.

**7 As best as you can tell from 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, why does God give gifts to Christians?**

continued from page 3

I'm sure you knew that, but have you ever marveled at it? And these same poison-swallowing, life-giving plants came from tiny seeds that were placed in the dirt. Some were watered, some weren't; but after a few days they poked through the soil and out into the warm sunlight.

this: God will not be tolerated. He instructs us to worship and fear Him. Go back and reread the last two paragraphs. Close this pamphlet if you need to, and meditate on the almighty One who dwells in unapproachable light, the glorious One.

**The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.**

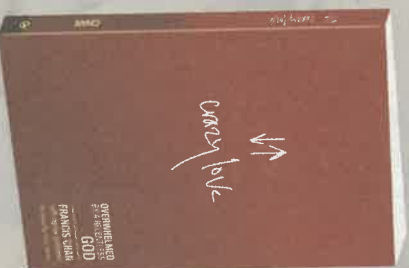
—Psalm 19:1–4a

Whatever God's reasons for such diversity, creativity, and sophistication in the universe, on earth, and in our own bodies, the point of it all is His glory. God's art speaks of Himself, reflecting who He is and what He is like.

This is why we are called to worship Him. His art, His handiwork, and His creation all echo the truth that He is glorious. There is no other like Him. He is the King of Kings, the Beginning and the End, the One who was and is and is to come. I know you've heard this before, but I don't want you to miss it.

I sometimes struggle with how to properly respond to God's magnitude in a world bent on ignoring or merely tolerating Him. But know

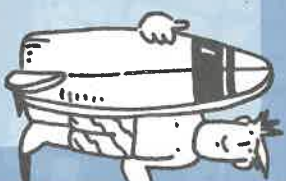
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# The Rock

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every  
day  
devos

# PART OF THE TEAM

*Just as members of an athletic team work together to win a game, so people with different spiritual gifts team up to do God's work.*

**MONDAY** Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-5. List some of your gifts and abilities (everybody has at least one or two). Then list one way each gift could be used for God's work.

**TUESDAY** Illustrate examples of things or groups that are made up of many elements working together to do one thing. (Look up 1 Corinthians 12:12 for Paul's example.)

**WEDNESDAY** Do you ever think you aren't important to God's kingdom? Read on in 1 Corinthians 12 (verses 12, 18, 21, 25) and think again.

**THURSDAY** Send a note to someone in your church family, thanking that person for working for the Body of Christ.

**FRIDAY** Look at 1 Corinthians 12:4-5 again. Write a poem to God asking Him to show you what your spiritual gifts are and how you can use them for His glory.

**SATURDAY** Think of a Christian kid in your church or youth group who drives you crazy sometimes. Ask God to help you see him or her through new eyes.

**T**here are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:4-5

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**Echoes**  
BY DAVID C. COOK

**Lesson 1**  
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