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# THE TWELFTH MAN

— PART 1 —

# THE TWELFTH MAN



Minnesota is my place of birth—which means that when it comes to football, I have become accustomed to depression. This is because the state football team, the Vikings, have perfected the art of “choking” during the most critical moments of the game, and yet Minnesota fans remain (mostly) loyal. Fan loyalty is huge—so huge that one NFL team, the Seattle Seahawks, considers fans to be one of the players. They refer to them as the “twelfth man.”

In Seattle, blue and green flags bearing the number 12 can be seen flying on homes and businesses of all kinds. Countless thousands of dollars are spent to attend games, wear the team logo, and even paint faces with bright, unnatural colors in order to demonstrate to the world that regular people are a part of the Seahawks. Clapping, screams, and hollers roar throughout stadiums as twelfth men witness their team hustle to another victory. If victory does not appear, everyone feels the loss personally. Twelfth men are an essential part of the team—more than simple spectators and fans.





Jesus handpicked twelve disciples that helped grow the church, a movement that was dedicated to following the example of Christ. These followers of Jesus still exist today and are more than fans or spectators who simply watch professionals like evangelists, pastors, teachers, and professors tell people about Jesus. No, these followers get in the game and take their work personally. In one passage of Scripture Paul even says that when one person wins, everybody wins, and when someone loses, we all lose (**1 Corinthians 12:26**). As a newly baptized member of the church, you will be more than just a fan that sits on the sidelines—you will be in the game. Even if you are terrified of being up front, are reclusive and the opposite of a social butterfly, or are

a personal danger to yourself when it comes to manual labor, you have a responsibility to participate and lend the personality, gifts, and wisdom God has given you to the rest of the church.

### STUDY

1. Read **Matthew 28:19**. This passage is known as The Great Commission, and unpacks our mission as followers of Jesus. What three things are we asked to do?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

Which one seems like the hardest for you to do? How might you find strength to do this?

2. The book of Acts is the sequel to the Gospel of Luke—Luke wrote both books on the same scroll. Acts outlines how the Holy Spirit empowered the brand new gathering of Jesus' followers for their mission. Read the first two chapters of Acts and work through the following questions:

A. What did the disciples do when Jesus ascended, and what did the angels remind them to do (**Acts 1:6-11**)?

B. Look at **Acts 1:8**. What does Jesus tell them to do? What do the three geographical locations mentioned indicate about how we should share Jesus?

C. How did the early believers relate to each other before being empowered by the Spirit (**Acts 1:14**)?

D. What strikes you most about the Holy Spirit in **Acts 2:1-13**? This event, known as

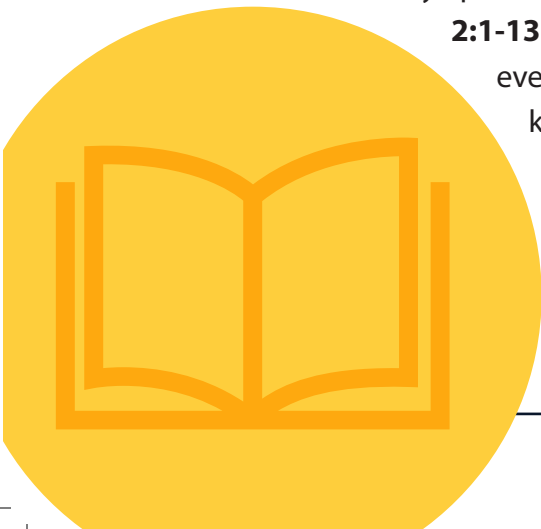
Pentecost, has a lot to explore. For now, what do you make of the use of language as empowered by the Spirit? How might that look today? What kinds of language do we use that aren't necessarily spoken today? What kinds of language differences do older and younger generations have?

E. How do you interpret **Acts 2:17**? What does that imply for you?

F. How could you help your church practice the example set in **Acts 2:44-46**?

3. **1 Corinthians 12** is an important passage for church members. It has two key sections. The first deals with the fact that everybody is given spiritual gifts to use in benefiting others. The second uses the image of the body to describe how different church members should work together. Look at this passage and work through the following questions:

A. The Corinthian church members had a bad habit of comparing themselves to each other to see who was better based on their spiritual gifts. What do you think Paul is trying to teach them in **1 Corinthians 12:4-7** and **12:14-20**?



- B. Look at the list of gifts in **12:8-10**. Which ones do you think you have? Is this a comprehensive list, or do you think Jesus gives even more gifts than what Paul lists? What types of modern gifts can you think of?
- C. How is the Body of Christ supposed to work together (**12:21-26**)?
- D. There are a lot of different people in the church. What does Paul say about that in **12:12-13**?
4. Reflect on **James 1:22**. What does it suggest for newly baptized members? Is it enough to just believe and say the right things in order to be a follower of Jesus? Can you think of examples of people who don't follow this passage or examples of people who do? What might stop someone who wants to follow Jesus from following this Scripture in James?
5. Youth can often feel a bit intimidated by church involvement, or uninspired by it. While some are no doubt happy to get up front, others may be nervous. Still other times, people may want to do something important and not get stuck with seemingly insignificant work or token youth positions.
- A. When we are new church members, we can struggle with our confidence. Look at the following passages and reflect on what they are saying:  
**1 Timothy 4:12** and **Jeremiah 1:4-10**.
- B. One of the conflicts that happens between older and younger generations is that younger generations often want the most important thing immediately, and older generations want younger ones to work a bit first to prove themselves. How does **Matthew 25:21, 23** speak to this?



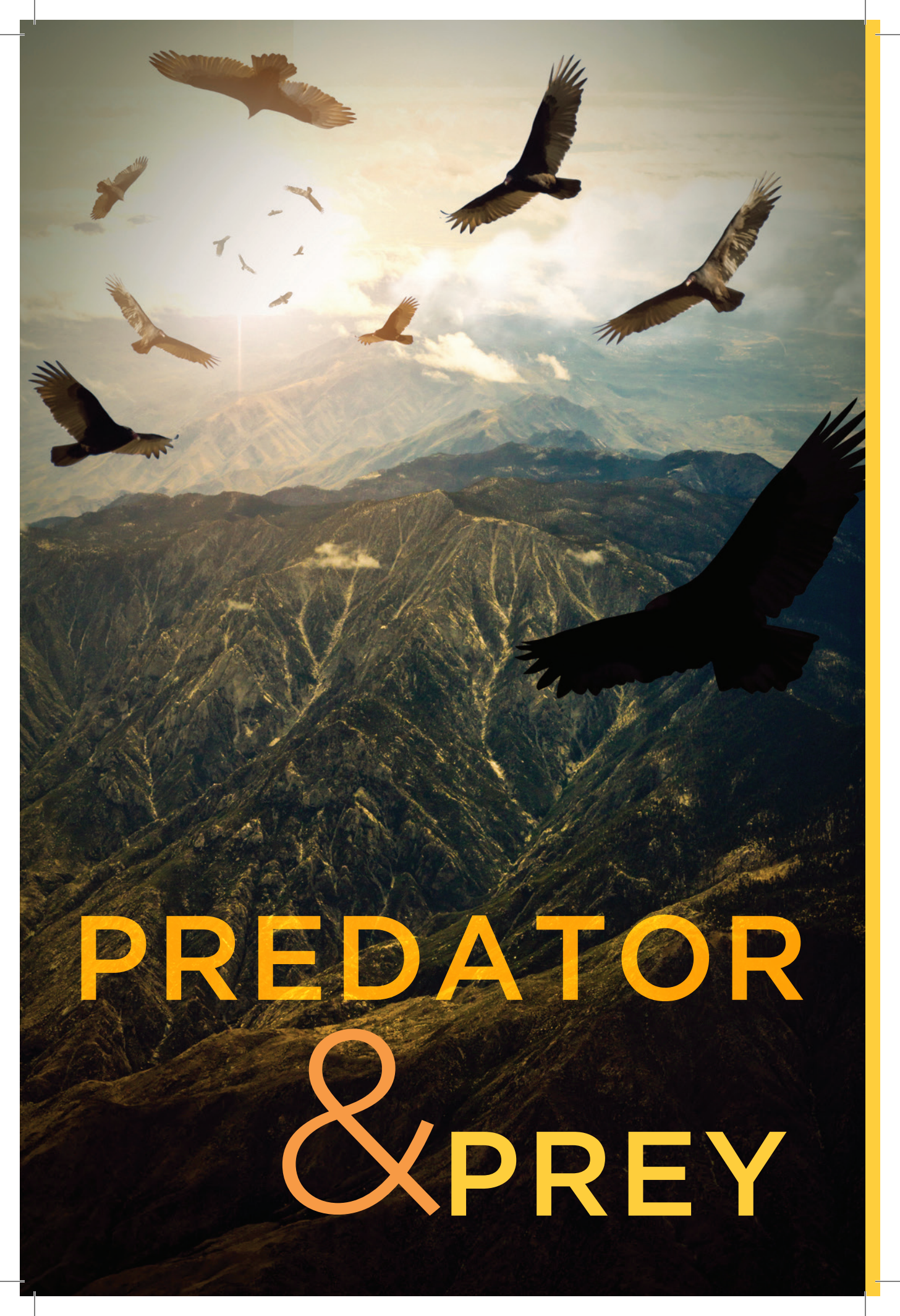




## APPLICATION

1. Google a spiritual gifts test and take it. What major gifts has God's Spirit given you? How could you use them at church?
2. Make an appointment with your pastor this week to ask where you can help out at church; be sure to share the results of your spiritual gifts test as well as your personal interests. Ask if the church has any youth representatives on the church board.





# PREDATOR & PREY