

We Are the Body / Uniquely Unified

A. The Potential Dangers Surrounding Spiritual Gifts -12:1-3

1. There is the danger of being ignorant about the gifts

1 Corinthians 12:1 (ESV)

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

2. There is the danger of being carried away to false worship

1 Corinthians 12:2 (ESV)

You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute (ours sing) idols, however you were led.

3. There is the danger of speaking false messages

1 Corinthians 12:3 (ESV)

Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

B. The Spiritual Gifts - 12:4-11

1. The unity of the gifts (v.4-6) **Gift!** – the Holy Spirit provides and guides. **Big Idea:** We are gifted to give!

- a. There are different gifts, but the same spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:4 (ESV)

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit

- b. There are different ministries, but the same Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:5 (ESV)

and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;

- c. There are different operations, but the same God.

1 Corinthians 12:6 (ESV)

and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

2. The purpose of spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV)

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

3. The list of the different gifts (v.8-10)

- a. Wisdom (v.8a) b. Knowledge (v.8b)

- c. Faith (v.9a) d. Gifts of healing (v.9b)

- e. Working of miracles (v.10a)

- f. Prophecy, see 14:3 (v.10b)

- g. Discerning of spirits (v.10c)
- h. Tongues (v.10d)
- i. Interpretation of tongues (v.10e)

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 (ESV)

For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

4. Then Paul stresses the unity of the gifts again (v.11)

Key verse - 1 Corinthians 12:11 (ESV)

All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

If you could be one part of the body which part? Why?

1 Corinthians 12:12-20 (ESV)

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member (gross), where would the body be? (*dead/useless – this is our problem*)

²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. (*His perspective – Truth*)

Would you rather not walk or not hold? Or not see or not hear?

- If a seemingly insignificant part is taken away, the whole body becomes less effective.
- Thinking that one's gift is more important than someone else's is an expression of spiritual pride.
- Devaluing the gift offends the Giver.
- We should not look down on those who seem unimportant, and we should not be jealous of others who have impressive gifts. Instead, we should use the gifts we have been given and encourage others to use theirs. If we don't, the body of believers will be less effective.

1 Corinthians 12:12 (ESV)

For just as the body is **one** and has **many members/parts** (*limbs, organs, cells*) (*206 bones, 642 skeletal muscles, over 7500 listed parts*), and all the members of the body, though **many**, are one body, so it is with Christ.

We must accept diversity in our *one body*. *It is what makes us health.*

The parts are different intentionally on purpose, and in their differences they must work together.

***Diversity can maintain unity as long as all submit to one Lord.

Christians must avoid two common errors: (1) being too proud of their abilities; and (2) thinking they have nothing to give to the body of believers. Instead of comparing ourselves to one another, we should use our different gifts, together, to spread the Good News of Christ's love and grace.

BIG IDEA: We speak Christ's "body language" when we practice our unique gifts under His sole authority.

1 Corinthians 12:13 (ESV)

For in one Spirit we were all baptized (*united together*) into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13 (MSG)

By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which he has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at

one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive.

1. The Spirit baptizes us into one body, Christ Himself (v.13a)

**What gives believers their unity is the *one Spirit*—the very same Spirit who also gives their diversity through the many and varied gifts.

When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit takes up residence, and that person is born into God's family. As members of God's family, we may have different interests and gifts, but let us pursue a common goal—deep unity in Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:14 (ESV)

For the body does not consist of one member/part (*limb or organ*) but of many.

1 Corinthians 12:14 (MSG)

I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn't just a single part blown up into something huge. It's all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together.

Main Point: Some gifted differently feel they are unimportant to the body (v.14-20)

1. Each member is necessary (v.15-16)

1 Corinthians 12:15 (ESV)

If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body.

**For a body to function, diversity is essential. Individual members cannot separate themselves without harming the body.

All the different gifts given by the Spirit to believers must be utilized in order for the church to function well. Likewise, the gifts are interdependent. Like the body, they cannot function without each other. – **Get plugged in!**

1 Corinthians 12:16 (ESV)

And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body.

1 Corinthians 12:16 (MSG)

If Ear said, "I'm not beautiful like Eye, limpid and expressive; I don't deserve a place on the head," would you want to remove it from the body?

The parts of the body should desire to perform only the functions for which they were made, not seeking to function as other parts.

The ear will no more be changed into an eye or given the ability to see, than a believer will be able to exchange one gift for another. Instead, each believer should discover his or her spiritual gift and then use it to its fullest capacity for the Lord.

2. Each member has an essential function (v.17)

1 Corinthians 12:17 (ESV)

If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

Every spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit is vital to the functioning of the body. Thus, the gifts are not given at whim and will not be changed according to people's preferences.

As important as any one part might be to the whole, their reliance on the rest, even to accomplish their vital role, is far more crucial.

The idea that Christians can somehow function and flourish outside of the body of Christ sounds as ludicrous as a rebellious ear or foot. Solitary Christianity has no basis in God's Word. We need the church, we are the church (the body) and we are needed by other Christians.

3. Each member is set in the body as God wills (v.18)

Theme Verse - 1 Corinthians 12:18 (ESV)

But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose/*just as he wanted them to be*.

4. Each member is distinct, but together there is only one body (vs.19-20)

1 Corinthians 12:19 (ESV)

If all were a single member/part, where would the body be? (*gross/useless*)

****1 Corinthians 12:19 (MSG)**

But I also want you to think about how this keeps your significance from getting blown up into self-importance.

For no matter how significant you are, it is only because of what you are a part of. An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn't be a body, but a monster.

1 Corinthians 12:20 (ESV)

As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

1 Corinthians 12:20 (MSG)

What we have is one body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own.

As God created human bodies to function with their *many parts* working together, so the body of Christ—the church—needs all the various gifts working in harmony.

We are one body with many parts, because God made it that way.

Ephesians 4:4-6 (ESV)

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. *He is making us one too!*

Ephesians 4:15-16 (ESV)

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

1 Corinthians 12:21-26 (ESV)

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”²²

On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty,²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it,²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the

same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

1 Corinthians 12:27 (ESV)

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Ephesians 5:22-33 (ESV)

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

