

INTRODUCTION

- There is unity and diversity in our spiritual gifts
- Unity, in that it unites us as the church, the body of Christ
- Diversity, in that each gift is unique to each individual in the church
- Both contribute to the overall ministry of the church which causes growth
- Today we're looking again at 1 Corinthians chapter 12.
- As Paul moves away from the list of the gifts in verse 8-10 and their source in verse 11, he now illustrates how each gift works in the body

Listen as I read verses 12-31:

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members

rejoice with it. Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

- In verses 12 and 13, we see the words "one spirit" and "one body"
- The word "one" occurs 11 times in verses 11-26
- The word "body" occurs 14 times in chapter 12
- 3 times we hear the phrase "one Spirit"
- All these terms and phrases emphasize unity
- We serve one God, one Lord Jesus Christ, and one Holy Spirit in one body, the body of Christ, which is Christ's true church
- When referring to the church, verse 14 tells us that "the body is not one member, but many"
- This emphasizes diversity in the one body
- From verses 12-27, Paul uses the human body and its parts to illustrate how they unify the body
- He mentions parts like the "ear," the "eye," and the "nose" (smell) to show the importance of those parts of the human body
- Did you know we "are capable of hearing sounds as low as 20 Hz. and as high as 20,000 Hz." (<https://factslegend.org/20-interesting-human-ear-facts>).
- Did you know "of the 206 bones in the human body, the six smallest are in your ears: three in the right and three in the left. Together, each three are about the size of a pencil eraser." (<https://blog.chsc.org/blog/10-interesting-facts-about-ears-hearing>).
- Did you know "the average person blinks between 15 and 20 times per minute, or 14,400 to 19,200 times a day — that's about 10 percent of your waking life, or upwards of 5 million times in a year." (<https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions->

treatments/info-2020/10-eye-facts.html)

- Did you know "the muscles that move the eyes are the fastest and strongest muscles in the body" and "around half of the brain is used for seeing and vision." (<https://www.thefactsite.com/amazing-eye-facts>).
- Did you know we are "capable of detecting 10,000+ scents." (<https://factslegend.org/40-facts-human-nose>)
- Did you know "the best air filter in this world is human nose. Human nostrils are lined up with hair responsible for blocking germs and dust. Grooves in the nasal cavity make air swirl like stream currents. This is when the inhaled [hair](#) is moistened and warmed so that the sensitive tissues of the [lungs](#) can be protected." (<https://factslegend.org/40-facts-human-nose>)
- Did you know when we sneeze "irritants (that cause sneezing) are expelled at a speed of 100 miles per hour." (<https://factslegend.org/40-facts-human-nose>)
- Our bodies are amazing!
- Did you know your brain "weighs about 3 pounds" and "about 75 percent of it is made up of water" (<https://www.healthline.com/health/fun-facts-about-the-brain#21-fun-facts-about-the-brain>)
- Did you know that "Information runs between neurons in our brain for everything we see, think, or do. These neurons move information at different speeds. The fastest speed for information to pass between neurons is about 250 mph" and the brain "contains approximately one hundred billion neurons" (<https://www.healthline.com/health/fun-facts-about-the-brain#21-fun-facts-about-the-brain>)
- In the words of the psalmist, "we are fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps.139:14).
- So Paul mentions the "ear," the "eye," and the "nose" (smell) to show the importance of those parts of the human body
- He also mentions the foot and hand for the same reason
- Did you know your feet "absorb a total force of about 26,000 pounds a day."
- And an "average person takes about 8,000 steps a day." (<https://www.precisionfootandanklecenters.com/blog/10-facts-you-didnt-know-about-your-feet>)

- "Your feet have about 8,000 nerves."
(<https://www.precisionfootandanklecenters.com/blog/10-facts-you-didnt-know-about-your-feet>)
- As for your hands, "each hand contains 29 major joints with a quarter of all the bones in your body found in your two hands."
(<http://www.americanacademyofreflexology.com/60-fascinating-facts-and-quotations-about-hands>)
- Paul's purpose of mentioning these body parts is similar to his list of gifts in verse 8-10.
- Both show the importance of diversity and unity in the body
- Each member is significant and has a specific function in the body
- And each rely on the body for their function
- If you were to cut one off, it would die and the body would be hindered
- We all know what it's like when we hurt one member of our body, our whole body hurts
- That's also true in the church
- When one member suffers, so does the rest

Paul says in verse 26, And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

So, In the present passage he explains and illustrates the nature and importance of the unity of the church itself, and then again the importance of diversity as a key factor in that unity.

The diversity of the church is a God-ordained means of bringing the fellowship to oneness, but unless each diverse member recognizes and accepts his part in the whole body, diversity will divide rather than unite, destroy rather than build up, bring discord rather than harmony, and result in self-serving rather than self-giving.

(MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

So, in verse 12, "The connective γάρ introduces the entire elucidation that follows in this paragraph. It consists of an illustrative analogy that is to elucidate all that is contained in v. 4–11, in particular the summary of all of it.

Lenski, R. C. H. [The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963. Print.

Notice in verse 12...

I. The Spirit Oneness in the Body (v.12)

Paul has already stated the gifts came from the "same Spirit" (vv.4, 7-11)

It is the Holy Spirit who creates the oneness in the Body through the gifts He's given

But even though we all have differing gifts, we are one Body in Christ

Paul says in verse 12:

*For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.
1 Corinthians 12:12 - NASB*

This verse parallels Romans 12:5:

*So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
Romans 12:5 - NASB*

- Both verses emphasize the oneness of the body
- Note the word “one” occurs seven times, in verses 12, 13, and 14
- The emphasis is on unity and oneness

- But again notice also the body has many members (vv.12, 14, 20)
- But the members are part of the one body

There are many Christian organizations, denominations, agencies, clubs, and groups of every sort. But there is only one church, of which every true believer in Christ is a member.

MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

Paul's view of the oneness of the body is also seen in how he identifies Christ

He says at the end of verse 12, "so also is Christ."

Christ and His church are seen as "one" body with Christ being the head of the body:

*He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.
Colossians 1:18 - NASB*

Paul continues his thought concerning the oneness of the Body by addressing in verse 13...

II. The Spirit's Baptism in the Body (v.13)

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13 - NASB

- We are "many members" in placed in one Body by the Spirit
- There is no distinction
- Whether we are "Jews or Greeks...slaves or free"

Paul says "For by one Spirit. That is, by the agency or operation of the same Spirit, the Holy Spirit, we have been united into one body.

Barnes, Albert. [Notes on the New Testament: I Corinthians](#). Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.

"And we were all made to drink of one Spirit" is a reference to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each believer:

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

Romans 8:9 - NASB

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

1 Corinthians 6:19 - NASB

Spirit oneness, Spirit baptism...all occur for unity in the Body of Christ

Notice now...

III. The Spirit's Diversity in the Body (vv.14-31)

- The Body is many members (v.14)
- Illustrating the spiritual body with the human body
 - The foot and the hand (v.15)
 - The ear and eye (vv.16-26)
- You are the Body of Christ and individually members of it (v.27)
- Just like the human body is one with many members (foot, hand, ear, eye, nose), so is the Body of Christ and its members being each individual believer with his spiritual gift:
 - Apostles (v.28)

- Prophets (v.28)
- Teachers (v.28)
- Miracles (v.28)
- Helps (v.28) - “Helps” is an ability for service; in fact, the gift of ministry (“service”) in Rom. 12:7 is in the same category (MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print)
- Administrations (v.28) - “Administration” is leadership. The word comes from the Gr., meaning “to pilot a ship” (Acts 27:11) and speaks of one who can lead ministries of the church efficiently and effectively. (MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.)
- Tongues (v.28)
- Questions that indicate we are all different and have different functions in the Body (vv.29-30)
- They were pursuing the "greater gifts" for selfish reasons
 - This was wrong
 - This verse is not a command (imperative) but a statement of fact (indicative)
 - What they were to pursue was a "more excellent way" which is love (chapter 13)

CONCLUSION

- As this chapter has revealed every Christian has a gift sovereignly given to them by the Holy Spirit
- They are to use it unselfishly by seeing that each member is to do their part
- God desires unity and diversity in the Body
- But He also desires God's people pursue loving one another

Jesus said in John 13:34-35, A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

- Love is a gift from the Holy Spirit

Romans 5:5 says "...the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

- 1 John 3:14 gives us the assurance we belong to Christ because "we love the brethren"

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

- Do you love the brethren?
- If so, you will minister your gift to them in the power of the Spirit for the purpose of unity in the Body, Christ's church
- If you don't know His love this morning you can by repenting and believing in Christ to save you from all your sin.
- He took your punishment for sin

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- Surrender your life to Him now as we pray
- Let's pray