

**THE BODY OF CHRIST**  
Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27

INTRO: Christ's church in Corinth was troubled by division & jealousy over the use & abuse of spiritual gifts, and Paul deals at length with that problem in chapters 12 thru 14. We do not have the special gifts Paul enumerated in chapter 12, but we do have natural gifts and talents that are to be used in God's service, and the underlying principles of unity of devotion within a diversity of abilities is a lesson needed by every congregation of God's people today.

**I. ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS SHARE THE SAME RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST WITHIN HIS BODY, THE CHURCH, vs 12-14.**

- A. Paul, in this passage, and in several others, uses the human body to illustrate Christ's spiritual body, vs. 12.
- B. Christ's spiritual body is the church, vs. 27-28.
- C. Following the word of the Holy Spirit, we all obeyed the same gospel & were baptized into the one body, vs. 13.
- D. There is no distinction along racial lines or social lines. All true Christians imbibe of the same Spirit.

Col. 3:11, There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

- E. The more variety there is racially, culturally, socially, etc., the more thoroughly the body can function, vs. 14.

**II. WE MUST NOT UNDERESTIMATE OUR IMPORTANCE IN THE BODY, vs. 15-16.**

- A. There is a limit to what each member can do effectively. No man is a church by himself. I can't do everything, but I can do something.
- B. The other fellow can do many things--but he can't do everything. I can do something. I must not belittle the ability God has given me.

C. What if, in the human body, the hands should wish to injure the feet? It is in the interest of ALL that EACH be kept healthy.

III. IN THE BODY, THERE IS COMMON INTEREST BUT SEPARATE FUNCTIONS, vs. 17. All members are not equal in strength or delicacy--but each is important to the well-being of all. When one member is not healthy, to that extent, the body is not healthy.

IV. OUR DIFFERENT ABILITIES/TALENTS ARE BY GOD'S DESIGN, vs. 18.

Rom 12:4-8, For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

A. The arrangement pleases Him.

B. We must learn to be content with what pleases God--with the abilities He has given & the limits He has placed on our authority.

C. This, of course, does not eliminate growth & development of talents & abilities. In fact, our need to grow is one of the reasons we cooperate with one another in the one body.

Eph 4:11-16, And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors & teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to & fro & carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the

trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--from whom the whole body, joined & knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

V. THE INTERESTS/DESIRES OF THE INDIVIDUAL MUST NEVER OVER-SHADOW THE NEEDS OF THE BODY, vs 19-20. I am not more important than this congregation. What I want is not more important than the needs of this congregation. You are not more important than the congregation, and your desires are not more important than the needs of the body of Christ in this locality.

VI. WE MUST NEVER UNDER ESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR BROTHERS & SISTERS IN CHRIST, vs. 21.

The church member who would say to another, "we don't need you. You are of no value to us," is not manifesting a Christ-like attitude. Period. If there is anyone of no value in the body of Christ, it is only because he has made himself so.

VII. WEAKER MEMBERS & LESS DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS ARE PROTECTED, STRENGTHENED & ENCOURAGED BY THE STRONGER MEMBERS, vs. 22-24.

Acts 6:1-7, Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the 12 summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you 7 men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit & wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer & to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. & they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, & Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid

hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

A. They couldn't preach, lead prayer, lead singing. Couldn't give money--had to take charity to survive.

B. What could they do?

1 Tim 5:10, ("widow indeed") well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

Titus 2:3-5, [Teach] the older women [to be] reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things--that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

2 Tim 1:5-6, I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

Acts 9:36, 39, At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did... And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.

VIII. THERE MUST BE NO DIVISION, NO SCHISM IN THE BODY, vs. 25. Mark 3:25.

IX. ALL MEMBERS ARE IN MUTUAL SYMPATHY, vs. 26.

There is no place in the Lord's church for the attitude: "That is their problem," etc. If I get a thorn in my foot, my hand is

quick to try to pull it out. And my foot does not resist the help.  
My whole body is in sympathy.

X. FINAL ADMONITION: [TOGETHER] YOU ARE THE BODY--  
AND MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY, vs. 27.

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, February 25, 1996

Wrightsville, PA, May 26, 1996

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, November 23, 2003