



GOING DEEPER

Discussion Questions and more from Sunday's message, before we begin, here are the verses for this week's study! Open your bible to the book of 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27.

How much time have you spent this past week reflecting on Jesus and the hope of the gospel? How has reflecting on Him been of help to you? Because that is how we grow in how we think about our relationship to God and how we bring Him Glory each day, in each conversation, interaction, our work, our family. **In everything.** The gospel and the love of Christ should indwell us, and we should be burdened to share that good news with others in these last days. ***Have you shared the good news with anyone this week? Have you showed the love of Jesus to anyone this week?***

Everybody in the Body is Somebody

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

One of my favorite jokes from my youth ministry days was this: "You see a whole lot of Philadelphia Baptist churches, but you do not see many Corinthian Baptist churches."

Then one day, I was in the parking lot of the Fort Oglethorpe McDonald's and saw a church van from LaFayette that said, "Corinth Baptist Church." I even had some youth with me, so I got my picture made next to it.

Now, I am sure they are a wonderful church. But if you know your Bible, you understand why most churches probably would not choose to name themselves after Corinth.

The Corinthian church had problems.

They had division.

They had pride.

They had immaturity.

They had confusion about spiritual gifts.

They had disorder in worship.

They had jealousy among some members and arrogance among others.

Some of their problems came from the culture around them, but many of their problems came from spiritual immaturity within them.

One of the major issues in the church was division among the membership, especially when it came to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

When a person is saved, God gives spiritual gifts for the blessing and building up of the church. Those gifts are not meant to make us proud. They are meant to make us useful. They are not given so that we can compete with one another. They are given so that we can care for one another.

But in Corinth, some people with less visible gifts felt inferior. They thought, "Because I am not out front, I must not matter."

Others with more visible gifts felt superior. They thought, "Because I am out front, I must matter more."

So, Paul writes to this fractured fellowship and gives them one of the clearest pictures in the Bible of what the church is.

The church is a body.

"Selfishness in the physical realm is deplorable but in the spiritual realm it is destructive. The gratification of physical self is degrading but the gratification of religious self is dishonoring, such is man's heart." George Williams, 1953.

"If you had to describe yourself as a body part today, which one would you be—and why?" Examples:

Hands – ready to help

Feet – tired, but still moving

Eyes – watching and learning

Ears – listening more than speaking

Heart – carrying a lot

Shoulders – feeling responsibility

In verse 12, **Paul uses the word “body.” The Greek word is sōma**, and it means a real, living, functioning body. Paul is not describing the church as a club, a crowd, a committee, or a corporation. He describes the church as a living organism.

This matters:

A crowd can gather and leave unchanged.

A club can exist around preferences.

A committee can operate around tasks.

A corporation can replace people when they are no longer useful.

But a body is different.

A body is alive.

A body is connected.

A body is dependent.

A body does not have spare parts.

So Paul’s message to Corinth is also God’s message to us:

Everybody in the body is somebody.

If you are saved, you matter to the body of Christ.

You are not just attending something.

You are part of something.

You are not merely a name on a roll.

You are not merely a face in a pew.

You are not merely a person in the crowd.

If you belong to Jesus, you belong to His body.

So, let’s walk through this passage and see what the Spirit of God says to us about our roles and relationships within the body of Christ.

1. We Are United by the Same Spirit vs.12-13

“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. 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.”

Paul begins with unity.

Before he talks about gifts, roles, service, honor, or suffering, he talks about identity.

We are one body.

Now notice something very important in verse 12. Paul says, "So it is with Christ."

You might expect him to say, "So it is with the church." But he does not say that. He says, "So it is with Christ."

That phrase in Greek is **houtōs kai ho Christos**, which means, "**so also is Christ.**"

That is a stunning statement.

Paul sees the church as so united to Jesus that speaking about the body is speaking about Christ and His people together.

Jesus is the Head.

The church is His body.

To belong to Christ is to belong to His people.

That means Christ did not save you to live in isolation. He saved you into a body.

That is why verse 13 says, "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."

The word "all" is important. In Greek, it is pantes, meaning all. Paul uses it twice in verse 13.

"All were baptized into one body."

"All were made to drink of one Spirit."

Paul is emphasizing that there are no first-class and second-class Christians in the body of Christ.

The preacher did not enter through a better door than the nursery worker.

The singer did not receive a better salvation than the prayer warrior.

The deacon did not get more of the Spirit than the quiet servant.

The person on the platform is not more saved than the person in the pew.

All were baptized into one body.

All were made to drink of one Spirit.

Paul mentions "Jews or Greeks, slaves or free" because those were major divisions in the ancient world. There were ethnic divisions, social divisions, economic divisions, and cultural divisions.

But Paul says the gospel tears down those walls.

The ground is level at the foot of the cross, and the ground is level inside the family of God.

That does not mean we are all the same. It means we all belong to the same Savior.

Different backgrounds. Different personalities. Different stories. Different gifts.
Different roles.

But one Spirit.
One body.
One Lord.
One salvation.

Then Paul says, "All were made to drink of one Spirit."

That phrase "made to drink" comes from a word that means to give drink or to cause to drink. Paul is saying that the same Spirit who places us into the body also gives life to the body.

The church does not stay alive by talent.
The church does not stay alive by tradition.
The church does not stay alive by personality.
The church does not stay alive by programs.
The church lives because the Spirit gives life.

We do not merely share a church name.
We share the life of the Spirit.

So, before Paul ever corrects their attitudes toward one another, he reminds them of what God has done for them.

You are one body.

That means I cannot look at another believer and say, "You do not matter."

And I cannot look at myself and say, "I do not matter."

Because the same Spirit who saved them saved me.
The same Spirit who placed them placed me.
The same Spirit who lives in them lives in me.

So, the first truth is this:

We are united by the same Spirit.

But Paul does not stop there. He moves from our unity to our diversity.

Why do you think Paul starts with unity before talking about individual roles or gifts?

2. We Are Arranged by the Wisdom of God vs14-20

"For the body does not consist of one member but of many."

The word “member” is also important. In Greek, it is melē, and it means body parts or limbs.

When we hear the word “member,” we often think of a name on a church roll. But Paul is not thinking about church membership like a list of names in an office. Paul is thinking about hands, feet, eyes, ears, hearts, lungs, and limbs.

A church member is not merely someone with their name on a roll. A church member is a functioning part of a living body.

That is a needed reminder.

Biblically, church membership is not spectatorship. It is participation.

A church member is not just someone who says, “This is where I attend.” A church member is someone who says, “This is the body where God has placed me, and I am responsible to use what He has given me for the good of others.”

Paul continues in verse **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.”**

Then **verse 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.”**

Paul imagines a foot looking up at the hand and saying, “The hand gets to do everything. The hand writes. The hand works. The hand shakes hands. The hand serves. The hand is visible. I am just down here on the ground, covered up by a sock and shoe. I must not matter.”

Then he imagines the ear looking at the eye and saying, “The eye gets all the attention. People look into the eye. The eye sees beauty. The eye notices danger. The eye seems so important. I am just stuck on the side of the head. I must not matter.”

But Paul says their feelings do not change the facts.

The foot may not feel important, but it is still part of the body.

The ear may not feel noticed, but it is still part of the body.

John MacArthur makes the application very clear. He said, “Every sensible person is more concerned with his heart than his hair”

And the same thing is true in the church.

Someone may say, “I do not preach. I do not sing solos. I do not teach a big class. I am not on the platform. I am not on any major committee. Most people do not even know what I do.”

But that does not mean you are insignificant.

The person who prays matters.
The person who gives quietly matters.
The person who rocks babies matters.
The person who teaches children matters.
The person who visits the sick matters.
The person who runs the sound matters.
The person who sends the encouraging text matters.
The person who cleans up after everyone leaves matters.
You may not be seen by everyone, but you are seen by God.

Then Paul asks in verse 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?”

That is almost humorous if you picture it.

Imagine a whole body that is just one giant eyeball.

It might see, but it could not hear.
It might notice the need, but it could not reach the need.
It might see where to go, but it could not walk there.

Or imagine a whole body that is just one giant ear.

It might be heard, but it could not see.
It could not smell.
It could not walk.
It could not serve.

Paul’s point is simple: sameness would not make the body stronger. Sameness would make the body useless.

A church full of preachers would be loud, but unhealthy.
A church full of singers would have music, but no nursery.
A church full of leaders would have direction, but no one serving.
A church full of hands could work, but it could not see where to work.

The body needs variety to be healthy.

Then verse 18 gives us one of the deepest truths in the whole passage: “But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.”

The word translated “arranged” comes from the Greek word *tithēmi*, which means to place, set, appoint, or arrange.

Paul is saying that God personally placed the members in the body.

Your place in the body is not random.

Your gift is not accidental.

Your role is not meaningless.

Your function is not a mistake.

God arranged the members.

And Paul says He arranged them "as he chose." That phrase means according to His will, according to His desire, according to His wisdom.

God did not throw the church together like loose parts in a junk drawer. He arranged the body with wisdom.

He placed the eye where the eye needed to be.

He placed the hand where the hand needed to be.

He placed the foot where the foot needed to be.

He placed the ear where the ear needed to be.

And if you are saved, He placed you where He wanted you.

That means comparison is more serious than we think.

When I say, "Why am I not like him?"

When I say, "Why can I not do what she does?"

When I say, "Why did God not give me that gift?"

When I resent my place in the body, I may not merely be struggling with other people. I may be questioning the wisdom of God.

Comparison says, "Why did God make me like this?"

Faith says, "God placed me here on purpose."

I remember when I was younger in ministry. Like a lot of preachers, I had some favorite preachers. I listened to them. I admired them. And if I am honest, I probably tried to sound like them.

But over time, I had to learn that God had not called me to be them. God had called me to be faithful with who He made me to be.

And when I finally accepted who I was as a preacher, God began to use me in greater ways.

I have watched very smart, very polished preachers go to places like Young America and struggle to connect with teenagers. That does not mean they are not gifted. It simply

reinforces the point that God gives different people different gifts for different parts of the body.

Some of you may never preach a sermon, but you may speak one sentence that keeps someone from quitting.

Some of you may never sing on a platform, but you may teach your children to sing to Jesus.

Some of you may never teach a large class, but you may disciple one person in a way that changes generations.

So do not despise your place in the body.

You are not insignificant.

You have been arranged by the wisdom of God.

What would it look like for you to trust that God has placed you in the body on purpose?

3. We Are Dependent on One Another vs21-23

Now Paul turns from those who feel inferior to those who feel superior.

Some people in Corinth were saying, "Because I am not like them, I must not matter."

But others were acting like, "Because they are not like me, I do not need them."

So Paul says in verse 21:

"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.'"

The phrase **"I have no need of you"** is blunt in the Greek. It is the language of pride. It is the attitude of self-sufficiency.

The eye may see the cup on the table, but it needs the hand to pick it up.

The head may know where it wants to go, but it needs the feet to carry it there.

Vision without hands does not serve.

Direction without feet does not move.

In the body of Christ, "I do not need you" is not confidence. It is arrogance.

No member can function alone.

The pastor needs the prayer warrior.

The teacher needs the encourager.

The singer needs the sound worker.

The youth ministry needs the people who cook, clean, drive, pray, and show up.
The children's ministry needs people who love kids enough to serve them when nobody applauds.

A body cannot work properly when the members despise one another.

Then Paul says something surprising in **verse 22: "On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable."**

The word "weaker" comes from a Greek word that can mean weak, feeble, or without strength. But notice Paul says they "seem" to be weaker. They appear weaker. They look less impressive. They seem less important.

But Paul says they are "indispensable."

That word means necessary, essential, required.

In other words, the parts that seem weak may actually be carrying the weight of the whole body.

Think about your physical body.

Your heart is hidden, but you cannot live without it.

Your lungs are hidden, but you cannot breathe without them.
Your kidneys are hidden, but your body depends on them constantly.

You can live without hair.

You can live without a fingernail.
You can live without a tooth.

But you cannot live without a heart.

That means the hidden members of the church are not church accessories. They are necessities.

The church can survive without applause. It cannot survive without prayer.

The church can survive without flash. It cannot survive without faithfulness.

The church can survive without everybody knowing your name. It cannot survive without members using their gifts in love.

Some of the most important people in the church may be the least noticed people in the church.

The spiritual heartbeat of the church may not be the person standing behind the pulpit.
It may be the senior saint praying in secret.

The strength of the youth ministry may not only be the person preaching on Wednesday night. It may be the person setting up chairs, checking in students, feeding teenagers, praying over names, and encouraging a hurting kid in the hallway.

The fruit of a Sunday morning may not only come from the sermon. It may come from the nursery worker who allowed a tired mother to sit under the Word. It may come from the greeter who made a lonely man feel welcome. It may come from the Sunday school teacher who prepared all week for six people.

God often puts extraordinary value in ordinary faithfulness.

Verse 23 says: "And on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor."

Paul is saying that in our physical bodies, we give special care to the parts that are less public. We cover them. We protect them. We treat them with modesty and honor.

The application is clear: the church should not honor only the visible parts. The church should be especially careful to honor the hidden, quiet, easily overlooked members.

A healthy church does not just celebrate the people on the platform.

A healthy church honors faithfulness.

The sound booth matters.

The nursery matters.

The prayer room matters.

The kitchen matters.

The parking lot matters.

The hospital visit matters.

The handwritten card matters.

The unseen act of service matters.

There may be people here at First Baptist who are not here mainly because of the preaching. They may be here because someone encouraged them during the week. They may be here because they have a Sunday school class that loves them. They may be here because someone noticed their absence and checked on them. They may be here because a quiet member of the body made them feel like family.

And that matters.

I know I need to preach the Word when God gives me the opportunity. I need to preach it clearly, correctly, and consistently. But I also know I cannot do what God has called me to do without the rest of the body.

This week, Brittany helped with the kids so I could study and preach. That matters.

At Young America, I may do much of the teaching and face-to-face communication, but Brittany writes, organizes, works on the website, and helps hold things together. If she does not understand that her role is valuable, the ministry suffers. If I do not honor her role as valuable, I am not thinking biblically.

That is true in the church too.

Do you need a pastor? Yes.

But a pastor needs the body too.

Do you need teachers? Yes.

But teachers need encouragers too.

Do you need leaders? Yes.

But leaders need servants too.

No one should feel independent from the body.

The person who says, "I am not needed," is wrong.

The person who says, "I do not need you," is also wrong.

We need one another.

4. We Are Called to Care for One Another vs24-27

Paul now takes the teaching one step further.

If no one is insignificant, and no one is independent, then no one should be indifferent.

Because we belong to one another, we must care for one another.

Look at verse 24:

"But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it."

The word translated "**composed**" means to mix together, blend together, or combine into unity. It pictures God skillfully blending the body together.

God does not just place individual members randomly. He blends them together wisely.

He knows how the hand needs the eye.

He knows how the foot needs the head.

He knows how the visible needs the hidden.

He knows how the strong need the weak.

He knows how the old need the young.
He knows how the young need the old.

The church is not a pile of disconnected parts. It is a body skillfully composed by God.

Then Paul gives the purpose in verse 25:

“That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.”

The word “division” is schisma. It means a split, tear, or rupture. It is where we get the word “schism.”

Paul is saying the body should not tear itself apart.

Division in the church is not just an organizational problem. It is a body wound.

When jealousy, pride, selfishness, gossip, comparison, or indifference divide the church, the body is being torn.

So Paul says there should **be “no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.”**

The word translated “care” can mean concern, burden, or anxiety. It is often used negatively for worry, but here Paul uses it positively. He is talking about holy concern.

There is a sinful anxiety we must cast on the Lord.

But there is also a holy concern we must carry for one another.

A healthy church is not full of people worrying about who gets noticed. It is full of people concerned that no one gets neglected.

That is the kind of church God wants us to be.

We ought to care as much for the person turning on the microphone as we do for the person singing into it.

We ought to care as much for the person teaching children on Wednesday night as we do for the person teaching adults on Sunday morning.

We ought to care as much for the lady preparing food for funerals as we do for the finance committee forming the budget.

We ought to care as much for the nursery worker as we do for the preacher.

Why?

Because in the body of Christ, there are no throwaway members.

Then verse 26 shows us what that care looks like:

"If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together."

The word "suffer together" means to suffer with. It is not sympathy from a distance. It is shared pain.

Paul does not say, "If one member suffers, the others should feel sorry from the stands."

He says the body suffers with them.

You know this from your physical body.

If you smash your thumb with a hammer, the rest of your body does not say, "Well, that is a thumb problem."

No, your whole body responds.

Your eyes water.

Your mouth cries out.

Your knees bend.

Your other hand grabs the thumb.

Your whole body enters into the pain.

That is how the church should work.

When a brother is grieving, we do not leave him to grieve alone.

When a sister is hurting, we do not make her hurt by herself.

When a family is struggling, the body should move toward them in love.

Biblical care is not sympathy from the stands. It is suffering with one another on the field.

But Paul does not stop with suffering.

He says, "If one member is honored, all rejoice together."

That phrase means to rejoice with.

And sometimes that is even harder.

It takes grace to weep with those who weep.

But it also takes humility to rejoice with those who rejoice.

When someone else is honored, our flesh may say, "Why not me?"

When someone else succeeds, pride may say, "What about me?"

When someone else is noticed, insecurity may say, "Nobody sees me."

But in the body of Christ, another member's blessing is not my competition. It is our celebration.

If one member is honored, the whole body rejoices.

I know it is a flawed illustration, but we ought to be like a good baseball team. If someone hits a game-winning, walk-off home run, the whole team runs to home plate. They do not stand in the dugout, jealous because they did not hit it. They celebrate because the victory belongs to the whole team.

That is how the church should be.

When God uses someone else, we rejoice.

When God blesses someone else, we rejoice.

When God opens a door for someone else, we rejoice.

When God strengthens someone else's ministry, we rejoice.

Because we are not competitors.

We are members of one body.

When a tear comes to the eye of the body, the hand should be there to wipe it away.

When the feet stumble, the arms should reach down to help.

When the heart is heavy, the mouth should speak words of grace.

When one member rejoices, the whole body should sing.

That is what it means to be the body of Christ.

Conclusion

Now look at verse 27:

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

That phrase "individually members" means each one has a part.

You are not the whole body, but you are truly part of the body.

That truth humbles the proud and encourages the discouraged.

To the proud person, God says, "You are not everything."

To the discouraged person, God says, "You are not nothing."

You are not everything, but you are not nothing.

You are part of Christ's body.

Conclusion

Some of you will remember the writings of Mike Royco, the Chicago columnist, who wrote a particular Christmas column that continues to be dear to many people of an impoverished couple who went to a Christmas tree lot and could not afford the trees that were for sale until they identified some scraggly ones in the corner that no one wanted and offered just a couple of bucks to the lot owner for the couple of scraggly trees.

The next day, the lot owner went to the lot, walked by their apartment, and saw a beautiful Christmas tree in their window because what they had done was they had taken the scraggly one with the bare side and the other scraggly one with the other bare side and wired them together until they became beautiful to glorify the birth of our Savior.

Every single one of us here has bare sides, the things that are scraggly and wrong.

And so God calls fallen, sinful, weak, troubled people, and He puts us together in the church of Jesus Christ and says, "I need you all there."

Application for us this week:

- 1. What is one way I can use what God has given me to strengthen this church?**
- 2. This week, thank someone who serves behind the scenes.**
- 3. Find someone who is hurting and move toward them.**

A healthy church is not full of people worrying about who gets noticed. It is full of people concerned that no one gets neglected.

LIVE IT OUT

Bible Study should ALWAYS lead to taking action with what you learned. Think of it as Vitamin A. "Application" into your day, week and interactions.

Here are some ideas for us this week to live out our faith:

In our families

Value each family member's role instead of comparing or competing.
Not everyone contributes in the same way, but everyone matters.

Serve where there is a need, even if it is unnoticed or inconvenient.

Speak with honor and patience, especially when personalities are different.

Carry one another's burdens by listening, praying, helping, and showing up in the hard moments in life.

Celebrate each other's strengths instead of feeling threatened by them.

In our workplaces

Respect contributions that often go unnoticed, not just the visible leadership roles.
One must be good follower before they become a leader.

Work as a team instead of trying to outshine others. Are you making your team better?

Encourage coworkers who may feel overlooked or undervalued.

Use your gifts faithfully without wishing you had someone else's position. Live in humility as an Ambassador of Christ.

Practice humility and dependability, remembering that every role can serve a greater purpose. Grace.

In our communities

Notice people who are often ignored and treat them with dignity.

Look for ways to meet practical needs—meals, encouragement, rides, prayer, support.

Build unity across differences instead of staying only with people like us.

Be willing to serve quietly, without needing recognition.

Show compassion when others are hurting and rejoice when others are helped or blessed.

In our church family

Remember that every member matters, not just the most visible ones.

Honor behind-the-scenes service like nursery work, prayer, setup, meals, visitation, and encouragement.

Refuse comparison and jealousy over gifts, roles, or recognition.

Care for one another intentionally—when one suffers, suffer with them; when one rejoices, rejoice with them.

Use your gift for the good of the body, not for attention or status.

Strengthen unity by speaking well of others, avoiding gossip, and pursuing peace.

We live out 1 Corinthians 12 today by valuing every person, serving faithfully in our role, refusing comparison, and caring for others as people who truly belong to one another in Christ.

What would it look like this week to live like a healthy part of the body of Christ in your family, workplace, community, and church?

How should I pray for this life change?

"You don't want to ask the Lord for a trouble-free life. You should ask the Lord this, "Lord, work Your work in my heart, don't give me more than I can endure.

Show me grace and compassion, you know my weaknesses and frailties. I want to see Your lovingkindness, but I want You to do Your work. I want You to do Your perfecting work. I want You to do whatever it takes in me to make me what You want me to be." You need to come to terms with that. You need to be able to say that." John MacArthur

Remember:

"We are to run the race with endurance, not in our own strength, but by fixing our gaze on Jesus. He is not only the goal of our faith—He is the source and sustainer of it." R.C. Sproul

***"The gospel is not only about changing WHERE you will live for eternity, it's also about changing HOW you will live today." Shane Pruitt
And that is a heart change. So that we glorify God in all we do.***

Having Jesus as Savior will cost you nothing. Having Jesus as Savior will cost you everything. How so?

Who do you say God is? You cannot "come after" Jesus unless you come to Him.

Two roads stand before us in this world today. There is the way of the divine things of our Lord, which is the way of Christ. And there is the way of human things of the world. There is a way to save your life, and you will lose it there. And there is a way to lose your life for the sake of the Kingdom, and there you will find it.

How do we follow Jesus' ways? First of all, we turn from our sin and entrust our lives to Him as our Savior and Lord. Then, we seek His will in His Word each day and put it into practice by the power of the Holy Spirit within us. We learn to deny our selfish desires and give ourselves completely to following Jesus.

This choice we have — to seek first the kingdom of God — is the fundamental choice everyone makes when they first repent and turn to Jesus Christ. Yet every day after that, our Christian life will either reinforce that decision or deny it.

Remember the gospel is personal. Your changed life shows that to others around you based on what happened at the cross. You are at a crossroads if you have not accepted Christ. Which road are you traveling on right now? Are you on God's side?



Are you in a Growth Group at First Baptist? In this isolated world, Growth Groups help people connect in a healthy way. God has created us for a deep longing for community. We grow when we are living out our faith in a small group with others and we do this by loving, caring for, and encouraging each other. If you have any questions about our Growth Groups, contact the Church Office for more information.