

UNIQUELY GIFTED AND CALLED TO SERVE

I. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

A. Many times over the years I've listed the problems addressed by Paul in the Church in Corinth. These include, internal divisions; blatant immorality; issues regarding divorce & remarriage; lawsuits between church members; mistreatment of the poor by the rich; misuse of spiritual gifts; flippant behavior (even drunkenness) during love feasts and the Lord's Supper; and downright doctrinal error with respect to the resurrection of dead. Corinth was an utter train wreck...

B. I mentioned a few weeks ago that Paul wrote these guys four times but only two letters made the Canon. Lots of correction was needed. Try this sometime: read 1 Corinthians 12, 13, & 14 back to back. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul brilliantly plops Chapter 13 right between the two chapters regarding spiritual gifts. Today we're in the first of these three chapters, reading from the Amplified Version.

C. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (AMP) is our main text today...

1) **V12-14:** *12 For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts, though many, form [only] one body, so it is with Christ. (Unity in the midst of diversity) 13 For by one [Holy] Spirit we were all baptized into one body, [spiritually transformed--united together] whether Jews or Greeks (Gentiles), slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one [Holy] Spirit [since the same Holy Spirit fills each life]. 14 For the [human] body does not consist of one part, but of many [limbs and organs]. (So who belongs and who doesn't?)*

2) **V15-18:** *15 If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," is it not on the contrary still a part of the body? 16 If the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," is it not on the contrary still a part of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole [body] were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But now [as things really are], God has placed and arranged the parts in the body, each one of them, just as He willed and saw fit [with the best balance of function]. (Look around this room and know this: everybody belongs!)*

3) **V19-26:** *19 If they all were a single organ, where would [the rest of] the body be? 20 But now [as things really are] there are many parts [different limbs and organs], but a single body. 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." 22 But quite the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are [absolutely] necessary; 23 and as for those parts of the body which we consider less honorable, these we treat with greater honor; and our less presentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 while our more presentable parts do not require it. But God has combined the [whole] body, giving greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 so that there would be no division or discord in the body [that is, lack of adaptation of the parts to each other], but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the parts share the suffering; if one member is honored, all rejoice with it. 27 Now you [collectively] are Christ's body, and individually [you are] members of it [each with his own special purpose and function]. (He who has ears let him hear...)*

D. Back in 1992, I needed surgery on my left ring finger. The surgeon was somewhat renowned. He had actually re-attached a Logan man's hand that was severed in a farming accident. My pre-surgery concern was being able to still play my guitar. So when I went in for my first consult, I took my guitar. Dr. Kerr showed me the x-rays and said the repair, with minimal therapy, on average would result in roughly 70 percent regained mobility. With persistent therapy on my part (*didn't mention prayer*) the results could be much better. Then I asked the doc if he could a-fix some cotton, gauze, and tape to my finger so I could see what 70 percent felt like. He smiled and did just that. I opened my guitar case, pulled out my guitar and went through all my chord progressions. So we went forward with the surgery and glory to God I got back almost full mobility.

E. So even my little ring finger has a very important function. Besides playing my guitar, it also bears my wedding band. And just like I value that little finger, God values all of us and has purposeful functions for each of us. No matter what, remember this, you truly do belong! You have a role to play, opportunities to serve God, and opportunities to serve one another!

F. Here's where love and maturity come in: You increasingly see those around you as belonging too. You value them from the heart. You see their contributions as necessary. You see them as instruments of God in His transformational work in all our lives. You encourage them. You look for ways to serve them and build them up. You rejoice when they rejoice and weep when they weep.

G. I just finished a great biography, *The Boys in the Boat*, by Daniel James Brown. It's about the 9-man rowing team from the University of Washington that won gold for Team USA at the 1936 Olympics. Under the scornful eye of Adolf Hitler, these men learned the beauty and synergy of rowing as one. They were akin to a symphony orchestra on water. From poor families and dysfunctional homes, in the midst of the Great Depression, on the brink of WWII, they became a brotherhood of cohesion, a rowing team for the ages. I'd sure like something like that for us!

H. Romans 12:3-13 (NLT) is what Christlike togetherness looks like. We'll allow these words to take us to the Lord's Table: **3 *Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. 4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. 6 In His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. 7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. 9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. 10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. 11 Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. 12 Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. 13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.***

*** Play the Communion Song...**

* Pray & Officiate Communion...

* **Our Benediction: 1 Peter 4:8-11 (NIV) takes us all home today: 8** *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (AMP)

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Romans 12:3-13 (NLT)

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given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. **7** If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. **8** If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. **9** Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. **10** Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. **11** Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. **12** Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. **13** When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

1 Peter 4:8-11 (NIV)

8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. **9** Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. **10** Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. **11** If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Communion Song

- By Steven A. Bush © 1986

Break this bread and drink this cup,
Celebrate New Covenant, lift Jesus up;
Sup with Him, receive the gift He gives,
And realize through Him, we can live,
He died that we might live!

Glory! Glory! Glory to the Lord!
Glory! Glory! Glory to the Lord!

His body broken for you and me,
His blood to wash and pay to set us free;
His life laid down to demonstrate His love,
We are restored with the Father above,
We are children of the Father above.

Worthy! Worthy! Worthy is the Lord!
Worthy! Worthy! Worthy is the Lord!

Brother, sister, family are we,
We share one life, one common destiny;
The royal blood and the royal call,

Together may we pledge to give our all,
To You Lord Jesus we gladly yield our all!

Holy! Holy! Holy is the Lord!
Holy! Holy! Holy is the Lord!

(Written January 24, 1986)

[Bonus Goodies](#)

Why is Church Membership Important? - GotQuestions.org
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_YgsWuNqNI

One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church - R.C. Sproul
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QmeBPHOXLY>

Rowing - Summer Olympics - Berlin 1936 (The Boys in the Boat)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYWCNPq3-Vg>

What Happens When A Believer Dies? - Randy Alcorn
<https://www.epm.org/blog/2022/Jan/31/happens-believer-dies>

What Changes Us as We Read the Bible? Is it Scripture or the Holy Spirit? (Ask Ligonier)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2266S7_lcc

Does the Spirit's Leading Have Authority Over Scripture? - Q & A with John Piper
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpbYdQ4SCxl>

How Does God Speak to Christians? - Sinclair Ferguson (Ligonier Ministries)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBbyHp3BwF4>

Does A Person / Ministry Need A Spiritual Covering? - GotQuestions.org
<https://www.gotquestions.org/spiritual-covering.html>

[Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras](#)

[Acts 2:42-47 \(NIV\)](#)

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **43** Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. **44** All the believers were together and had everything in common. **45** They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. **46** Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **47** praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

[Ephesians 1:3-8 \(NLT\)](#)

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. **4** Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. **5** God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure. **6** So we praise God for the glorious grace He has poured out on us who belong to His dear Son. **7** He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins. **8** He has showered His kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

Ephesians 5:1-2 (ESV)

1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. **2** And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (NLT)

16 Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? **17** God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

1 Timothy 3:14-15 (NIV)

14 Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, **15** if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

Hebrews 12:22-24 (AMPC)

22 But rather, you have come to Mount Zion, even to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless multitudes of angels in festal gathering, **23** And to the church (assembly) of the Firstborn who are registered [as citizens] in heaven, and to the God Who is Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous (the redeemed in heaven) who have been made perfect, **24** And to Jesus, the Mediator (Go-between, Agent) of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood which speaks [of mercy], a better and nobler and more gracious message than the blood of Abel [which cried out for vengeance].

Quote by François Fénelon

"It should be remembered that even the best people leave much to be desired, and we must not expect too much... Do not allow yourself to turn away from people because of imperfections... I have found that God leaves, even the most spiritual people, certain weaknesses which seem entirely out of place."

- François Fénelon, 17th Century Theologian.

Richard C. Halverson on The Church

"In the beginning the church was a fellowship of men and women centered on the living Christ. Then the church moved to Greece, where it became a philosophy. Then it moved to Rome, where it became an institution. Next it moved to Europe, where it became a culture. And, finally, it moved to America, where it became an enterprise."

- Quote by Richard C. Halverson, quoted by Skye Jethani in *The Divine Commodity: Discovering A Faith Beyond Consumer Christianity*, p. 11)

E.M. Bounds on The Church

"We are continually striving to create new methods, plans, and organizations to advance the church. We are ever working to provide and stimulate growth and efficiency for the gospel. This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man. Or else he is lost in the workings of the plan or organization. God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God's method. The church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men...What the church needs today is not more or better machinery, not new organizations or more novel methods. She needs men whom the Holy Spirit can use--men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men--men of prayer."

- Quote by E. M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*, p.p. 9-11.

Quote by Charles Hodge

"The Church is everywhere represented as one. It is one body, one family, one fold, one kingdom. It is one because pervaded by one Spirit. We are all baptized into one Spirit so as to become, says the apostle, one body."

Quote by A.B. Simpson

"I would rather play with the forked lightning, or take in my hands living wires with their fiery current, than speak a reckless word against any servant of Christ."

Justin Martyr (100-165) on the Church in His Day..

And what kind of lives did they lead? Justin Martyr, a noted early Christian theologian, wrote to Emperor Antoninus Pius and described the believers: "We formerly rejoiced in uncleanness of life, but now love only chastity; before we used the magic arts, but now dedicate ourselves to the true and unbegotten God; before we loved money and possessions more than anything, but now we share what we have and to everyone who is in need; before we hated one another and killed one another and would not eat with those of another race, but now since the manifestation of Christ, we have come to a common life and pray for our enemies and try to win over those who hate us without just cause." In another place Justin points out how those opposed to Christianity were sometimes won over as they saw the consistency in the lives of believers, noting their extraordinary forbearance when cheated and their honesty in business dealings.

An Orchestra & Body Of Christ

At a meeting of the American Psychological Association, Jack Lipton, a psychologist at Union College, and R. Scott Bulione, a graduate student at Columbia University, presented their findings on how members of the various sections of 11 major symphony orchestra perceived each other. The percussionists were viewed as insensitive, unintelligent, and hard-of-hearing, yet fun-loving. String players were seen as arrogant, stuffy, and un-athletic. The orchestra members overwhelmingly chose "loud" as the primary adjective to describe the brass players. Woodwind players seemed to be held in

the highest esteem, described as quiet and meticulous, though a bit egotistical. Interesting findings, to say the least! With such widely divergent personalities and perceptions, how could an orchestra ever come together to make such wonderful music? The answer is simple: regardless of how those musicians view each other, they subordinate their feelings and biases to the leadership of the conductor. Under his guidance, they play beautiful music.

- "Today in the Word," June 22, 1992.

This Is My Church

Author Unknown

This is my church

It is composed of people just like me.

It will be friendly if I am.

It will do great work if I work.

It will make generous gifts for many causes if I am generous.

It will bring others into fellowship if I bring them.

Its seats will be filled if I fill them.

It will be a church of loyalty and love, of faith and service if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these.

Therefore, with God's help, I dedicate myself to the task of being all these things I want my church to be.

The Church

The Reformation Study Bible

The church refers to all the people who belong to the Lord, those who have been purchased by the blood of Christ. Various other images and expressions are also used to define or describe the church. The church is called the body of Christ, the family of God, the people of God, the elect, the bride of Christ, the company of the redeemed, the communion of saints, the new Israel, among others.

The New Testament word for church, *ekklesia*, means "*those called out.*" The church is viewed as an assembly or gathering of the elect, those whom God calls out of the world, away from sin and into a state of grace.

Because the church on earth is always what St. Augustine called "*a mixed body,*" it is necessary to distinguish between the visible church and the invisible church. In the visible church (consisting of those who make a profession of faith, are baptized, and enrolled in membership of the institutional church), Jesus indicated there would be tares growing along with the wheat. Though the church is "*holy,*" it always, in this age, has an unholy mixture within it. Not all those who honor Christ with their lips honor Him with their heart as well. Since God alone can read the human heart, the true elect are visible to Him, but in some measure invisible to us. The invisible church is transparent but completely visible to God. It is the task of the elect to make the invisible church visible.

The church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. The church is one. Though fragmented by denominations, the elect are united by one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. The church is holy because it is sanctified by God and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The church is catholic (the word *catholic* means "*universal*") in that its membership extends across the earth including people from all nations. The church is apostolic in that the teaching of the apostles as contained in the sacred Scripture is the foundation of the church and the authority by which the church is governed.

It is the duty and privilege of every Christian to be united to the church of Christ. It is our solemn responsibility not to neglect the gathering together of the saints in corporate worship, to be under the nurture and discipline of the church, and to be actively involved as witnesses in the mission of the church.

The church is not so much an organization as it is an organism. It is made up of living parts. It is called the body of Christ. Just as a human body is organized to function in unity by the co-working and codependence of many parts, so the church as a body displays unity and diversity. Though ruled by one "*head*"-- Christ--the body has many members, each gifted and endowed by God to contribute to the work of the whole body.

- Theological Note from *The Reformation Study Bible*, R.C. Sproul General Editor, Reformation Trust, p. 2094.