



God's Body Building Program (1 Corinthians 12:14-27)

- Paul continues to draw out key elements about the body of Christ.
 - ◆ Believers cannot afford to be "*ignorant*" of their spiritual serving gifts (v. 1)
 - ◆ Believers must be discerning about how Jesus Christ is represented when using spiritual gifts (v. 2-3)
 - ◆ Believers must understand that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are all operating in and through the variety of gifts, ministries, and their fruitfulness (v. 4-6)
 - ◆ Believers must know that gifts are given "for the common good" of the body (v. 7)
 - ◆ Believers must recognize God has a variety of gifts (v. 8-10, 28-30; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:10-11)
 - ◆ Believers must know that every person receives a gift and the Spirit decides what gift you receive (v. 11)
 - ◆ Believer must recognize how the body of Christ is like a human body with "*many members*" in "*one body*" (v. 12)
 - ◆ Believers must know that the Lord uses the Spirit to immerse us ("*baptism*") into "*the one body*" in spite of our ethnic and socioeconomic differences (v. 13)
- Paul adds a few more keys to the proper functioning of the body of Christ and reiterates some of his main points.

① It's unique in its diversity (12:14-17)

- This truth is repeatedly emphasized by Paul (v. 4-6, 12, 20 and in v. 14-17). The body is made up of a wide variety of parts so that it can function as God intended and each part is significant.
- There are several things Paul notes about this diversity:
 - It's a widespread diversity (v. 14). There are "*many*" members
 - It's a significant diversity (v. 15-17). No one is insignificant, so we should appreciate all gifts and the gift God gave each one of us.
 - It's a unique diversity (v. 18). This is the third time Paul makes this point (v. 7, 11, 18). Remember that God sovereignly placed you and others where he wants them to be. Each believer has a unique part to play.

② It's unique in its dependency (12:19-24)

- This truth regularly fights against our natural tendency to be independent to be focused on our rights.
- God's body building program was created to be focused on one unit, not on each "*member*" (v. 19-20)
- God's body building program is concerned with right thinking toward one another, not ourselves (v. 21-24)
 - We all need each other and we can't act like we are indispensable (v. 21)

- Those gifts that seem “weaker” or “less honorable” or “less presentable” are really necessary, and should receive “more abundant honor” (v. 22-24a)

③ It's unique in its design (12:24b-26)

- Paul has already told us we serve “for the common good” of the body (v. 7), but now he shares four specific ways that can and should happen:
 - We must prevent division from happening (v. 25a: “there may be no division in the body”). Don't allow division to take place. This was a big problem in the Corinthian church
 - We must practice concern for one another (v. 25b: “have the same care for one another”)
 - We must provide encouragement in times of trial (v. 26a: “and if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it”)
 - We must promote joy in times of blessing (v. 26b: “if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it”)

④ It's unique in its distinctiveness (12:27)

- Paul summarizes his metaphor by making a pointed and clear statement about our distinctive identity
 - “you are Christ's body”. We are representing the greatest, highest, and best and you are not alone. You are part of the whole.
 - You are “individually member of it”. Your part matters. You are not better or worse than those around you and not one member is insignificant.