

“God’s Design For The Local Church”

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

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Teaching Aim: To recognize the need for both unity and diversity when it comes to “*spiritual gifts*” within the body of Christ (*the church*). To understand the fact that each of our spiritual gifts are important and needed for the overall health of the local church body. To realize individual Christians should be respected for their spiritual giftedness, but no believer should ever be placed on a pedestal above others because of the gifting they received from God. To recognize the ground is level at the foot of the cross!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: The body of Christ is a unit made up of many parts; all of its parts together form one body—the church! (1 Cor. 12:12-14)

1. What makes the human body such an excellent metaphor for the body of Christ – the church (**vs. 12**)? How does Paul use the human body to illustrate the various spiritual gifts within the local church?

2. According to **verse 13**, is “*the baptism of the Holy Spirit*” when applied to a born-again Christian presented in the past tense, present tense or future tense? What if any difference is there between “*the baptism of the Holy Spirit*” and “*the filling of the Holy Spirit*?” (See **Eph. 5:18-19**) What is the difference between “*the baptism of the Holy Spirit*” and “*water baptism*?” (See **Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38**)

3. According to **verse 13**, should there be any racial, cultural or social distinctions within the church? (See **Rom. 3:23; Eph. 2:1-9**) What truth can we learn from **verse 14**?

Part II: Paul compares the parts of the human body to God’s heavenly design for the church (1 Cor. 12:15-26)

1. As we move into **verse 15**, Paul begins by asking a series of rhetorical questions (*questions that are so obvious they don’t deserve an answer*). What are some ways that human hands and feet are dependent upon each other? What would happen if either of these limbs were cut off and removed from the rest of the body? How can losing a limb handicap an individual? Is this true of the body of Christ when Christians refuse to use their spiritual gifts? Why is it important for Christians not to forsake the assembling together? (See **Heb. 10:24-25**) How can we see this point illustrated with a charcoal barbeque?

2. **Verses 15 and 16** metaphorically portray jealousy among the members of the church body over God's distribution of spiritual gifts. How does this illustration relate to the church body today? Why do you think some Christians become jealous over the gifting of others? What should our attitude be when it comes to spiritual giftedness?

3. How would an eye lose its effectiveness if it were separated from the rest of the human body? How does this illustration relate to effective ministry within the local church today? Is there any room for lone rangers in the church of Jesus Christ? Why is a team effort always better than an individual effort?

4. According to **verse 18**, who is it that sovereignly assigns spiritual gifts to every member of the local church? Does the Bible describe God as pleased or displeased with "*His*" distribution of spiritual gifts (**vs. 18**)? If this is so, how do you think God feels when we don't use the spiritual gifts He has given us?

5. Would the human body be able to function if it were only one part like an ear, eye, nose or tongue (**vs. 19**)? Describe how the parts of the human body are interdependent upon each other (**vs. 20-21**). How does this illustration relate to the local church today?

6. What parts of the human body seem "*weaker*," but are absolutely required for survival (**vs. 22**)? Are the internal organs of the human body just as important, or even more important than the external limbs when it comes to our survival? Name a part of your body that you can't live without? What are some of the behind the scene ministries that are vital to the survival of the local church?

7. How do we demonstrate “*greater modesty*” today with those parts of our bodies that are considered unpresentable (**vs. 23**)? Why is it important for Christians to dress modestly; not extravagantly or provocatively? (See **Matt. 5:27-28; 1 Tim. 2:9-10**)

8. According to **verses 24 and 25**, did God design the church body with the intent of giving special privileges to those with the greater spiritual gifts? Why or why not? Why is it wrong to treat one believer as better than another? How should we treat each member of the body of Christ? (See **Phil. 2:3-4**)

9. Why is the person with “*a fever*” a great illustration of **verse 26a**? How does the human body work together when it gets a fever to make the whole body well again? How should the rest of the church react when a member of the body of Christ is hurting or out of commission? What are some ways that you can more effectively help hurting people within the church family?

10. There seems to be a lot of competition in the body of Christ these days for numbers. According to **verse 26**, how should Christians react when something good happens to another believer or to another Bible believing church? Do you? Why do you think we don’t see more Christians “*rejoicing*” and “*celebrating*” over the ministry successes of others?

Part III: Paul brings up several more offices and spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:27-31)

1. In **verse 27**, Paul identified the Corinthian believers as the body of Christ, but also stressed their importance as individuals. What offices and spiritual gifts are listed in **verse 28**? What is the function of each? What gift had the church of Corinth apparently elevated to the top of their list? (See **1 Cor. 14:18-19**) Where did Paul place this particular gift on his list (**vs. 30**)? Interestingly enough, Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ writing under Christ’s authority. Where did Paul place his office in regard to importance? Why? (See **Eph. 2:19-20**) What message was Paul communicating to the Corinthians?

2. Do any Christians receive all of the spiritual gifts (**vv. 29-30**)? Why? Why do you think there is such diversity of spiritual gifts? Have you discovered your own spiritual gift (or gifts) yet? If you have, what do you see as your three strongest gifts? If not, why not take a few minutes to take the *"Uniquely You"* Spiritual Gifts Assessment below and find out? Note: Please answer the questions as honestly as you can to get an accurate reading.

3. Why did Paul encourage believers to desire the greater spiritual gifts (**vs. 31**)? What gifts would you consider to be *"the greater"* spiritual gifts? Why? (See **1 Cor. 14:12, 24**) What makes these gifts greater? In **verse 31**, Paul informs the Corinthians that he will show them *"a more excellent way,"* meaning *"the way of love."* Why is it so important for believers to demonstrate an unselfish *"agape"* love when it comes to our spiritual gifts? What is the ultimate purpose of our spiritual gifts?

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna to live by!*

- Every believer *"was baptized"* (past tense) by the Holy Spirit at the moment of regeneration (or the moment of salvation).
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a onetime event; the filling of the Holy Spirit is a continual process throughout the Christian's life.
- God uniquely gifts every Christian with one or more spiritual gifts; these gifts are to be used for the building up of the body of Christ.
- We should be grateful for the giftedness God has given us and be willing to share those gifts for His glory.
- Every spiritual gift is needed for the overall health of the local church; no gift is insignificant.
- Christians should follow *"the way of love"* in all things, but especially in using their spiritual gifts.
- Our love for Christ and love for each other is the glue that holds the body of Christ (the church) together.

Online "Spiritual Gifts Assessment Test":

<https://uniquelyyou.org/catalog/online-profiles/combined-profiles> (Cost \$18.00)