



Biblical Foundations

Members of Christ's Body

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Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

—1 Corinthians 12:12–27 (NIV)

Do you ever look at others and wish you could be like them? Maybe it's their career choice that seems more exciting than yours. Or they make an unbelievable amount of money, while your income feels comparatively small. Perhaps you see those who have succeeded wildly in business, and your handful of startup attempts have failed miserably. Maybe you simply envy their personality, charisma, and popularity.



My wife and I enjoy quizzing each other on the things we might have done differently in life. If you had it to do over again, would you pick a different college? A different major or degree? A different career path? Different choices may have led to different life circumstances. Our conversations allow us to test our level of satisfaction with our current circumstances versus what might have been.

It's easy to minimize our own lives and wish for something different. As the saying goes, "The grass is always greener on the other side." But, as a joke adds, that may be because it's growing over the septic tank. (Be careful what you wish for.)

We are not all the same. We come from different life circumstances. We have different educational backgrounds, personalities, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, paychecks, and roles in society and in the church. That isn't a bad thing; it's actually very good.

The Corinthian believers struggled with some of the same issues. There were Jews and gentiles, slaves and free, varying personalities, qualities, weaknesses, and strengths. As a result, they found themselves serving in different roles—roles for which they were uniquely equipped. But they also exhibited a tendency to view some roles as more important or valuable and others as less desirable.

In Paul's response to their struggle in 1 Corinthians, he put things in perspective. Paul shared several important truths:

We are all part of the body. That means everyone matters—including you!

As such, we are all unified. The body of Christ is one body.

A healthy, functioning body requires many diverse parts. Diversity is a beautiful and practical element of God's design.

Every part belongs. Every part is valuable and necessary.



God shapes each part and places it in the body. In his sovereignty, God creates us all unique. This allows us to bring our distinctive contributions to the body and make our own special contribution to Christ's glory.

We all need each other. The image of God in humans includes the desire and need for relationship. God created us for relationship, with himself and with one another.

Perceived value is deceptive. No part lacks value. And no part has greater value than any other. Every part is equally valuable.

The body functions best when there is harmony and no division. Imagine two legs wanting to move in two different directions. It just doesn't work.

Honor for one part means rejoicing for all. We're all in it together.

It is Christ's body. Ultimately, it's about him. As individual parts of the body coming together as one, we physically represent Christ on earth. What an awesome privilege that is!