



Connect Groups

Week of July 21st, 2019—Body Parts
1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Opening Question:

If you were a body part (i.e., a literal part of the human body) in the Christian Church Body, what would you be and why?

Read verses 12-14.

1. What are the implications that, as Christians, we are a vital part of a living organism?
2. The word “one” is mentioned 6 times in these three verses, so one obvious theme is unity. From this passage, what do you think the Holy Spirit’s role is in fostering Christian unity?
3. “Many” is mentioned 3 times. What theme does this represent and how does this interact with the theme of unity?

READ 1 Corinthians 12:15-26, noticing how Paul personifies different parts of the human body, as if they could talk to one another.

4. From these two paragraphs what problems in the Corinthian church can you discern? Why would these issues be so divisive?
5. What specific challenge(s) do you find in this text to the prideful (those overvaluing their gifts)?
6. What specific encouragement(s) do you find to the insecure (those undervaluing their spiritual gifts)?
7. How do you think these issues apply most to our church setting?
8. In your Christian practice, do you value unity or diversity more? Why? Do you think you could be better balanced? How?
10. In verse 21-26 the parts of the Body that naturally receive more glory are supposed to honor those who don’t. What would that look like in real life?

Connect Weekly Devotion

Day 1: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Our human nature wants to assign people value and importance based on their role. But God wants each of us working together to benefit the whole church. Not only does Jesus' model make the church more effective, but it also brings us more joy. When we're serving in areas we're passionate about and using our spiritual gifts, we will be energized by our roles. God blesses our work as we settle into the ministry He designed us for.

The temptation to compare will always be there. The way to fight for unity is to give thanks for the role each person plays, recognizing that each person in the church matters to God and has a vital role in His Church.

Day 2: John 17

Politicians seem to thrive on division. Income brackets separate communities into one side of the tracks or the other. Even people who share the same beliefs bicker about how to live out those beliefs.

Unity may seem far-fetched, but unity is what Jesus prayed for us before going to the cross. In John 17, Jesus prays, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:23).

With so much division over so many things, Christians' ability to be unified, even when we're not the same, is what will set us apart. This kind of unity doesn't happen naturally. It comes from above. As we experience God's love for us, it leads us to love other believers with pure, unselfish motives. We stop trying to push ourselves to the top and begin submitting to God and one another.

Day 3: Colossians 3:1-17

Have you ever seen a kid's eyes light up as they listen to a story or transform a block into a high-flying airplane?

Watching kids grow up is fascinating and fun, but there's another side you may have seen, too.

At around age 2 or 3, kids start to say "Mine!" when you take away a toy. As we get older, we learn to disguise selfishness. But if we are making decisions based on what makes us feel good or holding on to what we think is ours, we are living with a toddler's mindset.

The author of Colossians, Paul, reminds the church that believing in Jesus and following Him means no longer living for ourselves. Our lives have shifted from being all about what we want and what we desire, to what God wants and desires. It doesn't matter where a person comes from, what language he speaks, or the amount of money he makes (Colossians 3:11).

All that matters is Jesus. And if we are living for Jesus, that's all that should matter to us. Instead of worrying about how we look or what others think, we are to wear "compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3:12). But above all else, we are to put on love. To put something on is a choice.



Day 4: Ephesians 4:1-13

Have you ever wished a parent, child, spouse, co-worker, or friend saw life the way you did? Or maybe, you hoped they understood an issue from your point of view? Sometimes, our differences cause conflict. But can you imagine if God made us all the same

We were meant to be different, and we are called to live unified. This is what the apostle Paul calls us to when he says “live a life worthy of your calling” (Ephesians 4:1). God doesn’t want us to ignore what makes us special or to try to be like everyone else. Instead, He tells us to embrace our differences, to bear with one another when we’re annoyed, and to work toward peace (Ephesians 4:2-3). Unity is not always easy, but it is worth the effort. When Christians stop fighting, Jesus’ message is declared more clearly, His grace is experienced tangibly, and His people grow in maturity (Ephesians 4:12-13).

Day 5: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Somewhere along the way, relationship has turned into follow-ship. We follow celebrities, sports teams, and friends on Instagram. We find people who like what we like, who follow who we follow, and we divide into smaller and smaller circles. The apostle Paul noticed the same thing happening in the church in Corinth. People in the church were saying, “I belong to Paul” and others, “I belong to Apollos.” They began to follow their favorite pastors rather than following Jesus, and division soon followed.

People who are “perfectly united in mind and thought” make the conscious choice to pursue Jesus above all else (1 Corinthians 1:10). This is the unity Jesus’ church is to be known for. When we remember who we follow and that we’re all one family in Christ, the Gospel begins to sound like good news again. The world is familiar with division. But heads turn when a group of people put preferences aside and declare, “In Jesus name, we are one.”

Day 6: Psalm 133, Acts 2:41-47, Acts 4:32, Romans 14:17-18

Not many people are against the idea of unity. We vote for people who promise to bring unity. We sing songs about unity and give awards to those who work toward unity. So if we can agree that unity is important, what keeps us from pursuing it in our own lives?

Unity doesn’t just happen. It takes an ongoing active pursuit. Unity will require us to take risks, enter uncomfortable situations, and face the possibility of getting hurt. The people in the early church weren’t all Jewish, and they probably weren’t from the same neighborhoods. Yet, they opened their homes to each other. Unity doesn’t come easy. But if we’ll accept the challenge and push through the awkwardness, like the early church, we might see God move in miraculous ways.

Day 7: Romans 15:1-13, Galatians 3:26-28

If you are a fan of any sport, you’ve heard the deafening noise of adoring fans speaking as one. While watching on the couch might give you a better view of the game, it’s never as exhilarating as cheering on your team from the stands.

A special energy comes from being part of a shared mission, whether that mission is to win a game or to bring heaven to earth

Rather than fielding a select few, Jesus sends all of His people out to share the good news that He has set us free and He will set things right forever. We might seem like a rag-tag bunch. But when it comes to this mission, no one is too old or too young. Wherever we’ve come from and whatever we’ve done, we all have a place on this team (Galatians 3:26-28).