12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many.  
 The chapter continues with Paul using a well-known analogy. It was well-known because the ancient Greek and Roman writers would often used the image of the body as a way for describing society. Paul, also, utilizes the imagery here but with a number of nuances. The question we want to ask is, what is the purpose of this imagery?  
 When it comes to the body the imagery is interesting. We humans have bodies. We have this physical reality that defines our existence while here on earth. Likewise, we all recognize that we do not have many bodies, but one body. Yet, when we consider our physical body we notice that it is formed through many members.  
 What does this mean? Well, we consider our hands, our feet, our head, our mouths, our ears, our eyes, our skin, our bones, our muscles, our insides. Ultimately, the human body is one organism with many pieces together. Despite the plurality of the human body which has these different parts, these different members, it is still one body. Paul makes the same point when it comes to Christ.  
 This is where the imagery comes into play. Throughout this chapter thus far Paul has established the unity of the many. Though there are many gifts, there is one Spirit, though many services, one Lord, many activities but one God. Just as the body, then, has many members and parts, so too does Christ have many members, many parts, and yet there is still only one Christ, one Lord.  
 Verse 13 focuses in on the unity and plurality aspect. For the unity is found in the One Spirit. At this point we come to one of the big discussions about baptism and Communion. In regards of baptism there are those who believe that the baptism of the Spirit means that every time we understand baptism in the New Testament we should understand it in light of this Spiritual baptism rather than the physical baptism of water.  
 The problem with this is that in this context Paul is using baptism as imagery just as He is using the body as imagery to make a grander point. This does not mean that we are not endowed by the Spirit, or given the Spirit, which we are. Instead, it is just a reminder that this is about the imagery of being immersed in the Spirit similar to baptism. To read, then, a spiritual Baptism into every other place where the Scriptures refer to baptism would be erring since in this context is meant as analogy.  
 Thus, when we are called to the Great Commission to make disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then the way this is accomplished is through water baptism. To read spiritual baptism into that text would be to misunderstand the analogy here.  
 But, this is also the point which is important. This endowment, this giving of the Spirit, is not for some believers. Paul emphasizes the all inclusiveness of the giving of the Spirit. Notice, “in one Spirit we were all baptized.” What were we baptized into? One body. Whose body? The body of Christ.   
 This is emphasized in greater detail as Paul specifies, Jews or Greeks, Slaves or free. For those who remember our time in Galatians Paul makes this same point, however there he also includes male and female. Some wonder why male and female are not introduced here, but it may be because of the Corinthians concept of absolute liberty in which men and women were no longer “different” as we saw in chapter 7.  
 In any case, the point is still clear. Jews or Greeks is a dichotomy of Jews and Gentiles, one or the other. The same is true with slaves or free. It doesn’t matter where one originates, it doesn’t matter what one identified as prior to coming to Christ and being given the Spirit. It doesn’t matter what ones status is to the world even after conversion, since, in the end, all are baptized into the One body.  
 The same emphasis is made when it comes to drink of one Spirit. It is possible, just as with being baptized by the Spirit, as this alluding to Communion, but just as with baptism it is part of the overarching analogy which is focusing on the unity of the many. Thus, all, no matter who the believer is, no matter what the gifts they have received, drink of the one Spirit. We all partake of the Spirit of God.  
 While it is true that Paul is using imagery in order to make his points, we should still not de-emphasize the point either. The reality of being given the Holy Spirit is secure and strong in these verses. It seems likely that Paul has in mind the conversion experience which all Christians experience. Thus, conversion itself is a radical redefinition of who we are as we are given the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit, then, is far more important when it comes to our identity as being in Christ than we may sometimes realize.  
 Ultimately it is with this in mind Paul returns to the point in verse 14. The body does not consist of one member but many. Even though we talk about the body as one, it is a unified one, unified of many different parts, many different pieces, many members. So it is when it comes to the Church, the body of Christ. There are many of us, but there is still one Jesus, one Christ, one Body to which we all belong despite our differences.  
  
Main Point: The main point of these verses are to establish the analogy of the body. Paul utilizes this analogy of the body as a means to opening up further about what it means for unity and plurality in the congregation. Ultimately, Paul makes two points. There is one unifying force, that is the Holy Spirit, that brings all the many different people together in Christ.   
  
Application Points  
  
1). On Unity: There is a debate amongst scholars when it comes to this section of I Corinthians. The debate centers around the question whether the main focus is on Christian unity, or Christian plurality. There are some who believe the emphasis, then, is what unifies us rather than what separates us. Others, however, believe that the emphasis is on our differences. Ultimately, I tend to think that they are not mutually exclusive. Instead, it seems to me, Paul is making both points simultaneously, dealing with the differences while at the same time showing the unity.  
 As such, before we start to delve deeper into the differences and how we have many kinds of ministries and gifts which are to be utilized for the glory of God for the betterment of the Congregation, it is important for Paul and for us to see what truly unifies Christians in the end. We need to ask the question how is it that we can have unity when this world would tell us such unity is impossible.  
 Indeed, when we consider rich and poor, the world will tell us that we cannot have any unity between the two groups. On the more leftist side there is the belief that everything much be equalized. The only way to have true unity is for everyone to be exactly equal. Thus the rich must give to the poor until there is neither rich or poor.  
 On the other hand the political right would say there is a difference between rich and poor and it shows on how the rich are able to acquire and do more things whereas the poor are unable to attain the same things. If the poor can’t afford it, then they shouldn’t have it. Granted, there is supposedly nothing stopping individuals from bettering themselves to be able to climb the social ladder, at least according to them.  
 On both sides of the political spectrum, then, there is a difference between these two groups of rich and poor. How they separate the two is not so different. The question for each side politically and economically tends to be how can one side, the poor, attain the same status as the rich. Both sides answer this question differently. In other words, the answer of unification is different based upon the political side you fall on.  
 Now, we may want to side with one group or the other when it comes to these kinds of questions. However, I do want to point out the obvious flaws with both. On the one hand, you essentially must take from one group and give to another group in order to make, supposed, unity possible. That should be problematic to everyone since forcing people to give up their possessions is theft by any means of the word.  
 Conversely, while the idea of merit and working hard sounds good, the truth is we have seen how the rich, or those in power, tend to be one step ahead of everyone else in order to keep their power. We also see how working incredibly hard does not necessarily lead to betterment. We have seen, far too often, how the rich and those in power can keep people down by using their riches and power to keep others from having any possible gain.  
 Now, some will say that if unity cannot be attained economically, then we can find some other means of unity. Perhaps it is through government itself, or through human rights. From an American perspective, perhaps we can find unity in the fact that we are good ole Americans. Granted, I will also ask how that has brought any lasting unity. Even ethnic or governmental identity seems to fail to bring about a true unification.  
 It seems we are stuck. No matter what may happen we always find ways to be disunified. We always find a way to create different hierarchies, different ways to distinguish group from group, people from people. Whether it be race, gender, economics, even religions, in the end we find ourselves not being able to find unity.  
 So this leads to a question. If this is almost the human condition, if, in the end, we are unable to escape this way of emphasizing differences, then is there really any hope for unity? I would argue, yes. Because all it takes is us thinking probabilistically over what can give us the greatest amount of unity while at the same time lifting up the greatest amount of differences and recognizing them whether just or unjust or simply because differences exist in this world.  
 To me, I find no greater source of unity than what Paul describes in this text, and that is the unity found with the Holy Spirit. In coming to the cross of Christ, in coming into the redemption found through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we find our redemption. In this redemption we are also given a guarantee of our redemption, and that is the Holy Spirit.  
 Indeed, consider what is said in Ephesians 1:11-14, “11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”  
 In this life we have been given the Holy Spirit. Every Christian, upon redemption, is given the Holy Spirit who lives inside of them. This same Spirit is given to all. He is not given to some here or some there. He is not given to only the kings, or only the slaves, or only the men, or only the women. He is not given just to those who are pastors, nor is He given to just laity. No, we are all given the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, leading us into righteousness, holiness, and godliness as individuals.  
 Yet, this is also, then, the unifying force for each. For however the world dichotomizes each individual group of people, the Spirit indwells all. Thus, whatever differences there are in this world are shattered because we have a unifying force within. We all have the same Spirit within. This Spirit of redemption, this Spirit of sanctification, this Spirit of joy and peace.  
 Thus, even though we may have our differences overall, for those who adhere to the foundational principles of the Gospel we can be sure that they have received the Holy Spirit. This is why it is possible for me to rejoice with those of other denominations, for me to enjoy the fellowship of our Methodist brothers and sisters, or Baptist, or Non-denominational. Because what unifies us, in the end, is not going to be whether or not we agree on every doctrinal point, but whether we agree with the foundational principle that Jesus is Lord, the Gospel is true.  
 Even when we disagree then about things like how we practice the faith, or what is the best way to practice the faith, if we look across the way and see individuals who love Jesus, who call Him Lord, and adhere to the truth of the Gospel, we can fellowship with them. We can be unified with them in the same Spirit who urges us to rejoice in this way. To have our differences, sure, but to be unified by the same Spirit as we seek to honor this same Lord.  
 This is true not only of denominational differences. In the end it is true for societal differences as well. I do not look at the rich believer and envy, nor do I think that they are better or have more worth. In the end, the rich believer has been gifted, and I rejoice in the gift given to them. Neither do we loathe the poor, or assume they are somehow worse than others. No, their worth is as great as any regardless of social status, for the same Spirit that is within them is within us and within the rich.  
 Same, too, when it comes to power or prestige. We can often give the powerful or those with prestige great glory. We can be oooohed and aaaaaahed by those who have accomplished things and have received renown. But the truth is, if let’s say a well known politician came in here, I wouldn’t hold them to any higher esteem than I would anyone else. If they aren’t a Christian I would proclaim the same Gospel to them as I would to the person whop has no name recognition. If they are a Christian, I wouldn’t give them more due than the believer with no name recognition.  
 Why? Because in the end we are all subject to the same Lord who is Jesus and the Holy Spirit within us is the One who confirms this truth within us. If we are all adherents to the same Lord, and if we are all indwelled by the same Spirit, then there is no reason for us to think too greatly, or too little, or too much, or too small. No, we all can be unified in the same Spirit who is within us.  
 As such, it might mean that there are differences in how we are to utilize the gifts given to us. Those differences will be spelled out as we continue on through the chapter. For now, however, the goal, the point, is to see the unity we can attain not because of our abilities to solve the problems, but because God is able to solve the differences and has done so through Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit.  
 Let’s not diminish the active role of the Spirit then in our congregations. Even if we do not agree on how the Spirit moves, and do not agree on whether manifestations of the Spirit such as we saw last week happen, we *can* agree that this Spirit lives within us, guiding us, and is the unifying force given to us to treat one another in love, and to walk with one another on this journey of faith.  
 Let’s not underemphasize this role of the Spirit within us. Let’s not sell the Spirit short of His work. Look around you, look at the people to your left and your right. See the wonder of the image of God on them, but then see too the Spirit of God in each of them, and in yourself, connecting us all together, giving us a unity that none can stand against.