14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.  
 Paul continues the metaphor of the body by recognizing a very important truth. The physical body is one, but it has many different parts. As we consider our own bodies we can see the reality of this. We know we have one body and this body consists of hands, arms, legs, feet, heads, skin, fingers, etc.  
 As it is, we do have these various parts of our body. Paul now brings out an absurdity in verse 15. If our feet were to say that it is not the hand I do not belong to the body, would that make it any less part of the body? Of course not. Even if part of the body were to not like its role, or function, it would not cease to make it part of the overall body.  
 The same is true of the senses which we see in verse 16. If the ear should say that because it is not the eye it does not belong, that neither would make it any less part of the body in its function and purpose. The ear, although not another member of the body, is still part of the body by design.  
 Paul then brings up another point, if the whole body were just an eye how would the body be able to hear? If the whole body were an ear, how would it be able to smell? Indeed, it becomes a monstrosity rather than a blessing. By only having one aspect of the body it ceases to be what it is intended to be. By only being one member, the body ceases to function as a whole.  
 Why is this? Because we find in verse 18, that God has arranged the members of the body. Our bodies were designed by God, and each member of our body is designed for a purpose for to bless the whole. Our eyes and ears play a part, our heads and feet play a part, and each part makes the system work as it is designed.  
 Thus verses 19-20 show Pauls point. If our bodies were just the eye it would cease to be a body, instead it would simply be an eye. If our bodies only consisted of hands, it would cease to be a body because the body itself consists of many members not just one. There is a purpose for this in the physical world, for our bodies to survive and thrive requires our bodies to have these different members, these different parts. All because one of the members or parts does not do as another, it doesn’t make it any less meaningful or purposeful for the design which it was made.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.  
 We could see how verses 14-20 focused on the each individual part looking at another and perhaps feeling inferior and because it does not have the right status it seeks to separate. Paul already addressed the absurdity of this and the necessity of each part of the body to fulfill its particular role.  
 Now Paul focuses on the superiority of certain members of the body. In verse 21 we see one member of the body saying to another that it is not needed. Thus, it would be silly for the eye to say to the hand that it has no use. Nor would it make any sense for the head to say to the feet that it has no purpose. The head is not designed to do the work of the feet, nor is the eye designed to do the work of the hand. The head is in need of the feet just as the eye is in need of the hand. In this sense, while the eyes and head may play its specific role it does not mean it has no need for any other member.  
 Paul shows us the contrary in this reasoning. Those parts of the body which seem weakest are in fact indispensable. When we consider our inner parts, for example, we recognize that though they are weak compared to, let’s say, our bones, they are significant when it comes to our lives. We cannot live without our hearts, we cannot live without our internal organs. Though other parts of our bodies are stronger than our internal organs it does not mean that the internal organs are unnecessary, indeed, far from it.  
 Thus in verse 23 Paul focuses on those honorable parts of our bodies. We do not often think of the internal organs, but when something goes wrong we are sure of it! Thus, we recognize the need for them to be working as they should just as we need the outer parts of our body.  
 Likewise when we consider the unpresentable parts, that is, the sexual organs, we treat them with more modesty. We cover ourselves. Does this mean that these unpresentable parts are of less value? Of course not. It simply shows they are of a different purpose and significance then other parts of our body which are presentable to the world. By covering ourselves we show the significance of these organs as compared to other parts of our body which are able to be seen.  
 Indeed, it is God Himself who has so designed our bodies in this way. For some parts to play particular roles for particular purposes according to the design. Though our inner parts have no honor, that is, we do not see them and they are not on full display for the world to oo and ahh over, it does not mean they have no value, instead the opposite. Thus by design the body itself testifies to the way God brings honor to each individual part of the body through the purpose He has given to it.  
 Why? So that there could be unity among all the members of the body. So that the hand could care for the eyes, for the feet to care for the head, for the eyes and head to care for each other and the hands and feet. The design of the body is meant for the betterment of the whole. Each separate part for the benefit of the unified whole.  
 Thus, we can imagine a situation as in verse 26. When we stub our toe, the whole body feels the pain of it. If we have cancer, the whole body feels the effect. Yet, if we are praised for a particular member, perhaps doing well in school, or being physically fit and achieving various awards, so the whole body feels the excitement and rejoices over the achievement.  
  
Main Point: The main poinst of these verses are to further consider the body analogy presented by Paul in the previous verses. There he focused on what unifies the Church which each person receiving the same Spirit. The Spirit is what unifies us. He then uses the body to show how the body has different members, it is a plurality, and yet the plurality is meant for the one being, the one body. Each different member has a role to play according to the design, the design is meant for the betterment of the body as a whole. Thus, no part can seek to separate without loss, no part can be superior compared to another, for without each other, the body loses, breaks down, and ceases to be what it was designed to be.  
  
Application Points  
1). Value in the Design: It is interesting to consider the body analogy Paul has utilized in this chapter. There is something profound about the way Paul is utilizing the imagery. In particular when we consider how all the members, all the parts, are placed where they are by design. That it does not depend on any one part to make the body, but all the parts together which form the whole.  
 This kind of understanding was not new to the world. Indeed, there were writers even during Paul’s time and before who would utilize the body as an image for society. Within the broader scope of society, however, these other writers would utilize the body as a means of showing the need for those who had lower status in society to serve the needs of those who had higher status. As such, they placed an emphasis on parts of the body above other parts. They expected those other members of supporting the greater members of a means of necessity.  
 This should be interesting to us. If we consider the way the world understands the body, and if we understand the way that the world would take one part of the body and place greater emphasis on it, then we can contrast this with the way Paul does here. For Paul, the body metaphor is to show two things. The first is the need for each member to be where they are by design, and the second to show each member has significance because of the overall design placed by God.  
 The contrast is clear. The world will tell us that particular elites deserve all the best of things and that those below should give up everything to them so that way society can function properly. By what standard? The standard of the world. Conversely Paul shows that each member does serve one another, but also that each member is deserving of recognition based upon God’s purpose for each member.  
 In context we understand Paul’s point, though he will make it explicit in the coming verses. The body is a representation of the Church. The connecting factor for us is the Spirit of God. This Spirit has also, for the sake of the congregation and God’s glory, given certain abilities to certain members of the congregation. These are different based upon the will of God.  
 Thus, not all in the congregation are going to be teachers. Not all are going to be preachers. Not all are going to be on the worship team. Not all are going to be deacons or deaconesses. Not all are going to be trustees. Not all are going to be in children’s ministry. Not all are going to be involved with any particular kinds of ministry. Instead, there will be places for each of us to serve for the purpose of God’s glory and the betterment of the congregation. This is done by design, just as the various members of the body are given by design.  
 Unfortunately we live in a world which likes to do three things. The first thing it likes to do is create hierarchies of greater and lesser values. Generally speaking hierarchies in their own right are helpful to establish order. However, when the hierarchies change from order to value based, then it leads to those who are the head of the hierarchies receiving greater glory and prominence than those at the bottom.  
 This can occur in the Church. When we consider the role of the pastor we can consider it to be the greatest of roles. In some ways, it is an important role based upon the design. God has called particular individuals to lead the congregation in knowledge of Himself so that we all can learn about Him and serve Him to the best of our abilities. He has given people in leadership for the purpose of order instead of chaos. The purpose of the role, however, is where it all ends. The leadership does not have greater value than anyone else in the congregation.  
 Why is this? Because we are all connected together. Leadership without people to lead is worthless. Likewise, people without a leader leads to anarchy. Both are required, both are of value. So too when it comes to any other ministry within the congregation. No matter what kind of gift is being used, to matter what kind of service is being performed, it finds its value based upon the design set by God. A value hierarchy, then, has little substance when it comes to a congregation.  
 The second thing our world likes to do is encourage individuals to be as individualistic as possible. In this, the goal is to be self-sufficient. It can become a life where we believe that it can be “me and God.” Where we do not need others in order for us to have a relationship with God, as such it doesn’t matter whether or not I attend Church or am part of a congregation. In other words, it can lead to what Paul describes today, the foot saying that I am not the hand therefore I will separate from the body.  
 But then what of the design of the foot, what of the design of the hand? Indeed, it loses its purpose when it separates itself from the body. So too do our gifts and our ability to serve when we have a mindframe that it can be just God and me and no one else. By doing this we go against the design which God has established, that our gifts given are not for ourselves but for His glory and the betterment of the congregation.  
 Thus, by becoming so individualistic we can forget that the reason of our existence is far more than just ourselves. Just as Jesus washed the disciples feet, showing us the great King was the great Servant, so too are we to serve one another in love. This hyper-individualistic understanding is incredibly foreign to the concept of the loving congregation we see in this chapter.  
 Not only this, but it also leads to an incredible amount of pride. The assumption is that our relationship with Jesus is so perfect here and now that we are not in need of others to help us on our journey. Dare anyone claim to have all the gifts? Dare anyone claim to be self-sufficient in their spiritual life as to not need others to serve and, even more so, to be served by? We can understand how some can become haughty, we can see how corruption can occur even in congregations, but the remedy is not to separate oneself from the body, but to be faithful to the design we were called to, to the gifts we were given, to the service we were called to perform.  
 The people to your left and your right. Really consider them. It isn’t just that you are called to serve them, you are also called to be served by them. They aren’t called to just serve you, but also to be served by you. Consider the different roles within the congregation. It isn’t just that we are to serve, but we are to be served based upon the different gifts of each individual. Yes, by design, we need each other, and unfortunately for us we have to be reminded of this need for one another constantly in a world which seeks to separate through hyper-individuality.  
 The third and final thing the world likes to do is to say that our ultimate purpose is our ultimate happiness. Because of this it is able to get away with separating the body from itself. It is able to say you can achieve anything you want and you can be whatever you want. Is this reality? No. There are things I cannot be. I cannot become a bird, I cannot become a woman, I cannot become the moon, or a star.  
 I am who I am based upon the design set for me by God. The greatest amount of happiness I could possibly achieve, then, is not going to be found in what I can do, but found in how faithful I can be to my calling. As a husband, as a father, as a teacher of the Church. To find ones happiness and ones peace isn’t going to be found in being able to do it all, it will be found in doing what I am actually called to do well.  
 In other words, when we are in tune with the designer we will find our greatest amount of peace and happiness. It won’t be by inventing new designs. It wont be by being our own designer. It will be by accepting the will of the Designer of all things and living according to His purpose that we find our greatest peace and happiness because the we are in tune with what we are called to be as a people.  
 All of what we are seeing in today’s text is a reminder. It reminds us that we should refrain from becoming haughty and prideful. We can assume we do not need others in one of two ways. The first is that our relationship with the Lord is enough and we do not need others, and the second is that our particular gifts are of greater value than other gifts within the congregation. We need to refrain from both of these things, to recognize the great value in each other, and to walk humbly before God who is the bestower of our abilities and gifts to begin with.  
 Indeed, humility to walk along side one another in love. To value one another in love. To cherish one another in love. To boast in each others abilities and gifts in love. To rejoice with each other in love. To serve one another in love. To be served in love. To see the differences not as something to mourn, but something to be cheered. To see the value in the design.  
 As such, be encouraged today to not be discouraged by the failings of others. What I mean is, there are those who have betrayed the intentions God has made for the design of the congregation. Who have become haughty and prideful, full of selfish ambitions. This can lead to anyone and everyone wanting to step away, become disgusted, and believe that it is better to not be involved.  
 Do not let the failings of so many dictate who you are called to be! Instead, be encouraged to serve God well, to be faithful in what He has called you to be. Do not let failings of particular members of the congregation ruin your call to be part of the congregation, part of the body. Do not let pride lead to more pride.  
 Instead, be encouraged to cherish each other. Be encouraged to love one another. Be encouraged to see the value in what each one provides. Each of us fulfills a function and a need that the other cannot fulfill. Rejoice in this Designer who has created such an incredible design! Where so many people with so many gifts can seek to serve and be served. Encourage one another, then, into faithfulness to the Designer, seeking value in the design He has created.