

Series: 1 Corinthians

“An Appeal for Unity in the Body of Christ”

(Sunday Morning August 2nd, 2026)

Passage: 1 Corinthians 12:12-25

O.S. There is a Television Series Entitled “*Alone*,” and Each Season Begins With a Selection of Ten Survival Experts

- > Each of These Survival Experts are Taken to a Primitive Natural Environment, and They Face the Challenge of Finding a Way to Live Off of the Land
 - > As an Incentive, the Last One Remaining Receives a Cash Prize of \$500,000
 - > One Thing This Television Series Reminds of is the Fact That God Has Designed All of Us as Human Beings to Live Within a Community
 - > For You See, the Primary Reason Most of These Contestants Choose to Quit is Not Related to Their Ability to Survive Off of the Land; It is the Fact That They Cannot Handle Being Constantly “*Alone*”
 - > Solomon Reminded All of Us of This Same Fact When He Wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes
 - > In *Eccl 4:9-12*, He Wrote “*9 Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. 10 For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. 11 Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? 12 And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.*”
 - > These Verses Tell Us That God Did Not Intend for Us to be Rugged Individualists Who Say “*I Can Make It Quite Well on My Own Thank You*”
 - > No, on the Contrary, Solomon Tells Us That There is Strength in Numbers; and So, It is Good for Us to Have a Family, and Friends, and a Church
 - > And I Want You to Notice That This is Helpful Not Just as a Source of Companionship, But Also as a Source of Productivity (E...vs 9)
 - > For You See, We Can Accomplish a Great Deal More When We Work Together
- St = In Recent Years, I Have Heard Many Christians Criticize Denominations,

and Non-Denominational Church Leaders Have Been Especially Critical of Denominations

- > **And I Think the Main Reason That Non-Denominational Church Leaders Have Been Especially Critical of Denominations is Because They Want People to Leave Their Denominational Churches and Join Theirs - That's Kind of a No-Brainer - Right?**

Q.n = But Listen to Me, are You Listening?

- > **Denominations Have Come Into Existence for Two Reasons, and the First One Involves Doctrinal Differences**
- > **Methodists, for Example, are Arminian in Their Theology (E...); Presbyterians are Augustinian (E...), and Most Baptists are Somewhere In-Between (E...)**
- > **The Second Reason Denominations Have Come Into Existence is so That They Can Bring More Churches Together in Order to Accomplish More**
- > **The Cooperative Program of Our Own Denomination, for Example, Supports 3500 Foreign Missionaries in 155 Countries, and We Also Support Over 3000 Missionaries in the United States and Canada**
- > **In Addition to This, We Help Support Forty Seven Southern Baptist Universities and Seven Seminaries**
- > **We Also Support Hospitals, and Orphanages, and Crisis Pregnancy Centers, and Christian Camps, and Camps for Troubled Teens and On and On It Goes**

Pt = There is Strength in Numbers, and More Productivity; and When the Church, Which is the Body of Christ, Comes Together in Unity, We are Able to Accomplish Some Truly Great Things in Our World

T.S. Unity in the Church, Which is the Body of Christ, is What This Passage of Scripture is All About

- > **And So, With This in Mind, I Have Divided This Message Into Two Parts**
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I. The Creation of Unity in the Body of Christ

1) God Has Created an Organism

Verse 12 (Read)

- > This First Thing I Want to Point Out is That the Church is Not an Organization; the Church is a Living Organism
- > Paul is Obviously Using an Analogy When He Refers to the Church as *“The Body of Christ”*, But I Want You to Know That This is Consistent Throughout the Bible
- > In *John 15:5*, for Example, Jesus Said, *“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”*
- > A Branch That is Attached to the Vine, Listen to Me Now, Has the Life of the Vine Sustaining It; It is Not an Inanimate Object; It is Living Organism
- > Jesus Referred to Us as Sheep; and in *John 10:16*; He Said, *“I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.”*
- > That is a Prophecy About Those of Us Who are Gentiles (Non-Jews) Being Brought Together With Jews Into His Body Which is the Church
- > And a Sheep, of Course, is a Living Creature, and a Flock of Sheep Represent a Group or an Aggregate of Living Creatures
- > We are Also Referred to as God’s Adopted Children in Places Like *Romans 8* and *Galatians 4* Who Have His Spirit Inside of Us Crying Out *“Abba Father!”*

Q.n = Why is It Important for Me to Point Out That We are Part of an Organism?

Ans = Because It Tells Us Something About How We are Supposed to Function

- > Every Christian in the Church, for Example, is a Living Part of It; and Therefore, Every Christian Should be Active Within It
 - > And Listen, Every Part of This Church Body Has Value, and Every Part Needs to be Nurtured and Cared For, and the Church is Not an Impersonal Business
 - > In Fact, One of the Challenges Every Pastor Must Face Involves Learning How Motivate and Accomplish Things With a Group of Unpaid Volunteers (E...)
- St = Now, in This Next Verse, Paul Describe Out Baptism With or in the Holy Spirit**

Verse 13 (Read)

- > **It is Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Who Brings People Into His Body, Which is Called the Church, & He Does This by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit**
- > **In *Matt 3:11*, John the Baptist Said This to His Disciples; He Said, “*As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He (The Lord Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*”**
- > **John the Baptist Was Not Referring to Water Baptism There, and Paul Was Not Referring to Water Baptism Here**
- > **He Was Using This to Refer to Our Initial Christian Experience, and Paul Uses the Aorist Tense Which Refers to a Once and for All Experience in the Past**
- > **So, This Does Not Leave Any Room for What Some Christians Call the Second Baptism of the Spirit**
- > **There is Only One Baptism of the Spirit, and It Happens at the Time of Our Conversion**
- > **In *Romans 8:9*, Which I Mentioned Last Week, Paul Said, “*...if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*”**
- > **So, It is Impossible to be Born Again of the Spirit of God Without Being Baptized With or in the Holy Spirit**
- > **And if You Don’t Have the Holy Spirit Residing in You Already, This Can Only Mean That You are Not Saved**
- > **This Baptism in the Spirit Extends to a Wide Range of People, Including, People From Different Races, and From Different Economic Backgrounds Etcetera**
- > **And the Holy Spirit Creates an Immediate Sense of Unity and Comraderie Between All Christians Even Though We do Not Come From the Same Culture or Even Speak the Same Language (In Acts 2, We Have an Example of This)**

T.S. 1) God Has Created an Organism

2) This Organism Has a Purpose

- > The Purpose, as We Saw Last Week, is to Glorify God, and the Best Way for Us to do This is Through His Church Which is the Body of Christ
- > In *Eph 1:22-23*, Paul Said, “22 And He (God the Father) *put all things in subjection under His feet* (God the Son), and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”
- > The Church, as I Said Last Week, is Where It is at, Because It is Through the Church That God Has Chosen to Manifest His Power in This World
- > During His First Advent, Jesus Had a Body Made of Flesh and Blood, and This is What He Used to Accomplish His Work in the World
- > Jesus Has a Body Today That Consists of Living Human Beings; We Call This “*The Church*”, and the Unity of This Body is Essential for Us to Fulfill His Purpose in This World
- > He is Referring Here to the Universal Church, or Sometimes, People Call It the Invisible Church
- > But Listen, This Does Not Negate Our Responsibility to be an Active Part of a Local Church

Q.n = Why Should I Join a Local Church?

Ans = These are Not Original (Derek Prime)

a. The New Testament Takes It for Granted That Every Christian Would Join a Local Congregation

-> I Hope You Have Noticed That Most of the Epistles That We Have in Our New Testament Were Written to Local Congregations (1 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col...)

-> And in the Book of the *Revelation Chapters 2 & 3*, Our Risen Lord Addressed Seven Local Congregations

b. The Descriptions of the Church Only Make Sense When We Meet Together in a Local Fellowship

-> I’ve Mentioned, “*the Flock*;” We Also Have “*The Household of the Faith*”, and “*The Family of Faith*” and “*The Living Stones*” in *1 Pet 2* That are Joined Together in Unity (BTW = I Want You to Notice That These are Called “Living Stones”)

c. The Local Church Was Designed by Our Lord for Fellowship, Discipline, Instruction and Service

-> In Acts 2:42, We are Told That, After They Were Baptized, *“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship,...”*

Q.n = Where Else are We Going to Find Fellowship With Young and Old, and Black and White, and Red and Yellow and Rich and Poor, and Fat and Thin?

Q.n = What About Service? Where Else are We Going to Find a Way to Get Plugged in and to Serve the Lord in Our World?

-> As I Pointed Out Last Week, Every Christian is Saved to Serve, and a Local Church Provides You With a Way to do That

Q.n = What About Church Discipline? This is Not a Pleasant Subject, But You Tell Me: is Accountability Important? And is It Ultimately for Our Benefit?

-> If You Decide to Become a Wino, or if You Become Addicted to Drugs, or if You Get Involved in Sexual Sin, or You Fall Into Doctrinal Error, I Have a Greater Degree of Responsibility if You are a Part of This Congregation to Try to Get You Back on Track

Q.n = Is This Kind of Accountability to a Local Church a Bad Thing?

Ans = I Don't Think So

-> Someone Might Say *“Well, Why do You Guys Try to Get Christians to Join Your Church and Send for Their Letter; That's Not Biblical”*- Oh Really?

-> In Acts 18:27, We Read, *“And when he (Apollos) wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace”*

-> That Sounds a Lot Like a Church Letter to Me, and That is Not an Isolated Example

-> Paul, for Example, *“Commended”* a Woman Named Phoebe to the Church in Rome; That Sounds Like a Church Letter Too

-> And Just so You Will Know, I Have Done Exactly This on Several Occassions; I Have Let Another Church Know When They Were Getting a Real Jewel

T.S. I. The Creation of Unity in the Body of Christ

II. The Causes of Disunity in the Body of Christ

1) The Problem of Inferiority

- > **One of the Problems in the Church at Corinth, as We Saw Last Week, is That They Had Developed a Hierarchy of Spiritual Gifts**
- > **And They Were Saying That the More Visible Gifts Like: the Gift of Prophecy, or Teaching, and Especially Ecstatic Utterances, Were More Important**
- > **And This Caused Some of These Christians in Corinth to Desire to Have the More Visible Gifts**
- > **And So, They Had People Trying to Preach or Teach Who Had No Business Trying to Preach or Teach**
- > **And They Had People Trying to Get Involved in Ecstatic Utterances, and This Gave the Devil an Opportunity to Create Some Counterfeit Gifts**
- > **And This Also Caused Some Who Had the Less Favored Gifts, to Become Envious and to Withhold the Use of Their Spiritual Gift**

Verses 15 (Read)

- > **The Little Word “IF” Appears Five Times in This Passage, and It is Intended to Say to Us That He Wants Us to Pretend**
- > **As So, He Begins With the Foot, and I Think This Was Intended to be Humorous; the Foot Becomes Envious of the Hand**

Q.n = Have You Ever Put Yourself in Your Foot's Shoes?

- > **Well, We Might as Well Admit That a Foot is Usually Not Attractive, in Fact, I Have Such Ugly Feet Some Girls at Schlitterbahn Made Fun of Them One Day (Eww It's the Man With Ugly Feet....Eww It's Those Teenage Girls With Zits)**
- > **We Cover Our Feet Up With Sock AND SHOES, and They Stay in There All Day; And When We Take Them Out at Night, They Stink**
- > **The Foot Becomes Envious of the Hand, Because the Hand Can Make Gestures, and the Hand Can Play an Instrument, and We Can Use Our Hand to Pick Up Our Car Keys (Have You Ever Tried to Pick Up Your Car Keys With Your Foot?)**

St = Then, He Moves on to the Ear, and the Ear Becomes Envious of the Eye

Verse 16 (Read)

- > **Of Course, the Ear is Not as Attractive as the Eye; Some of Us Have Big Ears, and They Say That Our Ears Never Stop Growing**

- > **Our Ears Tend to Collect Some Wax From Time to Time; Some of Us Older Folks Have Hair in Our Ears**
- > **Look at Your Neighbors Ears Right Now and Tell Me if You Think His Ears are Attractive or Just Don't Say "Ew" Out Loud – O.K. (E...BTW I Cheated...)**
- > **And Then, Paul Gets Really Sarcastic, and He Essentially Says *"What Would It be Like if Your Whole Body Was an Eye?" - Verse 17 (Read)***
- > **I Want You to Try to Imagine This is You Can – Try to Picture in Your Mind a 6 Foot Eye – and You Can Only Get Around by Rolling Your Eye**
- > **But I Suppose That You Could Say That You Got There in the Blink of an Eye**
- > **Now, the Punch Line Comes in *Verse 18*, and I Think This is When the Humor Begins to Subside – *Verse 18 (Read)***
- > **If We Pull This Onion Skin Back, I Think We Can See That It is Pride That Causes Some People Not to Put Their Gifts Into Use, and They're Blaming God**
- > **I Want You to Listen Carefully to What Paul Said Back in *Rom 9:20-21*; He Said,**

"20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?"

Pt = Our God is Sovereign, and It is a Slight Against Our God When We Choose Not to Exercise Our Spiritual Gift, Because We View It as Less Significant

- > **You See, That is Rooted in Pride; And Guess What? It is Not About You, and It is Not About Me; It is All About Our Sovereign God**
- > **And So, if He Wants Me to be an Ugly Foot, I Will be the Best Ugly Foot I Can be, and I Won't be Jealous of the Hand (E...the Best Ear...the Best Eye...)**

2) The Problem of Superiority

Verse 21 (Read)

- > **Now, We Have the Opposite Problem; There Were Some in the Church at Corinth Who Possessed the More Visible Gifts**
- > **And Unfortunately, They Developed This Attitude That Essentially Said,**

“My Gifts are Important, But Yours Aren’t; in Fact, This Church Can Get Along Quite Well Without Your Gifts, But My Gifts are Indispensible”

- > I Believe This Actually Happens in the Church Sometimes, and We Would be Kidding Ourselves if We Thought It Didn’t; and of Course, It is Very Destructive
- > In Fact, It Can’t Help But be Destructive, Because Solomon Said in *Prov 16:18* That “*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling*”
- > So, Paul Brings Their Pride Into Check by Reminding Them of the Fact That the Invisible Parts of Our Body are the Most Vital of All

Verse 22 (Read)

- > Listen, the Older I Get the More Concerned I Become With the Invisible Parts of My Body Than I am About the Visible Parts
- > I Don’t Think I Need to Emphasize This Too Much, Because It’s a Pretty Simple Thing to Understand

Ex = I Certainly Hope, for Example, That My Heart is Doing O.K. in There; Because if It Isn’t, I Won’t be Preaching Much Longer

Ex = And I Certainly Hope That My Liver is Doing O.K., Because I Was Told by One Doctor That I Have a Fatty Liver and That Could Lead to Cirrhosis

Ex = I Certainly Hope That My Lungs are O.K., Because I Can’t Live for More Than Five Minutes With Air

- > Paul is Just Reminding Us That Every Part of the Body is Essential, and Those Internal Parts are Vital Whether We Acknowledge This or Not

III: This Caused Me to Think of Vestigial Organs; in Case You Don’t Know, This Refers to Organs That are No Longer Considered Necessary for the Body

- > Evolutionists, Who BTW Consider Themselves to be Much Smarter Than Those of Us Who are Creationists, Have Long Touted That These Organs are Proof Positive of Evolution
- > One of Their Problems, However, is That Their List of Vestigial Organs Keeps Getting Shorter as Modern Science Begins to Prove That These Organs do Indeed Have an Important Purpose

-> Some Scientists in the Past Claimed That There Were as Many as 100 Vestigial Organs in the Human Body; and Now, Most Claim Less Than a Handful

Ex = It Has Now Been Discovered, for Example, That the Thymus Gland Which Was Once Considered to be Useless, Trains and Matures T Cells Which are Essential White Blood Cells That Help Fight Infection and Produce Hormones That Regulate Immune Function

Ex = The Pituitary Gland Was Once Considered to be Vestigial, and It is Now Referred to as “*The Master Gland*”, Because It Has Been Discovered That It Secretes Ten Different Hormones That Direct Many Other Vital Body Functions

Ex = The Appendix Was Also Once Classified as a Vestigial Organ, But It Has Now Been Discovered That It Contains a High Concentration of Lymphoid Tissue Which Helps the Immune System Distinguish Between Harmless and Harmful Microbes Which Support Antibody Production

Ex = Scientists Have Also Discovered That Some Internal Organs That are No Longer Useful Were an Essential Part of Fetal Development; and Therefore, These Should Not be Referred to as “*Vestigial*”

-> Now After Reading All of This, I Came to This Conclusion; My Preference is to Keep All of My Body Parts if I Can (Can I Get a Witness?)

-> And I Think We Would Also be Wise to Accept and Appreciate and Value of Every Christian in the Body of Christ, Because They May be Much More Vital to the Body of Christ Than We Might Realize (Can I Get a Witness?)

St = In Light of This, Paul Makes a Very Wise Suggestion; He Suggests That We Should Give More Praise to the Less Visible Parts of the Body of Christ

Verses 23-24 (Read)

-> I Understand the Need for This, and This is Why I Include an Appreciation During Our Announcements Every Sunday

-> But One Thing That Concerns Me About This is That I Fear That I Will Have Overlooked Someone Along the Way Who Deserves to be Appreciated

- > If You Happen to be One of Those, I Want to Encourage You Today by Saying That You Will Have Your Day; for You See, Our Lord Doesn't Miss Anything
- > The Writer of Hebrews Said This in *Heb 6:10*; He Said, *"For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints"*
- > He Knows My Friend; He Knows, and This is All Going to be Revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ Which is a Judgment Based on Rewards
- > And This is When We Will All Discover That *"...the last shall be first, and the first last"* (Matt 20:16) and the Greatest Among Us *"...will be the servant"* (Matt 23:11)

Verses 25-26 (Read)

- > It Has Been Said That This is When You Know That You are Really Connected to the Body of Christ; You Will Suffer With Those Suffer
- > And One of the Beautiful Things About the Human Body is That Our Body Has a Way of Compensating for Those Parts That Become Weak
- > It Has Been Proven, for Example, That, if One of Your Eyes Becomes Injured, Your Brain Will Teach Your Other Eye How to Compensate for This Deficiency

III: Sandra Kent Has Given Me Permission to Share This Story That Happened Ten Years Ago; She Had to Have Cancer Surgery, and She Was Laid Up for Quite a While

- > & So, Our Church Members Found a Way to Compensate for This Deficiency in Our Church Body (E...Some Ladies Volunteered to Clean the Church)

Invitation:

- > In Closing, I Want You to Notice That Paul Closes This Passage of Scripture by Wetting Our Appetite for the Next Passage of Scripture

Verse 31 (Read)

- > The Next Chapter is Called *"The Love Chapter"*, and *"The More Excellent Way"* Involves All of Us Loving One Another in a Godlike and Unselfish Way (Agape)
- > And One Reason This *"The More Excellent Way"* is Because It is Very Attractive

- > In *John 13:35*, Jesus Said, *"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*
- > This is the Best Form of Advertising We Have as a Church; It's Better Than Flyers, or Facebook Ads, or Billboards, or Even Television Commercials
- > Paul Tells Us in *Titus 2:10* That This Also *"Adorns the Doctrine of God"*; and Listen, *Titus 2* is All Salvation by Grace Thru Faith Alone in Jesus Christ
- > In Fact, in the Very Next Verse, Paul Said, *"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men"* (Titus 2:11)
- > And So, Our Goal Should be to Have Unity in the Body of Christ so That People Will be Receptive of Our Message About God's Grace
- > And This is Our Message: Our Message is That Anyone Can be Saved by Grace Through Faith Alone in Jesus Christ
- > And if You Have Not Yet Received Jesus Christ as Your Personal Lord and Savior, This is What the Bible Says You Need to Do (ABCs of Salvation)

Titus 2:10