LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

1 Corinthians 12 :12-31

One Body, many members

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 27, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Hi, everyone. We are back with our continuing study through 1 Corinthians. We're in the middle of chapter 12. We're going to be picking it up at verse 12 and going through the end of the chapter. So let's read those verses now, and we'll get into it.

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. 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. For the body does not consist of one member, but of many. If the foot should say, because I'm not a hand, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, because I'm not an eye, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body.

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? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

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. On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. 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, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles?

Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues?

Do all interpret, but earnestly desire the higher gifts? And I will show you a still more excellent way. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much. Thank you for your Word.

Thank you for this time that we can come together and study the Word and grow from it. And we pray that that would be the case this time. We pray that you would speak to our hearts, that you would open our hearts, that you would fill our hearts with wisdom, grace, and insight. And we ask it in the authority of Jesus. Amen.

So again, we're talking about the body. We're talking about caring for one another. We're talking about recognizing the necessity of the other members of the body of Christ. This is the theme that started in chapter 11. We dealt with it last time when we talked about spiritual gifts, and now we're dealing with it in Paul's picture of the body of Christ patterned after our own physical bodies.

And he talks about how our own physical bodies are assembled by the Lord in such a way as to be a complete, functioning body. And you know, that's the case with the body of Christ as well. We've been assembled by the Lord in such a way that we are complete when we come together and recognize the giftings that we have. The problem is we're human beings, and we tend to elevate. We tend to exalt certain giftings and to think that some are better than others from the standpoint of importance or popularity or something like that.

And we forget that God is the one who apportions gifts. He's the one who gives them as he wills, and we are what God has made us to be. And what he is looking for us to do is to be faithful with those abilities, our function in the body of Christ. Paul talks about that. He talks about the fact that the body would be ridiculous if it only had one kind of member or function.

And he went through this long section of essentially saying that one member or function of the body can't say to another that, I don't need you. We all need one another, and that's something that we need to get through our hearts. We all need one another. And have you ever thought about the implications of that statement? I've talked to so many Christians over the years who have said, you know, I don't really go to church.

I believe in the Lord Jesus, but I don't really feel the need to be part of a fellowship. The church isn't four walls. We all know that. We all know the church isn't four walls. We know that it's much more.

It's the people. But that's the point. The church is the people. And we come together as the people to make up the body. And when people say to me, I don't really gather with other believers, I think to myself, well, you know, when you came to Jesus, you became a member of the body of Christ, but you are a dismembered member by your own hand.

You've dismembered yourself from the body of Christ in a practical, day-to-day sort of expression. Now, Jesus has made you a member of the body of Christ, and you are that. And you're going to be that whether you join with other believers in fellowship, worship, and study of the word or not. You're still going to be a member of the body of Christ, but you're going to be a dismembered one. And you're going to be someone who is operating on their own.

And as Paul is saying in this section, we weren't intended to operate on our own. We were intended to operate as a group. That is the message of this section of 1 Corinthians chapter 12. We are a body. We were meant to function as a body.

We need one another. You know, there are so many pictures, Paul gives many of them here in this section. But when we think of other things, just concerning our physical body, there are so many pictures that God has given us of how our body functions and how we need all of the functions that make up our body. You know, there have been many times that I have cut myself. In fact, I'm one of those people that shouldn't be trusted with a knife or pointy things.

I just, I'm terrible with knives. I've got scars on my fingers from cutting myself. And they're usually all on my left hand because my right hand is the one in which I hold the knife. But you know what? Every time, every single time I've cut myself, something instant happens.

This hand drops the knife and reaches over and grabs the hand that has been cut. And it holds it tight so that I can stop the bleeding and it can start to heal. But isn't that a picture of the body taking care of itself? I mean, I don't think about the fact that I need to drop the knife and run over and grab my hand, you know. It's just, it just happens.

Because the body, our physical bodies, are designed in such a way that we care for the different members of the body. It's the same thing in the body of Christ. When someone gets hurt, when someone is struggling, the other members of the body shouldn't even think twice. We just, we go. We go to that person.

We talk to them. We pray with them. We encourage them. That's what the members of the body do. That's what we're meant to do.

And that's what Paul is talking about here. The eye, he says in verse 21, can't say to the hand, I have no need of you. Oh, good grief. Don't need my hands? Are you kidding?

And so he goes through these various things, talking about the fact that we need, we need one another. And in fact, he says, in verse 22, the parts of the body. that seem to be weaker are actually indispensable. I think about my little finger. It's really interesting.

It's a pretty weak appendage when you stop and think about it, but have you ever tried to do things without the use of your little finger? Have you ever had like a big bandage on your little finger? It might not be able to lift much or do much all on its own, but you realize when it's incapacitated how important it is, how necessary it is for doing things. So that's some of what Paul is talking about here. And he says in verse 23, on those parts of the body that we think less honorable, they're not, we don't seem to be all that important, we bestow the greater honor and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require.

And he's talking about all of this because he's likening it to how God has composed the spiritual body of Christ in the same way, so that we may, as he says at the end of verse 25, care for one another. We need to learn how to care for one another. Verse 26 is probably the key verse of this section of Scripture. If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all rejoice together.

At least that's the way it's supposed to happen when you realize we're one body, one body. And that's why he says in verse 27, now you, you are the body of Christ. All of this has been for the benefit of understanding our spiritual union and functionality with other believers. And God has appointed different functions in the church. He begins to list some of those functions, such as apostles, and he says they're first.

Second, prophets. Third, teachers. Then miracles, or those who function in that role. Then gifts of healing, helping. Boy, just being a help.

I just want to help. You know, that's a function in the body of Christ. Administrating. You know, there are people who have the gift of administration. I find as a pastor, they are rare.

True administration, I think is rare. And various kinds of tongues, the ability to speak in languages, supernaturally. So now you'll see he's kind of mixing these various functions and giftings within the body of Christ. But then he ends this section by asking this series of rhetorical questions. Are all the same?

Are all apostles? No. Are all prophets? Obviously not. Are all teachers?

No. Not everybody has that spiritual gift. Do all work miracles? Obviously not. Do all possess gifts of healing?

Nope. Do all speak with other languages? Nope. Do all interpret those supernatural languages? No, they do not.

We don't all do the same thing. We have different functions. Because that's what makes up a body. Diversity of function. And God is the one who determines that diversity, right?

He then says in verse 31, but eagerly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. What are the higher gifts? Well, he's going to reveal that in the next chapter. The higher gifts, I'll give you a little spoiler, okay?

The higher gifts are those that bless the largest number of people. Because remember, that's the theme. That's the theme we've been talking about ever since we were in chapter 11. And now through chapter 12. That which blesses the body, that which serves the body, that which encourages the body, those are the higher gifts.

So he says, if you're going to desire a gift, don't desire it for you. Desire it for others. Those are the higher gifts. But he's going to show an even greater motive behind it all. And that's what we'll get into next time, as we delve into chapter 13.

And we'll take that whole chapter together, because it's one single theme. You have some discussion questions now to go through. So let's close in prayer. Father, thank you for this time. Thank you for your spirit.

Thank you for teaching us. Thank you for your word. Continued, we pray to teach and direct our hearts according to your truth, and help us, Lord, to be the body of Christ. We commit this to you in the authority granted us through the name of Jesus. Amen.