

That all of them may be ONE

ONENESS GUIDE #8

TOWARD ONENESS

October 31, 2010

1 Corinthians 12

DESTINED FOR UNITY...
WITH GOD
In Jesus Christ Our Lord
WITH EACH OTHER
In The Church
WITH EACH OTHER
In Our Family

Unity: An Indispensable Means of Growth I

1 CORINTHIANS 12

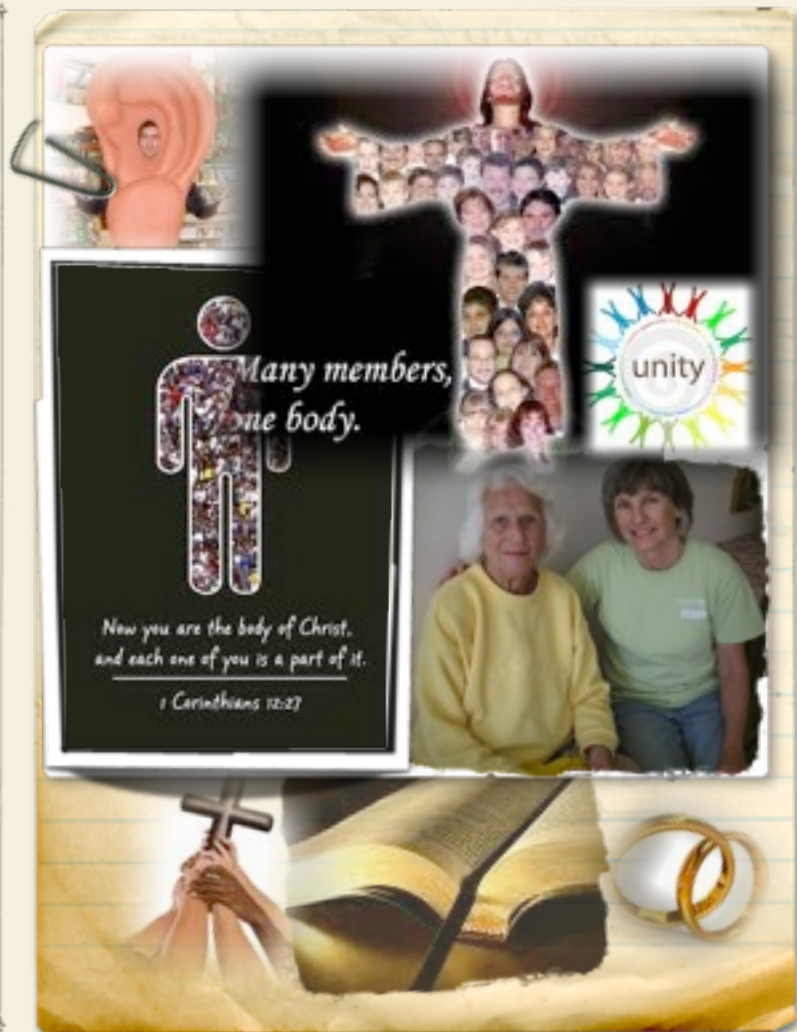
12 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ² You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³ Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,^a and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

- Jesus (John 17:21)



1 Corinthians 12 - The Picture of Health

¹² The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by^a one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴ Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸ And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

Self Study in Oneness for Week Eight

YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH. - PSALM 119:105

Day Look: Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

- 1 Ask:** 1. What clues do we find here as to how the Corinthians might have been “ignorant” about spiritual gifts?
2. How might such ignorance and/or pagan infatuation with ecstatic spiritual experiences (wild movement, speech controlled by spiritual entities, etc.) have “led astray” people in this church? What test does Paul suggest for determining whether such activity is healthy or destructive, unifying or disintegrating. (v.3)?
3. What spiritual gifts are mentioned here in this chapter (see esp. vv8-10 & 28-30)? What does each of these mean to you?

Meditate: Why do you think the Apostle Paul chose to use the analogy of the human body to help us understand how the Church--the Family of God, followers of Jesus, the Body of Christ--works? How does this analogy help us see the vital importance of unity?

Pray: *Each day* - Thank God for the gifts He has given you and the gifts He has given to others that help you grow in Him.

Ask Him to guide your studies in His Word this week and to equip you for the good work He has for you to do.

Today - Thank God for all the ways your physical body works in its diverse functions to keep the unity that is a healthy you.

Day 2 Look: Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Ask: 1. What roles do we see each member of the Trinity playing in relationship to spiritual gifts (vv.4-6)

- Father
- Son
- Holy Spirit

2. What truths concerning spiritual gifts does Paul emphasize in verse 11?

Meditate: Why does Paul begin this discussion of the Church as the “Body of Christ” by emphasizing unity in the Trinity? In what ways does the “sameness” of Father, Son & Spirit encourage you toward oneness with others?

Pray: Today - Focus for a moment on each member of the Trinity and consider the role of each Person in your life. Thank God the Father for His work in your life and His unity with God the Son & God the Holy Spirit. Thank Jesus, God the Son, in the same way. Thank God the Holy Spirit in the same way.

Day 3 Look: Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Ask: 1. In what ways does Paul say we are “one” as the Body of Christ? (vv. 12-13, 18-20, 25-26)

2. In what ways does Paul say we are “many” as the Body of Christ? (vv.14-20)

Meditate: How does this chapter help us to understand that unity does not mean uniformity? How do all of our differences--gifts, experiences, talents, personalities--that God has put in us help us then toward unity rather than disintegration?

Pray: Today- Think of someone you were able to help somehow in the last few days. What about you (gifts, personality traits, experiences, abilities, etc.) made you able to help? Thank God for these things.

Day 4 Look: Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Ask: 1. What makes the picture of vv.15-21 so absurd? What might have been going on in the Corinthian church to cause Paul to write these things?

2. How does Paul counter the apparent spiritual pride behind the behavior of people in this church (see vv. 21-26)?

Meditate: Think of times when you have seen people trying to promote themselves as a matter of first importance in the life of the church (*My gifts are the ones that matter! I need to be noticed and appreciated!*) or, on the other hand, people unwilling to share their time and talents because they wouldn't believe that God had gifted them in any significant ways (*I have no gifts. Nobody needs me.*) How do both forms of self-preoccupation--self-denigration (*I'm worthless. I have nothing of value to offer.*) and self-promotion (*I am complete in myself. I can do everything necessary for myself. You all need me, but I have no need of you.*)--destroy unity?

Pray: Today - Confess any bitterness or envy you may have toward others who have gifts and abilities you wish were our own. Ask God to replace these feelings with gratitude for the way these blessings help others and with praise to Him.

Day 5 Look: Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

Ask: 1. How is each part of the Body needed (indispensable)? How do you see this principle in your own church?

2. How is each part of the Body needy (dependent)? How do you see this principle in your own church?

Meditate: How do the principles of both indispensability (being needed) and dependence (being needy) help us to understand the crucial importance of unity in the human body and in the Body of Christ?

Pray: Today - Every positive characteristic we possess comes with a flip side (naturally “flexible” people tend to be disorganized... “creative” people can lack common sense... etc.). Think about your strengths and then about your “flip side” weaknesses. Thank God for the people in your church and in your life whose strengths complement your weaknesses.



Notes

Corinth & I Corinthians - see notes from Week Three.

I Corinthians 12 - In this chapter Paul gives his great presentation of the “Body of Christ” which is The Church using the analogy of the human body. Thus He commends to us the vital principles of unity and diversity in the Church. As our own physical bodies have a wondrous diversity with many parts and varieties of functions, so they also have a common purpose, working in harmony for the mutually-beneficial goal of healthy growth, strength and wholeness. When any part stops functioning, the whole body suffers. An organ that stops cooperating for the good of the whole body is an organ that will bring disease and death for itself and for all the other parts. **Now about spiritual gifts** (v.1) - To begin this chapter, these words indicate that Paul is responding again to questions asked of him by church members. Paul’s emphasis in vv.1-11 is on the *variety* of gifts God gives (probably in response to Corinthian preoccupation with one gift -- the ecstatic sign gift of speaking in tongues)... **influenced and led astray** (v.2) - pagan “spiritual experiences” are very different than the mysteries of spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit which serve to build up the Body of Christ... **Jesus is Lord** (v.3) - The fact of ecstatic speech is of no particular significance (Paul assumes it happens). What is important is the *content* of this speech. As scholar C.K. Barrett points out “*Inspiration as a religious phenomenon is in itself indifferent, and gains significance only in the context of Christian obedience*”... **to each one... for the common good** (v.7) - Every member of the Church, every follower of Jesus Christ,

is uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit, and all of these gifts are given for the good of the

whole Body... **just as he determines** (v.11) - This diversity of spiritual gifts in its entirety comes from God the Holy Spirit according to His plan and for His unified purposes... **The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts** (v.12) - “Diversity within unity” is the theme for Paul in the last part of this “Body of Christ” chapter... In the verses that follow, Paul points to the God-given and God-directed variety of gifts in His Church, and he encourages us to understand that in this Body of Christ, as in human bodies, each gift, each function, is both *needed* and *needed*... **you are the Body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it** (v.27) - All that Paul is saying here applies to *every single one of us* who have said “Yes” to Jesus Christ who has said “Yes” to us!... **eagerly desire the greater gifts** (v.31) -- Paul is probably referring here to the less dramatic gifts (as opposed to speaking in tongues or working miracles) that continually serve the greater good of God’s people.

Structure of 1 Corinthians

Part One (Ch.1-6) - Four Problems

Paul had been made aware of

- A. Divisions in the Church (1-4)
- B. Incest (5)
- C. Lawsuits among believers (6)
- D. Sexual Immorality

Part Two (Ch.7-15) - Response to Specific Questions asked of Paul in a previous correspondence

- A. Marriage (7:1-24)
- B. Virgins (7:25-40)
- C. Food Sacrificed to Idols (8-10)
- D. Propriety in Worship (11:2-16)
- E. The Lord’s Supper (11:17-34)
- F. Spiritual Gifts (12-14)
- G. The Resurrection (15)



Small Group Guide

Hearing About Us - 1. When have you been part of a team that seemed to be working like a “well-oiled machine?” 2. What factors made this team so effective at that time? 3. What part did you play on this team?

Heeding God’s Word - 1. Why did Paul choose the analogy of the human body to teach about spiritual gifts and the Church of Jesus Christ? 2. What does this teach us about the importance of unity to us as the people of God? 3. What spiritual gifts mentioned by Paul in this chapter do you see in the members of your small group? 4. As time permits share other insights you gained in your personal Bible Study in Oneness this week.

Helping One Another in Prayer to God - As we head into the home stretch of our Study, ask God to help you respond well to what you have learned and experienced in your Small Group. Share additional prayer requests and pray for one another.