

I Corinthians

Chapter 12:12-31

¹² **For** just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

For > (Precept Austin) “term of explanation”

Robertson > What Paul here means is Christ as the Head of the Church has a body composed of the members who have varied gifts and functions like the different members of the human body. They are all vitally connected with the Head of the body and with each other. This idea he now elaborates in a remarkable manner.

Romans 12: 4-5 > ⁴ For just as we have many parts in one body and all the body's parts do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another.

¹³ For by one Spirit we were all **baptized into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and **we were all made to drink** of one Spirit. ¹⁴ **For the body is not one part, but many.**

Baptized into one body > compare to **Romans 6:3-6** > ³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

We were all made to drink > (Utley) This term was used of irrigating water. It literally meant "saturated."

Utley > Both "baptized" and "made to drink" are *aorist* (once and done) *passive* (the action happened from the outside) *indicative* (a fact) which imply a finished work in past time

For the body is not one part, but many > (Utley) This is the summary truth repeated several times in this chapter (Consider Utley's emphasis here and compare it to Paul's overall desire for the church at Corinth. In addition ... think through the concepts of "Unity" and "Diversity".)

- **1 Cor. 12:12** > *For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.*
- **1 Cor. 12:13** > *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body*
- **1 Cor. 12:14** > *for the body is not one part, but many.*
- **1 Cor. 12:20** > *But now there are many parts, but one body*
- **1 Cor. 12:25** > *so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same care for one another*
- **1 Cor. 12:27** > *Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it.*

Precept Austin > The "Wooden" Rule > Legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden had an interesting rule for his teams. Whenever a player scored, he was to acknowledge the person on the team who had assisted. When he was coaching high school, one of his players asked, "Coach, won't that take up too much time?" Wooden replied, "I'm not asking you to run over there and give him a big hug. A nod will do."

¹⁵ *If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not **for this reason** any less a part of the body.* ¹⁶ *And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not **for this reason** any less a part of the body.*

MacDonald > "When we see that diversity is essential to a normal, healthy body, it will save us from two dangers—from belittling ourselves (**vv. 15–20**) and from belittling others (**vv. 21–25**).

For this reason > (Robertson) The Greek words used translate into *along side of this*. (In other words > "This" doesn't equal "this")

Where is the source of the focus by the speakers in these two verses? **Barclay** > "Whenever we begin to think about our own importance in the Christian Church, the possibility of really Christian work is gone."

¹⁷ ***If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?*** ¹⁸ *But now God has **arranged** the parts, each one of them in the body, just as He desired.* ¹⁹ ***If they were all one part, where would the body be?*** ²⁰ *But now there are many parts, but one body.*

If the whole body were an eye > (A T Robertson) The first part is false (i.e., the whole body is not an eye, 1 Cor. 12:17; the whole body is not an ear, v, 17; and the whole body is not one member, 1 Cor. 12:19)

Arranged > (Strong's) to place, lay, set

Vincent > See on **John 15:16**, where the same word is used by Christ of appointing His followers.

John 15:16 > *You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.*

If they were all one part, where would the body be? > (Constable) For example, if all had the gift of tongues, the gift that the Corinthians valued so highly, the body would not function. If an automobile were made up only of hundreds of horns, it could not function.

²¹ ***And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again, the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."***

And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you (Constable) Too often, because we differ from each other, we also differ with each other.

Tozer > In his book *The Pursuit of God*, A. W. Tozer wrote, "Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned not to each other but to another standard to which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshipers [meeting] together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be were they to become unity-conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship."

²² ***On the contrary, it is much truer that the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; ²³ and those parts of the body which we consider less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor, and our less presentable parts become much more presentable, ^{24a} whereas our more presentable parts have no need of it.***

Seem ... consider > (Strong's) to have an opinion, to seem

Helps Word-Studies > directly reflects the *personal perspective* (values) of the person making the *subjective judgment call*, i.e. showing what they *esteem* (or *not*) as an *individual*.

Necessary > We've seen this word in the past. Its source word is one that means > *bent arm*. **Precept Austin** states > a bent/uplifted arm poised to meet a pressing need - necessity, compulsion) describes that which compels or makes something needful or necessary (as meeting a need)

We bestow > (Vincent) Elsewhere in the New Testament the word is used of encircling with something;

- either putting on clothing, as Matthew 27:28;
- or surrounding with a fence, as Matthew 21:33;

- or of the sponge placed round the reed, as Mark 15:36; John 19:29.
- So evidently here. Rev., in margin, *put on*.

Presentable > (Strong's) shapeless, unseemly

^{24b} *But God has so **composed** the body, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked, ²⁵ so that there may be no **division** in the body, but that the parts may have the same **care** for one another.*

Composed > to mix together, to agree with

Helps Word-Studies > "identified *with*," intensifying > "mix into a new and improved compound") – properly, *mix together* into a superior *compound*

Library Greek-English Dictionary In classical usage the word is used to indicate when two things are mixed or blended together. The word is sometimes applied in connection with relationships between people suggesting close friendship or personal attachment.

Hebrews 4:2 > ² *For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also did; but the word they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united with those who listened with faith.*

Division > (Strong's) *schisma*

Care > (Strong's) to be anxious, to care for

²⁶ *And if one part of the body suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if a part is honored, all the parts rejoice with it. ²⁷ **Now you are Christ's body**, and **individually parts** of it.*

You > (Constable) "You" is emphatic in the Greek text and is plural.

Now you are Christ's body > (POSB) Each believer is a member of the body of Christ and has his own place in it. This point is forceful and emphatic. "*you are Christ's body*": collectively, we have the supreme privilege.

Individually parts (Strong's) a part, share, portion

Wuest Translation > *And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. And as for you, you are Christ's body and members individually.*

²⁸ *And God has **appointed** in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, and various kinds of tongues.*

Appointed > (Strong's) to place, lay, set (We saw this word earlier translated as "arranged")

Apostles > (Strong's) a messenger, one sent on a mission, an apostle

Constable > God called and gifted the apostles to plant and to establish the church in places the gospel had not yet gone. Apostello means "to send out," so it is proper to think of "apostles" as (those sent).

Utley > The Greek term is from one of the Greek verbs "to send." It was used by the rabbis for someone sent as an official representative of another.

Prophets > (Strong's) a prophet (an interpreter or forth-teller of the divine will)

Constable > "Prophets" were the channels through whom God sent His revelations to His people

Teachers > (Strong's) an instructor

Miracles > (Strong's) (miraculous) power, might, strength

Healings > (Strong's) a healing

Helps > (Strong's) a laying hold of, help

Barnes > This word occurs no where else in the New Testament. It is derived from *antilambanō* (to take instead of, take hold of), and denotes properly, "aid, assistance, help;" and then those who render aid, assistance, or help; helpers.

Administrations > (Strong's) steering, government, administration

Barnes > This word is derived from (a Greek word meaning) "to govern;" and is usually applied to the government or "steering" of a ship.

Tongues > (Strong's) the tongue, a language

²⁹ *All are not apostles, are they?*

All are not prophets, are they?

All are not teachers, are they?

All are not workers of miracles, are they?

³⁰ *All do not have gifts of healings, do they?*

All do not speak with tongues, do they?

All do not interpret, do they?

Utley > This series of questions all begin with a negative particle (i.e., *mē*), which denotes that the questions expect a "no" answer.

MacArthur > When the Spirit of God rules and energizes a church at least eight evidences will be manifested:

- 1) The Spirit-controlled church is **unified**. The Holy Spirit is the source and preserver of unity, a unity that does not crush individuality.
- 2) The Spirit-controlled church is **characterized by fellowship**. Its fellowship is deep and wide, honest and intimate, inclusive of every believer who cares and participates.
- 3) The Spirit-controlled church is **worshipful**. Its worship is meaningful, genuine, God-centered, and shared by all, as it honors God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It sings praise, talks praise, and lives praise.
- 4) The Spirit-controlled church is **evangelistic**. The Holy Spirit is the true instrument of every conversion, every new spiritual birth, and a church that is responsive to Him wins souls spontaneously and joyfully. Bringing unbelievers to new life in Christ is the top priority and natural outflow of its own life.
- 5) The Spirit-controlled church is **loving**. It is an assembly of people who care and help, a body of believers where selflessness and sacrifice are normal.
- 6) The Spirit-controlled church is **obedient**. It walks in the path that God prescribes, and only in that path. What the Bible teaches it believes, and what the Bible commands it does.
- 7) The Spirit-controlled church is **submissive**. Submissiveness is willing obedience, obedience that comes gladly from the heart. It submits to its Lord because it loves its Lord and seeks to please only Him.
- 8) The Spirit-controlled church **ministers**. Like its Lord Jesus Christ, its call and its goal is not to be served but to serve. It is a community of believers in which each one ministers by the gifting and empowering of the Holy Spirit.

³¹ **But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And yet, I am going to show you a far better way.**

Earnestly desire > (Strong's) to be jealous

Helps Word-Studies > properly, to bubble over because *so hot (boiling)*; (figuratively) "to burn with zeal"

Barnes > The Syriac renders it, "*Because you are zealous of the best gifts, I will show to you a more excellent way.*"