

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.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12

I. BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST'S BODY

- The church is Christ's body, a very prominent metaphor utilized by Paul. The many are one, the one becomes part of the many (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22-23).
- Baptism unites the individual believer to the corporate and visible body of Christ by the work of the Spirit. There are no exceptions based on sex, ethnicity, race, or social standing. We are one in Christ (Vss. 12-13; Gal. 3:25-29; Eph. 4:1-6).

II. UNITY IN DIVERSITY

- From verse 14 through verse 27, Paul goes to great lengths to emphasize that the church is made up of many individuals with individual giftings. None should be considered more valuable than the others.
- Generally speaking, those with "humbler" gifts are often the most indispensable (Vss. 22-23).
- God has decreed that there be no divisions in the body of Christ based on giftings or inherent value. We are to care for one another regardless of giftings, human traits, or social standing (Vss. 25-26; Eph. 2:14; 1 Cor. 3:16-17).

III. LEADERSHIP IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

- Paul lays out the leadership structure in the early church. Some offices remain, some are completed, and some are disputed (Vs. 28; Eph. 4:11).
- Paul's rhetorical questions in verses 29-30 are meant to be answered with a "no."
- Verse 31 is a highly contentious verse. Paul likely is thinking ahead to what he will address in chapter 14 after a brief pause in chapter 13 to speak of a "more excellent way."

KNOW: Baptism into the body of Christ (the church) brings with it a commitment to unity. In baptism, the one becomes part of the many. We dare not place more value on any one member or one gifting over all the others. Each person plays their part in a healthy church.

DO: Practice Christian unity in the body of Christ.

Suggested Reading:

Here to Love: Recapturing the Centrality of Jesus' Greatest Command by Chris Cipollone

(Available in the LifePoint Adult Library)

For Children:

I Am With You: The Holy Spirit and the Church by Jennie Allen

(Available in the LifePoint Kid's Library)

Next Week's Text: 1 Corinthians 13

**Questions/Discovery Points for
Life Groups/Families**

Please Read I Corinthians 12:12-31a

1. What, do you think, is Paul trying to address in this particular section of his letter to the Corinthians?
2. What is the purpose of baptism?
3. Why is the human body and its makeup an apt metaphor for the church?
4. Why is division in the body of Christ (the church) so detrimental?
5. How do we understand the leadership makeup that Paul describes in verse 28? Are there still apostles? What does he mean by "prophets?"
6. How do we "desire" the greater gifts?
7. What is your application from this text?