

“Spiritual Gifts: Their Unity and Diversity”

1 Corinthians 12:12-21

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I. Introduction

- A. Paul is writing to correct their ignorance of spiritual gifts
 - 1. Last time we saw three things:
 - a) The problems (vv. 1-3)
 - b) The source and purpose of the gifts (vv. 4-7)
 - c) The specific gifts (vv. 8-11)
 - 2. Now, beginning with verse twelve, Paul wanted the Corinthians to recognize their oneness within the body of Christ and yet at the same time, to see their functional diversity within that one body
 - 3. The focus in these verses is on unity and diversity

II. The Oneness of the Body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

- A. There is only one body (v. 12)
 - 1. Paul used the human body with its unity and diversity to illustrate the body of Christ
 - a) There is only one true church
 - b) (Ephesians 4:4)
- B. We have all been baptized by one spirit into the one body (v. 13)
 - 1. One spirit and one baptism
 - a) (Ephesians 4:4-5)
 - 2. Paul is telling us how we got into the body
 - a) The believing sinner becomes a member of the church, the body of Christ, through the baptism “in” better than “by” the spirit. The Greek word for “by” is “en” and most often “in”
 - 3. When Paul said in Ephesians 4:5 that there is “one baptism,” he is not talking about water baptism nor its mode, because not all believers have been water baptized, nor have they all been immersed or sprinkled
 - 4. Paul is talking about the baptism in the Spirit that happens at the moment of conversion and makes a person a part of Christ’s body
 - a) The evidence of the Spirit’s baptism is not speaking in tongues; it is the witness of the Spirit within
 - 1) (Romans 8:14-16)
 - 5. The confusion over the baptism versus the filling
 - a) Believers are never commanded to be baptized in the Spirit, but we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit
 - 1) (Ephesians 5:18)
- C. We are all given the one Spirit to drink (v. 13)
 - 1. All Christians have received the indwelling presence of the Spirit
 - a) (Romans 8:9)
 - b) (John 7:37-39)

III. The Diversity of the Body (1 Corinthians 12:14-18)

- A. The body performs many functions (v. 14)
 - 1. Paul wanted them to recognize their diversity within the one body
 - 2. One member does not constitute a body. An arm itself is not a body
 - a) Christians who don't join a body
 - b) Christians should not expect to have the same gifts
- B. Each function is important (vv. 15-16)
 - 1. Some feel unimportant in the body, and it is not true
 - 2. Don't belittle your importance just because you don't have another's gift
 - a) Diversity is not inferiority
- C. Each function must be performed (v. 17)
 - 1. If all the members performed one function, then other necessary functions would go undone
 - 2. A body consisting only of an eye would be a monstrosity
- D. God assigns each function (v. 18)
 - 1. When?
 - a) At the moment of conversion
 - 2. "As it hath pleased him"
 - a) God's sovereignty
 - 3. Be content
 - a) It's God's grace
 - 4. Do what God has called you to do

IV. The Mutual Need of the Body's Members (1 Corinthians 12:19-21)

- A. We need each other. We can't be independent of one another
 - 1. We need to be part of a local body
 - a) No one is better than another