

Much More!
“The Power and Gifts of the Holy Spirit”

Introduction

Romans 12:3-8

3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,

5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;

8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

NKJV

Paul refers to the church as the body of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:27

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

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He also refers to the church as the body of Jesus in Ephesians and Colossians.

Body

This truth that we are members of the body of Christ is very important for you personally and for the church of Jesus.

2 Observations:

1. Being a member of the body of Jesus demonstrates how important every member is to Jesus.

There are various ways Jesus relates spiritual truths to His disciples in His Word so that we can comprehend them. One of His ways is to use images we are familiar with in this world to help us understand Him and our relationship to Him.

One spiritual truth He wants us to believe is that each member of His church is very important to Him.

To communicate to us this spiritual truth...

- He calls us members of His family. (Mark 3:33-34)**
- He calls us members of His nation. (1 Peter 2:9)**
- He calls us members of His bride. (Ephesians 5:25-27; 2 Corinthians 11:2))**
- He calls us members of His temple. (1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20)**
- He calls us members of His priesthood (1 Peter 2:4-5; Revelation 1:6)**
- He calls us His members of body. (Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 5:30)**

Of all these different images, this last one the one that we can all relate to.

In 1 Corinthians 12 when Paul said we are the body of Christ, he specifically compared us to these members of our bodies; the head, the eye, the hand, the foot, the ear, and the nose.

How important are those members of your body to you? What price would you put on each one of those members? You could live without certain members of your body. But would you want to?

Wouldn't you say that every member of your body that is mentioned by Paul is indispensable to what you want to do with your life?

In the same way, Jesus considers each member of His mystical body the church to be that important to Him.

2. Being a member of the body of Jesus demonstrates how important every member is to the other members.

In the body of Christ, no one member can fulfill all the functions of the other members. Each member has a vital function that serves the other members. This means that every member is important to all the other members and to the whole body.

Paul emphasized this truth by personalizing the parts of our body. Could your eye say to your hand, I have no need of you? Could your head say that to your foot? His point is every part of your body is a part of your body and is needed by the other parts.

Being a member of the body of Jesus demonstrates how important every member is to the other members.

Conclusion

3 Applications:

- 1. This spiritual truth that you are a member of the body of Christ should be the foundation for your personal self-esteem.**

You do not need to find your identity in anything in this world. You are a member of the body of Jesus Christ. You are very important to Him. You have a spiritual gift that enables you to care for all the other members. You are important to them. You are significant!

1 Corinthians 12:23-25

23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty,

24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,

25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

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Finding your identity in anything on earth is so foolish. It is like trading in your Ferrari for a Volkswagen.

- 2. This spiritual truth that you are a member of the body of Christ should give you the motivation you need to serve the body of Christ.**

You have an important role to fulfill. You are needed. Your church suffers when you do not fulfill your role. We are stronger because of you.

For any elder in the church who really believes this, it creates one of our greatest crises in leadership of the local church. One of the greatest challenges I have faced in the local church is creating an opportunity for every member of my local church to use their spiritual gifts and talents to care for the other members.

Without the right strategy, the local church can grow wide numerically while most of the members sit idly.

They may faithfully attend services, faithfully give, faithfully read their bibles, and faithfully pray. But, without the right strategy, they do not have the opportunity to use their spiritual gifts to care for the other members.

Jesus never intended for the members of His mystical body to become fans watching just a few of their members care for His body.

Jesus does not save anyone to become just cheerleaders for His cause. He calls every member to care for the other members of His body.

So, as elders of a local church, it is our responsibility as leaders to find a strategy that will enable every member to get out of the stands and into the game using their spiritual gifts to care for the other members.

This responsibility has been an incredible burden to me personally since God called me to be an elder. I have spent so many sleepless nights praying about this. For most of my life serving our church as an elder, I have felt like I was called by God to lead a church that has this amazing untapped power to love one another as members of the body of Christ and I have not known how to give every member the opportunity to exercise that power.

I really do believe that we are the mystical body of Christ on the earth!

I did not know how to lead you until 2010. It was in 2010 that I heard Pastor Jim Putman share his story about what had happened in his church in a little town in Idaho called Post Falls. In 1998, Jim and his wife planted a new church in Post Falls. The started with a couple of other families in their living room. The population of Post Falls in 1998 was 17000 people. From 1998-2008, the church grew from this small gathering in a home to over 10,000 people.

Jim explained that the numerical growth of the church was due do the strategy they used for their small groups. He said the strategy they used in their groups gave every member the opportunity to care for the other members. He said the strategy they used in their groups enabled the groups to reproduce so they could reach more people.

He said the strategy they used was based on the strategy that Jesus used with His 12 disciples.

Jesus had a multilevel ministry.

- **He had a ministry to the multitudes (Matthew 5:1)**
- **He had a ministry to 70 disciples (Luke 10:1)**
- **He had a small group ministry to 12 disciples (Mark 3:14)**

It was only within the confines of that small group that those 12 men had the opportunity to become like a family and care for one another the way Jesus wanted His church to care for one another.

Matthew 12:46-50

46 While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.

47 Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

48 But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!

50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

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Jim Putman said that instead of just doing church in rows on Sunday mornings, in small groups they did church in circles.

And every member of the circle could care for the other members. And every member of the circle was important to the other members.

Jim Putman said the church in the USA has divorced the strategy of Jesus from the commands of Jesus and has

expected to get the same results! I had a moment of conviction.

I felt like God sent Jim Putman my way to give me the answer to my prayers.

Since that day, it has been my goal as an elder to lead you to embrace a strategy of caring for one another that is based on the strategy that Jesus used with His 12 disciples.

I have actively been a participant in this strategy. I am a small group leader. I have trained others to be small group leaders. I have sent out those I have trained to lead their own small group. I have heard the firsthand testimonies of the members of my group share what our group has meant to them and their spiritual growth. I have seen people in our group transformed from immature self-centered members of the body of Christ into members who sacrifice themselves to care for the other members.

Will this happen to every member if we as elders lead the church to use the right strategy?

No!

- **There will always be members that are content to faithfully attend the services of the church and perhaps serve the church in some program of the church.**
- **There will always be members that attend a small group, but they never mature.**

- **There will always be members that are content to just be a fan of what the church is doing.
The dictionary defines a fan as “an enthusiastic admirer.”**

But, based on example of Jesus in the Word of God and the results I have seen, I am convinced that the strategy we are using to lead you is the will of Jesus for His body on earth.

- **It is the way for every member of the mystical body of Christ to use their gifts and their talents to care for the other members.**
- **It is the way for every member of the mystical body of Christ to use their gifts and talents to work Together to care for the other members.**

This is bigger than us!

3. This spiritual truth that you are a member of the body of Christ should stop you from living in sin.

1 Corinthians 11:26-32

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

NKJV

- **Our sin dishonors the body of Jesus.**

It dishonors the reputation of Jesus, and it dishonors the reputation of His body, the church.

- **Our sin causes the Lord to chasten His body.**

The word chasten comes from the Greek word NT:3811 paideuo (pahee-dyoo'-o); to train up a child, i.e. educate, using pain.

It is the word Pontius Pilate used when he considered what he should do with Jesus. (Luke 23:16)

It is the word that the apostle Paul used when he turned Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan. (1 Timothy 2:20)

It is the word that is used in Hebrews to teach us how the Lord trains us.

Hebrews 12:6

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

KJV

The word Greek word scourge means to flog.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

NKJV

The word defiles and destroy are the same Greek Word. phtheiro (fthi'-ro); to shrivel or wither, i.e. to spoil (by any process) or (generally) to ruin (especially figuratively, by moral influences, to deprave):

As a member of the body of Christ, if we continue in sin, the scripture indicates that the Lord may chasten us in one of the following ways.

- **Physically**
- **Financially**
- **Spiritually**

The word destroy can be translated deprave. Also, our sin can hinder our prayers.

This spiritual truth that you are a member of the body of Christ should stop you from living in sin.

Invitation

I would have loved to have been alive when the incarnated Son of God was walking on the earth.

But until, He returns, we are the body of Jesus on earth!

- **Let's believe it!**
- **Let's start acting like we believe it!**
- **Let's honor Jesus!**
- **Let's follow the strategy of Jesus and let's care for one another in a way that glorifies Jesus!**

Are you with me?

If not, perhaps it is because you are not connected to Jesus. To be connected to Jesus you need to believe upon Him for the forgiveness of your sins.

1. Will you connect with Jesus right now?

2. Will you connect with the body of Jesus?

If you are with me, you need to...

- **Connect with one of our small groups**
- **Faithfully participate in caring for the other members when you meet**
- **Faithfully participate in caring for the other members seven days a week**

3. Will you repent of your sin against the Lord and His body?

