

Body Parts

Observations from 1 Corinthians 12

Tim Miller, Gateway Fellowship, 5/28/2017

1. **V4 - different - same x3.** This sets up the conversation. How should we think about how differently each of us behaves under the influence of the Holy Spirit? Differences naturally trigger comparisons leading to inferiority or pride, and often result in divisions, factions, and resentment. This is the opposite of God's purpose in empowering each of us differently.
2. **V7 - everyone has AT LEAST one spiritual gift**
3. **V7 - the gifts are for THE COMMON GOOD.** Connection to Jesus automatically puts you in a position to have something to use to help others.
4. **V7 All gifts are for serving.** Service isn't just cleaning and stacking chairs. Every spiritual gift is meant for serving others in love.
5. **V11 God decides who gets what gift** - which means embracing our uniqueness is partnering with divine design.
6. **V12 - We need ALL the parts connected to be a whole body.**
7. **V12 - We need ALL the parts actively serving in their gifts to be a functional body.**
8. **V13 - Connection to Jesus is inseparable from connection to Jesus' Church.** The Spirit of God within each believer is the deepest social bond in the universe, deeper even than biological family.
9. **V14 - One Body, Many Parts:** Engines are complex. Bodies are complex. I don't understand them. Individual parts might not understand the whole, but we play our part well. Church is a team sport. Individual accomplishments might be celebrated, but we can only win together.
10. **V15 - Don't disqualify YOURSELF by comparison** - you matter, and you provide an essential function. Nobody else can do what you do the way you do it. You are essential. We need you.
11. **V21 - Don't disqualify OTHERS by comparison.** They matter, and they provide an essential function. Nobody else can do what they do the way they do it. You need them.
12. **V22 - Less visible people are often the most essential to corporate health.** We don't see what they do, but we benefit from it and suffer when it is absent. When you remove the kidneys, you discover them for the first time.
13. **V25-26 We are bound together and affect each other far more than we know.** This is heavily on my heart right now.
14. **V28 - There is an order to the gifts.** This is not an order of importance, but an order of operation, a hierarchy of influence. This list is the only ordered list of the gifts in the NT.
15. **V29 - We don't all operate in all gifts - we are meant to be specialists.** Our significance is not found in gifts, but in Christ. All gifts are meant to serve that truth and see the fullness of the finished work of Christ established in people.
16. **V31 - We are told to eagerly desire "the greater gifts."** If God decides who gets gifts, we might then conclude our job is simply to accept his decision. Paul instead finds that an encouragement to seek more gifts since God is good, generous, and loves to reward faith.
17. **V31 - "The greater gifts," are those gifts that help others more effectively.** LOVE for others, again, the social, is the only natural outflow of what a healthy personal relationship with God pursues. The idea of a solo Christian is utterly foreign to the bible. This conversation is the context of "the love chapter."