

Summit Woods Baptist Church
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class

1 Corinthians 12:14-26

❖ Day 1

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-26.

For these lessons, the sermon text is provided in a format that visually helps display the structure of the paragraph or section of text. The main verbs are underlined. Generally, the main indicative clauses remain to the left, and the supporting clauses are either directly underneath when they have equal priority to what comes before, or are tabbed to the right when the clause supports, develops, or draws a conclusion from a neighboring clause.

¹⁴For the body does not consist of one member
but of many.

¹⁵If the foot should say,
“Because I am not a hand,
I do not belong to the body,”
that would not make it any less a part of the body.

¹⁶And if the ear should say,
“Because I am not an eye,
I do not belong to the body,”
that would not make it any less a part of the body.

¹⁷If the whole body were an eye,
where would be the sense of hearing?
If the whole body were an ear,
where would be the sense of smell?

¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

¹⁹If all were a single member,
where would the body be?

²⁰As it is, there are many parts,
yet one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand,
“I have no need of you,”
nor again the head to the feet,
“I have no need of you.”

²²On the contrary,
the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,
²³and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor,
and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty,

²⁴which our more presentable parts do not require.

But God has so composed the body,
giving greater honor to the part that lacked it,
²⁵that there may be no division in the body,
but that the members may have the same care for one another.

²⁶If one member suffers,
all suffer together;
if one member is honored,
all rejoice together.

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1. In Romans 12:3-8 (our passage two weeks ago), Paul spoke to those who think too highly of themselves (and by implication also to those who think too lowly). In this week's passage, which of them is Paul primarily speaking to in verses 15-19? In verses 21-24a?
2. Throughout this week's passage as Paul continues with his metaphor of using a physical body to help us think about how the members of the church fit together, he uses comparisons of an incorrect idea to a correct one. Which is more important, the incorrect or the correct, and why?
3. In verse 14, what is the incorrect idea? What is the correct idea?
4. Look at verses 15 and 16. Does the subjective feeling of the foot or the ear change the objective reality? What is the objective reality?
5. In verse 17, Paul imagines that the error from verses 15 and 16 is carried out to its logical conclusion.
 - a. How functional would such a body be?
 - b. Would that body reflect the glory of God?
 - c. What were the foot and the ear forgetting about the various parts of the body? (I.e., what word from Romans 12:4 were they forgetting?)

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6. What is the significance of the phrase “as it is” at the beginning of verse 18?
7. Consider verses 19 and 20. Is it enough to recognize that there must be many parts and not just one? Do you have a body if all the many parts are just lying in a pile? What is necessary for the many parts to actually make a functioning body?

❖ Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 again.

8. Referring back to question 1, to whom does Paul turn his attention in verse 21?
9. What is the incorrect idea in verse 21, and what correct idea does Paul give in verse 22?
10. According to verse 22, is it enough to simply acknowledge that those parts are not disposable? What does Paul say instead?
11. Similar to following the error in verses 15 and 16 to its logical conclusion, if the error in verse 21 were followed to its logical conclusion, what would be left of the body? And how well would that remnant be able to function?
12. The logic of Paul’s analogy in this week’s passage stands on its own merits, but what does Paul continually come back to in verses 18 and 24b (and verses 5, 11, 28, ...) as the true grounds for a right understanding of the church body?

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13. In verse 25, what is God's purpose in how He has arranged things? And what sort of responsibility do the various members have towards each other?

14. Do you think the "greater honor" that God gives to those "that lacked it" is meant to then make them superior to the parts that naturally had honor? How does verse 25 inform your answer?

15. Consider verse 26. What *in this passage* causes the suffering of certain members? And what is the result?

16. What causes the honor? And what is the result?

❖ Day 3

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 again.

17. Paul has placed this word picture in the midst of the larger section on gifts. How might you rephrase the foolish statements in verses 15-16 and 21 to reflect the topic of gifts?

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18. Think about our church gatherings on Sunday mornings.
- a. Which members of the body naturally receive honor?

 - b. How do you see a level of “greater honor” being given to some of those who do not obviously have a place of honor?
19. How many commands are in this passage? What then are we supposed to do in light of its teaching?
20. Summarize this week’s passage in one sentence.

In preparation for Sunday, pray that we would value the necessity of every member of the body, that we as a church would have no division in our body, and that we would care well for one another.