

The Church—Unity in Diversity

1 Corinthians 12

Part 2

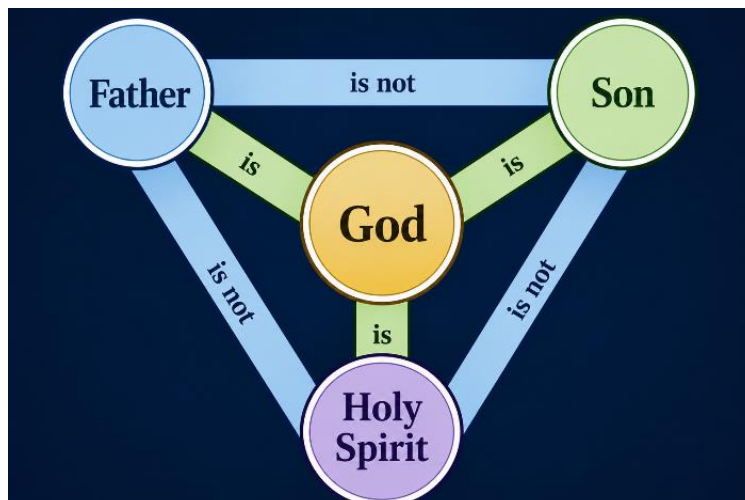
By receiving salvation through God's grace, a redeemed person becomes part of God's great work of salvation—accomplished by Christ and carried out through the Holy Spirit.

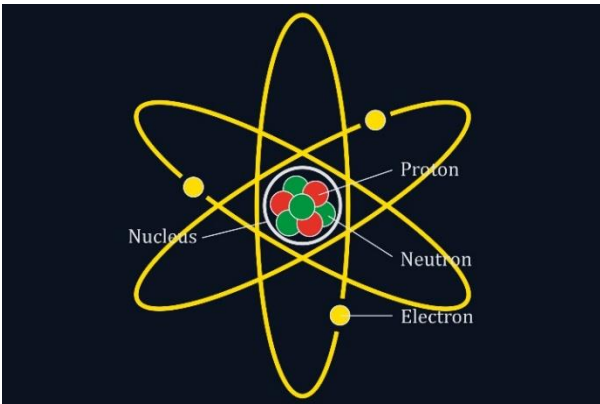
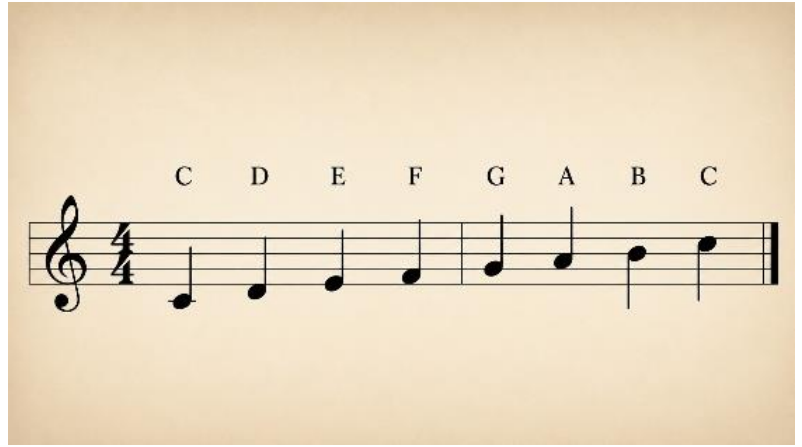
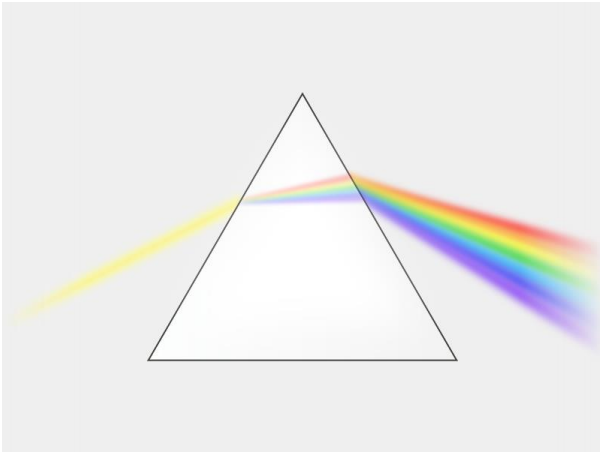
I. The Holy Spirit's Primary Work

- A. Saves
- B. Gives unique spiritual gifts
- C. Immerses into the body of Christ
- D. Builds the church

II. Cooperation with the Holy Spirit

A. The Nature of Diversity in the Church





- **Different DNA**

1 Cor. 12:12 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.

- **Different Races and Ethnicities**

1 Cor. 12:13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—**Jews or Greeks**, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

- **Different Social Backgrounds**

1 Cor. 12:13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, **slaves or free**—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

- **Different gifts**

1 Cor. 12:4-6 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Cor. 12:7-11 For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

- **Different levels of spiritual maturity**

1 Cor. 12:22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.

1 Cor. 12:14-20 For the body does not consist of one member but of many... If 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? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

The significance of each part of the human body is found in its relationship to the body as a whole.

Eph. 3:17-19 ...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Gal. 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...

Tit. 2:10 ...showing all good faith, **so that in everything they may adorn** the doctrine of God our Savior.

Rev. 21:2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as **a bride adorned for her husband**.

Rev. 21:23-27 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and **the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it**, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. **They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations**. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The purpose of diversity in the church is the partnership of diverse people with the Holy Spirit as He fills them with the life of Christ and expresses that life through their unique personalities in the particular place and time God has ordained for them.

B. Our Attitude Toward Diversity in the Church

1. Remember the Spiritual Unity of Christ's Church

1 Cor 12:4-7 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Cor 12:13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

The Unity of the Body of Christ

- We have all been created in the image of God.
- We are all fallen sinners.
- We have all been redeemed by Christ.
- We have all been made children of God.
- We are all indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- We have all become members of the one church of Christ.
- We are all pursuing the same purpose: to be filled with Christ and to build up His church.

2. Remember That Your Significance Is in the Life and Glory of Christ

1 Cor. 1:30-31 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

2 Cor. 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Rev. 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready.

3. Focus Not on Your Uniqueness, but on the Glory of Christ

Phil. 3:5-8 ...circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.

2 Cor. 4:5-7 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

4. Live the Life of Christ Through the Person God Created You to Be, in the Circumstances He Has Ordained for You

Accept the unique way God has made you and the circumstances He has allowed in your life as the specific outworking of His providence and live the life of Christ in the midst of them.

Rom. 8:28-29 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.

Your greatest blessing is to be filled with Christ, to grow into His likeness, and to radiate His glory in the unique circumstances He has appointed for your life.

5. Help Your Brothers and Sisters Display the Glory of Christ

Eph. 4:11-13 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Eph. 4:14-15 ...so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.

Eph. 4:16 From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

- Do not set yourselves against one another.
- Complement one another.
- Build one another up.
- Seek one another's spiritual growth.
- Help one another behold Christ, live by His life, and reflect His glory.

Do not try to shape others into your own image, even if you are convinced that your preferences and views are superior. Instead, do everything you can to help the people around you get to know Christ, come to love Him, treasure Him above all else, and learn to live out His life in the practical ways.