



So what does this look like practically? How do we move from division to unity, from competition to complement, from a collection of individuals to the body of Christ? Here are three application points drawn directly from this text.

First, identify your gift and start using it for the common good.

If you are a follower of Jesus, the Holy Spirit has given you a gift. It may be teaching. It may be encouragement. It may be giving or mercy or administration or wisdom or faith or healing. It may be something that feels ordinary to you but is extraordinary to the body. Stop comparing your gift to someone else's. Stop waiting for someone to give you permission. Stop hiding behind the excuse that you are not as gifted as the person next to you. You are not meant to be them. You are meant to be you, fully surrendered, fully deployed, for the good of the whole church. This week, ask three people who know you well what they see in you. Ask them where they have noticed God's grace operating in your life. Then take that feedback and ask the Lord where He wants you to serve. Not to be seen. But to build up the body.

Second, honor someone whose gift is different from yours.

The Corinthians failed because they elevated certain gifts and diminished others. We do the same thing. We celebrate the teacher and ignore the server. We applaud the musician and overlook the administrator. We praise the evangelist and forget the one who shows up every week to clean the building. Paul

says this has to stop. This week, write a note, send a text, or say in person to someone whose gift is different from yours, Thank you for serving the body. I need you. The worship team needs the deacons who unlock the building at six in the morning. The preaching team needs the intercessors who pray through the sermon before a word is spoken. The youth group needs the financiers who make the budget work. The whole body needs every part. So honor a part that is not your part. And watch what happens to your own heart when you do.

Third, pursue unity across a line that normally divides you.

The world does not need another church that looks like a political rally with a steeple. It does not need another church where everyone looks the same, thinks the same, votes the same, and consumes the same media. It needs a church where the love of Jesus is thicker than blood, thicker than politics, thicker than race, thicker than preference. This week, have a conversation with someone in this church who is different from you. If you are old, talk to someone young. If you are wealthy, talk to someone who is struggling. If you are conservative, listen to someone who is progressive. If you are a longtime member, welcome someone who is new. Not to argue. Not to convert them to your position. But to love them as a fellow member of the body. Because when the world sees us loving each other across the lines that divide everyone else, they will know that the Father sent the Son.