

Discovering a Place to Belong

Main Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12–20 (NIV)

Introduction

Everyone longs for a place to belong. Paul reminds the Corinthians—and us—that belonging is not based on status or skill but on being joined to Christ through the Spirit.

1. Belonging Comes Through the Spirit (v. 13)

1 Corinthians 12:13 – “For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

Cross References:

- *Ephesians 4:4–5 – “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”*
- *Galatians 3:28 – “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*
- *Romans 12:5 – “So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”*

Illustration: Like a hospital waiting room where diverse people are united by a need for healing, the Spirit unites us in Christ.

Truth: Belonging begins with the Spirit’s work of grace.

2. Belonging Affirms Our Uniqueness (vv. 14–18)

1 Corinthians 12:14 – “Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.”

Cross References:

- *Romans 12:6 – “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.”*
- *1 Peter 4:10 – “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”*

- *Psalm 139:13–14 – “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”*

Illustration: An orchestra is full of different instruments; each contributes to the beauty of the music.

Truth: Belonging means God values your unique place and contribution.

3. Belonging Creates Unity in Diversity (vv. 19–20)

1 Corinthians 12:20 – “As it is, there are many parts, but one body.”

Cross References:

- *John 17:21 – “That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*
- *Colossians 3:11 – “Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”*
- *Ephesians 2:19–20 – “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”*

Illustration: A quilt made of many different fabrics is beautiful because of its variety, stitched together by a master’s hand. The Spirit is that master quilter.

Truth: Belonging means harmony in Christ—different, yet united.

Conclusion: Discovering a Place to Belong

Cross References:

- *Psalm 68:6 – “God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.”*

- *1 Peter 2:9–10 – “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”*

Closing Illustration: Phineas Bresee dreamed of “a church in the heart of the city with the heart of God,” where everyone—rich or poor, educated or uneducated—could belong. That dream is still alive.