



September 14, 2025

Glenn Garvin

BIG IDEA – God designed us to **belong in unity and diversity**.

Scripture Focus – **1 Corinthians 12:14 NLT** "Yes, the body has **many** different parts, **not just one** part."

Ever had a splinter? Ever eaten something making your tummy rumble? Ever stubbed a toe or jammed a finger? How about a tiny object in your eye? If you've experienced one part of your body in pain or discomfort, you understand Paul's teaching on building a better body. In an absurdity of personification, Paul says "If the foot says..." – illustrating a comic moment where one body part throws shade on another. Let's find out how unity makes the body of Christ better this Sunday.

Paul has got to win some kind of prize for the funniest illustration in all of the New Testament letters to the churches. And he is writing to the most outrageous church in the New Testament. **The Apostle Paul wrote 13 of the 21 letters in the New Testament! That's almost 50% of the books in New Testament.**

We are in a series called **Life is Better Together**, but it's not about us it is really about how God created us to live and breathe and have meaning on this planet. **Paul told the high council in Athens why we exist!**

Acts 17:27-28 "His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. **For in him we live and move and exist.** As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'"

Continuing to talk about unity in our church, this week we are looking at how to build a body better.

Paul gives the best description of unity in diversity ever! He writes about a brief conversation between five body parts. Really, only two of the body parts have speaking roles, the other three are just passive participants. I don't know how the foot got the lead role, but Paul highlights it first. **You'll find this in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27**

The foot starts:

If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a **hand**," that does not make it any less a part of the body.

I'll tell you what's strange! Finding out that body parts do start speaking at a certain age. And – they get louder as we get older.

Oh, come on, you know they can. Lately, one of my feet has been talking, more like complaining ever since I stepped on one of my grand girl's Lego pieces lying on the floor. I didn't know it at the time, but that little piece of plastic tore a hole in my foot and it just didn't heal right. Plus, at my size, that means my foot had over 250lbs per square inch embedding into my sole!

Body parts can speak alright! My throat gurgles, my stomach growls, my knees crack and other unmentionable parts toot in as well.

You know what I notice about this short comedy sketch by Paul is **what the five body parts are talking about.**

What are they actually saying?

I never saw this before, but the foot does not say the hand is not a part of the body. Paul puts it in **first person – "I"**. "I am not a part of the body!"

In other words, **it is the foot that feels left out believing that it is less than the hand! It feels like it doesn't BELONG!**

Comparison is a unity killer!

And, where there's comparison, there's complaint!

And... **"Comparison kills contentment."**

How often do we feel like we just don't belong?

I don't fit, I'm different, people never notice me, I am invisible.

Let's continue...

And it makes perfect sense that **the ear listening to the foot would follow** down this dark path of perceived **uselessness**.

The ear joins in:

If the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," saying in effect, "I hear ya foot, I'm a nobody too because I can only hear, but cannot see **like the eye.**"

One more thing I notice. What body parts are not a part of the conversation. Paul writes about five body parts, the foot, hand, ear, eye and nose. **Where's the mouth? Where is that body part that James, the brother of Jesus calls out the fact that it causes more trouble than all five of these parts put together?**

It's the narrator breaking the fourth wall that joins into this conversation.

Before the body parts form a union, go on strike or enlist the rest of the body to join in riotous protest – with signs that say, “because I’m not someone else – I QUIT!”

Paul wraps up this part story, by saying something profoundly spiritual.

Just because they say, “I am not part of the body.” **Doesn't make it true!** I will push it a little further – just because you believe it, **doesn't make it true!**

1 Corinthians 12:16b-18

“Would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an **ear**, how would you **smell** anything?

But **our bodies have many parts**, and **God has put each part just where he wants it**. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, **there are many parts, but only one body.**”

Paul's illustration doesn't just highlight those parts that don't feel like they belong, he also comments on those who would say, “I don't need you.”

1 Corinthians 12:21

The eye can never say to the hand, “I don't need you.” The head can't say to the feet, “I don't need you.”

I don't need you?

We have issues in the church because of both of these divisive thoughts! I don't belong and/or I don't need you.

That is awful!

Paul writes to the Corinthian church about where **each person may have started out as separate specific ethnicity or social class, but because of Jesus need to end up as one made up of many.**

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. **Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free.**

But we have all been **baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit**. Yes, **the body has many different parts, not just one part**.
How many different parts does a human body have? See Dig Deeper notes!

What are Paul's methods to building a better body of Christ?

He gives us antidotes for disunity and how to combat division.

1. **Following Jesus individually and corporately! We have one savior, one good shepherd, one leader of the Church – that is Jesus!** Paul addressed this right up front in his correctional letter to the churches in Corinth.
 - **Quit picking specific Pastors or leaders, declaring loyalty to them over Jesus! As if one or any are better than Jesus himself!** “I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, **by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.** For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters. Some of you are saying, “I am a follower of Paul.” Others are saying, “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Peter, ” or “I follow only Christ.” **Has Christ been divided into factions?** Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not! 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 NLT
 - Paul abhorred schisms “**schisma**” **divisions, schisms, splits! We get our word "schizophrenic" derived from the Greek word "schizein,"** which means “to split,” and it relates to the mental disorder schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is a **split mind**, not a split personality.
 - Instead of schisms, Paul told the church they should focus on “**katartizó**” **to repair and restore, to mend together.**
 - **To be agents of restoration NOT divisions.**
 - **It's pretty common to think of it like this when folks have experienced pain that leads to pulling away:** How many of you have gotten sick at one of the places you like to eat – maybe even experiencing **food poisoning?** In 2020, It cost [Chipotle](#) **\$25 million dollars in criminal charges** to resolve the case where over 1,000 people got the norovirus because employees were showing up sick and transmitting these illnesses.
 - How many of you quit going to that place to eat for a while? **Some, never return!**
 - Paul is saying the body of Christ isn't like our favorite foody place, when something goes sideways with another member of the church, our job is to repair and restore – not leave. Granted, there are times when making it right is just not possible. But we still should not spread our pain around, causing even more problems. And it is possible that **the offender needs to leave, not the offended!**
 - We've got to be careful about our methods of skirting reconciliation by what I call “**triangulation.**” Triangulation is where I gossip about an issue to a

few others, hoping that someone will be brave enough to confront the brother or sister so that I don't have to. I just form more of a problem-posse than taking the Biblical path of meeting one on one.

2. **Fighting for each other rather than against each other.** We are one body with many members (1 Cor 12).

- **What does it look like when we fight against each other?**

- Paul doesn't address it, but **we now know there are many diseases that attack the body by disrupting how it works together as a whole.** Each believer has a role to play – no one is unnecessary.
- **These are the three top disease disrupters. They (1) attack the communication between systems, (2) weaken the immune system's balance, or (3) cause systemic breakdown.**
 1. **Autoimmune Diseases (e.g., Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis, Rheumatoid Arthritis)** The body's immune system mistakenly attacks its own cells, tissues, and organs.
 2. **Cancer – a class of its own. What happens:** Cells stop “listening” to the body's instructions and grow uncontrollably, forming tumors that invade and damage tissues. **Why it disrupts unity:** Cancer cells **act independently**, ignoring the body's “rules” and disrupting organ systems. It's a breakdown of communication and cooperation. **Rogue cells actually enlist healthy cells to join them in rebelling against the body.**
 3. **Neurodegenerative Diseases (e.g., Alzheimer's, Parkinson's)** The nervous system—responsible for communication and coordination—begins to deteriorate, impairing memory, movement, and thought.

- **What does it look like when we are rooting for each other.**

3. **Making others feel like they belong!** No one is unnecessary. No one is invisible. If you are a follower of Jesus in word & deed, **you belong in the Body of Christ, His Church. Yes, some are hard to convince when they keep believing the lies, but keep trying.**

- Recognizing and celebrating the different gifts within the body. Knowing that each one was created for God's purpose, and treating each other with **honor and respect** for those differences. **So that the foot cannot say to the hand, I guess I just don't belong here!**
- **Make a note for this week. Let someone know they are needed. Make it personal – “I need you!”**

4. **Make allowances for faults.** Paul wrote this to the churches in Ephesus

specifically because they were struggling with unity. “Ephesians 4:1–6 NLT

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. **Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.**

For there is **one body and one Spirit**, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

5. **Agree with more than we disagree with. If it's opinions about who's the best NFL, MLB, NHL or NSL team sure – have at it. But if it's just a church preference on worship, styles, hairdos and hymns – we have got to stop it! Dig Deeper has more in “Top 5 Things Church Folks Fuss Over.”**

- **Paul wrote to the Philippian churches about working together, not against one another. Philippians 2:1–4 NLT – Make my joy complete!** Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by **agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.** Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

Application.

I think the Lord wants us to hear this today. There is a strong sense of the word **belong** today.

There is a very real and effective attack on our personhood, our value. It is not just the enemy feeding and fueling these lies, much of it comes from our past.

I don't know what your past has done to you. I don't know what people who were supposed to love you and support you did to your own sense of self-worth.

But I do know this, **all of us have something or someone in our past that failed us.** Some have stuffed those feelings thinking, “life is hard, buck it up and get over it.” **Sure, life is hard. But if the way we see ourselves is preventing us from growing and maturing in Christ, it's time we deal with it.**

So, if you are feeling like you don't belong, or different from everyone else, or that you don't matter, God wants you to know something.

You are His – your value and worth is found in Him, and it's time to let go of your past, and the lies and run into His arms. You belong! You belong to Jesus and are a valuable part of His body.

Our unity in Christ is best celebrated with our diversities, not similarities. God made us uniquely different just as each part of our body has a purpose, so we need to quit saying, **I am not a part of the body because I am not someone else.** You are who God made you, now let's discover and work towards what that looks like!

Next Steps

Let Him cut out those lies, freeing you to move forward in Him.

If you mean business with God, come on up and let us pray for you.

I have asked all of our leaders here at Candlewood Church to take an online assessment.

As we move forward to both **BE and MAKE disciples**, I'm asking everyone to complete a free **30-minute assessment** through [AssessMe.org](https://www.assessme.org) click for information. This tool will help you discover your **spiritual gifts**, plus give feedback on your **personality, leadership style, skills, and next steps**. **Bottom line**—it will help us **grow and mature together**, and it will help us better understand and encourage each of you in your gifts.

Just click the sign up now to start the process!

Sign up now

SCRIPTURES

Acts 17:27-28 NLT

His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

1 Corinthians 12:14-19 NLT

Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part!

1 Corinthians 12:16b-18 NLT

"Would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?"

1 Corinthians 12:21 NLT

The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you."

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 NLT

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. **Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free.** But we have all been **baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.** Yes, **the body has many different parts, not just one part.**

1 Corinthians 1:10-13 NLT

I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, **by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.** For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters. Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul." Others are saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter," or "I follow only Christ." **Has Christ been divided into factions?** Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not!

Ephesians 4:1–6 NLT

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

Philippians 2:1–4 NLT

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by **agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.** Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

NOTES



The Three Top Disrupter Diseases.

(1) **attack the communication** between systems, (2) **weaken the immune system's** balance, or (3) **cause systemic breakdown.**

1. Autoimmune Diseases (e.g., Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis, Rheumatoid Arthritis)

- **What happens:** The body's immune system mistakenly attacks its own cells, tissues, and organs.
- **Why it disrupts unity:** Instead of defending the body, the immune system turns against it—breaking the natural harmony. Organs, joints, or the nervous system may be weakened.
- **Biblical analogy:** Like one part of the body attacking another instead of working together (1 Cor. 12:21–26).

2. Cancer

- **What happens:** Cells stop "listening" to the body's instructions and grow uncontrollably, forming tumors that invade and damage tissues.
- **Why it disrupts unity:** Cancer cells act independently, ignoring the body's "rules" and disrupting organ systems. It's a breakdown of communication and cooperation. Rogue cells actually enlist healthy cells to join them in rebelling against the body.

- **Biblical analogy:** A rebellious “member” that refuses to submit to the health of the whole body.

3. Neurodegenerative Diseases (e.g., Alzheimer's, Parkinson's)

- **What happens:** The nervous system—responsible for communication and coordination—begins to deteriorate, impairing memory, movement, and thought.
- **Why it disrupts unity:** When the brain and nerves fail to send correct signals, every other system in the body suffers.
- **Biblical analogy:** Like the “head” no longer being able to direct the rest of the body.



How many different parts does a human body have?

Skeletal System

- About **206 bones** in an adult body.
- Each bone is distinct and counted as its own part.

Muscular System

- Roughly **600+ skeletal muscles**.
- These allow all voluntary movement (walking, lifting, facial expressions).

Organs

- Around **78 major organs** are typically recognized (like heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, brain, skin).
- Some are paired (e.g., kidneys, lungs), so that count varies by how you list them.

Cells

- About **200+ different types of cells**, specialized for different roles (nerve, blood, skin, etc.).
- Total cell count = **~30 trillion** in the human body!

Other Structures

- **Joints:** 300+
- **Teeth:** 32
- **Blood vessels:** If stretched out, about **60,000 miles long**



Top 5 Things Church Folks Fuss Over



1. Music Wars 🎵
– Too loud / too soft, too old / too new, hymns vs. guitars.
 2. Message Grumbles 🗣️
– Too long / too short, too deep / not deep enough.
 3. Thermostat Theology 🌡️
– Sanctuary's too hot, too cold — *and somebody's always right!*
 4. Money Matters 💰
– Budgets, building projects, and who decides what's "worth it."
 5. Ministry Turf 🗺️
– Whose group gets space, time, attention... or the pastor's eye.
-



📌 What church folk complain about most

1. **Worship style & music**
 - Too loud, too soft, too modern, too traditional.
 - Hymns vs. contemporary songs.
 - Instruments vs. no instruments.
 2. **Preaching & teaching**
 - Too long / too short.
 - Too deep / not deep enough.
 - Too much on sin / not enough on grace.
 3. **Facilities & comfort**
 - Temperature (too hot / too cold).
 - Seating (pews vs. chairs, cushions vs. no cushions).
 - Parking and bathrooms.
 4. **Leadership decisions**
 - How money is spent.
 - Staffing choices.
 - Ministry direction (mission focus, outreach, programs).
 5. **Programs & ministries**
 - What exists vs. what doesn't.
 - Who's being served vs. who feels left out.
 - Youth, kids, seniors, small groups all vying for attention.
-

📌 What we choose to divide us rather than unite us

1. Preferences in worship (music, preaching style, service format).
2. Generational differences (young vs. old, change vs. tradition).
3. Doctrinal minors (non-essential theological debates elevated to essentials).
4. Politics & cultural issues (national elections, hot-button social issues).
5. Personalities & cliques (who's in, who's out, who's noticed, who's ignored).
6. Cultural background & traditions (different heritages valuing different expressions of faith).
7. Roles & recognition (who gets a "platform," who feels invisible).