



TEACH ME
THE BIBLE PODCAST

STUDY GUIDE

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CHAPTER

12

1 CORINTHIANS

Divisions in the Church



1 Corinthians: Chapter 12

If you are new to the Story of the Bible or would like to review the Story:
Listen to the following TMTB Podcasts:

The Story: Understanding the “Big Story” (30 min)

Old Testament: Walk Through the Broad Story (27 min)

Timeline: New Testament Beginnings (35 min)

Letters: Paul’s Writing to the Churches–Part 1 (30 min)

REVIEW

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul’s argument comes to its core point: the Corinthians were not baptized into any other body than that of Christ. And just as there are many members in a human body, so also are there many members in the body of Christ. Moreover, each member has its unique function but all members are for the building up of the whole body. So also, every member of the body of Christ needs to function for the building up of the body of Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 10-12 again. There is both exhortation to build up the body and a warning for tearing down the body. How does this reality relate to chapters 3 and 4?



1 Corinthians: Chapter 12

MONDAY

Listen to the Chapter 12 podcast.

TUESDAY

Paul's analogy of the body is perfect. In fact, one might wonder if "analogy" is the correct words at all. I suspect that it is not. Yet, Paul's point about the body is an insightful one. Each member of the human body has a function or role to fulfill. Moreover, each member exists for the building up of the whole body. Thus, an individual member's abilities or spiritual gifts MUST be used for the building up of the body. If not, then that member is not a useful member.

Read 1 Corinthians 12. How should each member of the body regard the other members of the body? Are all necessary? What happens in the human body if certain members quit doing their part? Does just that member suffer? If a member of the body is not using their gifts for the edification of the body then is church discipline needed? How might this point relate to chapters 5 through 11?

WEDNESDAY

Paul's analogy of the body not only emphasized that each member must function for the building up of the body, but also that some members of the body that are viewed as "weak" or "without honor" are in fact worthy of more honor. Paul's language here was intentional. Earlier in his letter (1:25, 27; 2:3; 4:10; 8:7, 9, 10, 11, 12; 9:22; 11:30; 12:22; 15:43) has used this "weak" and "without honor" in reference to himself. Read Paul's words in 4:10-14 again, *"For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor. To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children."* The Corinthians had elevated themselves in their own eyes while lowering Paul Likewise, we in the church today often value the wrong gifts and in so doing lower the most important gifts in the body of Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:25, 27; 2:3; 4:10; 8:7, 9, 10, 11, 12; 9:22; 11:30; 12:22; and 15:43. Also reread 1 Corinthians 3 and 4. Do you see how the "weak" and "without honor" language introduced in the verses above fit into Paul's argument?



1 Corinthians: Chapter 12

THURSDAY

Paul's use of the "body analogy" is not only found in 1 Corinthians. It is found in Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians as well. In Ephesians 4:11-13 Paul writes, *"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."* In both 1 Corinthians and here in Ephesians, Paul makes the point that those members of the body that build up the body are most important. Paul's consistent point is that those within the church who reveal or teach the word to the rest of the body are to be honored. For example, the pastor is not a position in the church that ought to be regarded as "weak" or "without honor." Instead, quite the opposite is true. In 1 Corinthians 12:28-31 Paul states, *"And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way."* So also, we should ascribe greater value on those gifts that build up the body of Christ the most.

Read Ephesians 4; Romans 12; and Colossians 1. Notice 1) the importance of the body of Christ, 2) how each member is to function in the body, and 3) those members most important for the building up of the body in love.

FRIDAY

Let's think through Paul's point in this chapter and his letter to the Corinthians again. We are all in Christ's body. Everything that we are to do is to build up the body of Christ. Our motives, actions, and desires will be evaluated in light of these truths.

Read 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. Also, read 1 Timothy 1:1-5. How does "love" and "instruction" go together? Do you see the priority to "instruction"? How does that priority relate to "faith, hope, and love" but the greatest is "love"?