

ONE BODY, MANY GIFTS

The Gathering, Pt. 3, 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

November 5, 2023

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.
There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.
There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.
1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

One Spirit, one body, many gifts, many parts

¹² *The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

¹⁴ *Now the body is not made up of one part but of many ¹⁸ But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*

²¹ *The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*

²⁷ *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸ And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But eagerly desire the greater gifts.*

1 Corinthians 12

1. Paul is still assuming we will agree (compare 1:10 with 12:25)
2. Gifts (literally “grace-gifts”) are the primary way in which we administer grace (see 1 Peter 4:7-11)
3. Paul assumes that the Spirit’s gifts are plural while the fruit is singular (see Galatians 5)
4. How we respect those parts of the body deserving “special modesty” is as counter-cultural today as it was in Corinth
5. These gifts (called *pneumatikos* and *charismata*) are the way the Spirit empowers the church for ministry

How the body works (from biology to ecclesiology)

1. The body reflects its designer and purpose

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

1 Corinthians 12

2. The body has to take in and metabolize energy

⁴ I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵ For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—⁶ because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. ⁷ Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸ He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

1 Corinthians 1

3. The body grows (but what happens if some parts are not working as they should?!?)

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4

4. The body is designed to serve, not to be served

¹⁰ Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever.

1 Peter 4

5. The body has Jesus for the head, that means the leadership's job is to steward and equip

¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4

Answering several important questions

1. How do we get from “one” to “many”?

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

1 Corinthians 12

2. Which gift is most important?

³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. ³² Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— ³³ even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

1 Corinthians 10

3. There are “if one part suffers” implications beyond the local church

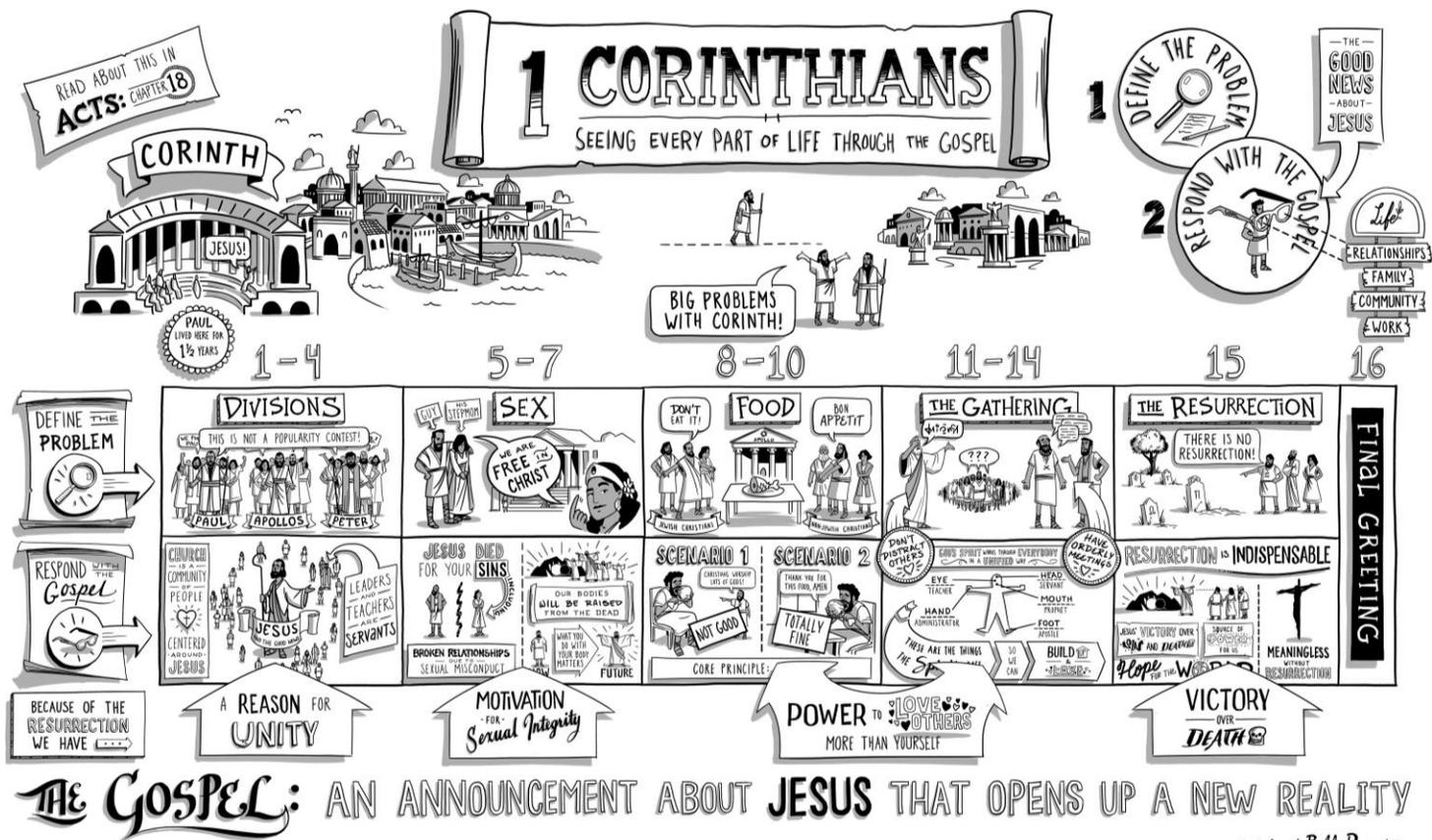
But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

1 Corinthians 12

4. A healthy body is God’s evangelistic plan

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2



Resources for further study

The Bible Project team does a great job of introducing 1 Corinthians at <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-1-corinthians/>

Spurgeon and Newton have several 1 Corinthians sermons at <https://www.biblebb.com/brefindex/1co.htm>

Ryle's study 1 Corinthians 10:14 is a good summary of the book at <https://www.monergism.com/flee-idolatry>

I appreciate Alexander Maclaren's application of this passage at https://www.preceptaustin.org/1_corinthians_maclaren_3#tug72

John Piper has a very good 1 Corinthians series at <https://www.desiringgod.org/scripture/1-corinthians/messages>

Keller has a wonderful piece on spiritual gifts at www.trinitypca.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/0e1508579_discerning-and-exercising-spiritual-gifts.pdf

Doug has referenced these commentaries:

Simon Kistemaker's *New Testament Commentary* (Baker, 1993)

Anthony Thiselton's *NIGTC* volume (Eerdmans, 2000)

Harold Mare's commentary in the *EBC* series (Zondervan, 1976)

Derek Prime has a shorter study "Opening Up 1 Corinthians" (Day One, 2005)

Doug likes the ESV Study Bible's introduction to 1 Corinthians and included it in these notes.