

Community Group Study - Winter/Spring 2018

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Theme: Gospel Partners Are Gifted

Introduction to Winter/Spring Study: Gospel Partnership

This semester we're doing a study on "Gospel Partnership" that ties in with our preaching series on Philippians. Paul thanks the church in Philippians for their "partnership in the gospel" (1:5). Today, our relationships in the church are still built on this "gospel partnership." We'll explore the foundation of that partnership in the first two studies, the goal of the partnership for two studies, and then some practical help for relating to one another as gospel partners.

Study Overview

While 1 Corinthians 12 is an especially rich text we're going to focus specifically on its implications for us as "gospel partners." Be warned in advance that there is more here than we'll be able to fully cover¹! Instead we want to focus on the big idea that *every* Christian has been designed by God with specific gifts. There are no "ungifted" Christians! Our goal will be to encourage one another to identify and use the gifts God has given us in the body for the good of the body.

Text

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves^[d] or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts,^[e] yet one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to

¹ Instead of feeling the temptation to cover every single idea in the text, or allowing the discussion to get sidetracked too far, you may need to regularly pull people back to the main idea with a reminder like "So we're talking about how every Christian is gifted..."

the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Questions

1. In verses 12-13 Paul says that though we are different, we share some very important things in common. What are those things we share in common?
2. In verses 14-20 Paul uses the word picture that we are all part of the body and addresses the idea that all parts of the body should be the same. Why does Paul say that's a bad idea?
3. In verse 21 Paul addresses member of the body who don't think they need one another. Why is that a silly idea according to the biblical argument?
4. In verses 22-25 Paul talks about "weaker" and "less presentable" parts in the body. What is he driving at with this section?
5. In verse 26 Paul summarizes the idea of the section. What does he say about suffering and rejoicing?
6. In verse 27-31 Paul lists a number of kinds of giftings in the church. Why do the church needed him to say these things?
7. How would you summarize Paul's whole encouragement in this section of the Bible? What's the big overall idea? (Perhaps challenge yourself to put this into one sentence)

Application

- Paul assumes that every Christian is needed and gifted. But if someone doesn't know how or where they are gifted, what are some ways to discover this?
- How does understanding this section help you as you consider how God has gifted you?
- How does understanding this section help you as you consider those who are gifted differently from you in the church?
- What does it mean that we should suffer and rejoice together? What could this look like in the church body and in our group?
- What are some of the "giftings" or "parts of the body" that we typically highlight? What are some giftings that we don't typically highlight? Why is it important to remember the body metaphor as we think about the value of each of them?

Prayer

- Spend time in the group thanking God for the various gifts in the group
- Spend time asking God for new gifts and giftings
- Spend time mourning or rejoicing together depending on the needs of the group