

The Spirit, The Body, and the Gifts: The Body
1 Corinthians 12:12-31

I. God's Goal for All Creation

A. Glory

1. Mission Statement: God reveals His will for the world
 - a. **Habakkuk 2:14 (ESV)** *For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*
2. No theology out of only one verse
 - a. **Numbers 14:21 (ESV)** ²¹ *But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD,*
 - b. **Psalm 57:5 (ESV)** ⁵ *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!*
 - c. **Psalm 72:19 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!*
3. Future Fulfilment
 - a. **Ezekiel 43:2 (ESV)** ² *And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory.*
 - b. **Revelation 5:13-14 (ESV)** ¹³ *And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”* ¹⁴ *And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

B. Why bring the mission up again?

1. Because God announced a singular mission to fill creation with the knowledge of His glory.
 - a. If it's important to God, it should be important to God's people.
 - b. If the love of God fills our heart then our heart should be filled with love for what God loves.
 - (1) Love for God's personal glory
 - (2) Love for the filling of the earth with the knowledge of His glory
2. Because it is a mission He reveals will be completed (especially since we know no plan of His can be thwarted.)
3. **Because you, sitting here today, are part of God's plan to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory, and your best course of life action is participation rather than resistance!**

C. God's method to fill creation with the knowledge of His glory

1. Through the work of creation
2. Through the work of redemption
 - a. Giving the Law: to define sin
 - b. Sending the Son: to forgive sin
 - (1) Forgiveness of sin

- (2) New birth
 - (a) New people
 - (b) New life
 - (c) New purpose
 - i) **2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*
 - ii) Not only old sins, but old way of life and old purpose for existence!
 - 3. **Through the Body of Christ, the church, the fully integrated, fully functional people of God!**
 - a. Why Paul addresses divisiveness in 1 Corinthians
 - b. Why Paul addresses spiritual gifts and love in chs. 12-14
- D. Proposition:** **Paul reveals the fully integrated God (Father, Son, Spirit: three in one) at work in the church to assemble and empower a fully integrated people whose singular experience and identity reveals God's personal glory to the world in which they live.**
- 1. Fully integrated means unity, not uniformity
 - 2. Fully integrated means that every true believer engages whatever spiritual gift they have for the benefit of all other believers
 - a. **1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV)** *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*
 - b. God gives to each for ALL!
 - (1) Implication
 - (a) Everyone has a spiritual gift from God
 - (b) Everyone has an immediate and perpetual responsibility to enact that gift for the benefit of the church (and ultimately for the glory of God)
 - (2) The Holy Spirit
 - (a) works in the believer for personal sanctification
 - (b) works through the believer for corporate integration - providing relational benefit that contributes to
 - i) Personal sanctification of others
 - ii) Expansion of the knowledge of the glory of the LORD in the world.
 - c. John MacArthur
 - (1) The diversity of the church is a God-ordained means of bringing the fellowship to oneness, but unless each diverse member recognizes and accepts his part in the whole body, diversity will divide rather than unite, destroy rather than build up, bring discord rather than harmony, and result in self-serving rather than self-giving.
 - (2) MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1984). 1 Corinthians (p. 310). Chicago: Moody Press.

3. **If we are going to avoid the pitfalls inherent in bringing diversity to unity then we need to understand and appreciate the role God has for each of us and for all of us in achieving the common good and advancing God's plan to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory.**

II. How God Outfits the Members of the Body to Work for the Common Good

A. God makes the Body and Christ one. (12:12)

1. Baptism, as an act of faith, integrates the believer into Christ
2. Christ and His Body are one
 - a. Integration not association
 - b. Substance more than structure

B. God makes the one body out of many parts (12:14)

1. No part can dismiss itself
 - a. Not by inferiority
 - b. Not by inaction
2. No part can dismiss another
 - a. Toes -
 - b. Every part counts

C. God arranges the body according to His wisdom and will (12:18)

1. Since the body (as with all God creates) exists for His glory
2. The Body does not exist for its own glory but for God's glory

D. God arranges the Body to serve love not selfishness (12:24-26)

1. "That the members of the body may have the same care for one another."
 - a. John Hay
 - (1) Asking "what is God's vision"
 - (2) Where is God working that we may join Him in His work?
 - b. "That the members of the body may have the same care for one another."
 - (1) Care: With the love shared among the Trinity
 - (2) Care: So that the world may see in our love for one another God's love for His glory
2. Looking outside when God has given a full agenda inside
 - a. Love one another
 - b. Put spiritual gifts to work for the benefit of all

E. You (y'all) are the Body of Christ and individually members of it. (12:27)

1. Members: God takes diverse individuals and by the working of the Holy Spirit makes them a fully integrated unity through faith in Christ bound together by love
2. Members:
 - a. God has appointed each of us to a ministry of His choosing in the Body
 - b. Faith and obedience require each member to discover their spiritual gift and put it into practice

III. Do you want to know what God is doing in the world?

A. God does this:

1. Ephesians 4:11-16 (ESV) *¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.***

B. Love one another

1. Actively pursue love for one another
2. Discover what God is doing in the world for His glory

C. How to love one another

1. Set your mind and heart on love: determine to act
2. Discover your spiritual gift
3. Engage your gift for the common good