

**EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY IN THE BODY OF
CHRIST** **I Corin. 12:12--13:3**

The key verses here are vs. 14, 20, & 27. In verse 22 Paul noted that the gifts we often see as unimportant are truly most necessary. When President Reagan was shot in 1981 the nation's government continued to function as though the attempted assassination had never taken place.

During that same year the garbage men in Philadelphia went on a three week strike & brought the city almost to a standstill. While most would say the presidency is far more important than domestic sanitation it was the trash men who proved to be indispensable.

Likewise in the church there are those who appear to have "unnecessary" gifts, but the absence of their service might hurt more than you expect. The truth we're reminded of is that everybody is somebody in the body of Christ.

I. UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST (12-13)

1. In verse 12 Paul takes the physical body and uses it to illustrate the characteristic of unity. There is one physical body, but it is made up of many different members. The body is not a pile of disconnected pieces, it is one unit with many different parts.
2. How did we get into this body of Christ? By salvation (vs. 13). We all came by one Spirit into one body through one way—JESUS CHRIST. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? It is God's Spirit placing a believer into the body of Christ.
3. At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit regenerates you, you repent and believe, and you are placed in the body of Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It all speaks of unity. The Holy Spirit is our basis of unity (Eph. 4:3).

4. It reminds us that we all need each other. No one is better than anyone else in the body. No one is more needed than anyone else in the body. The emphasis is upon oneness and unity.

II. VARIETY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST (14-30)

1. Mutual incorporation (vs. 14-16). There is unity, but also variety. We are one yet we also are many. Here Paul uses the analogy of the body to show the folly of discord. In verse 15 he imagines a complaining foot and in verse 16 he speaks of an enraged ear. You shouldn't feel inferior because it takes everyone working together to function.
2. Mutual dependence (vs. 17-21). It would be silly for your foot to envy your hand or for your ear to envy your eye. The same is true of the church and our gifts. Notice vs. 18. God put each person in the body right where He wants them and give them the gifts & abilities He wants them to have.
3. Mutual respect (vs. 22-25a). Paul deals here with those who are depreciating the gifts of others. He points out that the feeble are necessary (22). The honorless are given honor (23). His point is that the weaker members should be treated with care and respect. We must remember that the parts that seem unimportant may actually be indispensable.
4. Mutual support (25b-27). There should be no division. If one member suffers all suffer (26). When we begin to see the church as God sees it we will have the same care one for another. We will stop saying that this certain gift is all-important or that ministry is the all-important thing. We will see that God works the whole body together in a beautifully coordinated way.
5. Mutual enhancement (28-30). Here Paul poses seven rhetorical questions in the Greek which indicate a negative response to each question. Here he is speaking of the

church's, and God-appointed ministries. It is God's assignment and no man's selection that prevails.

6. (Share Chuck Swindoll's story entitled "A Rabbit on The Swim Team" in Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life.

III. MATURITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST (12:31-13:1-3)

1. In verse 31 Paul gives a command. Desire the higher or greater gifts. And then he moves in chapter 13 into the primacy of love and the necessity of love in exercising spiritual gifts. Only through love can the gifts function and this is true with all gifts. (share Billy Graham story)
2. In the first three verses of chapter 13 Paul mentions five spiritual gifts: tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith, & giving. His point is that without love the exercise of these spiritual gifts is nothing. It is love that enriches the gift and that gives it value. Ministry without love cheapens both the ministry and those who are touched by it.
3. However, ministry with love enriches the whole church. A man was known to carry a little can of oil wherever he went. If he passed through a door that squeaked, he put a drop of oil on the hinges, and if a gate was hard to open, he oiled the latch. So he passed through life lubricating all the creaking places, and making it a little more pleasant for those who followed after him. There is no telling how many lives we could keep from "rusting and squeaking" and how many gates we could open to happiness, if only we would carry a little oil of brotherly love and human kindness.
4. In the church, the body of Christ, there is unity, variety, & maturity. And all three point to this one truth: Everybody is somebody in the body of Christ.