

HIGHLANDS CHURCH

Study Guide

One Body, Many Parts

Bob Wade
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Major Points

- 1 A spiritual gift is not a refined natural talent but a supernatural endowment given by God at conversion, and every believer without exception receives one**

1 Corinthians 12:11

- 2 All believers are baptized by the same Holy Spirit into one body regardless of cultural, ethnic, or social background**

1 Corinthians 12:13

- 3 God sovereignly arranges each member in the body as he chooses, and the diversity of gifts is not accidental but intentionally designed for the church to function**

1 Corinthians 12:18

- 4 The parts of the body that seem weaker or less visible are actually indispensable — behind-the-scenes servants are the vital organs of the church**

1 Corinthians 12:22

- 5 No believer can say they have no need of another; the body needs every member functioning in their God-given role, united by love**

1 Corinthians 12:21

Key Quotes

“A spiritual gift is not a natural ability that God sort of takes and hones. It's not your natural way of doing things.

at 1:21

“When one part of the body doesn't function correctly, the whole body struggles.

at 7:40

“God was giving a picture of what it looks like when the church all comes together, one faith, one Lord, one baptism, all comes together, cultural differences, but one faith, Jesus.

at 12:53

“Your gift matters. Your service matters. Your presence matters.

at 19:25

“Please use your gift to do God's work. Please. Don't waste it. People need it.

at 36:31

Discussion Questions

1. Pastor Wade distinguishes a spiritual gift from a natural ability. How does understanding your gift as a supernatural endowment rather than a learned skill change the way you view your role in the church?
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2. Pastor Wade shares stories from Haiti and Washington D.C. where believers from different cultures worshipped together. When have you experienced the unity of the body of Christ across cultural or language barriers, and what did it teach you?
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3. Pastor Wade uses the baseball analogy of a catcher and a shortstop to illustrate that believers have different roles but the same goal. In what ways have you been tempted to compare your gift to someone else's, and how can verse 18 — that God arranged each member as he chose — free you from that comparison?
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4. Pastor Wade says the behind-the-scenes servants are the vital organs of the church. Who are the quiet, hidden servants in your church community, and how might you intentionally honor and encourage them this week?
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5. Pastor Wade closes with five takeaways, the last being 'we belong to each other.' What does it practically look like for your small group or church to live as though you truly need one another rather than functioning as independent individuals?
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Word Studies

χάρισμα charisma

Greek

A gift of grace; a free, undeserved endowment from God. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses this term to describe the specific spiritual capacities the Holy Spirit distributes to each believer for the common good of the church. Unlike natural talents, a charisma is rooted entirely in God's gracious initiative and cannot be earned or self-developed.

Usage: 17 times in the NT

σῶμα soma

Greek

Body; the physical organism. Paul uses soma as a sustained metaphor throughout 1 Corinthians 12 to describe the church as an organic, interdependent unity in which each member is vitally connected to every other. Just as a physical body cannot function if parts are missing or inactive, the ecclesial body of Christ suffers when believers withhold their gifts.

Usage: 142 times in the NT

μέλος melos

Greek

A limb or member of the body. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Paul uses melos repeatedly to refer to individual believers as distinct yet integral parts of the larger body of Christ. The term underscores that no single member is self-sufficient and that God has placed each melos in the body according to his sovereign design.

Usage: 34 times in the NT

Cross References

Romans 12:4-8

Paul uses the same body metaphor and teaches that believers have gifts that differ according to grace — prophecy, service, teaching, encouragement, giving, leading, and mercy — providing a complementary list to the gifts enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12.

Exodus 4:10-12

Moses protested that he was slow of speech, yet God told him 'I will be with your mouth.' This Old Testament parallel mirrors Pastor Wade's testimony of overcoming a severe stutter, illustrating that God equips those he calls regardless of natural limitations.

Ephesians 4:11-16

Paul teaches that Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers so that the whole body, joined and held together, would grow up into maturity — expanding the body-of-Christ ecclesiology beyond Corinth to the universal church.

1 Peter 4:10-11

Peter commands believers to use whatever gift they have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's varied grace — reinforcing the same call Pastor Wade makes that every believer's gift must be actively deployed for the body's benefit.

Psalm 139:13-16

David praises God for knitting him together in his mother's womb and ordaining all his days before one of them came to be — grounding the sovereignty Pastor Wade highlights in verse 18 ('God arranged the members as he chose') in the Old Testament doctrine of divine design.

Further Reading

- **The Body: Being Light in Darkness**
by Charles Colson and Ellen Vaughn
- **Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts: A Personal Inventory Method**
by C. Peter Wagner
- **1 Corinthians (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament)**
by David E. Garland

Scripture References

REFERENCE	TYPE	TIME	CONTEXT
1 Corinthians 12:12-14	Read Aloud	10 : 40	<i>For just as the body is one and has many members, ...</i>
1 Corinthians 12:15-16	Read Aloud	16 : 50	<i>If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, ...</i>
1 Corinthians 12:17-20	Read Aloud	17 : 40	<i>If the whole body were an eye, where would be the ...</i>
1 Corinthians 12:21-26	Read Aloud	26 : 30	<i>The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of...</i>
1 Corinthians 12:27-31	Read Aloud	29 : 50	<i>Now you are the body of Christ and individually me...</i>
Romans 8:9	Referenced	12 : 00	<i>You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spir...</i>
Ephesians 4:5	Referenced	12 : 30	<i>One Lord, one faith, one baptism.</i>
1 Corinthians 13:1	Referenced	32 : 40	<i>If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, bu...</i>