

The Gift of Interdependence in the Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:12-31 – 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 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, 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 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.

Opening: Why do we struggle to be dependent upon others? Why do we like to be so independent?

- ✓ *God has designed his church to be a community of complementary interdependence.*
- ✓ Each member brings something to the table that the others need, and is thus, enhanced by interdependence.

1. The _____ of Interdependence in the Body of Christ (12:21-28).

a. Paul uses the picture of the human body to show the beauty of the church. Verse 27 says: **Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.**

b. The beauty of interdependence is based on each member’s *indispensability*. Verses 21-24 tell us: **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,** ^{24a} **which our more presentable parts do not require.**

c. Why is the Church so interdependent? Verse 24b says: ^{24b} **But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it.**

d. And this God-designed beauty of interdependence looks like mutual care.

Verses 25-26 tell us: 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.

e. And God designed our mutual care to be expressed by using our grace gifts.

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.

2. The _____ of Interdependence in the Body of Christ (12:14-19, 29-30).

a. There is a lack of interdependence because we view others as dispensable.

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?

b. A lack of interdependence because of self-care.

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, yet one body.

3. The _____ of Interdependence in the Body of Christ (12:12-13).

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 or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

a. Interdependence can be recovered because Christ could have viewed sinners as dispensable, but in His grace, He saw them as indispensable.

b. Interdependence can be recovered because Christ saves sinners from the myth of self-composition.

c. Interdependence can be restored because Christ cares for sinners by making them interdependent members of His body.