



The 4Cs Kingdom Life: Christ, Connection, Care, Community  
Connection: “United” - I Corinthians 12:12-27  
Week of October 10, 2021

### Opening Question

- If you were to describe your place in the Body of Christ using a part of the human body, what would it be? Are you a mouth, a hand, a foot, an eye, an ear, a heart? Why?

### Prayer (from Colossians 1:9-12)

God, as we come together to study your Word, we ask you to fill us with the knowledge of your will. Thank you for the Holy Spirit who is here with us to help us understand how to live a life that pleases you in every way. Show us the good works you have for us to do and strengthen us with power to live as your holy people. We pray in the name of Jesus who redeemed us and brought us into your kingdom. Amen.

### Introduction

The church in every age struggles with influence from the surrounding culture. We often bring into our faith communities the same attitudes and thinking that are prevalent in our society. This was true of the Corinthian church in Paul’s day. He had to work to correct not only some of their theological misunderstandings, but also practices of the culture that influenced their thinking and life together. In the Greco-Roman world, high-status, wealthier members could easily be given more influence in the church. But God has something different in mind for Jesus-followers.

*“At the very beginning, God establishes this biblical ethic of human dignity. And that ethic declared that since humanity was created by God, and in the image of God, every human being had worth, value and dignity, and should be treated as such. This idea was unparalleled in the ancient world. No other civilization adopted an ethic of dignity like this. Throughout history, humans have used labels and categories and hierarchies to divide and organize human beings within societies. It was true then. It’s true now. People are divided and accorded dignity based upon things like age, gender, race, social standing, education and more. To accord people dignity based on labels and divisions is a pagan concept.*

*This seeing and according people equal dignity and value before God was revolutionary. And it made the church revolutionary.”*

-Brad Gray/Brad Nelson

Paul's use of the body as a metaphor for the church would have been familiar language to the Corinthians. According to N. T. Wright, "Various Greek and Roman writers had already spoken of communities in terms of a human body, working for the common good." Paul adopts this understanding to drive home his point about how the Corinthians needed to live with each other, valuing each person as a unique and gifted member of Christ's body.

### Read I Corinthians 12:12-27

#### Exploring the Text

- In the opening verses of this passage, what does Paul point to as unifying factors in the body of Christ?
- What is Paul's argument for needing and welcoming so many different parts in the body?
- Why is it important to value different opinions, gifts, and ways of seeing/operating in the body of Christ?
- With the incredible diversity present in the body of Christ, there is bound to be conflict at times. How should we go about resolving differences? What can we do to appreciate and honor the differences?
- How can we put into practice suffering with others, as well as rejoicing when others are honored?
- What are some practical ways to celebrate unique perspectives and gifts?

#### Closing Prayer

Depending on the needs/desires of your group here are some options:

- Ask one or two group members to close the group in prayer.
- Pray the Lord's prayer together aloud:

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen."

Preparation for next week:

For your group time next week, plan a meal together. Consider something you might fix as a group. Let everyone contribute. It could be as simple as homemade pizza and a salad. Work together towards a common purpose. Get in the kitchen together and chop some stuff! Perfection is not the goal. And let the conversation flow.

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Sources:

- Brad Gray & Brad Nelson, How the Christians Challenged the System, Paul and His Roman World, Infusion Bible Conference 2021
  - Background of Colossians, NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible 2016
  - The Argument of I Corinthians, The New Testament In Its World, N.T. Wright/Michael F. Bird 2019
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