

Thursday, January 4, 2024

Spiritual Anatomy 101

How many of us have used our cellular device this morning? You checked your schedule for the week on your calendar. You searched google to find out what sound a turtle makes for your granddaughters. You started the morning singing praise and worship with your Spotify app. You actually lost your phone and used your spouses phone to find yours. You called your kids to check in and see how they are doing. You took a selfie for your latest Be Real. That cellular device we all keep within arms reach really is incredible! It can accomplish so many amazing tasks and yet we really never give any thought to all the parts that make the whole. I've never once considered that my phone has a proximity sensor, ambient light sensor, accelerometer, magnetometer, gyroscopic sensor, or barometer, and yet all of these parts come together to make my phone one and to make my phone function.

When is the last time you thought about how the body of Christ functions? There are all these people and all these moving parts. All these ministries and gifts running around. And yet the body of Christ is supposed to come together as one to accomplish the life changing mission of disciple making.

Paul gave the Corinthians what I would call, "Spiritual Anatomy 101," to show them how the body functions to the glory of God. As we've seen continuously throughout the letter, if we are going to live out the gospel faithfully, we live according to God's design. We follow God's pattern and not our own. At our core, we are bent on self and independence. In the salvation that Christ brings, he makes us one with himself and with one another. And yet at the same time, he equips each one of us with a diversity of gifts that strengthen the whole and help us to fulfill the mission of advancing the gospel.

Let's take a look at the passage and try to understand God's spiritual anatomy of the body of Christ.

The first description of the body we see:

1. The Body Unified

- **1Co 12:12-13 (ESV) 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.

- **We are one as Christ is one (v. 12).**
- **We are one in salvation (v. 13).**
- **1Co 12:20-21 (ESV) 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.”**
- **We are one in purpose. Key word “need”**
- **1Co 12:25-26 (ESV) 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.**
- **We are one in care (v. 25).**
- **We are one in suffering (v. 26).**
- **We are one in rejoicing (v. 26).**

The second description of the body we see:

2. **The Body Diversified**

- **We can parallel the spiritual anatomy of the church in a similar way with the human body because that is the description that Paul gave the Corinthians.**
- **Consider a few facts that I hope will help us bring this into focus:**
 - **206 Bones**
 - **600 Muscles**
 - **4000 Tendons**
 - **78 main organs (5 are considered vital for survival)**
 - **It’s estimated over 7 trillion nerves**
- **None of us probably woke up considering all 7 trillion nerves in our bodies, but each one is essential to the proper functioning of our bodies. Unless you are getting ready to have knee replacement surgery, you probably didn’t wake up thinking**

about the 4000 tendons in your body that are quite literally holding you together. Just as our unity is essential for the body of Christ, so too is the diversity of the body of Christ. Just as God skillfully designed our human bodies, he has skillfully crafted the body of Christ to function the way he desires. Paul told the Corinthians that God arranged, composed, and appointed the parts of the body in just the way he saw fit.

- **1Co 12:14-19 (ESV) 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?**
- **The body requires many different parts (v. 14-19).**
- **God has arranged the many parts just as he desired (v. 18).**
- **1Co 12:22-24 (ESV) 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,**
- **All the parts are indispensable and honorable (v. 22-23).**
- **God composed (mixed together) the parts and functions of the body so that we are interdependent upon one another. He gave abundant honor (elevated status) to the parts that “seem” less than. There are no small roles to play in the mission of God (v. 24).**
- **We are diversified but not divided. In fact, God has so composed the body of Christ—uniting us in our salvation, and**

diversifying the parts for the effective working of the mission in order to create greater unity and to do away with division.

Each of the parts work together to create a unit (v. 25).

- **1Co 12:27 (ESV) Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.**
- **You have a necessary place in the body. Your gifts are needed.**
- **1Co 12:28-30 (ESV) 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?**
- **God has give you gifts and appointed you a role and a responsibility.**

Conclusion:

1. **Do we understand that we have been made one through the cross and the resurrection of Christ? We belong to one another.**
2. **What is something the Lord would have you do today to strengthen the unity of the body?**
3. **God has made you a necessary part of the body of Christ and the mission of Christ. What is your role and responsibility within the body of Christ?**