

1 God Has Gifts for You

This is the first of two lessons designed to give you a proper **foundation** for all that you will study in this course. In this first lesson you will learn of your importance in the body of Christ.

Spiritual gifts are given only to members of that body. Therefore you must learn all you can about His body and how it works. When you took Jesus as your personal Savior you became a part of His body. Every believer is an important member of this body. To each member God gives gifts. These vary from person to person.

As a human being you are part of an earthly family or group. When you became a believer in Jesus you also became part of an even more important family or group—the body of Christ. As we move through this lesson you will begin to see just how important you are to God, and to other members of His body. You will also discover that He has a special gift or gifts for you, and that He is depending on you.

lesson outline

We Are All Members of His Body

Christ Is the Head

Believers Are the Body

Each Believer Is a Member

Every Member Is Important

Every Member Is Part of the Body

Every Member Has a Particular Function

We Are Not to Compare Ourselves With Others
Comparison Displeases God
Comparison Discourages People

We Are to be Faithful With Gifts from God
We Are to Recognize the Gifts
We Are to Use the Gifts

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- List the two major parts of body of Christ.
- Explain why each member in the body of Christ is important.
- State two reasons why a believer should not compare himself with another believer.
- State the source of spiritual gifts.
- Explain how God's gifts should be used.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson development and look up each Scripture reference in your Bible.
2. Begin memorizing 1 Corinthians 13. By the time you have completed this first lesson you should be able to quote the first two verses.
3. Spend some time thinking about the meaning of each key word. If you need help with understanding it, look it up in the glossary at the back of the study guide.
4. Study the lesson section by section. Do the required exercises and check your answers periodically.
5. Complete the self-test at the end of the lesson. If you have answered any incorrectly reread the lesson until you can give the correct answer.

key words

Understanding the key words listed at the beginning of each lesson will help you as you study. You will find them defined in alphabetical order in the glossary that is in the back of your study guide. If you are in doubt about the meaning of any of the words on the list, you may look them up now or when you come across them in your reading.

equipping
function

steward
talent

lesson development

WE ARE ALL MEMBERS OF HIS BODY

Objective 1. *List the two major parts of the body of Christ.*

Christ Is the Head

We need help to understand the relation between Christ and those who believe on Him. Paul the apostle used the human body to illustrate this. He pointed out that Christ is the head of the body. All of us know how important our own head is. Without our head two things would be true of us. First, we would be dead. We cannot live without our head. Second, we would be motionless and useless. Our head directs our body into meaningful activity. In the same manner, Christ, the head, seeks to direct His body to do His will. Another name for Christ's *body* is the *church*.

- 1** Read Colossians 1:15-18. Answer the following questions.
 - a** Of whom does Paul speak in this passage?
 - b** What other word describes the body of Christ?

The Bible speaks quite often about Christ as the head of the body. You should read each of these passages carefully three times: Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15-16; 5:23, Colossians 2:19.

Believers Are the Body

A head without a body is as useless as a body without a head. The head is important, but so is the body. Christ’s body is made up of all those who believe in His name. As a believer you are part of His body. That is a great truth. Paul wrote, “so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:5).

2 Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:4; 5:29-30, Colossians 1:24. Complete the following statements by filling in the correct answer.

- a** Christ is the of the body.
- b** Another word for Christ’s body is
- c** Believers are members of Christ’s

Each Believer Is a Member

The body of Christ has two main parts: (1) one head, and (2) many members. Our physical bodies do not have just a single member, but many. Our arms, legs, fingers, heart, etc. are all different members of our body. The body of Christ is like that, too. Every real believer becomes a part of His body. This means that every true believer in the world is part of His body. “Now the body is not made up of one part but of many” (1 Corinthians 12:14). People from every race, color, land, and nation are all part of the same body.

3 Name the two main parts of the body of Christ and place an **X** after the part which you help make up.

- a**
- b**

4 Circle the correct answer. Like our physical bodies the body of Christ has

- a)** one member.
- b)** many members.

EVERY MEMBER IS IMPORTANT

Objective 2. *Explain why each member in the body of Christ is important.*

Every Member Is Part of the Body

What would your big toe do if it were not attached to your body? Nothing but decay and return to dust. Yet your big toe is an important part of your body. Without it your body would not be whole. A body which does not have all of its members is limited in what it can do. For example, a man with no legs cannot run a race. A man without eyes cannot see the stars. A man without arms cannot not climb a tree.

Every member in Christ's body is very important to Him. "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27). Perhaps we can expand this thought by saying that every member in Christ's body is a share of that body. He is a piece or portion of it, just like your toe is a share, a piece, or a portion of your body.

5 Read 1 Corinthians 12:15-26. Circle the letter before each statement that is true.

- a** All believers are part of Christ's body.
- b** All members of the body of Christ are different.
- c** Members of the body of Christ do not need each other.

Every Member Has a Particular Function

Your toes and ears do not serve the same purpose. Neither do your eyes and feet. Likewise in the body of Christ all members do not have the same use. Instead every member has his own function. **Function** means "special work or duty." The function of the eye is to see. Think again of your big toe. It may be hidden by a shoe. You may seldom think of it. Yet it has its own important work or duty. In addition to being necessary along with your other toes, to make up a complete foot, it helps you balance your whole body. Lose your big toe and you will miss it greatly. Every other part of your body benefits from it.

Without it you will stumble more easily. You will not be able to run well. You may even limp.

The members of Christ's body are like the members of your own body. Each member has his own function and is therefore important, both to the head and to the other members of the body.

6 Read Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:18-25. Write **T** in the blank if the statement is true, and **F** if it is false.

... **a** All members of Christ's body have the same function.

... **b** Function means body.

... **c** Every member in Christ's body is important because he has his own function.

WE ARE NOT TO COMPARE OURSELVES WITH OTHERS

Objective 3. *State two reasons why a believer should not compare himself with another believer.*

Comparison Displeases God

God made each of us different from anyone else, just as He made the members of our bodies different from each other. Do you think God would be pleased if you complained because your big toe is not where your nose is? No. We understand God made each part of us and placed it where it is so it would serve its own purpose.

When we compare ourselves with other members of the body of Christ and complain because we are not like them, we displease the Lord. Each of us must learn that He made us who we are and placed us where we are for the good of the whole body and for His own glory.

Being unhappy because our gift or gifts are not the same as another person's makes us judges of God. It is like saying, "God, why didn't you give that gift to me?" How would you feel if you gave three of your friends gifts which fit their tasks

in life and then one of them complained because he did not receive the same gift you gave to one of the others? You would be very unhappy.

7 Read 1 Corinthians 12:15-18. We understand from these verses that we should not compare ourselves with others. Circle the correct letter before each correct reason below for not comparing ourselves with others.

- a)** Comparing ourselves with others displeases the Lord.
- b)** Comparing ourselves with others makes us part of Christ's body.
- c)** Comparing ourselves with others shows we do not realize how important we are to the body.

Comparison Discourages People

When we compare our gifts with others two things can happen. The first is, *we* may become discouraged because our gifts are not like someone else's gifts. Our gifts may not seem as important as another's gifts. The second is, we may become proud because we think our gifts are better than another's. Then we may discourage *him or her*.

If each of us will learn that God gives us gifts suited to us this will help us. I would be very uncomfortable trying to wear my wife's shoes. Really, they would not fit at all. Nor could she wear mine. Her shoes are fitted to her feet. In like manner, the gifts God has for you are just right for you. Those He has for other members of the body are just right for them. What then is the sense of comparing our gifts with gifts others have been given?

One more thing is important here. Paul wrote, "so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others" (Romans 12:5). There is no good reason for comparing our gifts, since we belong to the same body. Each of us benefits from the other's gifts. Why try to compare our feet with our mouth? They don't look alike. They don't act alike. But both are necessary and both contribute to the same purpose. Our feet carry us to our food. Our mouth eats it. But the whole body profits. It is the same with members of Christ's body.

- 8** Read 1 Corinthians 12:21-27. Add the proper word or words to complete each of the following sentences.
- a** When we compare ourselves with others we may discourage both and
 - b** Gifts suited to us are given to us by
 - c** We should not compare ourselves with others because we are all necessary members of the same

WE ARE TO BE FAITHFUL WITH GIFTS FROM GOD

Objective 4. *State the source of spiritual gifts.*

Objective 5. *Explain how God’s gifts should be used.*

We Are to Recognize the Gifts

As a member of Christ’s body you have a spiritual ministry to perform. In **equipping** you for the work, God has given you a gift, and possibly more than one gift. Every member has at least one gift. Almost every place in the Bible where the gifts are mentioned it is stated that they are for every member.

These gifts are not given to us by our parents or by our teachers. No human being has the power to give them. Also they are not the talents we have come by naturally.

Talents are abilities with which people are born. Different people have different natural abilities. Some call them gifts, but they are not the same as spiritual gifts. Many unbelievers have talents. For example, an unbeliever may have a musical talent. Or he may have a talent for speaking in public. These are not spiritual gifts.

A spiritual gift comes from only one source—God. “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17).

9 Read Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11; 1 Peter 4:10.

Circle the letter before each TRUE statement below.

- a** Only a few of God's children have spiritual gifts.
- b** Spiritual gifts are given to us by God.
- c** Spiritual gifts and human talents are the same.
- d** Our teachers can give us spiritual gifts.

We Are to Use the Gifts

The Bible gives a simple rule which applies to all of God's gifts. "You have received without paying, so give without being paid" (Matthew 10:8). Applying this to spiritual gifts means that the gifts received by the members of the body are to be used for the purpose for which they are given.

Sometimes believers fail to use their gifts. Sometimes they use them selfishly and without love. The purpose is not fulfilled in either case.

Therefore, it is the believer's duty to (1) use each gift for its intended purpose, and (2) permit love to govern its use. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10). The Bible uses the word stewardship when speaking of man's duty. Stewardship means looking after the things of another. As believers we receive the stewardship of spiritual gifts. That is, we are to look after the gifts given to us and use them to further our Lord's kingdom. And there is a clear rule for stewards. "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). Faithful use of spiritual gifts brings glory to the Giver and blessing to the body.

Love is the key to effective use of spiritual gifts. Apart from love, spiritual gifts do not fulfill their purpose. "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Galatians 5:6).

- 10** Circle the letter before each TRUE statement.
- a** Spiritual gifts are to be used for the good of others.
 - b** Stewardship means being concerned about your own things.
 - c** We honor God when we faithfully use the spiritual gifts He has given.
 - d** Spiritual gifts are more important than love.
- 11** The key to effective use of the spiritual gifts God has for us is to
- a)** let others know you have a spiritual gift.
 - b)** compare your gift with your neighbor's.
 - c)** let love govern the use of gifts.
 - d)** wait for something to happen.

self-test

After you have reviewed this lesson, take the self-test. Then check your answers with those given in the back of the textbook. Review any questions answered incorrectly.

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space before each true statement. Write **F** if the statement is false.

- ... **1** Two major parts of the body of Christ are the head and the hands.
- ... **2** The body of Christ has many members.
- ... **3** Some members of the body are not important because they are not seen.
- ... **4** Different members in Christ's body have different functions.
- ... **5** Christ is pleased when we compare ourselves with each other.
- ... **6** By comparing ourselves with other members in the body of Christ we may discourage them.
- ... **7** Human talents are not spiritual gifts.
- ... **8** We are born with spiritual gifts.
- ... **9** God does not give us spiritual gifts especially for our own pleasure.
- ... **10** Stewardship involves the faithful use of spiritual gifts.
- ... **11** All spiritual gifts serve their purpose best through love.

answers to study questions

- 1 a** Christ.
b believers or church.
- 7 a)** Comparing ourselves with others displeases the Lord.
c) Comparing ourselves with others shows we do not realize how important we are to the body.
- 2 a** head.
b church.
c body.
- 8 a** ourselves, others.
b God.
c body.
- 3 a** head.
b members X.
- 9 a** False.
b True.
c False.
d False.
- 4 b)** many members.
- 10 a** True.
b False.
c True.
d False.
- 5 a** T
b T
c F
- 11 c)** let love govern the use of gifts.
- 6 a** F
b F
c T