Lesson 2

Everyone's Involved

1 Corinthians 12

Melba is totally dedicated to developing her gift of playing the oboe. An orchestra is too restrictive for her progress in "oboism" because she has to yield to too many other instruments. So she has sought out other oboists and created an all-oboe orchestra. Not surprisingly, tickets for the first concert have moved very slowly.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What abilities do you appreciate about each other? Take a few minutes to name some things. You might praise talents such as musical or athletic ability, but also try to concentrate on character qualities such as encouragement, hospitality or compassion.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. What unique ability or talent do you most enjoy using?

The church in Corinth was a collection of "soloists" who needed to learn to play in harmony. They had a nightmarish list of problems, including bitter strife, sexual immorality and drunkenness at the Lord's Supper! Paul sets forth the picture of a church where everyone has a part and all parts fit together into a whole. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

1. What is Paul's central message for the Christians in Corinth?

2. When have you needed the same sort of advice Paul gave the Corinthians?

3. Contrast the Corinthians' previous lives as pagans and their present lives as Christian believers (vv. 1-3).

4. Given the common source of all spiritual gifts, what should be their results (vv. 4-7)?

What factors might cause the outcome to be otherwise?

5. How do each of the gifts mentioned in verses 8-10 contribute to the unity of the church?

6. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. In what ways is the human body an appropriate metaphor for the church of Jesus Christ?

7. How should each of us be personally encouraged by the truth about gifts in verse 18?

8. According to Paul, how can we avoid divisions in the church (vv. 21-25)?

9. Look again at verses 21-25. In what ways have you failed to give honor to the weaker parts of the body of Christ?

10. What are some practical ways to give honor to those "parts of the body" which are typically regarded as "less honorable" (v. 23)?

11. Focus on verses 27-31. What do you consider to be your spiritual gift(s)?

12. How will you seek "the greater gifts" (v. 31)?

Ask for the Lord's forgiveness for any selfish ways you have used your gifts. If you are studying in a group, express prayers of thankfulness for one another's gifts.

Now or Later

How are you currently using your spiritual gifts to strengthen community in your church? This week, how will you seek to use your gifts to serve others?