

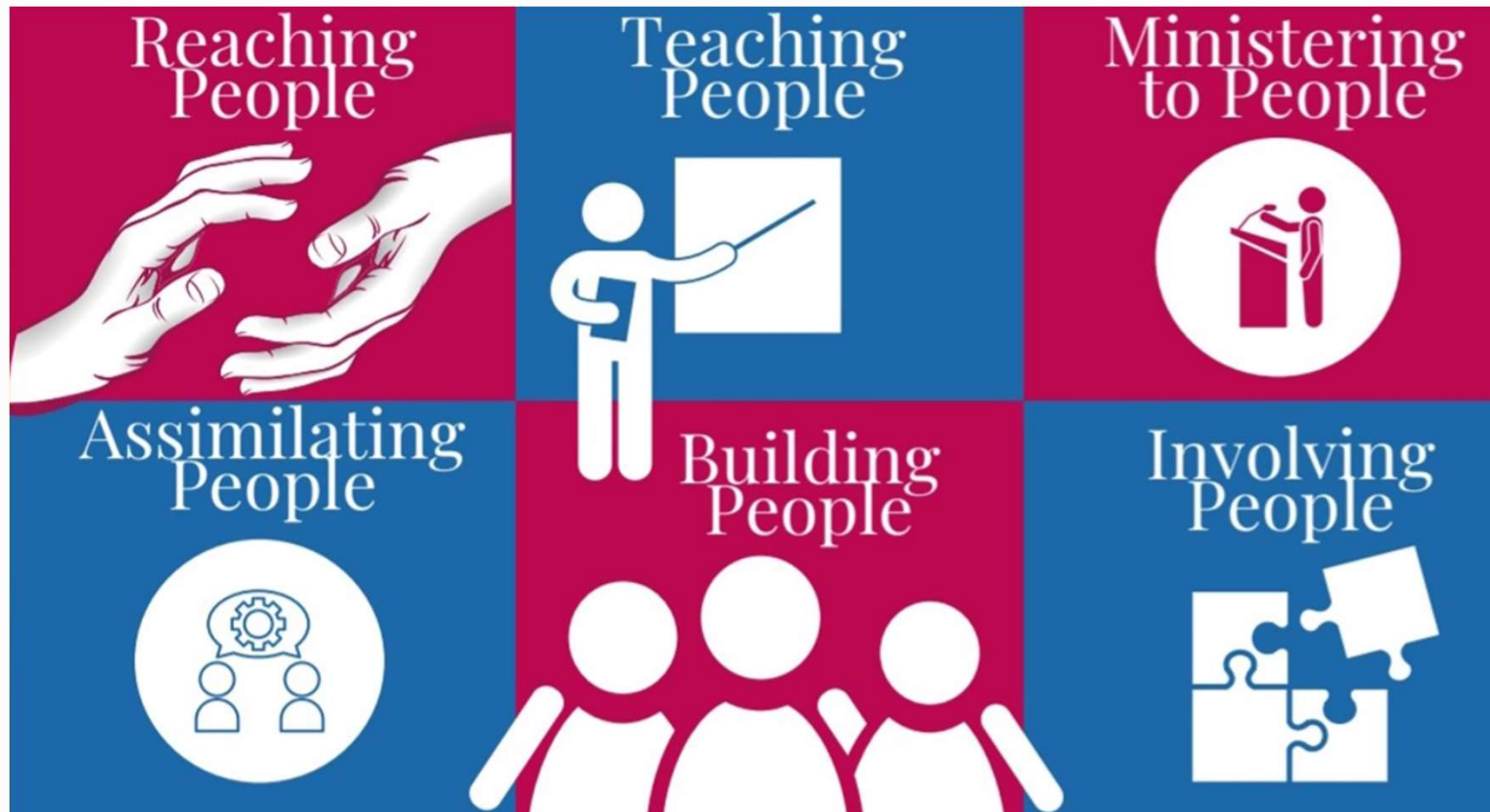


Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C
Sunday School

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025

THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE
BODY

SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalm 133:1**

School/Class: But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

Superintendent/Teacher: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

School/Class: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. **Psalm 119:105**

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

ALL:

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. **2 Peter 3:18**

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025

THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



- Bible Basis: 1 Corinthians 12:14-31
- Bible Truth: The church needs all the spiritual gifts to work together to function effectively and efficiently.
- Memory Verse: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" 1 Corinthians 12:13, KJV.
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: LEARN how each member of the body supports the other members; VALUE the different gifts operating within the church; and USE spiritual gifts in cooperation with others for building up the body of Christ.
- Background Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Galatians 3:23-29-Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



1 Corinthians 12:14-31, KJV

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



1 Corinthians 12:14-31, KJV

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



1 Corinthians 12:14-31, KJV

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked.

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



1 Corinthians 12:14-31, KJV

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



1 Corinthians 12:14-31, KJV

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



LIGHT ON THE WORD

Helps is the special ability to aid, assist, and support others. It is closely related to the gift of mercy, which is caring for those who are distressed and disadvantaged. In 1 Thess. 5:14, the phrase "support the weak" could refer to this ministry in particular. The men who were selected to feed the poor widows in Jerusalem could have possessed this gift (Acts 6:1-7). This gift could also be used in an unofficial capacity as those who gave alms and fed the poor without an official role or title.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



LIGHT ON THE WORD

"Governments" is related to the word for a captain or pilot of a ship. It is the special ability to organize and make decisions that lead to the church operating efficiently and effectively. It is the ability to administrate people and details in order to accomplish goals. Those with this gift usually have an eye for detail and an ability to problem solve.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: We will understand the importance for
Christians to operate in unity within their spiritual
gifts.

INTRODUCTION

A Common Source for a Common Goal

Paul likened the church to a human body. He emphasized that every member has an important function just like the parts of the body. Each and every member contributes to the health and functioning of the whole body. This makes every believer a necessary part of the body of Christ. He reminds them that God is the provider of all gifts, and that the Holy Spirit is the source (1 Corinthians 12:2-5).

INTRODUCTION

A Common Source for a Common Goal

As a balance, he illustrates the similarity of the human body to the body of Christ (1Corinthians 12:13). By breaking down the importance of each member, he makes it clear that the church's body cannot afford to be divided for any reason, whether from outside influence or internal disagreement. Even as the various parts serve differing functions, they have a common source and a common goal and cannot operate separate from one another.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will trust that love governs the
exercise of all the gifts of the Spirit.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



I. THE PURPOSE OF THE PARTS

Strength in Diversity
1 Corinthians 12:1-3

Paul began his analogy of the body of Christ by using very common language regarding the human body. He blended humor and a hint of irony to describe the rather silly way that people can treat each other. Paul used rhetorical questions to state the fact that the church is one body. If the church is made up of only one member or one spiritual gift, then it would miss out on some important things that it needed. In contrast, God has placed all of the members of the church into one body; thus the diversity of gifts can profit the whole church.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



I. THE PURPOSE OF THE PARTS

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

Strength in Diversity

1 Corinthians 12:1-3

The body metaphor was widely used in the ancient world. Many politicians used it to create peace and harmony between the different social classes. The argument was usually that the lower parts needed to be subordinated under the more superior or noble parts. In other words, the poor and working classes must submit to the rich and noble classes. This was not the case with Paul. The metaphor of the body is used in a more egalitarian way for Paul to show what true Christian community looks like.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



I. THE PURPOSE OF THE PARTS

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

Strength in Diversity
1 Corinthians 12:1-3

It can be safe to infer that for Paul, the idea of the church as the body of Christ was more than a metaphor but an actual reality. Here Paul uses the body metaphor to highlight the necessity of diversity. Everyone cannot have the same gift if the body of Christ is to operate effectively. The body must consist of many members with diverse gifts. The oneness of the body does not take away from the diversity of its members.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



I. THE PURPOSE OF THE PARTS

Strength in Diversity
1 Corinthians 12:1-3

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

In many cultures, the foot is regarded as being very lowly. To touch another person with the foot would be considered disrespectful, if not insulting. But the touching of hands is considered a gesture of friendship. Thus, if the foot did not wish to belong to the body, because it did not have the status of a hand, would not change the fact that it is still a vital part of the body. The ear and the eye both occupy a position upon the head, so there is not as great a difference in status as the foot and the hand. However, the difference lies in function. These two organs have distinct purposes, neither of which the body would gladly do without.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



I. THE PURPOSE OF THE PARTS

Strength in Diversity
1 Corinthians 12:1-3

17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

The argument for diversity continues. The body of Christ cannot function properly with prophecy only, but also healing, hospitality, teaching, etc. Paul's point is that if the whole consisted of only one thing, the body would lose many functions, if not its very existence. The body was not meant to just pursue one function. Paul argues that a diversity of gifts are needed for the church to do all the work it is meant to do.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



I. THE PURPOSE OF THE PARTS

Strength in Diversity
1 Corinthians 12:1-3

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

Paul credits God with having arranged each member of the body by plan. The body is organized for God's purpose. There would not be a body if He had not planned it, if all the members were the same. Diversity is necessary. According to God's purpose, many diverse members work together for the good of the whole body.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



LIGHT ON THE WORD

The Blessing in Sharing Gifts

Paul says that these many members are a part of one body. These many members are necessary for the whole body to function; without them, the body would be incapacitated. All the members with all their gifts are a part of the one body. This shows the diversity as well as the unity of the church.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



II. THE DANGER OF DIVISION

The Body of Christ as One
1 Corinthians 12:21-26

Paul continued his conversation among the body parts by shedding light on very common attitudes. He supposed the eye and hand suffer a disagreement in which they attempt to cast each other off (v. 21). While it is quite possible for a body to survive an amputation of an eye or hand (or foot or arm, etc.), the point is that a seeing eye still has nothing with which to grasp. Likewise, a hand without an eye to guide it will do more bumbling and destruction rather than productive handiwork.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



II. THE DANGER OF DIVISION

The Body of Christ as One
1 Corinthians 12:21-26

Far too often, arguments arise in the church where members work harder to find fault in each other than they do to find alternate solutions to a common problem. More serious is the idea of "schism". This word describes a division or dissention. More seriously, it represents a tear or a rip, as in a garment. Whenever we look upon our brothers and sisters as being less valuable – either to God or mankind – we are forgetting our own personal need for salvation.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



II. THE DANGER OF DIVISION

The Body of Christ as One
1 Corinthians 12:21-26

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

One member or body part does not equal a body. Paul tied the existence of the body to the diversity of its members such that the Corinthian church could not protest his argument for diversity and interdependence. The many members make up the one body. Since the existence of the body is wrapped up in its diversity, then interdependence becomes necessary. None of the parts can exist alone; they all need each other to function as one body.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



II. THE DANGER OF DIVISION

The Body of Christ as One
1 Corinthians 12:21-26

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: **23** And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

Here Paul overturns the Corinthians' attitude of pride and boasting. The parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are the most necessary. The parts with less honor and dignity are also the ones given the most care. Those that are weakest are those we clothe with the greatest care. The parts that are stronger do not receive the same kind of care and attention.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



II. THE DANGER OF DIVISION

The Body of Christ as One
1 Corinthians 12:21-26

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For the Corinthian church, this means that those members they deem less dignified and lacking in knowledge are the ones to be treated with honor. The ones they despised for being weaker and an embarrassment were actually placed there by God to receive greater honor and care. This profound statement was rooted in the design of the body and therefore a part of God's plan.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



II. THE DANGER OF DIVISION

The Body of Christ as One
1 Corinthians 12:21-26

24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

Continuing with the theme of interdependence and unity, Paul said that God has mixed the body together and given more honor to the parts that naturally lack it so that there would not be a schism in the body. The opposite of division is that the different members would provide the same care for one another. There would be no member who was isolated and did not receive the same care as the others. That would be detrimental for the health of the body and contrary to their existence as the body of Christ.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



II. THE DANGER OF DIVISION

The Body of Christ as One
1 Corinthians 12:21-26

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

With our physical bodies, an injury to any part is felt throughout the body. So it is with the body of Christ. Similarly, if one member exercises his or her gifts for the glory of the Lord, the whole of the church is edified. We see this edification in how the presence of a single member in a church can make an enormous difference in the quality of worship, in the feeling of hospitality visitors receive, even in the effectiveness of the church's administrative functions.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



LIGHT ON THE WORD

Togetherness Among Christians

After the argument between the eye and the hand, the head and feet erupt into an outright dismissal of one another. As ludicrous as it would be for one body part to dismiss another, we are quick to seek separation from other Christians, regardless of our common call to life in Christ. Paul acknowledged that there are those among us who may have less favorable attributes (vv.23-24), yet we have no right to dismiss them or devalue their presence within the body. Schism represents a painful rip among humans, and also rips us from God's will.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



III. THE MISSION OF MEMBERSHIP

Connected as One Body
1 Corinthians 12:27-31

As Paul concluded this portion of his letter, he called the discorporate body parts into a unified vision of hope. He addressed them directly, saying, "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular" (v. 27). As such he outlines that rather than lowly feet or eye or hand, the members of the church are actually far more vital. Naming gifts like prophecy, teaching, healing, preaching, and administration, he makes it clear that there is no person or gift that is without value in God's eyes (vv. 27-31).

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



III. THE MISSION OF MEMBERSHIP

Connected as One Body
1 Corinthians 12:27-31

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Paul underlined what he has taught throughout this passage. The members of the Corinthian church were the body of Christ. As individuals, they were members or parts of that body. Their existence as the body of Christ is based on their unity and interdependence. It was not an either/or proposition, but a both/and proposition.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



III. THE MISSION OF MEMBERSHIP

Connected as One Body
1 Corinthians 12:27-31

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

Now Paul went back to the beginning of his argument in 1 Corinthians 12:12. There are many members but one body. He stated that God has set some in the church with different gifts. Four gifts are mentioned here that are not mentioned in the beginning of the chapter: apostles, prophets, teachers, and governments. All four are stated as roles or leadership positions with the final one potentially encompassing a number of types of leadership including administration.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



III. THE MISSION OF MEMBERSHIP

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Paul included them all here as spiritual gifts. To be an apostle is literally to be "one who is sent." This applied to the twelve apostles who traveled with Jesus during His earthly ministry as well as others, including Paul, who came after Jesus who were specially commissioned by Him to be His witness and lay the foundation for the church. The other three gifts Paul mentioned have similarly important roles in spreading the Gospel. The prophet is one who hears from and speaks for God. Teachers regularly educate the members of the emerging church. "Governments" can be defined as the gift of administration or organizing.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



III. THE MISSION OF MEMBERSHIP

Connected as One Body
1 Corinthians 12:27-31

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He next asked some rhetorical questions. All of them can be answered with an emphatic "No!" The main point he is making is that not everyone can be every gift. He continued his argument for the diversity of gifts within the church. Everyone should not have the same gifts, or the church would cease to be a functioning body. This is the practical application of Paul's earlier statements about the whole body being an ear or an eye; there would be a loss of function. Paul is now making it plain that we do not all have, and should not all seek to have, the same gifts.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



III. THE MISSION OF MEMBERSHIP

Connected as One Body
1 Corinthians 12:27-31

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

The word for covet earnestly (Gk. zeloo, zeh-LOoh) means to burn with zeal. Here Paul said to seek after the best gifts with intense passion. We can see that Paul wants to encourage spiritual gifts actively functioning in the church. He says to covet earnestly the best gifts. From this text, we cannot see what the best gifts are. It could be a way to appeal to the Corinthians' fascination with the more ecstatic supernatural gifts, or linked to his preference of prophecy as the best gift. (cf. 1 Cor. 14:1)

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



III. THE MISSION OF MEMBERSHIP

Connected as One Body
1 Corinthians 12:27-31

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Paul added a qualifier to his encouragement to seek out the best gifts. He says that he will show them a more excellent (Gk. hyperbole) way. Literally, this Greek word means "throwing beyond." Metaphorically it is an adjective describing something beyond measure. Paul is now about to show them away that is beyond all measure of goodness. This is a transition into Paul's famous passage about love. It is clear from this transition that Paul's chapter on the qualities and the importance of love are set in the context of the spiritual gifts and his teaching on the diversity and unity of the body of Christ.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



LIGHT ON THE WORD

Individuals Building Collectively

More than a simple call to mend fences, Paul empowered each individual to know their place in the body of Christ so that their individual gifts may be put to their best use for God, rather than personal or individual gain. To be a member of the body of Christ is a serious responsibility, but that responsibility is made bearable by support and care from the other members connected to us.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will recognize and support all parts
of the body of Christ.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



BIBLE APPLICATION

Often people separate from a church after a negative experience. Sometimes people can be put off by a well-intentioned but poorly placed comment. The news is unfortunately replete with accounts of people suffering tragic abuse at the hands of church leaders. Our natural reaction may be to say how much better we are than a particular denomination. We may go so far as to speak negatively about that particular group's theology based on human failures. Our task in striving for unity is not to condone or cover misdeeds done in or around the church. Instead, we should hold each other up via upholding standards and accountability. While it is hard to subject ourselves to each other, it is best that we determine that we will submit together to the will of God.

STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: We will strive to identify and understand
our gifts and how they can best be used for
the glory of God.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



STUDENT RESPONSES

In some church cultures, the idea of spiritual gifts is only understood to be evident by certain worship activities. In the African American culture, it is no secret that exuberant singing, shouting, dancing, or displays of emotion may indeed reflect the power of the Holy Spirit upon someone's life and physical body. Still, Paul's letter makes certain that our gifts are not simply to be seen or heard within the assembly. Seek out those people in your church body who contribute behind the scenes. Make a point to show them appreciation through words of encouragement, a card, or a gift.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



Prayer

Dear God,

We praise and honor You as the Creator of all gifts. We are excited and rejoice at knowing that each of us has a gift from You to glorify Jesus, our true Savior.

In Jesus' Name we pray.

Amen.

Lesson 12 May 18, 2025
THE SPIRIT CREATES ONE BODY



Next Sunday
May 25, 2025
Lesson 13
The Greatest Gift is Love
1 Corinthians 13