

31. Learning that Every Christian Is Important

In our last topic, we saw that the Holy Spirit baptizes every Christian at the moment of salvation by placing each person in the body of Christ at the moment that person becomes a Christian. We also saw that it is important to help each of our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the importance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to others. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit work together to give us different ways of working, different ministries and different spiritual gifts to equip each Christian to carry out the ministry that God has designed for each Christian. Today, we are going to see why we want to help our children understand that every Christian is important.

In 1 Corinthians 12:19-20, we read, “And if they *were* all one member, where *would* the body *be*? But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body.” In the physical body, if every part of the body was a leg, we would not have a body. Instead, we would have many legs that were useless because they were not able to function as a part of a body. It is the same way in the church. We cannot all do the same thing or we would not be functioning as a body. For that reason, God has made each of us different so that each one of us can carry out the ministry that the Lord has created us to do.

One of the key things that we want to help our children learn to explain to others is that every Christian is important and God has designed a ministry for each one. That is why 1 Corinthians 12:21-22 says, “And 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.’ No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.” Here, we see that no Christian is to feel that the ministry of some other Christian is not important. In the physical body, the eye does not say that it does not need the hand. In the same way, we need every Christian to realize the importance of the ministry of every other Christian. We show a wrong attitude if we think that the ministry of another Christian is not important.

Some Christians are physically weak and not able to do things that involve the use of their physical body. That does not mean that they are unimportant. In fact, in the sight of God, that person may have a very important ministry. A Christian may be physically limited or very advanced in age. However, that person may spend many hours in prayer every day. In Luke 2:36-38, we read, “Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman *was* a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” Here, we see that Anna was older and so she served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

1 Corinthians 12:23-25 goes on to say, “And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another.” Some Christians may carry out those ministries that most

Christians do not even notice. However, God knows how each Christian serves Him and such individuals may be some of the ones who receive the greatest honor when we get to heaven.

Other parts of our body are not even seen. We do not even see our physical heart but without it our body would be dead. In the same way, the Lord has given some Christians ministries that are never seen by other Christians. We see that God says that He will give greater honor to those parts that do not receive honor from others. We see that God has a goal for the body of Christ. The word that is translated “schism” means *division*. It is the word that is translated “divisions” in 1 Corinthians 1:10 where we read, “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” Paul had a great concern to see the Corinthians stop those things that were bringing divisions between various Christians. Instead, we see that Paul said he wanted to see the Christians perfectly joined together.

That is why we are to have a great care and concern for every Christian. 1 Corinthians 12:26-27 says, “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it*. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.” Here, we see that anytime something causes one Christian to suffer the whole church is affected. When we see any person suffering in the body, we are to suffer with that person by praying for that person. Romans 12:15 says, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” We are also to share in the suffering of those who weep by weeping with them and praying for them. In the same way, when a Christian is honored, we are to rejoice with that person and thank the Lord for the way that He has worked through the life of that person.

In our physical body, if we break a toe, we experience pain that affects every part of our body. In the same way, when something affects another Christian, we see that it also affects the rest of the body. That is why we are told that we are to continually remember we are all a part of the body of Christ and need to have a great concern for each other. We see an illustration of this principle in Acts 11:27-29 where we read, “And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.” Here, we see that the disciples in Antioch had a great concern to share in the suffering that was going to happen to the Christians in Jerusalem and the surrounding area.

As we help our children learn how to help others develop a great concern for other Christians, we are showing them how to function as the body of Christ. This was an important lesson for the Christians in Corinth because there were many divisions in the church at Corinth. In the same way, it is also an important lesson for Christians today because we still see many divisions. The night before He was crucified, Christ told the disciples in John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Here, we see that the thing that will cause the world to recognize the love of Christ is to see the love of Christians for one another.

We go on to read that God is the One who gives those who minister to the church or in the church their various ministries. In 1 Corinthians 12:28-31, we read, “And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. *Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.” We saw in an earlier topic why apostles and prophets are listed first.

In Acts 1:21-22, we read, “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” Here, we see that the apostles were to be eyewitnesses of the resurrection. Without the resurrection, there would be no church. 2 Peter 1:19-21 says, “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.” Here, we see that the prophets gave us the written Word of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Without the Word of God, we would have nothing to guide us and show us how to help each Christian develop the ministry the Lord has given them.

We also see that two additional gifts are mentioned here that were not mentioned in the earlier part of the chapter. One of these is the gift of helps. The gift of helps is similar to the gift of serving in that it speaks of helping and serving others. However, it is different than the gift of serving in the sense that the word translated “helps” means *to take the burden off someone else and place it on oneself*. This is often one of those unnoticed gifts. Yet it is very important because it frees others for ministry by relieving them of those things that could be a burden and hindrance to their ministry.

The second gift is the gift of administration. This word comes from the same root word as the word for the pilot of a ship. It has the thought of one who steers the ship and guides it to the harbor. This gift of administration speaks of those who have been given the special ability to make wise decisions to motivate, to mobilize and to delegate responsibility to help a group of Christians. This helps the body to accomplish a purpose, fulfill an objective or reach a goal that they have been led of the Lord to establish. This is also an important gift that often is not recognized but helps the body of Christ function effectively. We want to show our children how to help all Christians realize that they are important in the body of Christ. Then, our children will be able to help others learn to serve the Lord effectively and the body will function properly. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to help other Christians understand that the Lord wants to use their ministry for His glory.