

God's Principles and Priorities on Time, Talent and Treasure

Part 2. Talent: Using God's spiritual gifts, talents and abilities

II. Purpose - Unity in Diversity (cont.)

In the previous lesson, we looked at the church as a body of believers, and compared it to the characteristics of the human body. We concluded that the beauty, proper operation and stability of the Body of Christ (as well as our own bodies) were actually dependent on the **diversity** of its members and each member functioning in their role. In fact, the one of the primary purposes of each member of the body is to contribute to the well being of the whole. Let's take a look at others.

Romans 12:3-6a. Members of the same body, different functions.

UNITY

- ❑ *I Corinthians 14: 12* - Strive for spiritual gifts that build up the church.
- ❑ *Ephesians 4:1-16* - God's model for gifts, unity and service in the church
 - ❑ *Ephesians 4:1-3*. Strive for unity.
What qualities are we to exhibit?
 - ❑ *Ephesians 4:4-6*. One body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.
 - ❑ *Ephesians 4:7-10*. This passage is used many times in supporting Christ's victorious ascent from Hades/Paradise into heaven with believers. Note the parallel comparison to Christ as a conquering warrior and his distribution of gifts (spoils of victory).
 - ❑ *Ephesians 4:(11) - 14*. (The first hierarchical list of service/ministry positions in building the New Testament churches)...but for what purpose? To prepare God's people for service so that the body of Christ might be built up. We are to strive (again) for 1) Unity in the faith, 2) in the knowledge of the Son of God, and 3) spiritual maturity.

What are some marks of spiritual infancy? Dangers? Give some examples of "winds of teaching" and "deceitful scheming" that threaten to veer the church of course. (See Hebrews 5:11-14, 6:1-3 - What are we to be teaching?)

- ❑ *Ephesians 4: 15-16*. *In what context here, are we to speak the truth in love?* Paul closes this passage with another powerful "body" illustration. The mature, healthy body GROWS and BUILDS ITSELF UP, as each part does its work.