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Unified and Diversified

12: 12-19

Unified and diversified DIG: In what ways are the various members of the Church dependent on one another? In what ways have you and your local congregation functioned like a human body - with each part depending on each other? How did that serve to bring unity? Paul warns against any part of the body considering itself less important or more important than the others. What kind of parallel behavior in the Church does this warn you about? Believers are to honor one another as parts of the same Body. In light of this, how does ADONAI want you to treat other members of your local congregation?

REFLECT: Why should we resist the temptation to compete with, or compare ourselves with other believers (Second Corinthians 10:12)? In what ways do petty arguments and divisions in the Church tarnish the message of the Good News? How can believers in Messiah learn to appreciate the differences of others in the Church instead of allowing them to divide the congregation? What threatens the unity where you worship? What steps can you take to promote peace and harmony there? In what ways can you honor someone in your congregation this week who may feel unappreciated or insignificant?

All believers are baptized by one Spirit, into one Body, one time, at the moment of salvation.

There is simply no such thing today as a believer who has not been baptized by the Spirit.



The Corinthians' misuse of **spiritual gifts** was one of many reflections of **their** carnal worldliness, and was closely related to **their** divisiveness, which **Paul** now continues to rebuke. While illustrating the diversity of **spiritual gifts** (to see link click [Cj - The Varieties of Spiritual Gifts](#)), **Paul** repeatedly stresses **their One source** and **purpose** in **ADONAI**, revealing **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh's** work and power for the common good of the Church (see [Ci - The Source and Purpose of Spiritual Gifts](#)). These unifying realities lead **the apostle's** thought to a general discussion of the oneness of **the Body** of believers.

In these verses **Paul** explains and illustrates the nature and importance of the unity of the Church itself, and then again the importance of diversity as the key factor in that unity. The diversity of the invisible, universal Church made up of believers all over the world, is the **God-ordained** means of bringing the fellowship to oneness. But unless each diverse member recognizes and accepts his or her part in the whole Body, diversity will divide rather than unite, destroy rather than build up, and bring discord rather than harmony. In **verse 12 Paul** gives an illustration of unity, and in **verse 13 he** explains its origin.³⁷⁶

Unified in one Body: For just as the body is one but has many parts; and all the parts of the body, though many, constitute one body, and so it is with the Messiah (12:12). Once again (10:17) **Paul** uses **the human body** to picture the unity and interdependence of the members of **the Body of Messiah**, the Church. **The human body** has many parts, even though there is only **one body**. Each part has a different function, but they all work together to make **the body** function as a unit. This is the key way the Church ought to function.

Baptized by One Spirit: For it was by one Spirit that we were all baptized (Greek: *baptidzo*, meaning to dip or immerse, often used of a piece of cloth being immersed into dye) into one Body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free; and we were all given

the one Spirit to drink (12:13). In order to stress how wide a diversity is actually incorporated into that **one Body**, **Paul** picks out two of the most obvious social distinction in ancient society: **Jews and Gentiles**, and **slave** and **free** people. If these sorts of people can come together into **one Body**, then anything that divides us as human beings - such as social status, economic level, ethnic distinction - should play no role in dividing **the Church**.³⁷⁷

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for the many blessings that **You** bestow on those who **love** and follow **You** as their **Lord** and **Savior**. **You** not only rescue us from **sin's** awful punishment of death (**Romans 6:23**), but by so graciously indwelling each believer and giving them **Messiah's righteousness (Second Corinthians 5:21)**, thereby opening heaven's door for all who **love You**. **And He raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Messiah Yeshua (Ephesians 2:6)**. How fantastic that **You** not only forgive our **sins (First John 1:9)**, but you raised the bar of **love** even higher by both **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** living in us and by **Yeshua** preparing an eternal home for us in heaven. Thank **You** for being such a gracious and **loving Heavenly Father**. I can't wait for the joy of praising **You** for all eternity! In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

Your **baptism** is a physical picture of a **spiritual** truth. It represents what happened the moment **God** brought you into **His** family. **Baptism** doesn't make you a member of **God's** family; only faith in **Yeshua Messiah** does that. **Baptism** shows you are a part of **God's** family. Like a wedding ring, it is a visible reminder of an inward commitment made in your heart. It is an act of initiation, not something you put off until you are **spiritually** mature. The only biblical condition is that you believe.³⁷⁸

Despite their old **sin nature** (see the commentary on **Romans Bm - The Consequences of Adam**) all of the **Corinthian** believers had been **baptized into one Body**. There is simply no such thing today as a believer who has not been baptized by **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh**. As **Paul** told the believers in Rome: **Anyone who doesn't have the Spirit of Messiah doesn't belong to Him (Romans 8:9)**. However, the modern charismatic movement says that is not enough. Their belief that **Spirit** "baptism" as "evidenced" by **the speaking in tongues** (see **Dm - Tongues are a Sign**), is a *second* work of grace, the next crucial step *after* salvation. Unfortunately, this has become the cardinal doctrine of the charismatic movement. However, the Bible teaches that there is no special blessing of **the Spirit** that only some believers receive; there is no imagined **spiritual** elite who have what the rest of us do not.

The real “evidence” of **the Spirit’s baptism** at conversion is the witness of **the Spirit** from within (see the commentary on **Romans Ci - The Leading of the Ruach**). It is not **speaking in tongues**. All of the believers in the **Corinthian** congregation had been **baptized** by **the Spirit**, but not all of **them spoke in tongues (12:30)**. The “evidence” of **the Spirit’s filling** are power of witnessing (**Acts 1:8**), joyfulness and submission (**Eph 5:19-20**), **the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-26)** and a growing understanding of **the Word (Jn 16:12-15)**.³⁷⁹

All believers receive **the Spirit** and **His** blessings. The number of times **Paul** stresses the universal gift of **the Spirit** to all believers hints that some in **Corinth** may have claimed a “greater measure of **the Spirit**” than others. To summarize, we either have **the Spirit** or we do not, and if we have received **Messiah** as our **Lord and Savior**, then we have been **baptized into the Body of Messiah**, or as **Paul** puts it here, **we were all given the one Spirit to drink**.³⁸⁰

After salvation, there are two distinct ministries of the Ruach:

First, **YHVH** seals us with **His Ruach (Ephesians 1:13-14; Second Corinthians 1:21-22)**, and **baptized** (in the Greek aorist tense, *pointing to a past completed action*) **in, by, and with the Ruach Ha’Kodesh (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5, 11:16)**, into **the Body of Messiah (Galatians 3:27; First Corinthians 12:13)** at the moment of salvation. Nowhere does the Scripture command us to seek this **baptism**, since we have already experienced **it**, and **it** need not be repeated. Hence, **there is only one baptism (Ephesians 4:5)**. It is something that we don’t cooperate in with **God**, it is **His** sovereign act.

Secondly, there is **the filling of the Ruach**. You are sanctified, this is something that you cooperate with **God** and is ongoing. This speaks of your daily walk with **the Lord**. Through **filling**, **God** pours out **His love** through your life to others and sets you apart for **His** holy use. In the Scriptures **to be filled** is used to mean *to be controlled by, or be under the influence of something or someone else*. To be **filled** with **the Spirit**, therefore, is to be controlled or strongly influenced by **the Spirit**. **Don’t get drunk with wine, because it makes you lose control. Instead, keep on being filled** (in the Greek imperfect tense, *pointing to continuous action*) **with the Ruach (Ephesians 5:18)**. As **drunkenness** affects behavior for evil, **being filled with the Ruach** affects a person for good. As a **drunken** person is under **the control** of **wine**, so a **Ruach filled** person is under **the control** of **the Ruach**. This does not make you a robot, without your own will. Rather, you freely comply with **the Ruach** and **His** purposes and **His** Word. That is what it means to be “spiritual.”

The **filling** of **the Ruach** is commanded by **God: keep on being filled with the Ruach**, literally, stay **filled (Ephesians 5:18)**. As imperfect humans, we are leaky vessels of clay, and we need to be constantly **refilled**. This was true even for **the apostles (Acts 2:4, 4:8 and 31, 9:17, 13:9)**. This continuous condition of **being filled with the Ruach** is dependent on our submission to **the Spirit**. You may wonder, can a believer resist **the Ruach** and still be a believer? Yes, people can resist the filling of **the Ruach**. Therefore, the challenge we have as believers is to be controlled by **the Ruach** and not our flesh. This is why we have believers at so many different levels of relationship with **Yeshua**. Some have a closer walk with **the Ruach** than others. Some believers have **love, joy, and peace** while others are depressed and anxious.³⁸¹

Diversified in one Body: The most important characteristic of **the Body** is unity; but diversity is essential for that unity. The Church is **one Body, indeed the body is not one part but many**. Unfortunately, many of **the Corinthian** believers were unhappy with **their gifts**. They wanted the showy ones, like **speaking in tongues**, instead of being glad for, and faithfully using, the many diverse **gifts** that **the Ruach** had given **them**. Envy is a sure sign of worldliness, and it seems that everyone wanted a **gift** that someone else had. **Paul's** somewhat humorous analogy extends the illustration of the human **body**. **If the foot says, "I'm not a hand, so I'm not part of the body," that doesn't make it stop being part of the body. And if the ear says, "I'm not an eye, so I'm not part of the body," that doesn't make it stop being part of the body.** Continuing with his analogy, Paul reminds us that a body could not possibly function if it were all the same part. **If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If it were all hearing, how could it smell (12:14-17)?** No matter how important any **one part** may be, there can be no **body** formed from **it** alone. That would be a monster, not a **body**.

Gifted by one Lord: Discontentment with **their spiritual gifts**, however, was much worse than the lack of common sense. By wanting **gifts they did not have, the Corinthian** believers questioned **God's** wisdom and goodness by implying **He** had made a mistake. **They** also opened **themselves** up to fleshly and pagan counterfeits (see [Ce - The Pagan Background of Counterfeit Spiritual Gifts](#)). **Their** primary problem was not intellectual, but spiritual. As **Creator and Lord, God arranged each of the parts in the body exactly as he wanted them (12:18)**. **ADONAI** has created us, re-created us, and placed each of us in **His Body** exactly where **He** wants us to be, and equipped us to do exactly what **He** wants us to do. However, because of the discontentment and disobedience of **the Corinthian** believers, **they** were also unproductive. **They** did not use **the gifts** they had, and, in light of **Paul's** repeated emphasis in **12:4-11** that every believer is **gifted**, apparently some thought **they** didn't have a **gift** at all. In any case, **their gifts** were not being used or were being

misused.

Now if they were all just one part, where would the body be (12:19)? Paul expands on his point in **verse 17**. **A body** that had only **one** part would not be **a body**. A Messianic congregation or church whose members all had the same **gift** and same ministry would not really work. It is foolish and immature not to be content with or use what **the Lord** has given us. Diversity does not suggest inferiority. We are not perfect, but **His gifts** to us are perfect and the ministry in which **He** has called us to use **them** is perfect. **His** design for the Church is perfect and **His gifting** of the Church is equally perfect.³⁸²

As believers, we share **one Lord, one Body, one Father, one Spirit, one** purpose, **one** hope, **one** faith, **one baptism**, and **one love**. We share the same salvation, the same life, and the same future - factors far more important than any differences we could count. For unity's sake we must never let differences divide us.³⁸³