



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#133)
Baptism – union with Christ, and with other Christians (3).

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM – MAKING US *ONE* WITH EACH OTHER ... WITH GOD-GIVEN *DIFFERENCES*.

Our union with each other (in Christ) is to *influence* – perhaps we can say, *define* – how we should interact with each other.

PAUL FOCUSES ON THIS ISSUE IN THE EPISTLES HE WROTE TO CORINTH AND EPHEBUS.

In CORINTH: Different sections of 1 Corinthians focus on different issues. The focus of chapters 12-14 is on God's people interacting with each other and building each other up.

In EPHEBUS: In Ephesians, Paul writes about the wonders of salvation. Our focus is on the section that describes the interaction of God's people, and the general effect that salvation will have on conduct.

A comparison of 1 CORINTHIANS and EPHESIANS:

| 1 CORINTHIANS 12-14 (A focus on this specific issue.) | EPHESIANS (The wonders of salvation.) |
|--|---|
| ----- | Our calling; God's accomplishments. |
| What baptism accomplished. | < Baptism mentioned. > |
| How the body of Christ is to function. < Explained in much detail. > | How the body of Christ is to function. < A shorter summary. > |
| ----- | How the body of Christ is to live: Sin is not an option! |

What the book of 1 CORINTHIANS teaches us about this.

First of all, what kind of a church was at Corinth?

Some people would lead us to believe it was a crazy, mixed-up church filled with sin. And they use this as an excuse to "justify" their own sins and the sins that are common in many modern-day churches.

YOU SAY THE CHURCH IS FULL OF HYPOCRITES AND SINNERS? IT SURE IS!!

BUT SO WAS THE CHURCH AT CORINTH!!

In reality, it was a church full of "new-borns" who were still learning what it meant to "follow Jesus" – and they were willing to learn!

THEIR RESPONSE TO WHAT PAUL SAID IN 1 CORINTHIANS:

I am not sorry that I sent that severe letter to you ... I know it was painful to you for a little while.
... the pain caused you to repent and change your ways.

2 Corinthians 7:8, 9b (NLT)

THE "BAPTISM VERSE" IS IN CHAPTER 12.

Here, Paul: ① corrects misconceptions about spiritual gifts, and ② explains how the Spirit guides people to function as a unit.

★ This chapter is not only about "gifts." It's also about people who are united in Christ, interacting with each other. ★

Now concerning spiritual gifts: * brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be unaware.

1 Corinthians 12:1 (CSB)

*(Footnote: Or *spiritual things*, or *spiritual people*.)

The New Testament Greek says "*spiritual things*"; but since chapter 12 focuses mainly on "gifts," most translations insert that word. Yet the chapter starts out with a focus on people, not gifts and abilities.


WHO does the Spirit lead? (This is where we need to start.)

⇒ NOT those who follow idols.

You know that when you were pagans, you used to be enticed and led astray by mute idols.

1 Corinthians 12:2 (CSB)

- ✓ The main issue is NOT the piece of wood, stone or metal, but the demonic forces that they represent (1 Corinthians 10:19-20).
 - ⇒ It's the whole "world system" that the unsaved go after.
- ✓ Today, the devil often downplays actual physical objects ("idols") and goes straight to the values and attitudes of the heart.
 - ⇒ Examples: Atheists; most false religions that have been invented since Jesus' resurrection.



⇒ **NOT** those who call Jesus "accursed"!

Therefore I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is cursed," ...
1 Corinthians 12:3a (CSB)

DOESN'T
MEAN
THIS!

✓ This does **NOT** refer to: The type of cursing that people often do today.

#@*#

✓ It might refer to one of these:

- Someone who rejects Jesus or turns against him.
(⇒ This is a popular view, but perhaps less likely.)
- Someone who accepted Jesus' *physical death*, but who denied his *physical resurrection*. (The "curse" would be a reference to his payment for sin, as in Galatians 3:13.)
(⇒ This is a more likely view, and could be a reference to the people Paul had to refute in chapter 15.)

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⇒ **ONLY** (and ALWAYS) those who acknowledge Jesus as *Lord*!

... and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.
1 Corinthians 12:3b (CSB)

IT DEFINES THEIR
RELATIONSHIP
TO HIM.

"LORD" MEANS "MASTER."

- ✓ This describes our relationship to Jesus. We are his slaves* – just as Paul often acknowledged about himself.
- ✓ People who are controlled by the Holy Spirit will be eager to serve Jesus. Their whole attitude about life has changed!

Am I now trying to gain the approval of people, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a slave of Christ!

Galatians 1:10 (NET)

* We have a *good* Master! (The only other option is to be a slave to sin.)

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THE SITUATION IN MANY CHURCHES TODAY:

They might not be the idolaters of v. 2; but...

Many are best described by v. 3a:

- They are willing to say that Jesus took the "curse" they deserve, but do not accept the Bible's testimony about the resurrection.

Many church-goers today consider Jesus' resurrection to be "spiritual" but not "physical."

Many are **NOT** described by v. 3b:

- They are more interested in the things of this world, than in the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Many church-goers today are eager to call Jesus their "savior" (i.e., to "keep them from hell" in eternity). They might say the word "Lord," but they are unwilling to submit to Jesus, as their absolute Master over this present life.

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HOW does the Spirit lead?

⇒ He **empowers** his people, enabling them to do his will!

- ✓ He gives them *abilities* – or what we often call "gifts."
(A representative list of nine examples is given, in vs. 8-10.)

- Many abilities... all from *one* God.
- Given for the *common good*.
- Distributed to people the way *he* wants to.

Now there are **different gifts**, but the same Spirit. And there are **different ministries**, but the same Lord. And there are **different results**, but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.

To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is **given for the benefit of all**.

It is one and the same Spirit, **distributing as he decides** to each person, who produces all these things.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11 (NET)

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**THE HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM IS THE "STARTING POINT"
THAT MAKES IT ALL POSSIBLE.
He's the reason we are ONE body.**



Just as a body, though one, has **many parts**, but all its many parts form **one body**, *so it is with Christ*.

For we were all **baptized** by **one Spirit** so as to form **one body**—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the **one Spirit** to drink.

Now you are **the body of Christ**, and *each one of you* is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27 (NIV)

- ✓ This ONE Spirit makes us all ONE body in Christ.
- ✓ We can't claim that there are *different* bodies, and then ignore the people we don't get along with!

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**If we are ONE body...
we need to learn how to function as ONE body!**

⇒ **The rest of chapter 12:**

ALL the abilities the Spirit gives us are important (12:14-26). We shouldn't be longing for abilities we don't have, because the ones we do have are needed!

⇒ **Chapter 13:**

Everything is to be done in love (defined in chapter 13).

⇒ **Chapter 14:**

The abilities God gives us aren't for "us" ... they are for "them" (chapter 14)! We are to use our abilities:

- In a decent and orderly manner.
- In a way that builds up other people.

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What the book of EPHESIANS teaches us about this.

What was going on at Ephesus?

Paul taught at Ephesus for about three years. This church was truth-focused; so when he wrote to them, there were no major issues to confront. Instead, Paul wrote about the greatness of God and salvation, and the application of those facts to life.

Years later, when the apostle John wrote the book of Revelation, the Ephesian church was *still* faithful to the truth... but they were starting to neglect *love* – which is also necessary (and mentioned several times in the book of Ephesians).

But I [Jesus] have this against you: You have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then how far you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.

Revelation 2:4–5a (CSB)

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The broader theme: God's **CALLING** and our **RESPONSIBILITY**.

⇒ **God has called us to a wonderful hope** – something we can confidently look forward to!

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know *the hope to which he has called you*, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Ephesians 1:18-19a (NIV)

⇒ **We have a responsibility to live worthy of that calling.**

I urge you to *live a life worthy of the calling* you have received.

Ephesians 4:1b (NIV)

<< Chapter 4 tells us how to do this. >>

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AS WE SHALL SEE (on the following slides):

⇒ **The context of this calling and hope is UNITY.**

- It's a unity that affects *all of life*.

Our hope, our calling,
our faith, our baptism,
our God, our connection
with other Christians

⇒ *are all interrelated;
and it affects them all.*

MORE ABOUT THIS →

⇒ **It's a UNITY that maximizes the value of our individual DIFFERENCES!**

- These differences enable us to *function* as one body in Christ. (= A focus similar to that of 1 Corinthians.)

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OUR UNITY – made possible by **God**.

[This is just a *summary statement*. Paul wrote about many of these issues in previous chapters.]

There is **one body** and **one Spirit**, just as you were called to **one hope when you were called**; **one Lord, one faith, one baptism**; **one God and Father of all**, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NIV)

↑
[Though baptism is only mentioned briefly, other Scriptures fill in the details.]

- ✓ It's all-encompassing, related to everything that pertains to our interaction with God and people.
- ✓ Since there is *only ONE* group, we sin when we choose to exclude other followers of Jesus.

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OUR DIFFERENCES – given by **God**.

Godly UNITY requires DIVERSITY within the body of Christ. We *need these differences!* But it is a diversity that is quite unlike the world's counterfeit (which often encourages sinful conduct).

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ...

Ephesians 4:7, 11 (NIV)

⇒ **God has done this for a purpose:**

... *to equip his people* for works of service, *so that the body of Christ may be built up* until we all *reach unity* in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and *become mature*, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:12-13 (NIV)

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God uses our different abilities to accomplish good things!

⇒ **This is how we attain spiritual growth and maturity!**

Then *we will no longer be infants*, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, *we will grow* to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Ephesians 4:14-15 (NIV)

⇒ **OUR RESPONSIBILITY?** God requires us to use our abilities for the good of the group! We *all* have a part in this.

From [Christ] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, *as each part does its work*.

Ephesians 4:16 (NIV)

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The rest of Ephesians shows us HOW to live worthy of our calling.

We can do it, because *God empowers us* through the UNITY-DIVERSITY interaction already mentioned!

⇒ **In pursuit of a God-honoring life** (the rest of Ephesians).

- How to live, contrasting our "old" (unsaved) ways to our "new" (saved) ways. Sin is not an option. (4:17+)
- Specific ways to interact with other people, especially when it involves authority structures. (5:21+)
- Our need for God's power to accomplish this. (6:10+)

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⇒ **A quick summary, comparing 1 Corinthians and Ephesians.**

The two books are very different; yet when dealing with our unity (and diversity) as the body of Christ, they have overlapping themes.

| 1 CORINTHIANS 12-14 | EPHESIANS 4+ |
|--|---|
| It's the result of Holy Spirit baptism. | (Baptism mentioned without further explanation.) |
| United in Christ, as one body. | (Mentioned in previous chapters.) |
| ← God gives us abilities for the good of the group. → | |
| ← The goal is to build each other up. → | |
| Do all things in love (chapter 13). (Specific issues are dealt with in other sections of the book.) | (Love is mentioned several times.) Instructions on how to live as the body of Christ; sin is <u>not</u> an option. |

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YOUR MISSION: APPLY TO YOUR LIFE WHAT BAPTISM TEACHES!

✓ So much happens with *Holy Spirit baptism*; so many changes occur...
 (... and *water baptism* is a picture of the Holy Spirit baptism that causes it!)

PURSUE THESE CHANGES!
If your heart has been changed, it will be your desire to do so!

HOW?

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How to:

PURSUE THE CHANGES!

IN SPIRIT BAPTISM, GOD HAS CALLED US TO A GLORIOUS HOPE!

He tells us to:

- ⇒ Live a life worthy of that hope (Ephesians).
- ⇒ (as a group) Use the abilities God has given us to help each other in this pursuit (1 Corinthians and Ephesians).

So we need to:

- ⇒ Acknowledge that we are ONE body. (1 Cor. & Eph.)
- ⇒ Work together to build each other up. (1 Cor. & Eph.)
- ⇒ Pursue godliness. (Ephesians)

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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