

Youth Teaching Resources

January 23, 2022



Season after Christmas

Psalm 147:1-20—"A Good Beginning"

In Christ We Have ...

Season of Epiphany

Acts 8:4-17 (RCL 8:14-17)—"Amazing Grace"

1 Corinthians 12:1-11—"Amazing Gifts"

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a—"Amazing Oneness"

1 Corinthians 13:1-13—"Amazing Love"

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“Amazing Oneness”

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Robert Tackett-Evans

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Gathering

Take some time to go over the spiritual gifts assessments the youth took this past week. Ask students to share the three areas they scored the highest in.

- Are there ways you are currently exercising that spiritual gift in the church?
- What are some ways you could exercise your spiritual gifts?

Encourage students to talk with their youth leaders and pastors further about the results from their assessments.

Opening Exercise

As you begin this week’s lesson, show the YouTube clip from *Friday Night Lights*. If you cannot show the clip, you may summarize it to the best of your ability. You will want to make sure the students know to specifically pay attention to what the commentators are saying in this clip.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Anz9K9ThfMg>

Note: The commentators talk about Boobie Miles as if he is the whole team. Clearly, what we see in the game is that he is a very talented athlete, and he knows it too. In scenes prior to the one you are showing students, he rubs his talent in the faces of his teammates. Miles ends up injuring his knee, which turns out to be a season ending injury. From that point on, the team has to figure out how to play without him, barely making the state playoffs.

After showing the clip, lead a discussion by asking questions like the following:

- When you listened to the commentators of this football game, was there anything that stood out to you about what they were saying?
- Do you think it was problematic that they talked about Boobie Miles as if he was the only talented player on the field? Why or why not?
- Based on what you saw, do you think the team was solely built around Miles? How do you think that might have impacted the rest of the team?
- When Miles ends up with a season ending injury, how do you think his inability to play may have impacted the team?
- Have you ever been in a place where you were made to feel as though you didn’t matter? In what way were you made to feel you didn’t matter? What was that like for you?

Listening to the Scripture

As you turn to today's scripture, begin by reading 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 aloud. Invite students to share any initial thoughts, questions, or insights they have about the text by asking a question like the following:

- What details stand out to you in this reading? (*Students are invited to name details they find confusing, interesting, troubling etc.*) Why does this stand out to you?

You will want to consult Tony's commentary to address questions students might raise about the passage. After everyone has had the opportunity to share their initial insights or questions, continue the discussion by asking questions like the following:

- Are there ever times when you or other people in the church are made to feel as if you don't matter? Can you name some of those instances?
- What do you think Paul's image of the church as a body has to say to you or others who feel you don't matter?
- Paul talks about when one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. What do you think Paul is trying to communicate? (*There is a sense of interdependence here; we need one another. Think about the football team in the earlier exercise, when one team member is struggling, the whole team struggles as well.*)
- (*One of the things Paul is concerned with is the hierarchical understanding that is prevalent in Corinth based on spiritual gifts, as if some gifts are more honorable, or desirable than others. It's as if spiritual gifts have become something with which to gain bragging rights.*) Based on today's scripture, where do our spiritual gifts come from? Or to ask it differently, who gives us these gifts? Do we develop them ourselves, or do they come from somewhere else?
- What purpose do our spiritual gifts serve? (*It may be helpful here to talk about some of the specific gifts that Paul names. See Tony's commentary.*)
- All of you have specific gifts that God, through the Holy Spirit, has graciously given you. After hearing what Paul said to the church in Corinth, do you believe that as a part of the Body of Christ, you matter? Why or why not?

If the students would like to continue with this study, consider consulting Tony's section titled *Digging Deeper*. You might consider asking questions like the following:

- Is there a part of your body that you find undesirable? Why? (*Maybe you think your nose is too big, or your ears are too big, etc.*)
- Can you imagine what it would be like if that part of your body no longer existed? How would that impact how you lived?
- Who are the people in the life of the church that we seldom pay attention to? What do they contribute to the life of the church? How would church life be impacted if they were no longer here?

If the group feels up for a challenge, consider discussing what Tony poses as *The Hardest Question*.

- What is "The body" to which Christians belong?

Application

This week's challenge for students is two-fold.

- (1) Challenge students to talk with or at least set up a time to talk to their youth pastors and/or pastors about the results from the spiritual inventory.
- (2) Consider someone in the church who shares their "gifts," but often what they share goes unnoticed. (Maybe they serve by cleaning up, or they pray diligently for others, or write cards to shut-ins, etc.) Take a few minutes this week to thank that person, letting them know that the special gift they share with the church matters. Come back next week, prepared to share about this experience.

Close with prayer.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Feet and hands—Feet are the lowest part of the body, and generally the dirtiest in a dusty world where everyone wore sandals rather than shoes and socks. Their usefulness is mainly limited to standing, walking, or kicking.

On the other hand (pun intended), human hands with their opposable thumbs are not only more public, but so useful that it’s hard to imagine life without them. Hands can pick up or manipulate objects (handy for eating), put things together, wield a sword or hammer, or perform intricate tasks from writing to making fine jewelry.

Surely hands may seem more valuable than feet, but they are both integral parts of the body that are needed for a full and healthy life.

Ears and eyes—As feet might feel inferior to hands, should ears feel less honored than eyes (v. 16)? If asked to choose, most of us would likely opt for vision over hearing, but we wouldn’t voluntarily give up either one, for both are needful. If we were all eyes, how would we hear? If we were all ears, Paul asked, how would we smell (v. 17)?

All of the senses—and the organs that enable them—are vital parts of the body. Indeed, every organ, bone, nerve, and artery serves the larger whole, and the failure of any one part leads to diminished health or ability. Both individuals and churches are part of the body of Christ, which functions best when all the parts are not only present and accounted for, but working together.

Least honorable parts—Paul’s emphasis on body parts goes so far as to include the “least honorable” of body parts. And what would that be? He was almost certainly thinking of genitalia and excretory organs. The parts we consider to be “weaker” are actually indispensable, he said (v. 22), and we understand why. Can you imagine living without them?

Indeed, Paul said, we implicitly recognize their value because we “clothe with greater honor” the body parts we’d rather hide, so that “our less respectable members are treated with greater respect” (v. 23). God made us that way, he said (v. 24), a reminder that all members of the body are interdependent and therefore mutually needed (v. 25).

Greeks and Romans were known for sometimes competing nude in sports or wrestling matches, but that was the exception rather than the rule: even when stripping down for hard labor, people typically kept their “privates” private.

Apostles—The word “apostle” can bear the generic sense of “messenger,” but it came to be used in the New Testament as a technical term to describe someone who had seen the risen Christ (Gal. 1:16), or who had been called, empowered, and authorized by God to carry on

Digging Deeper *continued*

the work of Christ. Paul considered himself to be an apostle because he believed that he had personally encountered the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-8).

Apostles are mentioned first on this list, as in Eph. 4:11. Some writers have argued that the first century believers thought of apostles in the same sense as the Jewish *shaliakh*, one who was sent on a mission by higher authorities and empowered to act in their behalf. Apostles were those who had been with Christ, empowered by Christ, and charged with disseminating the gospel throughout the world.

Prophets—Paul assumed the presence of prophets in the church (1 Cor. 14:29, Eph. 3:5, 1 Thes. 5:20), as did Luke, the author of Acts. According to Luke’s account, prophets often appeared in the early church, and women were included in their number (Acts 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:8-10).

Teachers—In Paul’s day, prior to the writing and widespread distribution of the gospels, teachers would have specialized in memorizing oral traditions about Jesus’ teaching, and then passing them on to new believers. In the contemporary church, teachers instruct children, lead Bible studies, or promote discipleship development in other ways.

Healing—The exposure of fraudulent “healings” by some televangelists and a general lack of exposure to someone possessing a true gift of healing have led many Americans to be skeptical that God continues to be active in this way. In some underdeveloped countries, however, Christian workers often speak of miraculous works and healings as par for the course. We cannot be certain why this is so, though some would no doubt point to the presence or lack of faith. Whether it is due to a greater openness to the supernatural in some areas, or whether God may choose to use the miraculous to reveal his presence in certain situations, remains a mystery.

The one thing we can be sure of is that Paul clearly lists both abilities among the gifts one might expect to find in the church, gifts that serve to build up the larger body.

Spiritual gifts—We should note that Paul’s intent is not to give a comprehensive list of gifts, or to delineate the order of their importance. Paul mentions at least 20 different gifts in his various approaches to the subject (1 Cor. 12:8-10, 27-31; Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11). Neither the list of gifts nor the order of their appearance is consistent in the various texts. Paul’s discussion is intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

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What is “the body” to which Christians belong?

Paul’s metaphor of the one body having many parts that need to work together comes with a bit of a surprise. As Scott Nash has noted (*1 Corinthians*, Smyth & Helwys Commentaries [2009], p. 363), one would expect that Paul was thinking of the church. After all, he was writing to a divided church in which some members did not want to associate with other members, or thought themselves better than other members, or imagined that they did not need certain members.

It would seem natural, then, that Paul’s metaphor of a single body made of many interdependent parts would be a reference to the church. The surprise is that Paul looks past the church to which he was writing and applies it to Christ: “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” (v. 14).

This suggests, Nash says, that Paul’s use of body language implied something more substantial than a metaphor, for Paul goes on to say in v. 27 “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” In vv. 4-11, Paul emphasizes that all are brought into the body (“baptized”) by the Spirit, and all “drink” of the Spirit. Thus, Nash suggests, “Paul’s point is that entrance into the body of Christ involves a complete saturation of the Spirit, inside and out” (p. 363).

Paul’s metaphor, then, is bigger than our participation within a church, or any association of churches, or any denomination. It is to the “body of Christ” in its earthly representation that we belong, a body that includes all of the churches and all their apostles, prophets, and teachers, along various functions with which persons could be enabled: mighty works, healing, service, leadership, and tongues (v. 28; note that in this list, as in vv. 4-11, tongues are last on the list).

This is the way God intended it to be. Different persons blessed with different gifts serve different functions, and all are part—not just of their local church—but of the body of Christ. Working together with mutual respect will make for a happier and more functional church, but it is all in service to Christ.