

# YOU

**Sermon Series: Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus**

**To be used with: Connecting to Christ's Body**

**Sermon Title Possibilities: Growing through Partnership**

**Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-24**

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the small group study “Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus,” this sermon from 1 Corinthians 12:12-24 explains that spiritual growth calls for regular interaction with and ministry to other believers.

**Introduction:** Dr. Brian Carmichael correctly suggests, that we need three things to grow: the Word of God, the people of God, and the Spirit of God. We must saturate ourselves with the Word of God, and we must submit ourselves to the Spirit of God, and we must also surround ourselves with the people of God. We cannot grow alone.

The apostle Paul wrote to the saints in Corinth to help them grow in their faith in Christ because they were contentious, carnal, and overly charismatic. They were contentious because they were fighting and divisive. They were carnal because they were sensual and sensational. They were overly charismatic because they focused more on the spiritual gifts than on the Giver of the spiritual gifts. The cure for our contentiousness, carnality, and unbiblical charisma is growing in the likeness of Christ by being in community with other saints.

## **1. Growing through Our Identity with Other Believers (v. 12-19)**

In these verses Paul makes it clear that all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and has been incorporated into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. First, he deals with the diversity of the spiritual gifts (v. 1-11), then he deals with the unity that we ought to have in the diversity. The apostle shows us that the body of Christ is illustrated in the human body. Just as your body has many limbs, organs, and parts but is one body—likewise, the body of Christ has many different members/individuals, with many different spiritual gifts, yet it is still one body. Therefore, we ought to identify with other believers as those who are in Christ and have Christ in us.

Seeing ourselves as equally indwelt and incorporated will guard us from divisive, dominant, and/or dominant mindsets. The more we understand that we are washed by the same blood and indwelt by the same Holy Spirit, the more we will begin to flow and grow together. May the Lord help us to grow through our identity with other believers.

## 2. Growing through Our Interdependence with Other Believers (v. 20-23)

Paul makes it clear that we need other believers to grow. Paul says that the eye can't say to the hand I don't need you, nor can the head say to the foot I don't need you. The fact is, every part of the human body needs every other part of the human body. This is true in the body of Christ as well. No one member of the body of Christ is insignificant. Every saint needs every other saint and their spiritual gifts to grow (v.1-7).

Paul declares this interdependence in Ephesians 4:16 where he says, <sup>16</sup>“From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.” The church edifies the church. The body of Christ builds the body of Christ. We need the spiritual gifts of other saints' operating in our lives and other saints need our spiritual gifts operating in their lives.

## 3. Growing through Our Investing with Other Believers (v. 24-25)

God has so fashioned the body of Christ so that we will have the same concern for one another. We are designed to grow both relationally and reciprocally. The writer of Hebrews encouraged his audience to consider one another to provoke/promote love and good works and to continue assembling together for the sake of encouraging one another (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Friend make it your business to connect with some other saints who are running hard after God. Give yourself to some spiritual partnerships so you can experience some spiritual progress. God uses His Word and circumstances to help us grow, but He also uses other saints to help us grow.

**Conclusion:** In *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*, Dr. Kenneth Boa suggests that one of the ways we grow is by connecting to a meaningful context of encouragement, accountability, and worship. Friend make sure you get in partnership with some other saints to receive and engage in these three things. Because, we not only stand together, but we also grow together.

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