

Week 2 | Who Do You Think We Are?

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12, Romans 12:3-13, Genesis 11:1-8

Objectives:

- Understand God didn't create us to be alone, but to work together.
- You have strengths that others need. Other's strengths will help you in the areas you are weak.

Scripture References:

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 | 12 The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. 13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. 14 Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. 15 If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? 18 But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. 19 How strange a body would be if it had only one part! 20 Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. 21 The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." 22 In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. 23 And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, 24 while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. 25 This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. 26 If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. 27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

Romans 12:3-13 (NLT) | 3 Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. 4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. 6 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. 7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. 9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. 10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. 11 Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. 12 Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. 13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

Genesis 11:1-8 (NLT) | 1 At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words. 2 As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia and settled there. 3 They began saying to each other, "Let's make bricks and harden them with fire." (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.) 4 Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world." 5 But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. 6 "Look!" he said. "The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! 7 Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other." 8 In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city.

Last Week | Who Do You Think You Are?

Last Week we talked about our personalities. It's important to understand who you are, but it's even more important to understand that God will take what you are and perfect it.

Psalm 138:8 (KJV) | 8 The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

Are you water or are you wine? Why?

How you see yourself speaks directly to your understanding of how God sees you. Understanding that God created you and loved you before you even tried to love him is the only way to overcome the condemnation we feel when we make mistakes. Your flesh and Satan will tell you that you're dirty water, but Jesus is saying you're wine. Who will you believe?

Who Do We Think We Are?

Today we're going to look at how we fit together as a group. We're all different. We have different personalities.

**Which personalities do you feel you work best with? Worst?
Why do you feel it's easier to work with some personalities than others?**

We Were Created To Be Connected

God created us to be connected (not digitally), but our world is more disconnected than it's ever been. Social media and technology have reduced face to face communication to sentence fragments and emojis. Many of our houses are closer than they've ever been, but we don't know our neighbors. COVID-19 took isolation to another level. God created us to be in community with each other, but our modern culture is systematically eliminating community. There is more depression and anxiety than ever before. Some turn to therapist or psychologist while others look for escape in drugs, alcohol, sexual perversion or even suicide. Cut off from God and each other, thousands of people live lives in quiet isolation. God created us with an instinctive longing to be more like Him. That longing drives us towards love, community, and unity. The last prayer Jesus prayed stressed the importance of this longing:

John 17:20-21 (NLT) | 20 "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. 21 I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one--as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

Love God, Love People

Matthew 22:36-40 (NLT) | 36 "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" 37 Jesus replied, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

1 John 4:19-21 (NLT) | 19 We love each other because he loved us first. 20 If someone says, "I love God," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? 21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their Christian brothers and sisters.

Loneliness is often caused by our focus being entirely on ourselves; we desire to be loved rather than to give love. Real happiness comes from giving love to others. We need to seek community of love with our neighbor again and again, and in this seeking we must each become a helper, a brother or a sister.

God's image is reflected most brightly and completely where there is love first for him and then for our brothers and sisters. **To be a helper to another on God's behalf is not our duty, but a gift.**

How would our relationships look different if we truly grasped this concept?

We live in a time when fear and mistrust grip us everywhere we go. Where is love, the love that builds community and the church? Being right is more important than being kind. We allow politics to divide us, popular culture, preferences, and other people's sin that becomes so disgusting to us that we'd rather separate from them because of how it makes us feel.

1 John 4:19 (NLT) | 19 We love each other because he loved us first.

The same God who turned you into wine loves the person who you view as dirty water.

Unity = Power

[optional] The tower of babel, *Genesis 11:1-8* - The people were unified to where nothing was impossible for them - God brought confusion because they weren't unified for the right cause.

In the body of Christ there is unity but not uniformity.

The disciples that Jesus called were a diverse group - many different personalities. We aren't given a whole lot of detail on specific personalities, but we can put some things together based on what scripture does give us.

Peter, Andrew, James, and John were all fishermen. They were brothers and worked in the same profession. They were probably comfortable with each other, but then Jesus added Matthew the tax collector. He was wealthy, a supporter of Rome and a thief. Later Jesus added Simon the zealot. Zealots were part of a political movement whose primary goal was to overthrow the Roman government. They believed they should be under no ruler except for God.

Why do you think there aren't scriptures detailing the disciples' conflicts?

But the thing they all had in common was Jesus and HIS LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY over them. Without Him this disciple and apostle thing would not have worked. Wherever the reign of Jesus is felt, differences are embraced and even celebrated as believers move toward one another in unity and peace.

We were created to be together under the banner of Jesus Christ's love for all of us. We were created to be one under a common mission.

Why do we separate ourselves?

Why is it difficult to live in community with people God created us to be in community with?

Paul talks in letters to two different churches about the importance of unity in the body of Christ.

Romans 12:4 (NLT) | Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

Many personalities, but one body.

1 Corinthians 12:14-22 (NLT) | Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. 15 If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part

of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? 18 But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. 19 How strange a body would be if it had only one part! 20 Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. 21 The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." 22 In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary.

Last week we talked about our personalities. Some of us have wanted to be more like someone else because we loved certain things about their personalities that we didn't see in us. It's important to realize that God has created you just as you are. God has used your life choices (both good and bad) to develop your personality even further. It all plays a part. It's important to believe this. To truly believe it, is to finally be comfortable with who you are right now, and who you WILL be in the future, because you believe God's hand is in it.

The other reason it's vital for us to embrace who we are is that each one of us have been created by God not to be alone, but to be together in unity. Like the human body, God has created each of us to be a part of the whole. So if we isolate ourselves or try to change ourselves we then become like the ear changing itself into the eye because it felt like it would rather be an eye. The body would have an extra eye (maybe useful), but it would lose its ability to hear. The Lion has many strengths, but it also has the tendency to rush into action without being fully prepared. Pair him with a beaver whose strengths are being prepared, and the two of them can form a mighty team.

What do you feel you contribute to the body of Christ? To your community? How can your personality strengths be used by God to serve the people around you?

Which personality do you feel you struggle the most to work together with and why?

***Matthew 6:33 (NLT)** | 33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.*

Until Next Week | Link up with someone this week. Ask God to lead you to the people who you can serve. Ask God to lead you to the people who will complete you.