

THE CHURCH IS DEPENDENT

YEAR: UNITE / FOCUS: I AM PART OF A FAMILY
SERIES: GOD IS FATHER - I AM PART OF THE FAMILY

BIG TRUTH: THE CHURCH IS DEPENDENT

Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 13:3; 1 Peter 3:8

BIBLE VERSE: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

BIG IDEAS

- We are members of one body, serving the God who is three in one.
- God the Spirit uniquely gifts every believer.
- Our gifts exist for the building up of one another and God’s glory.

BIBLE PASSAGE: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-27

UNITE - I AM PART OF A FAMILY

The Unite Year is an exploration of what it means to be united in Christ as the family of God (Romans 12:5). When we are saved, we are given a spirit of adoption as sons (Romans 8:15-16), are made a child of God, and we are also saved into a family- the Church. The Unite Year explores how we are to live as a part of a family, and to live in light of our calling as servants and disciples of Christ. We use our gifts to build up the church as we pursue unity, humility, and gentleness with our brothers and sisters in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-2).

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- The church is a family.
- The church is given by God.
- The church exists for God.



Every student should feel...

- Thankful for the unique ways God has gifted them and their church.
- Appreciation for the elders and leaders that God has gifted their church.



Every student should strive to...

- Prioritize gathering to worship each week with their church family.
- Learn more about membership in their local church.
- Do something to intentionally serve someone in their church family each week



Every student should want...

- To devote themselves to pursue holiness with their church family.
- To have their lives be marked by love for the church.
- To live in a way that is sacrificial and generous for the good of others and the glory of God

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week’s Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.

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BIBLE VERSE: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

Every believer belongs to the body of Christ.

“Now you are the body of Christ...”

- Every person who is a follower of Christ is part of God’s family. God’s family is compared to a body with many parts that are connected and dependent upon each other. Believers make up the body of Christ.
- Every believer is an integral part of Christ’s body. At salvation believers are joined to this body that exists for the glory of God. The members of Christ’s body are connected and joined by His Spirit.

The body belongs to Christ.

“Now you are the body of Christ...”

- Our individual body parts belong to us. Our eyes are ours. Our hands and feet belong to us and no one else. The same is true for each individual member of Christ’s body. Individual believers belong to Jesus and they are part of His body.
- The body of believers as a whole belongs to Jesus. Every person who has been redeemed is no longer their own person. They are no longer members of this world, but instead, they belong to Jesus and are a part of His body forever.

The body of Christ depends upon each member.

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

- Just as the human body depends on each of its parts, the body of Christ is dependent upon individual members. When a person loses a part of his or her body, the effects are felt for the rest of their lives. Each part of the human body works together to make the person effective and productive.
- Each individual member of the body of Christ is necessary to the entire body of Christ. No person is redeemed to live apart from the whole body of Christ. We are redeemed to work in unison with other believers as we fulfill God’s purpose for His church on this earth.

THE CHURCH IS DEPENDENT

BIG IDEA #1: WE ARE MEMBERS OF ONE BODY, SERVING THE GOD WHO IS THREE IN ONE.¹**[THIS]**

Being independent and free is seen as the ideal situation in our world, yet God has an established a better way for His people to live. Our flesh natures resist the idea of being dependent upon anything or anyone. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Paul teaches that God's people are indeed dependent upon one another. God has joined and connected His people to one another through His Spirit and each individual member is necessary to the whole body. Every believer is a member of Christ's body. Though believers gather in local, smaller groups, there is one body of Christ. This body is comprised of all believers everywhere. Each member of this body is necessary and important to the purpose God has given His church on this earth. Each member of Christ's body depends upon one another and are connected by one Spirit.

[THEREFORE]**Why is it significant that every local church is connected in one body of Christ?**

God calls His people to walk and live in unity. When we realize that we all belong to the one body of Christ, we understand we are connected and joined together for a single purpose. Romans 12:4-5 and Colossians 1:18 show us that there is just one body of Christ. Each local church is part of the one body. It's important to recognize there is only one body because this enables us to focus on the purpose that God has given His people, instead of just focusing on what we want to do or what is most comfortable for us.

[THIS]

God is one God in three persons. This is referred to as the Trinity—God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, Paul alludes to the Trinitarian nature of God. It's important for us to understand that believers belong to the one body of Christ and this body serves the one true God who manifests Himself in three persons. The three persons are equally and fully God. They make up the one true God who gives life and purpose to His church. Believers are connected through the one Spirit and seek collectively to be like the Son to honor and glorify the Father. This united purpose of serving the one true God connects believers and causes them to depend upon one another in order to fulfill this purpose.

[THEREFORE]**How have you seen your local church join with other believers to serve the one true God?**

Our local body of believers can partner with other bodies of believers to serve God by supporting one another. Philippians 2:4 and Hebrews 13:16 teaches us that part of following Christ is considering and putting the needs of others before our own. When we use the resources and talents that we have to help other believers all over the world, we are serving God together as His body.

Do you believe you are dependent on the other members of the body of Christ? Why or why not?

God joins His followers to Himself and to one another by giving them His Spirit. This Spirit is the same in every believer. There are not different Spirits, but one. Ephesians 4:4 and Romans 15:6 teach us that there is one Spirit, and this Spirit means we are all dependent upon each other and God. We are connected to God and one another in the same way and we need one another in order to please God.

1. 1 Corinthians 12:12: *There is one body of Christ and it works to fulfill the purpose of the one true God.*

THE CHURCH IS DEPENDENT

BIG IDEA #2: GOD THE SPIRIT UNIQUELY GIFTS EVERY BELIEVER.²**[THIS]**

We are all born with natural talents and abilities. These are a result of the common grace that every person on earth experiences. Our talents and abilities are things we can naturally do well or easily. Spiritual gifts are different. God gifts His people with the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts at salvation. Every believer receives the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when they have saving faith and they also receive spiritual gifts. These gifts are from the Holy Spirit and are not something that we can teach ourselves or gain through our own power. We can mature our spiritual gifts as we grow in our knowledge of Christ and mature spiritually, but we cannot give ourselves these gifts. Spiritual gifts uniquely equip us to serve God because they are from the Holy Spirit and are ways we can manifest, or show the Spirit in our personal lives and collectively with God's church.

[THEREFORE]**Why are we given spiritual gifts and how can you use yours to fulfill God's purpose?**

We are given spiritual gifts when we are redeemed from our sin debt and that we might glorify God. When we use our gifts to further God's kingdom, we will glorify Him. We are to use our gifts within the body of believers to make much of Jesus throughout the world.

How do spiritual gifts uniquely equip believers for service to God instead of themselves?

Because spiritual gifts are given to believers only, we are uniquely equipped to serve God. We are able to bear the fruit of the Spirit as seen in Galatians 5:22-23 because we have been gifted with God's Spirit and with spiritual gifts. This makes us uniquely prepared to serve God and bring Him glory.

[THIS]

In 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, Paul mentions a few of the different spiritual gifts that believers receive. The Word of God does not contain an exhaustive list of the spiritual gifts God gives His people, but from the ones mentioned in Scripture, we can get a better idea and understanding of how the Holy Spirit gifts believers. God uniquely and individually gifts His people to serve with other believers in His church. While believers may share some of the same gifts, there isn't a set list of gifts every believer receives. Some may receive the gift of teaching and others may receive the gift of generosity. Regardless of the spiritual gifts that a believer receives, all receive this outpouring of the Spirit in a way that is unique and individual to them. God does this to equip His people to serve Him and to equip His body to better fulfill His purpose for the church in the world.

[THEREFORE]**Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. How have you noticed individuals in your church who have unique gifts?**

In 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, Paul teaches that not every believer receives the same spiritual gifts. God is most glorified through His people who have a diverse set of spiritual gifts. We see more of who God is and how He works in the varied nature of spiritual gifts within the church. We also see that God alone truly understands people and how to best equip them for His purposes.

2. 1 Corinthians 12:4-5: *There is a variety of spiritual gifts, but one Spirit. Each believer is uniquely gifted with spiritual gifts.*

THE CHURCH IS DEPENDENT

BIG IDEA #3: OUR GIFTS EXIST FOR THE BUILDING UP OF ONE ANOTHER AND GOD'S GLORY.³**[THIS]**

Everything God does is for His glory and the good of His people. His purpose and plans will always bring Him glory and be the very best for His people. God equips His people to glorify Him by giving them spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12:1-27, Paul writes to the church at Corinth to help them correct their false idea that one spiritual gift had more merit than another. All spiritual gifts are important and no one should be valued more than another. We know this because they all come from God and not from man. It is God who chooses the gifts that a believer receives and He does this for His glory. These gifts do not exist to elevate mankind, but to make much of Jesus. All that a believer does is to be done for the glory of the Lord. We are redeemed and set apart to be used for God's glory. Our spiritual gifts exist to help us fulfill this very purpose.

[THEREFORE]**What are some ways we could misuse our spiritual gifts?**

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul reminds the Christians in Corinth that their spiritual gifts are for the glory of God and not for themselves. Because they were valuing some gifts over others, they had a man-centered view of spiritual gifts. We should keep a God-centered view of our gifts and understand that our gifts are for His glory and not for our own.

[THIS]

God is a good Father who equips His people for His purposes. God gives spiritual gifts to His people to help them live for Him. He gifts them with these manifestations of His Spirit so His people might help one another live for Him. Spiritual gifts are for the building up of the body of Christ. The church, or body of Christ needs each member to truly fulfill God's purpose. These gifts are to be used for the edifying or building up of the church so that God is glorified in all the earth. We should seek to know what our gifts are and how we can use them so that we can build up other believers and use our gifts for the glory of the Lord. The gifts that the church receives help her grow to be more and more like Jesus and they help individuals live holy and set apart lives for Christ. We each depend upon other believers using their gifts in order to grow spiritually and fulfill God's plan and purposes for His church.

[THEREFORE]**What are some distractions that keep you from using your gifts to build up the body of Christ?**

Romans 12:3 teaches us to not think more of ourselves than we ought. In the same way, we should not think less of ourselves or the plan that God has for each believer. This means that we should not discredit the gifts that we have by thinking too much of them or too little. We should find our identity in Christ and seek to use the gifts He's given us for His glory.

What are some ways you can join your church in using your spiritual gifts?

1 Thessalonians 5:11 and 1 Corinthians 14:19 help us understand that we all are tasked with building up the body of Christ. Our spiritual gifts are part of our contributing to the growth of the body of Christ. When we identify our spiritual gifts and seek to use them in the church for the glory of God, we will build up the body and make Jesus famous in all the world.

3. 1 Peter 4:10-11: *Spiritual gifts are given for the edification of the body and for God's glory.*