Responsibility to the Body – 03/21/24

Often, dissimilarity between people makes it difficult to interact without it feeling awkward and forced. When we interact with other Christians, we know that we have the most important thing in common – we are a part of the same body in Christ. But that is the “gimme” answer – simply knowing this does not make our relationships automatically natural or enjoyable. Having Jesus in common doesn’t make us similar to one another! After all, how similar is your eye to your foot? Your kidneys to your brain? Our relationships with one another are not based on us being *like* each other; they are based on us being a part of the *same body*.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses this illustration to help us understand our relationships in Chris: “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” (1 Cor. 12:12). In this context, Paul teaches several important principles. Everyone has their place in the body (v.15). God designed and arranged the body parts (v.18). We should appreciate what others bring to the body (v.21). On these principles, he builds what I believe to be his main point in this section: SAME BODY = RESPONSIBILITY**.** We are to *care* for one another and fulfill our “bodily role” in *love*.

God “so composed the body” that—instead of being divided—we members of the body would care for one another, suffering and rejoicing together (v.24-26). Our concern for each other should be as strong as our concern for ourselves because we are of the same body! We won’t all look or sound the same, nor will we all fill the same function. Nonetheless, we are of the same body.

Paul then points out that, because we all fulfill different roles in the body of Christ, we ought to be less concerned with *what* role we “get” and be more concerned with *how* we fulfill that role – namely that we fulfill our God-given roles in love. This is the “more excellent way” of verse 31. Do all have the same gifts? NO. Do all have the same responsibility to one another? YES. Our responsibility is to build up the body of Christ in love – with whatever skills, circumstances, and opportunities God has given us! Regardless of how skillful we are, we “gain nothing” if we do not have love (13:1-3).

This is not an optional part of following Christ. If we are in the body of Christ, no matter our personalities, skillsets, or positions in life, we have a responsibility in the process of “building up.” This is accomplished through Jesus-centered relationships as we each take however much or little God has entrusted us with and use it to care for one another in love.

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