

# Spiritual Principles of the Body of Christ

## TOPIC LESSON GUIDE

*“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” (Romans 12:5-18)*

## LESSONS

1. GOD’S GREAT OBJECTIVE
2. THE EQUIPPING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST
3. THE BUILDING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST
4. THE COMMUNION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

## LESSON 1

### GOD'S GREAT OBJECTIVE

*“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (Acts 2:46)*

1. There has always been a main objective towards which every manifestation of God moves. The Church, the Body of Christ. The Church is not a building, denomination, philosophy, or even a ministry (Strong's #1248, service, ministering, especially of those who execute the commands of others even at your own cost) Ministry is about being obedient to God's word to us in doing what He desires us to do and not going and doing things for God on our own.
2. What was the burden of Paul's prayer? It was for spiritual growth and development of believers, the Body of Christ. It was not for bringing in the kingdom and getting this world set straight, nor was this the object of Jesus' prayer.
3. Jesus prayer was bringing out of the world as many as possible into salvation, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:” (John 17:20-22)
4. Jesus said, Go ye to the ends of the earth “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:” (Mathew 28:20) not to Christianize the world, but to evangelize the world. And having evangelized the world to gather them together in what He calls the Body of Christ, the “Church” (Strong's #1577) a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly. The Body of Christ is not physical but spiritual, a living expression of God and His love for those people in the world who still labor under the bondage of sin and death in their souls.
5. We do not become a member of the Body of Christ by repeating some words as most denominations teach, nor through our faithful attendance or giving, but by partaking of eating Jesus' flesh and the drinking of His blood. Jesus taught us this truth, “Verily, verily (double imperative no exception or other way), I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.” (John 6:53-58)
6. We become what we eat of. If we eat of the world we become like the death (in our thought life and every relationship we enter into) of the world, but if we eat of the flesh of Christ and drink of His blood we will become bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. This is God's great objective for us; to be bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh.
7. As we partake of Him (take Him into our habits, customs, traditions, our lives) we are transformed from horrible darkness and ignorance into the glorious light (revelation – God's measurement of our authority) and salvation (knowing God, which includes eternal life – “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3), but is much more) not to become popular, rich,

handsome, or even to go to heaven like most Christian leaders teach, but so we can become like Christ whom we eat of.

8. When Satan was before God he answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. 5But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. 6And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." (Job 2:4-6)

9. So too is the testimony of Satan for each person that abides as a member of the Body of Christ. In spite of losing all (except his wife) and enduring all Job's confession was, "Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; 7Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. 8I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: 9Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number:" (Job 5:6-9) How could Job say such things?

10. Maybe it was because of God's testimony of Job, "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect (Strong's #8535 complete, mature, selfless) and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth (turn aside or depart) evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause." (Job 2:3) This is the place God desires for all of us to come.

11. Unless we eat of His flesh and drink of His blood this will never be our testimony by God. Unless we eat of His flesh and drink of His blood we will never become a part of the Body of Christ.

## LESSON 2

### THE EQUIPPING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

*“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12For the perfecting (Strong’s #2677, maturing complete furnishing, equipping into selflessness) of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (Ephesians 4:11-12)*

1. We see God’s great objective brought out in Ephesians 4. The Spirit and even all of the personality gifts relate to the edification of that unique strange mystical group of people the – Body of Christ.
2. I am so glad all direction in is the Head – Christ. Here is my body, God does not expect my hands to be my brains. He expects them to serve what my mind directs. When we get over into thinking the church is a building, ministry, or organization we also can forget Christ is the Head of the Body and therefore there should be nothing originating in us; only receptivity to perform and do that which is actuated and directed from the Head.
3. We run around doing things for God maybe that is why we often are feeble in our approach to God with our mind or emotions instead of knowing how to live from the Living Head. We try to produce what we think the Head wants to produce, but the Head wants to make the program. He only asks us to function as members, not as the Head.
4. It seems to take us a long time to find this out. We are so used to directing from our own natural self – our own head directing what our body is to do. All direction; all programs anything that is worthwhile at all must originate in God.
5. God must have us the Body through whom He executes and moves upon the earth. What a great burden that would take off of our hearts and lives if we could ever believe and learn this central truth.
6. The Churches in the Book of Revelation have a work complex, instead of a worship (bow our head to the ground) complex. We must stop shoving the Body of Christ out into the world with artificial objectives such as: trying to bring the world to the Lord, clearing up politics, and getting everything ship shape. Where did that come from? From religious traditions of denominational doctrines of men.
7. It is not about doing something for God but about becoming something in God. So, in the Body of Christ, it is easier to do programs and activities than to abide, evolve, and become. God is after us becoming like His precious Son Jesus Christ.
8. The Body is made of raw material; redeemed humanity. God’s emphasis is upon building a Body, and not upon redeeming the world. He has placed the personality gifts there, “FOR the perfecting of the saints, FOR the work of the ministry, FOR the edifying of the body of Christ:”
9. The equipping of the Body is so that the Body can mature and grow spiritually, “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (Ephesians 4:13-14)
10. Coming into “the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:” is our objective in this life. Make no mistake this objective is God’s

objective and reaching it will kill us dead spiritually, but that is okay this is another objective of God, us dying so that He may live. 11. John shares Jesus' words, "Verily, verily (another double imperative), I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." (John 12:24-26) Where are we going? The same place His Father took Jesus, to His death!

11. There is no greater work in our life than us falling into the ground and dying to our selfishness and self-seeking for when we lose our life (our desires, our emotions, our plans, our life) God can now live through us.. Our spiritual death is God's opportunity to life. If we lose our life for His sake we shall find eternal life. God equips the Body of Christ not to live, but to die. How much faith do we need? Just enough to believe God can raise us (like Jesus) from the dead.

12. Experiencing loss in our lives is a great teacher. Our gain in God is measured in our loss. How much of the world and self can we lose? At that same measure of loss so is the gain in God we experience no more no less.

13. "The unity of the faith" is not worked in the Body by coming together to eat or fellowship, we have prayer breakfasts that will never develop unity with the Body of Christ, but all enduring the same hardships, persecutions, tribulations (with the same heart condition) and the like will develop unity within the Body of Christ. The loss is the common denominator, now we have something in common on which God can begin to build His character in us, our loss.

14. As we come into "the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" We will be able to function and operate as God does, flow with the Spirit and each other. We will be able to become correctly fitted into the Body of Christ and take our place where God has ordained us to fit in to support the over all structure locally and globally. We will be able to, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:15-16)

15. We will be able to "speak truth in love" and not lies, guile, and deceitfulness. We will be able to grow up and not be a baby needing the milk of the word.. Paul shares these word to "those in Italy" perhaps Rome, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:12-14)

16. We will be able to give God a return on His investment in us. Did you know God is looking for a return on His investment in us? Not in money. He owns the cattle on a 1000 hills and the hills, but God is looking for a return in our giving to other as He gave His Son. Giving is at the heart of the Gospel. And we will experience eternal life now on earth, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3) We – the Body of Christ will not have to wait to experience heaven, we can have heaven on earth now.

## LESSON 3

### THE BUILDING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

*“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” (1 Corinthians 12:27-31)*

1. Jesus said, He will build His Church, *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18)* What a wonderful thought to know we do not have to do anything here. Now Jesus did not say He was going to build His Church on Peter, but *“upon this rock I will build my Church.”*

2. What rock was Jesus talking about? Was it Psalms 118:22, Jesus *“the chief Cornerstone that the builder rejected?”* Yes, but not really. It was the revelation Peter had of Christ. *“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:16-17)* The Body of Christ is always built on revelation and not physical things. Revelation is the measure of how of God is in us.

3. The Church is not built on flesh and blood, nor can the strong arm of ability and intellect build spiritual growth and development within us. John drives this point home in His Gospel, *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6)*

4. God has given *“The Body of Christ, and members in particular”* His goods to build His Body so that He can show us a more excellent way. What way is this? What way are we going now? *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6)* We are going our own way and not God’s way. We have turned from God’s *“excellent way”* to our own selfishness and ungodly desires.

5. Thus God set some of His spiritual goods in the church. Now please know these spiritual goods of God have been placed within the Body of Christ before time eternal. Here in Corinthians Paul was re-teaching the Body of Christ at Corinth these truths again because they (like sheep) have gotten off track. *“Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. 18For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.” (1 Corinthians 11:17-18)*

6. These spiritual goods of God has been given to us not so that we can see who can get the most power or ability in God, but to minister (be a servant to, a slave) to the Body of Christ. And so that we will have the ability in God to recognize the *“more excellent way”* of God’s eternal everlasting way we must walk with Him.

7. Now for God to build there must be a building program we must willfully enter into. It is like the word discipleship. For disciples to be made there must a dedication and commitment by people to the discipleship process to be made a disciple. So too for us to be built by God through His spiritual goods, we must willfully enter into God’s building program.

8. Please know God does not build on another’s foundation. God begins His building by first tearing down. What a strange way to build. God will tear down in us everything that is not of Him in our lives. He will pull

down all of those strongholds (something we lean on for strength) in our lives that we have allowed into our lives. All of the unstable thinking, unstable attitudes, unstable dreams and visions, unstable plans, all that is unstable in us He cannot build His character and nature in us.

9. God will put down all of our religious thinking and pious approaches to God. All of our religious customs and traditions that keep us from making a Godly heart-felt approach to God. All of our emotional and mental ascent that leaves us falling short of the glory of God. Our glory has been touched and built up, but God's glory has not been touched nor His heart.

10. Make no mistake my friend coming into God's building program will help bring God's greatest objective into our lives. It is painful when God begins to put His finger on things, that are not of Him, in our lives. It is painful when God begins to expose us for what and who we really are. It is painful when we discover who we really are, not who we want to be or things we are, or even what we tell people we are, but who we really are. My friend it will kill us. But that is okay again this is another objective of God.

11. This revelation of our self as compared to Christ happens as God is able to build His character into our lives as we enter into His building program. As we allow God's work in our lives (our choice not God's) and use the spiritual goods he has given us, we will begin to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18)

12. Paul talks about two Bodies of Christ; one in Corinth and the other in Antioch where the name "Christian" was first spoken. The question is which church do you want to be built like? In Corinth we have learned, "Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse." (1 Corinthians 11:17) In other words Paul was saying it would have been better if they would not have come together to worship God inspite of every work of the Spirit in operation.

13. And the other church was Antioch, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me." (2 Timothy 3:11) Which church would you want to be?

14. Most would say, Antioch until God begins to take them through His building program. Look at what happened to Paul at Antioch, "longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, and afflictions" who would want this when we can have our flesh and emotions satisfied like at the Church of Corinth? The one's who desires to be developed and not delivered.

15. We read the word "delivered" at the end of 2 Timothy 3:11 and think God has removed Paul out from all of these bad things in His life, but not so. Oh no my friend the contrary is true. No where in the Bible did God deliver anyone from "persecutions and afflictions." Daniel went into the lions den. The three Hebrew Children went into the fiery furnace. Jesus had to go to the cross, inspite of Him praying if it be the will of the Father for this to cup to pass from Him so be it.

16. We are built by God as He is allowed to develop us through tough and fearful areas and situation sin our lives. All of God's spiritual goods (listed in 1 Corinthians 12:27-31) are for the perfecting and establishing of His Body so that we will be able to discover the more excellent way God has for us to go.

## LESSON 4

### THE COMMUNION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

*“I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. 16The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. 18Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?” (1 Corinthians 10:15-18)*

1. I really like what we call the communion table or the last supper. Did you know the setting of the communion table is always set in strife, confusion, and ambition?
2. The day before Jesus entered Jerusalem (for His crowning moments, His death and resurrection of His ministry) to observe the Passover feast with the disciples a dispute over who would be the greatest (also in Matthew 18:1 and Mark 9:34) in the kingdom and who would sit on Jesus' right hand arose, *“And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, 44Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. 45But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying. 46Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.” (Luke 9:43-46)*
3. We have already discussed the spiritual heart condition of the Body of Christ at Corinth, but in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Paul uses the communion table to bring peace, correction, and reconciliation. Paul kept talking about doing this in the remembrance of Christ or the remembering. Now I was not there but, but I think Paul selected His words particularly, because we must remember he was not at the original Lord's supper with the other disciples. I believe Paul was talking about remembering the precious work Christ did on the cross for us and for us not to treat as not sacred, but at the same time the Holy Spirit was doing a work in hearts and lives of the people, a “re-remembering” of the Body of Christ gathered. A bringing together again from the strife and division that was painfully present, as Jesus used the Passover feast to bring correction and peace to then disciples.
4. I do not believe Jesus was instituting a tradition, custom, or ordinance (what we call the Communion Table) to observe every time we gather, weekly, monthly or whenever. But, He was doing something greater. As the disciples (and us) part took of His flesh (bread) and blood (wine) they were taking into themselves the life of God and as they part took they were remembered back to Christ and His Body.
5. The communion table and remembering of the Body is spread for three reasons: to endure persecution, under go correction, and be reconciled to God and man.
6. Polycarp was Bishop of Smyrna (today known as Izmir), a city on the west coast of Turkey. The letters to the “seven Churches in Asia” at the beginning of the Book of Revelation include a letter to the Church in Smyrna, identifying it as a Church undergoing persecution.
7. Polycarp is said to have known the Apostle John, and to have been instructed by him personally in the Christian faith. Polycarp was denounced to the government, arrested, and tried on the charge of being a Christian. When the proconsul urged him to save his life by cursing Christ, he replied: “Eighty-six years I have served him, and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” The magistrate was reluctant to kill a gentle old man, but he had no choice.



8. Polycarp was sentenced to be burned to death. As he waited for the fire to be lighted, he prayed:

“Lord God Almighty, Father of your blessed and beloved child Jesus Christ, through whom we have received knowledge of you, God of angels and hosts and all creation, and of the whole race of the upright who live in your presence: I bless you that you have thought me worthy of this day and hour, to be numbered among the martyrs and share in the cup of Christ, for resurrection to eternal life, for soul and body in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. Among them may I be accepted before you today, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, just as you, the faithful and true God, have prepared and foreshown and brought about. For this reason and for all things I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you, through the eternal heavenly high priest Jesus Christ, your beloved child, through whom be glory to you, with him and the Holy Spirit, now and for the ages to come. Amen.”

9. Suddenly, a voice from heaven rang out, “Polycarp be strong..” The fire was then lit, but as the flames reached Polycarp they swirled around him, near a flame touching him. Shortly thereafter a soldier stabbed him, by order of the magistrate, but as his blood ran out of his body it distinguished the flames, and he died. His friends gave his remains a honorable burial, and wrote an account of his death to other churches.

10. Make no mistake my friend the communion table is set in sacrifice. The greater the communion the greater the sacrifice required of us and please know God gets to pick the sacrifice.

11.. Like persecution, communion and correction goes hand in hand. As the Lord was saying, *“And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.”* (1 Corinthians 11:24) the disciple did not understand what He was saying to them about communion. They were not feeding upon Him, they were feeding upon heir own ambition and desires.

12. During this solemn feast they debated among themselves who would be the greatest. They went out, not for the better but for the worse. They were weak and sick and that weakness was reflected in many ways. It was seen in Peter and others when they boasted they would die for the Lord.

13. We too, like the Corinthians and disciples before them can miss the life God has for us to share with others by our neglecting communion with times of correction. We too come through the doors of the building bringing attitudes and sin that would have been corrected if we truly would have supped with the Lord. Our lack of feeding on Him causes the feast to be contaminated with the leaven of malice and wickedness.

14. We must realize and not be the one person who brings such into the communion service because of our waywardness, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” (Galatians 5:9) instead, “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Corinthians 5:8)

15. Personal correction by the Lord and communion with the Lord is to be the basis of the communion of the saints. Each individual must examine themselves to see if there are ungodly things present in their heart. Each individual must feed on the Lord so that they can be filled with sincerity and truth.

16. Correction is the beginning of communion with God and the saints. True communion is a feast of the life of God passing from one saint to another resulting in the increase of the Body. The Spirit of God then can flow from one to the other blessing, enriching, and strengthening the Body collectively. Then we can go out from the meetings we have come together for the better. Some give, others receive, some feed, others eat, some bless, others are blessed, but all are increased in God.