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Being Part of the Body

I remember the very first service that I experienced Pastor Dave Roberson minister on the Holy Spirit. I was in my early twenties, and as I look back on that moment, I realize how God orchestrated it all. It was during these meetings that I was inspired to establish a relationship with the Holy Spirit. I began to take time to pray in the language of the Spirit. The hours and hours of speaking in tongues started out as a discipline I've continued to this day, and I am thankful beyond words for this walk of the spirit.

One of the results of praying tongues has been that the Holy Spirit became my personal teacher. As it says in John 14:26, *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."* What an incredible thing it is for each of us to have access to this wonderful instructor.

It didn't take too long for the Holy Spirit to begin to mold my understanding into His opinions and thoughts. I realized that what He was teaching me didn't align with what men had taught me about God. The Great Teacher was reshaping many of the principles from how we are to serve God, to how we are to give our finances. As a Pastor, one of the most significant instructions that He built in my understanding was how we are to see the children of God.

I hadn't realized how much religion had taught me about the church system and how to put people to work. I was trained to place a harness of good works onto people's backs to connect them to the church. I had the impression that the five-fold ministries were special compared to the rest of the body. It was as if a two-tiered system was in place, with the "called" being higher than the rest of us. The people on stage had a higher calling than the people in the audience. This is how I viewed the church system in my early years, and it was through the time of praying in tongues that allowed the Holy Spirit to teach me what I believe now.

The Lord showed me that every believer is born into His family at the moment of salvation. Each of His children is important to Him, and there is no one singled out as special. Not only are we birthed by Him as His children, but we also are given specific jobs to do within the family. Think of a large family on a farm a couple of hundred years ago. They all wake up early, and each one has specific roles to do during the day. From milking the cows to cooking bread to harvesting the crops, each one would spend the day working on their job. Then at the end of the day, everyone would sit down together for dinner together, and at that table, everyone would feel equally loved and important to their father.

This is how we should see ourselves in God's family, but instead of using the word "job," let's use the word "callings." In our family, each calling, from big to small, was just as important as the others. With this understanding of the scripture, I could see how valuable we all are to Him. It says in 1 Corinthians 12: 12-13, "*For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*"

There is an important reason that Paul uses the image of a body to describe the church. There is no better example for every individual to understand than the body because we all have one. If you want to understand the way God desires to operate the church, then simply look at your own body. Every part of your body is necessary and has a specific role to play. With this picture of the body, we can skip Bible College to learn how the church should work by simply looking at our own bodies. Every part of your body is essential, and you really don't want to be without any part. Yet, too many believers feel second class when it comes to their work of the gospel. We have highlighted the pulpit-type positions as more glamorous and more important than other positions. This, unfortunately, is why we have so many people pacified into just attending church and helping as they can. In fact, if you look at most churches, the crowd arrives a few minutes before service and then heads home right at dismissal, if not a few moments before. The modern church has become an event, not a family that works together.

When we were young children, we had dreams of being valuable in this world. We dreamed of being leaders and doing things that would be great. Little boys and girls might want to be an astronaut, doctors, police, princes, and princesses. This is how we should dream about our place in the gospel, that we will change the world together. However, with this two-tiered system of the church structure, what do we tell the young kids who grow up in church? Do we tell them to stop dreaming of doing great things in God, because it's just for the special ones? Do we say that if you're not called to preach, then accept that you will never be that important to God?

It's evident that every part is necessary, as Paul describes in the following verses of 1 Corinthians 12:15-17. "*If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?"* This understanding also encourages the entire body to develop and grow up together, not only a few prominent parts. In other words, this truth requires every one of us to grow up spiritually equal no matter what role we play.

Years ago, I met a wonderful lady whose child was born with only one kidney. The doctors informed her that her son's one kidney was smaller than normal and that, eventually, he would need a transplant. The doctor said that while he is young, his little kidney will be able to manage the work of filtering the blood, but as the body grows and develops, it will have difficulty keeping up. Then at around thirteen years old, his blood

work brought concerns because the doctor was correct. His small kidney could not keep up with his growing body, and he received a successful transplant. A healthy body demands that all of its parts grow together, but an unhealthy body has specific parts that are not completing their tasks. Every hospital has different areas for different body parts; for example, there are kidney doctors, heart, lungs, liver, eyes, and many more specialists. Your entire body can be strong and healthy, but if even one area is weak, then the whole body is affected. If our view of the church is that a few are spiritual giants God uses to bless the rest of us, we will forever be known as the deformed church.

To accept that you are an integral part of a wonderful, beautiful body of Christ means that you also accept that you have the responsibility to grow up equally with all the other body parts. The message of spiritual growth for the entirety of the children of God gives us an idea of the roles of leaders. The five-fold ministry jobs are not to sit high above the rest of the church, dispensing God anointing to the rest of us. The five-fold ministry positions are to be beneath the church lifting the rest into growing up together.

I'm a father to two children, and I have the title of head of my household before my family and God. I'm not the king of the house or am I ruler; the head of my home means I have accepted the responsibility to make sure my family is always in God's will. I serve my wife and kids as I encourage them to grow in God. I lay my life down for them to succeed, as should the leaders of the church for their congregation. Always remember that Jesus is the head of His body, and all the rest of us, no matter what position we hold, are to listen to His instructions. Both you and I are in His body together, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can grow together strong. There are many incredible plans ahead for you in the body of Christ.

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