

INTRODUCTION: Message - "Deformed" (1 Corinthians 12:12-31)

Human bodies with birth defects can range from mild to severe deformities. Some churches make the mistake of dismembering their own church "body" by exalting the worth of some while diminishing the worth of others. There is even a saying that goes: "Don't cut off your nose to spite your face."

Paul was helping to correct the situation that was creating a deformed church and he desperately wanted the Corinthian church to understand. The Corinthian church was struggling from the inside. Some Christians felt out-of-place and unnecessary, while others overly exalted their self-worth to the congregation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Read 1 Corinthians 1:12-31. Paul is comparing the church congregation to what living organism? Can you think of another analogy that would also fit?
- 2) Have you ever felt "out of place"... with *nothing* to offer and unnecessary to the church where you worship?
- 3) Read 1 Corinthians 1:15. Obviously a foot cannot speak. What were some Corinthian Christians saying about themselves and/or their gifts of the Holy Ghost?
- 4) Read 1 Corinthians 1:17. What point is Paul making in this verse?
- 5) Read 1 Corinthians 1:21 and verses following. Paul shifts his focus from one set of Christians to another group. What are these other Christians saying to fellow believers?
- 6) Can you think of any Christians whose efforts and contributions to the church are probably pointless? Would it concern you if they were gone?

SO WHAT?:

Resist the temptation to elevate your own importance and to diminish the contribution of other Christians. Resist the temptation to think you have nothing to offer. No servant of God is either indispensable or expendable. Avoid falling into the trap of making spiritual comparisons between yourself and other Christians. Don't cause deformities within your own church body!

THINK ABOUT IT:

"But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be." (1 Corinthians 12:18, New Living Translation - NLT)