

i-design – Body of Christ

Three Images in Scripture:

- Body of Christ
- Bride of Christ
- Family of God

All indicate something important

- created to be a part of something bigger than you
- echo's design of marriage and trinity
- impossible to live out alone – demands participation
- this is of great importance to all Christians

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Many Objections in our days:

- institutions are man made – don't see this in scripture
- not how the early church met and modeled
- God is doing something new – due to failure of past
- relationship with God is personally entered into – thus I must not need others to live and grow
- what about the hypocrites and fakes all around – refuse to trust and engage

* Matt. 16:18 *“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it”*

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Key Question – What does God Say

1. God Designed Our Connection

- we are connected like a body
- Christ is the head – we are the body
- 1 Cor. 12:12 *“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”*

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- Eph 1:22-23 *“And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”*
- Rom. 12:4-5 *“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”*
- we are under Christ who is the head, connected in every way to the body

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a) Consider Jesus' Words

- Matt. 10:40 *“He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me”*
- Matt 25:33-36 *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ ” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?” “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ ”*

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- Acts 9:1-4 *“Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied.”*

- evident that Jesus claims to be one with us

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b) Consider God's Word to be Clear

- Eph 4:15-16 *“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*

- Jesus is shown to be the head of the body

- Eph. *“That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”*

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2. The Design is God Enabled

a) God Chooses

- 1Cor.12:18-19 *“But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.”*

- almighty God himself chooses and arranges

- gives pause to our criticism of the body, how it looks and our appreciation of it's design

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b) Every Believer has been Given a Gift

- 1 Cor. 12:7-11 *“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.”*

- note the gift is not given so you might boast – but for the common good.

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c) Each Gift is Critical to the Body

- vs.21-27 – *“The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don't need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don't need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”*

- all matter and are needed

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3. God's Design is Our Aim

- Eph 4:11ff *“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*

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a) build up the body

- diet, exercise, participation
- moving from immaturity to maturity

b) unity in the faith

- common trust in God
- learning to serve alongside, surrender, others first, what needs to be contended for, what's destructive or constructive

c) attaining the whole measure & fullness of Christ

- glorifying God by our body

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So What

1. We are Connected, One.

- from the echo of God's design for marriage & Trinity
- from the clear scripture – together, relationship in the design

2. Chosen, Gifted, Enabled, Counted On

- clear in God's word this is not optional for believers
- your participation is needed for the body to function

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3. Become Involved In:

- building up the body
- bringing to maturity those finding Christ
- finding unity in faith
- being the body that glorifies God

