

- We are at a time of the year where we pause to give thanks. As we give thanks for our many blessings in this life, do we give thanks for the part that we play within the local church and within the Kingdom of God? That is certainly something that we should do! We should be extremely thankful that we have a part to play within the victory of our God in this spiritual battle. However, I think that there are some things that hinder us from giving thanks for the parts that we play individually.
 - We might not recognize the part that we play, so we're thankful for it.
 - We might not be playing our part well so we don't want to acknowledge it.
 - We might not think that our part is all that important and we feel unimportant.
 - We feel under appreciated so we don't do our part and we don't give thanks.
 - We might not appreciate our part because we're too busy hanging our heads because we don't play a different part.
- Do you fit somewhere into one of these categories? If you do, then I want to encourage you this evening by considering the text of **I Corinthians 12:12ff** where the Apostle Paul discusses the necessity of the many different parts that we play as individuals within the Kingdom of God. Let's consider playing our part and why that is so important. This text in context is speaking of spiritual gifts, but the principles can be well applied to the talents, gifts, and parts we do have, today.

I. Different people play different parts.

- A. Not one person has to do everything.
 1. The analogy of the body fits so perfectly into this discussion of our individual parts that we play.
 2. The different parts of the body play completely different roles. (seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, etc.)
 3. There are many different parts within the Kingdom and the local church. (leading in worship, teaching class, evangelism, personal studies, training up saints, encouraging saints, leading the church, etc.)
 4. No one person is responsible to have every single one of these things as his/her strength.
 5. As individuals we understand that we do have different abilities and we don't need to think that we have to do everything single thing as if we are the only person that can get it done.
- B. But every person has something they can do.
 1. We don't have to do everything, but it is our responsibility to figure out what we can do to contribute to the Kingdom.
 2. A man might be musically talented, so he can lead song worship. A woman might have the ability to teach children well, so she can teach bible classes. A person might be skilled in building maintenance, so he or she could assist the church by fixing issues that might arise with the building.
 3. Each of us, individually, need to seek out ways that we can serve and be a part of the success of the Kingdom and the local church.
 4. When we do those things, we must do them the very best we can! (**Col. 3:23, 24**)
 5. We have all been blessed in some way with an ability that can be used for the kingdom and we must use that ability.

II. All parts are needed. (vv.15-22)

- A. Without doing our part, that part doesn't get done.
 1. Sometimes, Christians don't do their part.
 2. They might be so caught up in the world that they ignore their responsibilities to the Kingdom. (**Demas, II Tim. 4:10**)
 3. They might neglect their part because they see others not doing theirs.
 4. They might not get enough attention for the part that they play.
 5. They might desire a different part.
 6. They might feel as if they aren't all that great at their part.
 7. They might feel as if their small part isn't really all that necessary.

- B. We can't think that we are useless because we might consider ourselves too young, too old, or too inexperienced.
 - 1. Youth is not a factor in our usefulness within the Kingdom. Timothy was 'young' and Paul told him to no worry about that, but to just do his part. **(I Tim. 4:12)**
 - 2. Age in general does not disqualify you from taking a part within the Kingdom. There were plenty of things that the older and younger Christians could do, according to Paul. **(Titus 2:1-8)**
 - 3. You might not have the knowledge to stand up and preach a sermon or teach a class, but a young in the faith Christian can do his or her part by simply showing a great desire for God's Word, growing, and encouraging. Timothy did his part by showing his progress through his diligent work in the Kingdom. **(I Tim. 4:15,16)**
 - 4. Every Christian has a job to do
- C. We need to express to one another our appreciation for the part that they play within the Kingdom and the local church.
 - 1. We need to make it a habit of showing our appreciation to others for the parts they do within the Kingdom.
 - 2. A showing of appreciation is so encouraging and it gives others the confidence to continue on.
 - 3. The weaker Christians can be encouraged to grow all they are constantly told how much they are appreciated. **(vv.22,23)**
 - 4. Encouraged and confident Christians are valuable assets in the Lord's Kingdom.

III. God expects us to do our part the best we can for His glory.

- A. This is really the bottom line from the text.
- B. Our responsibility is to do the best we can with what we have for a part.
 - 1. If we are ears, then hear! If we are eyes, then see! Same is true for the song leaders, the preachers, the shepherds, the class teachers, the mothers, the older members, and the young Christians.
 - 2. We can become ineffective if we are giving all of our focus and energy to the things we are not good at.
- C. We are not to exalt ourself above someone else because we might be blessed with more talent.
- D. We are not to exalt ourselves at all. The glory must be to God. He is all deserving. **(Psalm 115:1)**
- E. We can always improve and get better at playing our part.
 - 1. The Thessalonians showed great love for the brethren, but Paul encouraged them to excel even more. **(I Thess. 4:9,10)**
 - 2. Complacency will kill us slowly if we are not giving diligent effort to get better every single day. **(II Pet. 1:8)**
 - 3. You might already lead songs. You might already teach class. You might already be raising your kids in the Lord. But... can you do all of those things even better. We must put forth that effort to always be looking for ways to improve ourselves in playing our part.

Where are you in the process of doing your part? Are you doing your best with the part you have been given? Are you caught up with the things you don't do so much that you end up not doing anything at all? God expects our best and we must be busy doing the work of the Lord while we are here on this earth. May God help us to be thankful for our part, and may He help us to play our part the best we can so we can help the Kingdom and the local church thrive.