

SOME MARKS OF CHRIST'S BODY

Romans 12

February 5, 2023

1. The Basis (of Our Connections with Each Other as a Body):

2. The Challenge (of Being Part of the Same Body):

Romans 12:2 (ESV) – “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind....”

3. The Members (of this Body):

Those who are a part of Christ's body – A local church (vv. 4-5)

4. The Picture (of this Body, or What this Should Look

Like): A body with many very different but necessary parts...

📖 Each part is **different** (v. 5)

📖 Each part functions **uniquely** (v. 5)

📖 Each part is **necessary** (v. 5 – “one body with many members”)

📖 Each part functions **interdependently** (v. 5)

5. The Characteristics (of this body): (Sincere love and Humility)

📖 **Sincere love** (v. 9)

† Love **which** is not “hypocritical” (v. 9)

NLT: “Don't just pretend that you love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Stand on the side of the good.”

Love ever gives—Forgives—outlives—And ever stands

With open hands. And while it lives—It gives

For this is love's prerogative—To give—and give—and give.

John Oxenham

† Love which is **devoted** – Family devotion (vv. 10-12)

1 John 4:20

v. 12 (ESV) “Be constant in prayer.” It's hard to really be angry with someone while praying God's blessing on them.

† Love which is **Persevering** (vv. 12, 21)

Hope enables us to rejoice, even in the midst of difficulties. Perseverance flows out of hope, so what is our hope? Our hope, our confident expectation, is that “he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6 (ESV))

† Love which is **forbearing** (vv. 14, 17, 18, 21)

1 Peter 2:23 (New Century Version) – People insulted Christ, but he did not insult them in return. Christ suffered, but he did not threaten. He let God, the One who judges rightly, take care of him.”

Are you an overcomer? Or are you a reactionary? Do you give others power over you, or do you overcome their sin with God's goodness?

† Love which is **empathetic** (v. 15) – It is amazing how much mutual sorrow and/or mutual celebration bonds us together...

† Love which is **Practical** (v. 13)

Let us love not merely with words, but with our actions (1 John 3:18)

The beauty of love: the giver benefits more than the recipient. (Acts 20:35)

📖 **Humility** (vv. 3, 10, 16)

Humility is not so much thinking less of yourself, as it is thinking of yourself less.

When we think to highly of ourselves, what happens?

† We try to do things in our own strength

† We are critical of other's mistakes or shortcomings.

† We try to take on more than we should.

† We communicate a certain arrogance or disdain towards others.

† We have a hard time being a part of a team, because we have a hard time trusting anyone else to do things “right”

When we think to little of ourselves, what happens?

† We are unwilling to try new things.

† We are shattered when things we try don't work out as we hoped for.

† We are quick to quit when the going gets tough.

† We reject God's grace as though it was given on the basis of merit.

† We are more concerned with our own self-image, with how others view us, than we are about God's glory or loving those around us.

v. 10 (ESV) – “Outdo one another in showing honor.”

(NIV84: “Honor one another above yourselves.” / NLT: “Take delight in honoring each other.”)

This is not natural.

It is natural for us to seek honor for ourselves. It is natural for us to be jealous when others get honor we feel that we deserve.

However, it is **not** godly.

Rather, we are to “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than [ourselves.] Each of [us] should look not only to [our] own interests, but also to the interests of others. [our] attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...” (Philippians 2:3-5 NIV84)

When we are truly a body, we all share in the joy and in the sorrow of all the other parts. We all share in the honor and in the success of all the other parts.

And finally: v. 16 (NASB) – Do not be wise in your own estimation.

A Truth to Remember: We do not have to stand alone. We do not even have to stand alone by faith that God, at least, is with us. We are a part of a body, and that body is on our side, from the head, which is Christ, to the smallest part.

A Challenge to Consider: How can you shift your focus from your individual role in the body to that of the good & the success of the body as a whole?