

He explains in verses 28-30 that as members of the physical body have their own functions, so members of the spiritual body (the church) have their own functions. He cites the offices of apostles, prophets and teachers, and then brings up the miraculous and special gifts an individual may have. He demonstrates that not everyone in the body of Christ is an apostle; not everyone is a teacher, not everyone has works of power.

His conclusion is that as with the physical body each separate member has its place, so in the spiritual body each member (Christian) has his place and contributes to the overall ability of the church to perform. This is as it should be and is an encouragement to each of us to do what we can to help each one of us continue to grow.

Stop here for a moment. Do you see how the discussion of talents and the discussion of

members are tightly joined? As members of the Lord's body, the church, we have abilities that can improve the well-being of the church. We have those abilities because God has given us the talents (abilities) to do certain deeds that, as members, we can use to improve the work of the church. If we don't use those talents to improve ourselves and those Christians around us, we stand to lose what we have been given. ~

Morris Fraser

NAVARRE MESSENGER

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PARALLEL WORDS

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Navarre church of Christ

8490 James M Harvell Rd
Navarre, FL 32566

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Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible Class for all ages_9:00 AM

Morning Worship Service_10:00 AM

Evening Worship Service_6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class for all ages_7:00 PM

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along with some more useful information

VISITORS ARE WELCOME!

A single word may have different meanings. For instance, "stick" may mean a long, thin piece of wood. Or it may mean adhering to another surface, or a tackle in football. The meaning depends on the context of the discussion.

We all recognize that the

same word may have different meanings, and that's important for us to understand what others are talking about. When we misunderstand the meaning by the speaker, we misunderstand what he is trying to tell us.

So valuable conversations are two-way streets: The speaker

must be clear in the thought he is trying to convey, and the listener must pay attention without misinterpreting what he hears.

The New Testament uses two words in particular to teach important lessons: first, to anyone who will listen; and, second, to Christians who

need to understand the roles they play among believers.

One definition of each of these words is well-known to their listeners and readers. As Jesus used agricultural terms in much of his teachings to allow listeners to understand his parables, so these words were familiar to listeners of that day. When Jesus and Paul used them in slightly different contexts, people could easily make the transition from the common meaning to the real teaching Jesus and Paul wanted them to understand.

Matthew 25:14-30 relates Jesus' parable of the talents. This parable describes a rich man leaving certain financial assets to some of his servants with an understanding that they would invest and increase the money with which they had been entrusted.

The money is described as "talents." A talent in biblical times was both a weight and

a monetary amount. As money, it was based on the weight of gold or silver issued. Normally, a talent of gold would be 120 pounds. In today's economy, a talent might have been worth \$1,233,100, according to some historical analyses. So the servant who received five talents had at his disposal \$6,065,500 in today's currency. Even the servant with one talent had more than \$1 million to invest.

But Jesus was not trying to show people why they should invest money. His concern was that they use their abilities to do good.

Coincidentally, the English word talent also means ability. It should be easy for us to understand that Jesus was really teaching that people should use their abilities in his service, rather than showing us how we should invest our money.

So when he taught that the

man who invested five talents wisely was a good and faithful servant, Jesus was making the point that a man who has a number of skills and uses them in God's service is good and faithful.

In the same way, a man who has a limited skill set still has a responsibility to use his abilities properly. The man who had one gold talent didn't try to improve on what he had been given and his master chastised him for it. Likewise, even if we have (or think we have) limited abilities, we should use what we have in God's service.

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Paul used another word to convey an understanding of how Christians should behave. In that passage, Paul is more direct in comparing the idea of "members of the body" to "members of the church."

His readers understood at least the rudimentary ideas

of anatomy. They knew the purpose of hands, feet, eyes, ears and nose, as well as other unnamed parts of their physical bodies. They recognized that some parts of their physical bodies (members of the body) had specific functions that other parts, or members, did not have. The hand grasps items; the ear does not grasp. But the ear hears sounds, which the hand cannot do.

When each part performs its duties, it complements the whole body, and the entire body functions in a suitable manner. If one fails (eyesight, as an example), the entire body suffers to a greater or lesser degree.

This seems to be an elementary understanding of how bodies work, and it indeed is. We rarely think about the basic functions of our own body's members (at least until one ceases to function properly). But sometimes we need to have basic ideas explained so that we have them

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27

For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

1 Corinthians 12:14

in our minds when a speaker extends his ideas into different realms.

Having reminded his readers that their own bodies work with different parts (members) performing their own specific functions, Paul applies the same concept to the church.

He makes a statement in 1 Corinthians 12:27 that is obvious to us today but at the time of the early beginnings of the church took some getting used to. Paul said, "You are the body of Christ, and members in particular (KJV)."

Paul puts forth the concept that every disciple of Christ belongs to the church, the called out. He uses the phrase "body of Christ" to relate back to his teaching about the physical body. He emphasizes that his readers are the body of Christ. Each of them, all together, make up the church.

Then he continues his argument that each individual that belongs to the body of Christ is in fact a member of that body. As a group, all these different individuals belong to it as much as hands, feet and ears belong to the physical body.