



LESSON 3 – PLACEMENT: FINDING YOUR PLACE IN MINISTRY

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

REVIEW

1. **Assignment:** Who stepped out and tried something new this week? Let's hear about it!
2. **You were made on purpose for a purpose!** (Ephesians 2:10)
3. Three reasons your gifts matter:
 - They reveal God's nature to the world
 - They complete the body of Christ
 - They fulfill your personal destiny

Today we're talking about PLACEMENT. You've discovered you have gifts. You've started figuring out your purpose. Now it's time to find WHERE you fit. This is the "rubber meets the road" moment. Grab your Bible and let's go to **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**.

WHERE DO I FIT?

Have you ever tried to force a puzzle piece into the wrong spot? You're working on a puzzle, you've got this piece in your hand, and you're CONVINCED it goes right there. So you push it. You angle it. You try to jam it in. And it just... doesn't fit.

So, you walk away frustrated. Maybe you even throw the piece across the room. (Just me? Okay.)

But later, you come back, pick up that same piece, and BAM ... it slides perfectly into a completely different spot. The piece was never the problem. It was exactly the right shape. You were just trying to put it in the wrong place.

That's what happens when we try to serve in areas where we're not gifted. We feel frustrated. We burn out. We think something's wrong with us. But there's nothing wrong with you ... you're just in the wrong spot.

Today, we're finding your right spot.

OPENING TEXT

Let's read **1 Corinthians 12:12-27** together. This is one of the most important passages on spiritual gifts in the entire Bible:

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased... And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'... But God composed the body... that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."

Okay, let's break this down. Paul's using the analogy of a human body to explain how the church should function. And honestly, it's brilliant.

THE BODY PRINCIPLE

Think about your actual, physical body for a second. You've got eyes, ears, hands, feet, a stomach, a heart, lungs ... all these different parts. And every single part has a specific function.

Your eye can see, but it can't hear. Your ear can hear, but it can't walk. Your foot can walk, but it can't taste. Each part is designed to do ONE thing really well ... and when every part does its thing, the whole body functions perfectly.

Now imagine if your foot decided it wanted to be an eye. Like, your foot is having an identity crisis, and it starts speaking to you. Your foot says, *"I'm tired of being down here on the ground. I want to be up there seeing stuff!"*

That would be ridiculous, right? Because feet don't see. They walk. And when they do what they're designed to do, the whole body benefits.

But if the foot tries to be an eye, two things happen:

1. The body loses a foot (now nobody's walking)
2. The body still doesn't get another eye (because feet can't see!)

That's what happens when we try to operate outside our gifting. We abandon the role God designed us for, and we fail at the role we're trying to force ourselves into. Everybody loses.

Paul says in **verse 18: "But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased."**

God PLACED you. He set you. He positioned you. Not randomly. Not accidentally. ON PURPOSE.

FOUR TRUTHS ABOUT YOUR PLACEMENT

Let me give you four truths from this passage that will help you find your place:

1. Every Part Is Essential (verses 15-17)

Look at what Paul says: ***"If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body?"***

Translation: Just because you're not in a high-profile role doesn't mean you're not important. Some people look at the church and think, "Well, I'm not the pastor, I'm not on the worship team, I'm not leading anything big ... so I guess I'm not that important."

WRONG. You are absolutely **essential**. You know what happens if your pinky toe stops working? You lose your balance. You can't walk straight. One tiny toe ... and the whole body is affected.

- The person who prays quietly in the prayer room? **Essential.**
- The person who sets up chairs before service? **Essential.**
- The person who works in the nursery so parents can worship? **Essential.**
- The person who greets people at the door with a smile? **Essential.**

No role is too small when it's the role God designed you for.

2. Every Part Is Different (verse 17)

"If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?"

God loves diversity! He intentionally designed the body with different parts that have different functions. That means it's okay ... actually, it's GOOD ... that you're not like everyone else.

- You don't teach like Sarah. Good ... we already have Sarah.
- You don't lead worship like Marcus. Good ... we already have Marcus.
- You do YOU, and let God use you the way He designed you.

This will set you free! You don't have to copy anyone. You don't have to compete with anyone. You just have to be the best version of YOU that you can be.

3. Every Part Needs Every Other Part (verse 21)

"And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'"

This destroys pride and insecurity at the same time.

Pride says: "I don't need anyone else. I can do this on my own."

Insecurity says: "I'm not needed. They could do this without me."
Both are lies.

The truth is: **We need each other.** The teacher needs the administrator to keep things organized. The worship leader needs the tech team to make sure the sound works. The pastor needs the intercessors to pray. Everybody needs everybody.

When you find your place and serve in your gifting, you're not just helping yourself—you're helping the whole body function better.

4. EVERY PART IS PLACED BY GOD (verse 18)

"But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased."

This is huge. God Himself placed you where you are. It's not random. It's not a mistake. You're not in the wrong church or the wrong city or the wrong season by accident. God strategically positioned you exactly where you are for such a time as this.

Maybe you're thinking, "But I don't like where I am. I want to be doing something else." Okay, fair. But before you move, ask yourself: "Have I fully served where God has currently placed me? Have I been faithful in the small things?"

Jesus said in **Luke 16:10**: ***"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much."***

Sometimes God tests your faithfulness in the place you don't want to be before He promotes you to the place you do want to be.

THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

Let me tell you a story from the Bible that perfectly illustrates this principle. You know the story of Esther, right? Jewish girl. Orphan. Raised by her cousin Mordecai. Through a crazy series of events, she becomes queen of Persia.

But here's the thing ... Esther didn't try to become queen. She didn't campaign for it. She didn't network her way into the palace. God placed her there.

And then, at exactly the right moment, a crisis hit. An evil guy named Haman plotted to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom. Esther was in a position to do something about it—but it was risky. She could lose her life. Her cousin Mordecai sent her a message that gives me chills every time I read it:

"Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)

Translation: *"Esther, you're not here by accident. God positioned you in this place, at this time, for this purpose."*

And Esther stepped up. She used her position, her influence, her voice ... and she saved her entire nation. Here's my question for you: **What if God has positioned YOU exactly where you are for such a time as this?**

What if your gifts, your experiences, your connections, your availability ... what if all of it is converging right here, right now, for a purpose bigger than you realize? Don't dismiss where you are. Don't waste this season. God placed you here on purpose.

FINDING YOUR SWEET SPOT

Okay, so how do you actually find your place? How do you know where you're supposed to serve? Let me give you a framework. I call it the **SWEET SPOT FORMULA**:

SWEET SPOT = Your GIFTS + Your PASSION × Current NEED

Let's break it down:

YOUR GIFTS - What has God equipped you to do? We covered this in week one. You've got at least one spiritual gift. What is it?

YOUR PASSION - What breaks your heart? What fires you up? We covered this in week two. What's your burden?

CURRENT NEED - What needs to be done right now? What gap exists in your church, your community, your world that you could fill?

When all three of these line up, that's your sweet spot. That's where you'll be most effective, most fulfilled, and most fruitful.

Let me give you some examples:

Example 1: TEACHING + KIDS + NEED FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

If you have the gift of teaching, you're passionate about kids, and there's a need in the children's ministry ... boom. That's your place.

Example 2: MERCY + HURTING PEOPLE + HOSPITAL VISITATION

If you have the gift of mercy, you care deeply about people who are suffering, and there's a need for people to visit patients in the hospital ... that's your spot.

Example 3: ADMINISTRATION + EXCELLENCE + CHURCH OFFICE

If you have the gift of administration, you love creating systems and keeping things organized, and the church office needs help ... you just found your placement.

See how it works?

THE THREE LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT

Now, let me give you a reality check. Not everyone is at the same level of involvement, and that's okay. There are three levels:

LEVEL 1: ATTENDERS

These are people who show up on Sunday. They're present, they worship, they listen, they might even tithe. But they're not serving anywhere. They're consumers, not contributors.

Nothing wrong with being an attender when you're new or going through a tough season. But God didn't save you to be a permanent spectator. He saved you to get in the game.

LEVEL 2: VOLUNTEERS

These are people who serve somewhere. They've found a spot, they show up, they contribute. They're using their gifts to help others. This is good! This is where most active church members should be.

LEVEL 3: LEADERS

These are people who not only serve but also lead others in serving. They recruit, train, and multiply themselves. They're raising up other volunteers. They're casting vision for their area of ministry.

Here's the progression: **Attender** → **Volunteer** → **Leader**

Where are you on that journey? And where does God want you to be in six months? A year?

EXCUSES THAT KEEP US FROM FINDING OUR PLACE

Alright, let's get real for a minute. I've heard every excuse in the book about why people don't serve. Let me bust out a few of them right now:

EXCUSE #1: "I'm too busy."

Yeah? So is everyone else. We're all busy. But we make time for what matters to us. You have time to scroll social media for an hour a day. You have time to binge Netflix. You have time to go to the gym, grab coffee with friends, watch sports.

I'm not saying those things are bad! But let's be honest ... we all have the same 24 hours. It's not about having time. It's about making time.

What if God is waiting for you to prioritize His purposes before He blesses your schedule?

EXCUSE #2: "I don't have anything to offer."

We already destroyed this one in week one, but apparently it needs to die again. You DO have something to offer. You have gifts. You have experiences. You have a perspective. You have availability.

The widow only had two coins ... but she gave them, and Jesus said she gave more than everyone else. The boy only had a lunch ... but he gave it, and Jesus fed 5,000 people with it.

Stop waiting until you feel qualified. Start with what you have.

EXCUSE #3: "I'll serve when I get my life together."

Newsflash: None of us have our lives completely together. We're all works in progress. If God only used perfect people, nothing would ever get done. He uses broken people, messy people, people who are still figuring it out.

In fact, your mess might be your message. Your struggle might be your ministry. Don't wait until everything's perfect. Start where you are.

EXCUSE #4: "I'm afraid I'll fail."

Okay, this one's valid. Fear is real. But let me ask you this: **What if** you succeed? **What if** you step out in faith, and God shows up in ways you never imagined? **What if** your obedience opens doors you didn't even know existed? **What if** your willingness to try inspires someone else to try?

And even if you do "fail" ... so what? You'll learn something. You'll grow. And God will redirect you.

Thomas Edison failed 10,000 times before he invented the light bulb. When someone asked him how it felt to fail that many times, he said, "I didn't fail 10,000 times. I just found 10,000 ways that didn't work."

EXCUSE #5: "Nobody asked me."

Well, I'm asking you right now. We need you. The church needs you. The kingdom needs you. But also ... sometimes you don't wait to be asked. Sometimes you step up and volunteer.

Jesus said in **Matthew 9:37-38**: ***"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."***

Don't wait for someone to beg you to serve. Look around, see a need, and fill it.

THE POWER OF PLACEMENT

Let me tell you what happens when you find your place and start serving in your gifts:

1. YOU COME ALIVE

There's something that happens when you operate in your sweet spot. It's like everything clicks. You think, "THIS is what I was made for!"

You're not dragging yourself to serve. You're excited about it. Time flies. You leave energized, not drained.

That's the difference between serving in your gifting versus serving outside your gifting.

2. MINISTRY BECOMES NATURAL, NOT FORCED

When you're in the wrong place, ministry feels like work. When you're in the right place, ministry feels like breathing.

It's not always easy ... don't get me wrong. But it's natural. It flows. You don't have to fake it or force it.

3. PEOPLE AROUND YOU ARE BLESSED

When you're operating in your gifts, people benefit. Lives change. Needs are met. The kingdom advances.

Your contribution might seem small to you, but it's huge to the person on the receiving end.

4. YOU EXPERIENCE GOD IN A NEW WAY

There's something about stepping out in faith and serving that opens your eyes to see God working. **You'll see** prayers answered. **You'll see** divine appointments. **You'll see** God use you in ways that blow your mind.

And you'll think, "I almost missed this because I was too scared to try."

THE STORY OF THE TALENTS

Jesus told a parable in **Matthew 25** about a man who went on a journey and gave his servants different amounts of money to manage while he was gone.

One servant got five talents. Another got two. Another got one.

The servant with five talents invested it and doubled it. The servant with two talents did the same. But the servant with one talent buried it in the ground because he was afraid.

When the master came back, he praised the first two servants: ***"Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master!"***

But the servant who buried his talent? The master called him wicked and lazy and took the talent away.

Here's the point: God doesn't expect you to have five talents if He only gave you one. But He does expect you to USE what He gave you. Don't bury your gifts. Don't hide your talents. Invest them. Use them. Watch God multiply them.

DISCOVERY EXERCISE #3: PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT

Grab your student manual. Let's figure out where you might fit:

PART A: GIFT + PASSION MATCH

1. Based on the last two weeks, what do you think your top 2-3 spiritual gifts are?
2. What area of ministry are you most passionate about? (Check all that apply)
 - Children/Youth
 - Hospitality/Welcome
 - Worship/Creative Arts
 - Prayer/Intercession
 - Outreach/Evangelism
 - Teaching/Discipleship
 - Administration/Organization
 - Pastoral Care/Counseling
 - Technical/Media
 - Missions/Compassion
3. Where do your gifts and passion overlap? (Example: Gift of teaching + passion for youth = youth small group leader)

PART B: AVAILABILITY CHECK

1. Realistically, how much time per week could you commit to serving?
 - 1-2 hours
 - 3-5 hours
 - 6-10 hours
 - 10+ hours
2. What day(s)/time(s) work best for you?
 - Sunday mornings

- Sunday evenings
- Weeknights
- Weekends
- Flexible

PART C: CURRENT NEEDS

Look at the list of ministries in your church. Which ones have current needs that match your gifts and passion?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

PART D: NEXT STEP

Based on this assessment, what's ONE specific ministry you could try in the next 30 days?

I commit to trying: _____

ASSIGNMENT

This is it. This is where the rubber meets the road.

Your assignment this week: **TAKE ACTION.**

1. **Contact a ministry leader** in an area that matches your gifts and passion. Ask them about serving opportunities.
2. **Schedule a meeting** or a phone call to learn more about what serving in that area looks like.
3. **Commit to trying it** at least once in the next month.

Write down:

- Ministry area you're exploring: _____
- Leader you're contacting: _____
- Date you'll reach out: _____

Don't overthink this. Don't wait for the perfect fit. Just try something. Step out. See what God does.

Next week, we're talking about moving from availability to participation. But you can't participate if you don't first make yourself available. Let's do this!

Resource Credits

1. Bugbee, Bruce. *What You Do Best in the Body of Christ*. Zondervan, 2005.
2. Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church*. Zondervan, 1995.
3. Hybels, Bill. *Courageous Leadership*. Zondervan, 2002.
4. Frazee, Randy. *The Connecting Church*. Zondervan, 2001.
5. Cordeiro, Wayne. *Doing Church as a Team*. Regal Books, 2001.

Next Week: LESSON 4 - PARTICIPATION (Moving from Availability to Participation)

© AOCLI, 2025