

First Corinthians 12:21-31

The absurdity of isolation within the congregation—12:21-27

- 1) Examples of absurdity—12:21 ²¹ *And the eye is not able to say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you^{pl}.”*
- 2) Examples from real life—12:22-24a
 - a) Weakness—²² *On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker [asthenes] are necessary.*
 - b) Without honor—²³ *And those parts of the body that we think are without honor [atimos], on these we place (clothe with) greater honor, and our unpresentable (private) parts have greater modesty, ²⁴ but our presentable parts have no need of this.
 - i) We honor the private parts of our body by covering them with clothing.*
- 3) Examples from God’s sovereignty—12:24b-26 *But God has organized [sugkerannumi] (blended together) the body, (cf. 12:18, 28)*
 - a) What did God do? *having given honor to the part that lacks it,*
 - b) Why did God do this? ²⁵ *so that ...*
 - i) Negatively—*there may be no division [schisma] in the body, (cf. 1:10; 11:18)*
 - ii) Positively—*but that the body-parts should have the same concern for one another.*
 - c) What does this mutual concern look like?
 - i) Genuine compassion—²⁶ *And if one body-part suffers [pascho], all the body-parts suffer with [sumpascho] it; (eg. hit one finger with a hammer, and ... ?)*
 - ii) Genuine congratulation—*or if one body-part is honored [doxazo], all the body-parts rejoice with [sumchairo] it. (we don’t congratulate just the pitcher’s arm)*
- 4) Application—12:27
 - a) Corporately—²⁷ *Now **you^{pl}** (emphatic; the Corinthian church) are Christ’s body,*
 - b) Individually—*and individual body-parts of it.*

The wisdom of God’s gifts to the congregation—12:28-31

- 1) God’s sovereignty related to the gifts—12:28-31a
 - a) It’s God’s responsibility—12:28-30 ²⁸ *And on the one hand [men] God has placed [tithemi] (for Himself [middle voice]) in the congregation ... (cf. 12:18, 24)*
 - i) The ranking of the gifts: *first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then works of power, then grace-gifts of healings, helps, administrative (steering, guiding) abilities, different kinds of languages.*
 - ii) The wise distribution of the gifts: ²⁹ *Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all do works of power, do they? ³⁰ Not all have the grace-gifts of healings, do they? Not all speak in languages, do they? Not all translate, do they? (expects a “No” answer)*
 - b) Keep your focus—12:31a ³¹ *But on the other hand [de], have a passionate interest in [zeloo] the superior grace-gifts.* (cf. 14:1, 39)
 - i) We should desire that God will produce the greatest possible results in the congregation through us for His glory and the good of others. When we choose not to attend church services, we cannot play the part God has designed for us.
- 2) God has provided something even better—12:31b *And I will demonstrate to you^{pl} a still more excellent path.* (i.e. a way beyond all comparison)
 - a) Love (chapter 13) immeasurably outranks even the top gifts (cf. 12:28). Biblical Christianity is not about gifts but about a way of life, i.e. the way of love.