

The Human Hand

- What makes it useful?
- What are the parts?
- “She’s all thumbs”
- What does a “well designed” hand look like?
- What does a “well designed” church look like?



Arranged by God **1 Corinthians 12:12-31**

Chinese: page 1862
Spanish: page 1464
Brown: page 1151
Green: page 785



Letters to the church in Corinth

- Long relationship with Paul, multiple letters
- A key concern in this letter: divisions in the church
 - Ethnic groups: Jew and Gentile (non-Jew)
 - Social standing
 - Theology/practice of the church
 - Personalities
- 1 Corinthians 11-14: divisions in worship service
 - Head coverings, Lord's Supper, Spiritual gifts

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

- 12-14: The church is 1 “body” with many “limbs & organs”
- 15-16: • Ethnicity
- 17-20: • Social class/standing/power
- 21-24a: • (Gifts/abilities/emphasis)
- 24b-26: • The Holy Spirit is the source and the basis for unity
- 27-31: • Everyone joins the body the same way
 • Everyone lives in the body the same way

Chinese: page 1778

Spanish: page 1396

Brown: page 1099

Green: page 749

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

12-14: The church is 1 “body” with many “limbs & organs”

15-16: Feeling unimportant doesn’t make you less valuable

17-20: • Some parts seem (to everyone) to be more valuable

21-24a:

24b-26:

27-31:

Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were **wise by human standards**; not many were **influential**; not many were of **noble birth**. But God chose the **foolish things of the world** to shame the wise; God chose the **weak things of the world** to shame the strong. God chose the **lowly things of this world** and the **despised things**—and the **things that are not**—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 1:28-31

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

12-14: The church is 1 “body” with many “limbs & organs”

15-16: Feeling unimportant doesn’t make you less valuable

17-20: God arranged all of the parts to make a whole body

21-24a: • Wholeness requires diversity

24b-26: • The human body can’t survive with nothing but eyes,

27-31: or hands, or ears, ...

- Even when we can’t see why it helps

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

12-14: The church is 1 “body” with many “limbs & organs”

15-16: Feeling unimportant doesn’t make you less valuable

17-20: God arranged all of the parts to make a whole body

21-24a: Apparent hierarchy is not what God sees

24b-26: • In the human body, ‘weaker’ parts get extra

27-31: support, not less

- Weaker (maybe less power)

→ indispensable

- Less praised (maybe lower class)

→ give more honor

- Unpresentable

→ greater modesty or care

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

12-14: The church is 1 “body” with many “limbs & organs”

15-16: Feeling unimportant doesn’t make you less valuable

17-20: God arranged all of the parts to make a whole body

21-24a: Apparent hierarchy is not what God sees

24b-26: God’s design: no divisions; all care for one another

- 27-31:
- God intends greater honor for those who lack it
 - Praising the widow and her 2 tiny coins *Luke 21:1-4*
 - If one suffers, all suffer with that one
 - If one is honored, all rejoice with that one

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

12-14: The church is 1 “body” with many “limbs & organs”

15-16: Feeling unimportant doesn’t make you less valuable

17-20: God arranged all of the parts to make a whole body

21-24a: Apparent hierarchy is not what God sees

24b-26: God’s design: no divisions; all care for one another

- 27-31: Church: 1 body, many different parts by God’s design
- Some gifts more critical to overall health of church
 - Sometimes we elevate less critical gifts (“tongues”)
 - Gifts are given for the church, not for individuals
 - Serving as you are in love is more important than having particular gifts or abilities

The Big Idea

**The body of Christ (the Church) is
one body
made up of many different parts
by God's masterful design**

EVERY PART MATTERS!

EVEN IF...

- **A PART SEEMS LESS USEFUL OR VALUABLE**
- **A PART SUFFERS**
- **A PART CAN'T DO WHAT ^{WE THINK} WE NEED RIGHT NOW**

Application

- **Care for each other**
 - Suffer with those who suffer
 - Listen! Actively, generously, intentionally, ...
 - Get permission to solve problems before you try
 - **Especially** across differences
 - when it doesn't make sense to you yet
 - Majority culture for minorities
 - Rejoice with those who rejoice
 - Categories: Gifts & abilities, God's blessings (especially relationships)
 - Requires profound humility and trust

Application

- **Care for each other**
- **Value self and others**
 - Value what **you** bring to the body
 - Not “I don’t matter because...”
 - Value what **others** bring to the body
 - Not patronizing or marginalizing
 - Because...
 - It is by God’s design
 - We are very poor judges of real value
 - “God chose the lowly things of this world...”

Application

- **Care for each other**
- **Value self and others**
- **Grow in your place**
 - Trust God’s wisdom
 - Your ethnicity, history, social class, gifts/abilities, personality, ...
 - “Stay in the condition you were in...” *1 Corinthians 7:17-24*
 - “If anyone speaks, speak the very words of God. If anyone serves, serve in the strength God provides.” *from 1 Peter 4:10-11*
 - “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...” *Colossians 3:17,23-24*

Application

- **Care for each other**
- **Value self and others**
- **Grow in your place**
- **Pursue unity**
 - “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit...”
Ephesians 4:3
 - Christian unity **is not** the natural result of kind people who get along easily
 - Christian unity **is** the intentional and determined result of courageous humility, love, and care in Christ

The Big Idea

**The body of Christ (the Church) is
one body
made up of many different parts
by God’s masterful design**

God has put Crossway together, placing every part just as he wanted it to be, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.