

Accurately Handling
The Word of Truth

By Gary Gilbertson

1 Cor. 12:14-26

Part 6

An open Bible is shown at the bottom of the image, lying flat on a dark wooden surface. The pages are slightly aged and feature printed text. The text 'Part 6' is overlaid in the center of the open pages.

I Cor. 12:14 “For the body is not one member but many.

- Paul is still talking about the grace-expressions of the Holy Spirit – not about the opinions of people’s worth.
- Still talking about grace-expressions in the public assembly of the church.

“not one member” One member would make the church into a cancerous monstrosity.

“many” means there are many grace-expressions in the public assembly of the church not just one.

needed for a v. 7 “manifestations...to profit withal” = providing what is particular circumstance.

v. 15 “If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?”

- Feet and hands are metaphors.
- Paul “personifies” the body parts.
- Opposing a hierarchy of value to the grace-expressions.

v. 16 Same as v. 15

- Ears and eyes are metaphors that have been personified.
- Feeling inadequate does not justify deriving the edification that God has invested in you.
- V. 17 “If the whole body were an eye where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling?”
- If there is too much of one grace-expression and not enough of other grace-expressions, the body will be deprived of edification.

v. 18 “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him.”

“But now...” On the contrary, as the situation is...

- What is the situation?

“God...” is the situation. God has taken the decision of what grace-expression are distributed to whom out of the hands of men.

“set the members every one of them in the body...” Set means “to bring to a place; to plant”. God has taken the decision of where we are planted in the body out of the hands of men.

“as it hath pleased Him.” Pleased means, “determined by purpose and resolve”

- God has put a lot of thought into where you are planted and what grace-expressions you are assigned.

v. 19 “And if they were all one member, where were the body?”

There is no body, only one over-grown cell, taking life from all the other cells. This is not a body, this is cancer.

Example: The assembly that only values and esteems the grace-expression of preaching and the preacher, to the neglect of other grace-expressions.

v. 20 “But now are they many members, yet one body.”

“But now” = as the situation is

In spite of the opinions and biases of men, the true situation is that there are many members (grace-expressions) and they can all function as one healthy body because they are all baptized and drink of the “one and the selfsame Spirit.

v. 21 “And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again, the head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you.”

Yes you can, if you are thinking childishly and dishonestly. (See 14:20) It happens all the time. Menenius Aggrippa speech is an example of immature short-sighted thinking.

The eye cannot say, if it is thinking maturely.

v. 22 “Nay, much more, those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.”

“Nay” = on the contrary!

“those member of the body which seem...” Seem = to have an opinion; a person’s own subjective mental estimate.

I Samuel 16:7 outward appearance, II Cor. 10:7 outward appearance

John 7:24 outward apearance

v. 22 (continued) “...which seem to be more feeble”

“feeble” = unimpressive outward appearance based on opinions.

The paradox of “feebleness”:

- II Cor. 12:9 strength made perfect in “feebleness”
- I Cor. 1:27 “feebleness to confound (shame) the mighty
- II Cor. 12:10 when I am “feeble” than I am strong

Feeble does not mean “inferior” (poor quality)

The “strong” must realize their interdependence on the “feeble”.

v. 23 “And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon those we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.”

“think” = to have an opinion; a person’s own subjective mental estimate.

It’s just an opinion!

“less honorable” to regard as having no value

It’s the ‘regard-er’s’ problem, not the member’s problem

- Dishonorable = having a lack of integrity
- Less honorable = not given the honor that is truly deserved

“bestow” = place upon; wrap around

“more abundant” = super-abundantly; over-abundance; over-much

“honor” = the value, recognition and preferential treatment given to someone by others

v. 23 (continued) Those that already have “more abundant honor” (over-abundance; over-much) are to voluntarily and lovingly bestow their over-much honor on those that have not been given the proper amount of honor that they truly deserve.

“and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.”

- Uncomely = unimpressive outward appearance by someone’s opinion.
- Comeliness = impressive outward appearance by someone’s opinion.

“have more abundant comeliness”

Question: If the uncomely parts have “more abundant” comeliness, where did the “abundant comeliness” come from?

v. 24 “For our comely parts have no need.” No need of “more abundant comeliness”. They already have more than enough. They need to give it away to those that don’t have enough.

v. 24 (continued) “...but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to the part which lacked.”

Exodus 16:18 gathering manna

II Cor. 8:15 gathering donations

“He that gathered much (honor) had nothing over; and he that gathered little (honor) had no lack.”

“God has tempered the body together”

“tempered’ = to blend together God has blended the relationships in the body to operate in the same way as the Trinity has always operated in their relationships.

“having given more abundant honor” Who has given more abundant honor? The parts that have more than enough honor voluntarily bestow their excess honor on the parts that don’t get enough.

v. 25 “That there should be no schism in the body...”

- Schism = to split; to tear; to make a gap
- I Cor. 1:10-12 “I beseech you...that there be no divisions among you...”
- The personal opinions about who to bestow honor upon was creating divisions in the church. Some were bestowing honor on Paul, others on Apollos, others on Cephas others on Christ.

“but that the members should have the same care one for another.”

Patronage only cared about:

family

those who owed you favors

those who you owed favors to

v. 26 “And whether one member suffer, all members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all members rejoice.”

This is the exact opposite of the patronage system that they had all grown up in. This Christian way of life could cost them their social status, their livelihood and their chances for advancement. It was also considered seditious.