

1 Corinthians 12:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

Analysis

And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?—Paul repeats the argument with different body-parts (ear/eye instead of foot/hand) to reinforce the point through variation. The ear's function—hearing—differs entirely from the eye's function—seeing. Neither is superior; both are necessary. A deaf person lacks what the hearing possess; a blind person lacks what the seeing possess. Yet neither deficiency negates their humanity.

Applied spiritually: the believer with discernment gifts (spiritual "hearing" to detect truth from error) shouldn't envy the believer with vision gifts (prophetic foresight or strategic planning). God designed the body to need both. The ear cannot see, but it can hear what the eye cannot—vibrations, tones, warnings from behind. Diversity of function creates comprehensive perception—the body sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches simultaneously. No single member provides all sensory input; collectively, the body experiences reality fully.

Historical Context

The Corinthians' competitive spirituality created an atmosphere where Christians compared gifts, ranking themselves and others. Paul systematically dismantles this by showing every member's essential, non-interchangeable contribution.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What 'ear' gifts (discernment, wisdom, helps) might be undervalued compared to 'eye' gifts (prophecy, teaching)?
2. How can you cultivate gratitude for the gifts you have rather than envy for gifts you lack?
3. In what ways does the church's 'comprehensive perception' require diverse gifts working together?

Interlinear Text

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|-------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| καὶ | ἐὰν | εἴπῃ | τὸ | οὖς | Ὅτι | οὐκ | εἰμὶ | ὀφθαλμός | οὐκ |
| And | if | shall say | G3588 | the ear | Because | not | I am | the eye | not |
| G2532 | G1437 | G2036 | | G3775 | G3754 | G3756 | G1510 | G3788 | G3756 |
| εἰμὶ | ἐκ | τοῦ | σώματος· | οὐκ | παρὰ | τοῦτο | οὐκ | ἔστιν | |
| I am | of | G3588 | the body | not | it therefore | G5124 | not | is | |
| G1510 | G1537 | | G4983 | G3756 | G3844 | | G3756 | G2076 | |
| ἐκ | τοῦ | σώματος· | | | | | | | |
| of | G3588 | the body | | | | | | | |
| G1537 | | G4983 | | | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Romans 12:3 (Parallel theme): For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

