



THE OPPOSABLE THUMB

by Lanny and Marilyn Johnson

“Hey kids, look who came to visit!”, Mr. Jones called out.

Billy and Mary exclaimed, “Grandma! Papa!” as their grandparents hugged them.

Mary noticed that her grandmother’s right hand was bandaged and asked, “Grandma, what did you do to your hand?”

“Oh, I was in a hurry and tripped and fell. I reached out to catch myself and ended up breaking my thumb. My doctor said it’s not a bad break, but he doesn’t want me to use it for several weeks, so he splinted it to my hand.”

“Does it hurt?” Billy asked.

“Not too much, but now I understand how important our thumbs are for us.”

“What do you mean, Grandma?” Mary asked,

“Well, look at your thumbs and see what they can do. Hold up your hand and move your fingers and thumb around in different directions. Notice that your thumb moves differently than your other fingers (also called digits). Your thumb is shorter and on the side of the hand but can move around to face (or oppose) your other fingers. It is called an opposable (*a-po-za-bal*) thumb. This gives us the ability to grasp or hold on to things. God also created apes, monkeys,

and other animals with opposable thumbs. They use theirs to climb trees, gather food, pick lice (just kidding), and even peel bananas. We can do those things, too, but we can use our fingers and thumbs to do things far beyond what any animal can do with theirs.

“Together with the brain God gave us, we can make tools and use them with precision.

Our opposable thumb is why we can do so many things with our hands.

“You know, it might be easier to do an experiment that shows how important your thumb can be. First, we need to get some items to work with. Each of you will need a jar with a lid, a pen or pencil with a piece of paper, a coin, a balloon, and a brush or comb. You also need to wear a shoe on one foot with the shoestring untied, and a sock to put on a bare foot. Also, wear an unbuttoned shirt and an unzipped jacket over it. Papa, if you get some tape, we will start this experiment.”

Grandma continued after all the items had been gathered, “Now, Papa, tape the kids’ thumbs to the sides of their hands. Tape them lightly to keep the circulation in their fingers. Also, make sure they can still move their fingers but not their thumbs. Now, children, using only



one hand, try to pick up the pencil and write your name on the paper.”

Both the kids tried but couldn’t even pick up the pencil. Their grandmother then permitted

them to use both hands. After much giggling and laughing, Mary could scoot the pencil into her hand and close her fingers around it, but she couldn’t write anything that even looked like her name. Next, they tried the same thing with a brush and comb - first to pick them up and then comb their hair. Both failed with only one hand, but using two hands, they could close their fingers tightly enough to comb their hair somewhat.

Picking up a coin off the flat table was a challenge. Mary was able to do it after several attempts. Billy had to use two hands to do it. He used a fingernail on one hand to lift the coin enough that two fingers of the other hand could pinch it. With great difficulty, they managed to slide on a sock using curled index fingers on both hands. Other challenges, such as buttoning a button, tying a shoelace, blowing up a balloon and tying it, starting and pulling up a zipper, and opening a jar, were even more difficult or impossible without using their thumbs.

Grandma smiled and said, “I hope you both understand now what an incredible design your opposable thumbs are. We should give God a thumbs up to thank Him for His amazing designs. Now, I need one of you to use your working thumb to open this jar of peanut butter for me.”



HIDDEN OBJECTS

Everyone in this scene is using their opposable thumbs to hold on to things! See if you can find the 18 hidden objects from the Hidden Picture Silhouettes below.



CROSS-OUTS

Only an intelligent Creator could create an amazing opposable thumb. Solve the puzzle above to find what the Bible says about that Creator.

CROSS OUT ALL:

1. Shapes
2. Colors
3. Reptiles
4. Fish
5. Candy
6. Girls' Names

Puzzles by Lanny Johnson
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SQUARE	I	FUDGE	PERCH	WILL	PRAISE
TURTLE	RED	YOU,	LOLLIPOP	SAMANTHA	LIZARD
FOR	SANDRA	GREEN	PENTAGON	I	SHARK
AM	HEXAGON	FEARFULLY	LICORICE	AND	ALLIGATOR
WONDERFULLY	MADE;	ABIGAIL	TORTOISE	MARVELOUS	TAFFY
PURPLE	ARE	TRIANGLE	TOFFEE	YOUR	SARAH
BROWN	CARP	WORKS, ...	TROUT	CIRCLE	
SALMON	PSALM	CARAMEL	CROCODILE	MARY	139:14 a

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