

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 231 – August 19th – 1 Corinthians 12:1-26

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 1 Corinthians

John Drane	<i>Paul</i> , Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1976
Leon Morris	<i>The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians</i> , Tyndale New Testament Commentary, 2 nd Ed., IVP, Leicester, 1985
Anthony C Thistleton	<i>The First Epistle to the Corinthians</i> , The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2000

1 Corinthians 12:1-3

Thistleton stresses that chs 12-14 must be viewed as part of the continuing argument over the difference between status-seeking and the cruciform life. "The way in which some ranked their self-perceived 'spirituality' or giftedness by the Holy Spirit so as to encourage superior status enhancement which resulted in the attitude 'I have no need of you' (12:21-26) provides a close parallel to the status enjoyment of those who enjoyed the more comfortable location and better table fare than the latecomers at the Lord's Supper (11:21-22; see above)... The problem of rich and poor, of influential and deprived, however, offers less subtle opportunities for status enhancement and self-deception than issues of 'spirituality.' Here the temptation to glory in being 'one of us' (i.e., those people who are 'spiritual') takes a more insidious and ultimately more disastrously damaging form. For it engenders a self-glorifying at variance with the reality of divine grace and the transformative proclamation of the cross (1:18-2:5, esp. 1:10,31)."

On verses 1-3 Thistleton provides the following quotes from Mitchell and Eriksson to support his heading for these verses: "Paul relativises all claims to greater or less spiritual attainment because of ecstatic gifts by saying that *every Christian is indeed a spiritual person*, because every Christian who makes the common acclamation Κύριος Ἰησους (cf. 8:6) shows that he or she is possessed by the Holy Spirit" Mitchell

"First, Paul treats the finite question of the pneumatics' spiritual status by redefining all baptised Christians as spiritual. Then he continues with the second finite question, the spiritual gifts, by elaborating the charismatic giftedness of all." Eriksson

Verse 1

Περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν.

περὶ δὲ cf. 7:1,25.

πνευματικός, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to the spirit

πνευματικῶν is of indeterminate gender and hence could be 'spiritual men' or 'spiritual things' i.e. gifts. The latter is probably intended. "But if both the writer and the readers well knew that the Greek ending included *both* genders (i.e., excluded neither), why should the meaning be construed in either-or terms at all?" Thistleton

θέλω wish, will

ἀγνοεῶ not know, be ignorant, fail to understand

Verse 2

οἴδατε ὅτι ὅτε ἔθνη ἦτε πρὸς τὰ εἰδωλα τὰ ἄφωνα ὡς ἂν ἤγεσθε ἀπαγόμενοι.

"... this verse in Greek is ungrammatical. Two possibilities have been suggested with some plausibility. The one is Hort's suggestion that for ὅτε we should read ποτε, when the sense would be, 'You know that formerly you were Gentiles, carried away ...' The other is that we supply another *ye were* (ἦτε) with the participle ἀπαγόμενοι, *carried away*... This would yield 'You know when you were Gentiles, you were carried away...'" Morris

οἶδα know, understand

ὅτε conj when, at which time

ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, οὐς n nation, people; τὰ ἔ. Gentiles

εἰδωλον, οὐ n idol

ἄφωνος, ον dumb, silent

It is difficult to be certain of the import of the reference to idols as *dumb*. Clearly there is an allusion to the OT contrast between lifeless and dumb idols and the living God. There may also be the implication that the ecstatic religion "that characterised many of the Corinthians prior to their conversion was an attempt to make up for the silence of their gods... With Christ as their Lord they have no need to construct some 'spirituality' as if God were silent. Their varied experiences of the different gifts which God actively apports out (12:4-11) rest upon his choice and initiative, not upon their own self-generated choices and motivations." Thistleton

ἤγεσθε Verb, imperf pass indic, 2 pl ἀγω
ἀπαγω lead away by force, lead astray

"Even as ye were led is probably 'how ye were led whenever the occasion happened' (Edwards). The construction is unusual (Moulton says that it is one of only three places in the New Testament where the old iterative use of ἄν survives), and serves to underline the plight of the heathen." Morris. Paige suggests that ἀπαγω is used here in a physical sense of being 'carried along' in the festal processions to the idols.

Verse 3

διὸ γνωρίζω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλῶν λέγει· Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, καὶ οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν· Κύριος Ἰησοῦς εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ.

διὸ therefore, for this reason
γνωρίζω make known, disclose, know

"It appears that Paul is taking up the claim of those who style themselves as οἱ πνευματικοὶ to have γνωσις." Thistleton

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδέν no one, nothing
λαλεῶ speak, talk
ἀναθεμα, τοῦ n cursed, under God's curse

"Paul means that it is not a human discovery that *Jesus is the Lord*. It is a discovery that can be made only when the Spirit works in a man's heart." Morris
Hence this fundamental confession of the Christian marks each Christian as one possessed of the Spirit and demands that each person possessed of the Spirit remains Christocentric.

Cullmann suggests that 'Jesus is cursed' is related to demands in time of persecution to own 'Caesar is Lord' and to curse or disown Christ. Dunn, however, suggests that during Christian worship at Corinth "some members had cried out under inspiration 'Jesus be cursed.'" Dunn links this with quasi-gnostic devaluation of the earthly Jesus (cf. 1 Jn 4:2). Hering argues that the utterance is that of a charismatic "possessed only by an evil spirit," a suggestion which Fee finds attractive. Many others, such as Aune, Bruce and Kistemaker think the phrase is used here hypothetically by Paul rather than referring to an actual incident. Whatever may be said on 'Jesus is cursed' the thrust of Paul's argument is clear, the confession that 'Jesus is Lord' "is no mere 'floating' fragment of descriptive statement or abstract proposition, but is a *spoken act of personal devotion and commitment which is part and parcel of a Christ-centred worship and lifestyle.*" Thistleton

Verse 4

Διαίρέσεις δὲ χαρισμάτων εἰσὶν, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα·

διαίρεσις, εὐς f variety, difference

Thistleton says, 'different apportionings.'

χαρισμα, τοῦ n gift (from God)

Paul stresses that spiritual gifts are *gifts* which cannot be the source of pride but only of thankfulness.

Verse 5

καὶ διαίρεσεις διακονιῶν εἰσιν, καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος·

διακονία, ας f ministry, service

"The thought of service might be that of service rendered to Christ [cf. 3:5]. But since in the previous and following section it is the action of the divine within the believer that is described, we should probably understand this verse of the service that the indwelling Christ enables His people to render, or perhaps of the service to which he calls them." Morris.
"In 12:4-11 Paul continually stresses unity in diversity in order to overcome divisiveness owing to different valuations being assigned to different gifts." Martin

Verse 6

καὶ διαιρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσὶν, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεός, ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν.

Note that vv 4-6 are implicitly Trinitarian. "In 12:4-6 ... we encounter the only place in Paul's writings where πνευμα, Χριστος, and θεος occur in consecutive and closely parallel statements." Richardson

ἐνεργημα, τος η working, activity
ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

πασιν could be neuter, 'in all things', or masc, 'in all men'. The latter is more probable in context. "Paul completes the argument that *different gifts* imply no ranking of 'having the Spirit' in greater or lesser degree, since 'the same Spirit' is active in all according to God's own purposes which determine their 'apportioning.' Similarly, 'different ways of serving,' if they are genuine, all honour 'the same Lord.' Finally, *whatever* 'activates effects' 'activity' (the usual meaning of ἐνεργημα, according to BAGD; cf. Collins, *activities*) of a spiritual nature which constitutes a work of 'the same God who brings about everything in everyone.'" Thistleton

Verse 7

ἐκάστῳ δὲ δίδεται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.

ἐκαστος, η, ον each, every

"probably indicates that the gifts of the Spirit are not reserved for a few outstanding men. Some gift is given to each." Morris

διδωμι give
φανερωσις, εως f bringing to light,
disclosure

"It is not clear whether we should understand *the manifestation of the Spirit* meaning 'that which the Spirit makes manifest', or 'that which makes the Spirit manifest'. Either way the thought is of the spiritual gifts, and of the exercise of the spiritual gifts as something public and open, which others than their possessors perceive." Morris.

Thistleton says, 'public manifestation.'

συμφερον, ου η good, advantage, benefit

"Spiritual gifts are ... for the edification of the whole body of believers." Morris.

"The Spirit produces visible effects for the profit of all, not for self-glorification."

Thistleton

Verse 8

ᾧ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδεται λόγος σοφίας, ἄλλω δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα,

For other lists of 'gifts' in Paul, cf. 12:27-28; Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11.

σοφια, ας f wisdom, insight

A catchword or slogan at Corinth (cf. 1:17,19, 20,21,22,24,30; 2:1,4,5,6,7,13; 3:19). "The background which controls the exegesis, therefore, derives from the contrast between the pretentiousness and competitive status-seeking of human wisdom (1:17-22; 2:1-5; 3:19) and the gift of divine wisdom (1:24-31; 2:6-13). Since the emphasis in 12:8 falls entirely on gift, clearly *divine wisdom* as a gift of the Spirit lies in view here." Thistleton. Thistleton argues that the phrase means an 'intelligent utterance of God's wisdom,' particularly relating to "God's plan of salvation" (cf. 2 Cor 1:12). Quoting other commentators he writes, "From 1 Cor 1-3 it is almost certain that Paul identified the wisdom from God with God's saving deed in the crucified Christ, particularly in the proclamation of the saving event.' [Schatzmann] It relates primarily to 'the revelation of God in the cross.' [Schrage]"

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

Another catchphrase at Corinth (cf. 1:5; 8:1,7, 10,11). Banks thinks this to be the gift of "understanding the Old Testament, Christian tradition, and the capacity to expound them correctly." Others think a word of practical application. Whatever this might be it is given for the 'common good' and therefore is not a coded message for individuals.

Verse 9

ἐτέρῳ πίστις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, ἄλλω χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι,

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

"Paul proceeds to speak of things like healing and the working of miracles, so that probably he has in mind a special faith which is associated with miraculous operations (cf 13:2 ...)" Morris. "A special endowment of faith for a special service (cf. 13:2b)." Bruce

χαρισμα, τος η gift (from God)

ιαμα, τος η healing

The plural implies 'various kinds of healings.'

Thistleton provides a helpful discussion of the (sometimes contentious) issues relating to the gift of healing and its relationship to faith. In particular, if faith and healing are here to be related, is it the faith of the healer or the one needing healing that is being spoken of? He makes the point that nothing can be 'claimed' by faith unless it is specifically promised and that God does not promise healing of every sickness *now*.

Verse 10

ἄλλω ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, ἄλλω προφητεία,
ἄλλω διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, ἐτέρω γένη
γλωσσῶν, ἄλλω ἐρμηνεία γλωσσῶν·

ἐνεργημα see v.6

Calvin thinks that Elymas being struck blind (Acts 13:11) is an example of the kind of miracles spoken of here. Theilike suggests that the *powers* mentioned here are evil powers and that the sense is 'authority over the powers.' Thistleton suggests that the phrase may not imply solely *miraculous* acts; he suggests the translation 'deeds of power.'

προφητεία, ας f prophecy, the gift of
prophecy

Thistleton supplies discussion and bibliography on the subject of prophecy in the NT. Hill, he says, suggests "that the prophet is a Spirit-endowed person 'whose preaching contains admonition and comfort, the call for repentance and promise' and who also counsels, as a pastor, and 'blames and praises. That, we submit, may be legitimately called a ministry of pastoral teaching and instruction ... Christian prophets exercised a teaching ministry in the church which included pastoral preaching.'"

Having considered the various arguments, Thistleton draws some "interim conclusions prior to the note at 14:3." He says, "Prophecy is for *edification and encouragement and does not necessarily exclude teaching and doctrine* (14:3,31). It depends on revelation, and is sometimes closely related to prayer (11:4-5). The allusion to the cessation of prophecy in 13:10 refers only to the Lord's return. If we were tempted to complain that the definitions of NT prophecy by David Hill, Gillespie, Aune, Muller, or Friedrich were too broad, Grudem concludes with an even broader comment: 'Paul defines the function of prophecy very broadly in 1 Cor 14:3; its functions could include any kind of speech activity which would be helpful to the hearers.' 'The NT does not lead us to expect to find any distinctive speech forms for prophecy.'...

"We have no reason to doubt the conclusion of Hill, Muller, Gillespie, and Friedrich that 'prophecy,' as a gift of the Holy Spirit, combines pastoral insight into the needs of persons, communities and situations with the ability to address these with a God-given utterance or longer discourse (whether unprompted or prepared with judgment, decision and rational reflection) leading to challenge or comfort, judgment, or consolation, but ultimately building up the addressees. On the basis of 12:10 (in isolation from 14:1-25; see under 14:3) more cannot be said with certainty. While the speaker believes that such utterances or discourses come from the Holy Spirit, mistakes can be made, and since believers, including ministers or prophets, remain humanly fallible, claims to 'prophecy' must be weighed and tested. It would go beyond the limits of exegesis to assume that the gift of 'prophecy' belongs any more *permanently* to some specific individual as an 'office' than the gifts of 'faith' or 'kinds of healings.' The epistle remains silent on this matter. Equally, it offers no evidence that 'prophecy' ceases before the return of Christ at the eschaton (see on 13:10). Finally, as J. Panagopoulos insists, prophecy is not a function to be isolated from tradition, from its OT background, and from the function of announcing and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nothing links it with 'trivial' messages to individuals."

διακρίσις, εως f ability to discriminate

Cf. 1 Thess 5:19-21; 1 Jn 4:1-6. Drawing on the work of Jewett and Hoyle, Thistleton suggests, "The gifts of 'discernment' or *discrimination* include (a) a *critical capacity to discern the genuine transcendent activity of the Spirit* from merely human attempts to replicate it; and (b) a *pastoral discernment of the varied ways in which the Spirit of God is working*, in such a way as to distinguish various consequences and patterns." He cites Dunn regarding the three basic criteria for judging spiritual gifts, "does it exalt Jesus? (1 Cor 12:3)... Does it manifest love? (1 Cor 13:4-7)... Does it build up? (1 Cor 14)."

γένη Noun, nom/acc pl γένος, ους n
family, race, kind, sort

Thistleton lays stress on the 'different kinds' and says that it is wrong to seek to limit 'tongues' to one specific, tightly defined phenomenon. "A cluster of generic characteristics mark off 'tongues' from 'prophecy': in one context, the contrast between articulate speech and unintelligible sounds (14:2b, 5, 7-9, 11,19); in another context the contrast between being addressed to God and being addressed to other human persons (14:2a; 14:15); in yet another context the distinction between communicative discourse in the ordinary public domain and something so exalted as to be associated with angelic utterance (13:1); in one more context capable of making some believers feel like exiles and strangers 'not at home' in the community of believers (14:23a) and repellent to unbelievers (14:23b); in other situations that which benefits the tongue-speaker and for which he or she can give thanks (14:4a, 5a, 18). Any generalising definition will founder on semantic contrasts which constitute counterexamples. On the other hand, one or more of the above characteristics or family traits give adequate grounds for the use of 'tongues', provided that they are 'given' by the Holy Spirit and not self-induced."

γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language, utterance

Thistleton provides a lengthy summary and critique of the various views concerning 'tongues.' Citing a parallel with Rom 8:26 he favours the view of Theissen that "'Tongues' may be viewed as 'the language of the unconscious' because it is unintelligible (unless it is 'interpreted') not only to others but also to the speaker. In 14:11 'foreign language' is unintelligible to the listener but intelligible to the speaker. But this represents a 'logical jump.' Paul prepares to urge 'the speaker, not the listener' (my italics) 'to pray for the power to interpret,' i.e., to articulate what he or she utters, bringing it up from the levels of unconscious depths to those of cognitive consciousness... Paul does not say that the glossolalist *does* understand his or her utterances, but that he *wishes* that they would, and urges them to pray for this further gift. Usually the gift of 'tongues' is given 'to one,' and 'intelligible articulation of tongues speech' 'to one another' (12:10). But ideally 'one and the same person can possess both gifts,' as 14:27-28 probably presupposes... Theissen convincingly concludes that 'glossolalia is language of the unconscious – language capable of consciousness.'"

ἐρμηνεια, ας f interpretation, translation

Verse 11

πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, διαιροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται.

ἐνεργεω see v.6

διαιρεω divide, distribute, apportion

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

ἐκάστος, η, ον each, every

βουλομαι want, desire, wish, intend, plan

Paul's words underline the personality (not mere power) of the Spirit.

Verse 12

Καθάπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα ἐν ἑστίν καὶ μέλη πολλὰ ἔχει, πάντα δὲ τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος πολλὰ ὄντα ἐν ἑστίν σῶμα, οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός·

καθαπερ as, just as

σωμα, τος n body

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μελος, ους n member, bodily part

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, many

For Christ as head of the body, see also Eph 5:23; Col 1:18. The picture of a body with its various members was familiar in Greek and Roman political rhetoric as an expression of order and hierarchy in society. Christ gives distinctive shape to *this* body.

Verse 13

καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἐν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες, εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν.

ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι is this *locative*, indicating sphere, 'in one Spirit' (NRSV, JB, RV, REB, NJB) or *instrumental*, indicating agency, 'by one Spirit' (AV, RSV, NASV, NIV)?

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

Baptism is, symbolically, the means by which a person is joined to Christ and to the body of his people. Paul here speaks of the spiritual reality corresponding to that outward sign, baptism with (rather than by) the Spirit. This is the act of the risen Christ by which Christ, by the Spirit, saves and equips his people (see Lk 3:16; Acts 1:5,8). Note that being baptised with the Spirit and belonging to Christ and to his people are co-extensive.

"Any theology that might imply that this one baptism in 13a in which believers were 'baptised by [or in] one Spirit' might mark off some post-conversion experience or status enjoyed only by some Christians attacks and undermines Paul's entire argument and emphasis. Paul's constant use of ἐν, 'one,' and παντες, 'all,' constitutes a direct onslaught against categorisation or elitism within the church. As Mitchell and Martin (among others) have decisively shown, the argument picks up the categorisations which Paul attacks in 1:10-12. The 'all' and the reference to transcending the Jew-Gentile, male-female, slave-free divisions of Paul's day reflect the reference to baptism in Gal 3:27-28." Thistleton.

"These verses are a crushing rejoinder to Pentecostalist ideas about the reception of the Spirit. The reception of the Spirit is the beginning of the Christian life (3:3-5)... The gift of the Spirit and justification are two sides of the one coin... The gift of the Spirit is what makes us ... sons of God ..." Similarly, Gal 3:26-27 concerns "a metaphor drawn from the rite of baptism to describe the entry of the believer into Christian experience." In the context of baptism or of Christian experience "there is no talk of a subsequent coming of the Spirit." Dunn

εἴτε if, whether

Ἕλληνα, ἡνός m a Greek, non-Jew

ἐλευθερός, α, ον free, free person

ποτιζῶ give to drink, water

Verse 14

Καὶ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν μέλος ἀλλὰ πολλά.

μέλος see v.12

"Diversity is not an accidental attribute of the body. It is of its very essence." Morris
 "Unless the many perform their assigned functions, however diverse, the one body would not exist as a single entity but as a chaotic array of conflicting forces, without focus or coherence." Thistleton

Verse 15

ἐὰν εἴπῃ ὁ πούς· Ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι χεῖρ, οὐκ εἰμι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, οὐ παρὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος;

ἐὰν if, even if, though

πούς, ποδος m foot

χεῖρ, χειρος f hand, power

παρὰ with acc. here in sense of by, by that token

Some at Corinth who lacked the more spectacular gifts of others may have been so discouraged that they began to ask whether they had any place or function in the church.

Verse 16

καὶ ἐὰν εἴπῃ τὸ οὖς· Ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι ὀφθαλμός, οὐκ εἰμι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, οὐ παρὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος;

οὖς, ὠτος n ear, hearing

Verse 17

εἰ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα ὀφθαλμός, ποῦ ἡ ἀκοή; εἰ ὅλον ἀκοή, ποῦ ἡ ὄσφρησις;

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

ἀκοή, ης f report, news, hearing

ὄσφρησις, εως f sense of smell

Verse 18

νυνὶ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τὰ μέλη, ἐν ἑκάστων αὐτῶν, ἐν τῷ σώματι καθὼς ἠθέλησεν.

νυνὶ (originally an emphatic form of νυν)

now

ἔθετο Verb, 2 aor midd indic, 3 s τιθημι

midd put place, set, determine

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μελος

ἑκάστος, η, ον each, every

ἐν ἑκάστος places emphasis on each one – 'each and every one'

θέλω wish, will

Each member is deliberately and thoughtfully set in place by God to serve its particular function. Gifts are gifts, gifts from God.

"Christians must give up anxiously comparing themselves with each other... It leads to jealousy [cf. 1:10-12; 3:1-4] and discouragement... They complain that they are not like so-and-so... They develop an inferiority complex and lose all joy of salvation. The foot grumbles because it walks in the dust and carries the whole weight of the body... Others would like to be the eye which oversees or [especially!] the mouth which speaks... God knows why he has made each one of us as we are; he knows what use each one of us can be." Deluz

Verse 19

εἰ δὲ ἦν τὰ πάντα ἐν μέλος, ποῦ τὸ σῶμα;

Verse 20

νῦν δὲ πολλὰ μὲν μέλη, ἐν δὲ σῶμα.

"This emphatic reiteration of the theme of unity in diversity concludes this part of the discourse." Morris

Verse 21

οὐ δύναται δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς εἰπεῖν τῇ χειρὶ·
Χρείαν σου οὐκ ἔχω, ἢ πάλιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῖς
ποσίν· Χρείαν ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔχω·

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

χρεια, ας f need, want

ἢ or

παλιν again, once more

κεφαλη, ης f head

ποσίν Noun, dat pl πους, ποδος m foot

Those more gifted and seemingly more useful cannot dispense with those they view as having a lesser position than themselves. "The sin of 'autonomy,' *self-sufficiency*, or 'the right to do what I like' (6:12) is precisely the 'fleshly' attitude within the church (3:1-4), which Paul finds alien to Christlike existence 'for others,' but reflects much more secular culture (whether inside or outside the church) at the beginning of the twenty-first century."

Thistleton

Verse 22

ἀλλὰ πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὰ δοκοῦντα μέλη τοῦ
σώματος ἀσθενέστερα ὑπάρχειν ἀναγκαῖά
ἐστίν,

μαλλον adv more; rather

πολλῶ μᾶλλον 'it is much more the case that',
'far rather.'

δοκεω intrans be recognised, seem

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μελος, ους n

member, bodily part

ἀσθενεστερος, α, ον weaker; comparative
from ἀσθενης

In light of 1:27 and 4:10 Thistleton argues that the reference is to social status and perhaps (following Glad) disposition of character. He offers the translation 'less endowed with power.' "They were insufficiently impressive to count for much, either socially or spiritually, within the church, or in terms of what 'contacts' or ability they might show for mission or for speaking with wisdom and knowledge to outsiders. Probably they never did effective mighty works of healing, seldom or never prophesied, and perhaps never spoke in tongues. In v.23 they are spoken of as *less attractive* and less '*presentable*'

(εὐσχημοσύνην)." Thistleton

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἶμι)

ἀναγκαιος, α, ον necessary, essential

It is the 'weak' who are especially the objects of God's saving activity (1:27).

Verse 23

καὶ ἃ δοκοῦμεν ἀτιμότερα εἶναι τοῦ σώματος,
τούτοις τιμὴν περισσοτέραν περιτιθέμεν, καὶ
τὰ ἀσχήμονα ἡμῶν εὐσχημοσύνην
περισσοτέραν ἔχει,

δοκεω think, suppose; intrans seem

ἀτιμοτερος, α, ον less honoured;

comparitive from ἀτιμος

τιμη, ης f honour, respect, price

περισσοτερος, α, ον more, much more

περιτιθημι put around, clothe in, treat with
honour

Thistleton suggests the translation 'invest.'

ἀσχημων, ον unrepresentable

"The semantic contrast between ἀσχημονα (σχημα, form, with alpha privative) and εὐσχημοσύνην (σχημα, form, with εὐ, well) embodies two semantic oppositions (i) between *ugly* and *beautiful* or *adorned*; and (ii) between *private parts* of the body and *publicly 'presentable'* limbs and organs. The only way to preserve the wordplay in English seems to be to explicate both double aspects: 'our unrepresentable private parts have greater adornment to make them presentable.'"

Thistleton

εὐσχημοσυνη, ης f modesty, propriety

Paul would seem to be illustrating his point from the way in which we clothe our bodies.

Verse 24

τὰ δὲ εὐσχήμονα ἡμῶν οὐ χρείαν ἔχει. ἀλλὰ ὁ
θεὸς συνεκέρασεν τὸ σῶμα, τῷ ὑστεροῦντι
περισσοτέραν δούς τιμὴν,

εὐσχημων, ον gen ονος respected,
presentable

χρεια see v.21

συνεκέρασεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

συγκεραννυμι put together, arrange

Used of a painter mixing colours or of a musician composing harmonies.

ὑστερεω lack, be inferior to; pass be
lacking; midd be in want

δούς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s διδομι
give

τιμη, ης f honour, respect

Verse 25

ἵνα μὴ ᾖ σχίσμα ἐν τῷ σώματι, ἀλλὰ τὸ αὐτὸ
ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων μεριμνῶσι τὰ μέλη.

ᾖ Verb, pres subj, 3s εἶμι

σχισμα, τος n division, opposing group

Cf. 1:10.

ἀλληλων, οις, ους reciprocal pronoun one
another

μεριμναω be anxious/concerned about

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μέλος, οὐς n
member, bodily part

Verse 26

καὶ εἴτε πάσχει ἐν μέλος, συμπάσχει πάντα τὰ
μέλη· εἴτε δοξάζεται μέλος, συγχαίρει πάντα
τὰ μέλη.

εἴτε if, whether

πάσχω suffer, experience

συμπάσχω suffer together, share the same
suffering

δοξάζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt

"If the ear and fingers of a musician are 'praised,' or the hands and feet of an athlete are 'praised,' a person receives 'congratulations' for his or her coordination *as a whole*. The whole person is described as a good musician or as a good athlete, and indeed some intrusive bodily distraction could wreck the performance."

Thistleton

συγχαίρω rejoice with, rejoice together