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In this chapter the apostle, I. Considers the case of spiritual gifts, which were very plentifully poured out on the Corinthian church. He considers their original, that they are from God; their variety and use, that they were all intended for one and the same general end, the advancement of Christianity and the church's edification, ver 1-11. II. He illustrates this by an allusion to a human body, in which all the members have a mutual relation and subserviency, and each has its proper place and use, ver 12-26. III. He tells us that the church is the body of Christ, and the members are variously gifted for the benefit of the whole body, and each particular member, ver 27-30. And them, IV. Closes with an exhortation to seek somewhat more beneficial than these gifts, ver 31. On Spiritual Gifts. (A.D. 57.) 1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. 4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. The apostle comes now to treat of spiritual gifts, which abounded in the church of Corinth, but were greatly abused. What these gifts were is at large told us in the body of the chapter; namely, extraordinary offices and powers, bestowed on ministers and Christians in the first ages, for conviction of unbelievers, and propagation of the gospel. Gifts and graces, charismata and charis, greatly differ. Both indeed were freely given of God. But where grace is given it is for the salvation of those who have it. Gifts are bestowed for the advantage and salvation of others. And there may be great gifts where there is not a dram of grace, but persons possessed of them are utterly out of the divine favour. They are great instances of divine benignity to men, but do not by themselves prove those who have them to be the objects of divine complacency. This church was rich in gifts, but there were many things scandalously out of order in it. Now concerning these spiritual gifts, that is, the extraordinary powers they had received from the Spirit, I. The apostle tells them he would not have them ignorant either of their original or use. They came from God, and were to be used for him. It would lead them far astray if they were ignorant of one or the other of these. Note, Right information is of great use as to all religious practice. It is wretched work which gifted men make who either do not know or do not advert to the nature and right use of the gifts with which they are endowed. II. He puts them in the mind of the sad state out of which they had been recovered: You were Gentiles, carried away to dumb idols, even as you were led, v. 2. While they were so, they could have no pretensions to be spiritual men, nor to have spiritual gifts. While they were under the conduct of the spirit of Gentilism, they could not be influenced by the Spirit of Christ. If they well understood their former condition, they could not but know that all true spiritual gifts were from God. Now concerning this observe, 1. Their former character: they were Gentiles. Not God's peculiar people, but of the nations whom he had in a manner abandoned. The Jews were, before, his chosen people, distinguished from the rest of the world by his favour. To them the knowledge and worship of the true God were in a manner confined. The rest of the world were strangers to the covenant of promise, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and in a manner without God, Eph 2 12. Such Gentiles were the body of the Corinthians, before their conversion to Christianity. What a change was here! Christian Corinthians were once Gentiles. Note, It is of great use to the Christian, and a proper consideration to stir him up both to duty and thankfulness, to think what once he was: You were Gentiles. 2. The conduct they were under: Carried away to these dumb idols, even as you were led. They were hurried upon the grossest idolatry, the worship even of stocks and stones, through the force of a vain imagination, and the fraud of their priests practising on their ignorance, for, whatever were the sentiments of their philosophers, this was the practice of the herd. The body of the people paid their homage and worship to dumb idols, that had ears but could not hear, and mouths but could not speak, Ps 115 5, 6. Miserable abjectness of mind! And those who despised these gross conceptions of the vulgar yet countenanced them by their practice. O dismal state of Gentilism! Could the Spirit of God be among such stupid idolators, or they be influenced by it? How did the prince of this world triumph in the blindness of mankind! How thick a mist had he cast over their minds! III. He shows them how they might discern those gifts that were from the Spirit of God, true spiritual gifts: No man, speaking by the Spirit, calls Jesus accursed. Thus did both Jews and Gentiles: they blasphemed him as an impostor, and execrated his name, and deemed it abominable. And yet many Jews, who were exorcists and magicians, went about, pretending to work wonders by the Spirit of God (vid. Lightfoot's Hor in loc.), and many among the Gentiles pretended to inspiration. Now the apostle tells them none could act under the influence, nor by the power, of the Spirit of God, who disowned and blasphemed Christ: for the Spirit of God bore uncontrollable witness to Christ by prophecy, miracles, his resurrection from the dead, the success of his doctrine among men, and its effect upon them; and could never so far contradict itself as to declare him accursed. And on the other hand no man could say Jesus was the Lord (that is, live by this faith, and work miracles to prove it), but it must be by the Holy Ghost. To own this truth before men, and maintain it to the death, and live under the influence of it, could not be done without the sanctification of the Holy Ghost. No man can call Christ Lord, with a believing subjection to him and dependence upon him, unless that faith be wrought by the Holy Ghost. No man can confess this truth in the day of trial but by the Holy Ghost animating and encouraging him. Note, We have as necessary a dependence on the Spirit's operation and influence for our sanctification and perseverance as on the mediation of Christ for our reconciliation and acceptance with God: and no man could confirm this truth with a miracle but by the Holy Ghost. No evil spirit would lend assistance, if it were in his power, to spread a doctrine and religion so ruinous to the devil's kingdom. The substance of what the apostle asserts and argues here is that whatever pretences there were to inspiration or miracles, among those who were enemies to Christianity, they could not be from the Spirit of God; but no man could believe this with his heart, nor prove with a miracle that Jesus was Christ, but by the Holy Ghost: so that the extraordinary operations and powers among them did all proceed from the Spirit of God. He adds, IV. These spiritual gifts, though proceeding from the same Spirit, are yet various. They have one author and original, but are themselves of various kinds. A free cause may produce variety of effects; and the same giver may bestow various gifts, v. 4. There are diversities of gifts, such as revelations, tongues, prophecy, interpretations of tongues; but the same Spirit. There are differences of administrations, or different offices, and officers to discharge them, different ordinances and institutions (see v. 28-30), but the same Lord, who appointed all, v. 6. There are diversities of operations, or miraculous powers, called energemata dynameon (v. 10), as here energemata, but it is the same God that worketh all in all. There are various gifts, administrations, and operations, but all proceed from one God, one Lord, one Spirit; that is, from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the spring and origin of all spiritual blessings and bequests: all issue from the same fountain; all have the same author. However different they may be in themselves, in this they agree; all are from God. And several of the kinds are here specified, v. 8-10. Several persons had their several gifts, some one, some another, all from and by the same Spirit. To one was given the word of wisdom; that is, say some, a knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel, and ability to explain them, an exact understanding of the design, nature, and doctrines, of the Christian religion. Others say an uttering of grave sentences, like Solomon's proverbs. Some confine this word of wisdom to the revelations made to and by the apostles.To another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; that is, say some, the knowledge of mysteries (ch. 2 13): wrapped up in the prophecies, types, and histories of the Old Testament: say others, a skill and readiness to give advice and counsel in perplexed cases. To another faith, by the same Spirit; that is, the faith of miracles, or a faith in the divine power and promise, whereby they were enabled to trust God in any emergency, and go on in the way of their duty, and own and profess the truths of Christ, whatever was the difficulty or danger.To another the gift of healing, by the same Spirit; that is, healing the sick, either by laying on of hands, or anointing with oil, or with a bare word.To another the working of miracles; the efficacies of powers, energemata dynameon, such as raising the dead, restoring the blind to sight, giving speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, and the use of limbs to the lame.To another prophecy, that is, ability to foretel future events, which is the more usual sense of prophecy; or to explain scripture by a peculiar gift of the Spirit. See ch. 14 24.To another the discerning of Spirits, power to distinguish between true and false prophets, or to discern the real and internal qualifications of any person for an office, or to discover the inward workings of the mind by the Holy Ghost, as Peter did those of Ananias, Acts 5 3.To another divers kinds of tongues, or ability to speak languages by inspiration. To another the interpretation of tongues, or ability to render foreign languages readily and properly into their own. With such variety of spiritual gifts were the first ministers and churches blessed. V. The end for which these gifts were bestowed: The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, v. 7. The Spirit was manifested by the exercise of these gifts; his influence and interest appeared in them. But they were not distributed for the mere honour and advantage of those who had them, but for the benefit of the church, to edify the body, and spread and advance the gospel. Note, Whatever gifts God confers on any man, he confers them that he may do good with them, whether they be common or spiritual. The outward gifts of his bounty are to be improved for his glory, and employed in doing good to others. No man has them merely for himself. They are a trust put into his hands, to profit withal; and the more he profits others with them, the more abundantly will they turn to his account in the end, Phil 4 17. Spiritual gifts are bestowed, that men may with them profit the church and promote Christianity. They are not given for show, but for service; not for pomp and ostentation, but for edification; not to magnify those that have them, but to edify others. VI. The measure and proportion in which they are given: All these worketh one and the same Spirit, dividing to every man as he will. It is according to the sovereign pleasure of the donor. What more free than a gift? And shall not the Spirit of God do what he will with his own? May he not give to what persons he pleases, and in what proportion he pleases; one gift to one man, and another to another; to one more, and another fewer, as he thinks fit? Is he not the best judge how his own purpose shall be served, and his own donatives bestowed? It is not as men will, nor as they may think fit, but as the Spirit pleases. Note, The Holy Ghost is a divine person. He works divine effects and divides divine gifts a he will, by his own power, and according to his own pleasure, without dependence or control. But though he distributes these gifts freely and uncontrollably, they are intended by him, not for private honour and advantage, but for public benefit, for the edification of the body, the church. Union Recommended. (A.D.57.) 12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 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? 16 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? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. The apostle here makes out the truth of what was above asserted, and puts the gifted men among the Corinthians in mind of their duty, by comparing the church of Christ to a human body. I. By telling us that one body may have many members, and that the many members of the same body make but one body (v. 12): As the body is one, and hath many members, and all members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ; that is, Christ mystical, as divines commonly speak. Christ and his church making one body, as head and members, this body is made up of many parts or members, yet but one body; for all the members are baptized into the same body, and made to drink of the same Spirit, v. 13. Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, are upon a level in this: all are baptized into the same body, and made partakers of the same Spirit. Christians become members of this body by baptism: they are baptized into one body. The outward rite is of divine institution, significant of the new birth, called therefore the washing of regeneration, Tit 3 5. But it is by the Spirit, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, that we are made members of Christ's body. It is the Spirit's operation, signified by the outward administration, that makes us members. And by communion at the other ordinance we are sustained; but then it is not merely by drinking the wine, but by drinking into one Spirit. The outward administration is a means appointed of God for our participation in this great benefit; but it is baptism by the Spirit, it is internal renovation and drinking into one Spirit, partaking of his sanctifying influence from time to time, that makes us true members of Christ's body, and maintains our union with him. Being animated by one Spirit makes Christians one body. Note, All who have the spirit of Christ, without difference, are the members of Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free; and none but such. And all the members of Christ make up one body; the members many, but the body one. They are one body, because they have one principle of life; all are quickened and animated by the same Spirit. II. Each member has its particular form, place, and use. 1. The meanest member makes a part of the body. The foot and ear are less useful, perhaps, than the hand and eye; but because one is not a hand, and the other an eye, shall they say, therefore, that they do not belong to the body? v. 15, 16. So every member of the body mystical cannot have the same place and office; but what then? Shall it hereupon disown relation to the body? Because it is not fixed in the same station, or favoured with the same gifts as others, shall it say, "I do not belong to Christ?" No, the meanest member of his body is as much a member as the noblest, and as truly regarded by him. All his members are dear to him. 2. There must be a distinction of members in the body: Were the whole body eye, where were the hearing? Were the whole ear, where were the smelling? v. 17. If all were one member, where were the body? v. 19. They are many members, and for that reason must have distinction among them, and yet are but one body, v. 20. One member of a body is not a body; this is made up of many; and among these many there must be a distinction, difference of situation, shape, use, etc. So it is in the body of Christ; its members must have different uses, and therefore have different powers, and be in different places, some having one gift, and others a different one. Variety in the members of the body contributes to the beauty of it. What a monster would a body be if it were all ear, or eye, or arm! So it is for the beauty and good appearance of the church that there should be diversity of gifts and offices in it. 3. The disposal of members in a natural body, and their situation, are as God pleases: But now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it hath pleased him, v. 18. We may plainly perceive the divine wisdom in the distribution of the members; but it was made according to the counsel of his will; he distinguished and distributed them as he pleased. So is it also in the members of Christ's body: they are chosen out to such stations, and endued with such gifts, as God pleases. He who is sovereign Lord of all disposes his favours and gifts as he will. And who should gainsay his pleasure? What foundation is here for repining in ourselves, or envying others? We should be doing the duties of our own place, and not murmuring in ourselves, nor quarrelling with others, that we are not in theirs. 4. All the members of the body are, in some respect, useful and necessary to each other: The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of your: nay, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble (the bowels, etc.) are necessary (v. 21, 22); God has so fitted and tempered them together that they are all necessary to one another, and to the whole body; there is no part redundant and unnecessary. Every member serves some good purpose or other: it is useful to its fellow-members, and necessary to the good state of the whole body. Nor is there a member of the body of Christ but may and ought to be useful to his fellow-members, and at some times, and in some cases, is needful to them. None should despise and envy another, seeing God has made the distinction between them as he pleased, yet so as to keep them all in some degree of mutual dependence, and make them valuable to each other, and concerned for each other, because of their mutual usefulness. Those who excel in any gift cannot say that they have no need of those who in that gift are their inferiors, while perhaps, in other gifts, they exceed them. Nay, the lowest members of all have their use, and the highest cannot do well without them. The eye has need of the hand, and the head of the feet. 5. Such is the man's concern for his whole body that on the less honourable members more abundant honour is bestowed, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. Those parts which are not fit, like the rest, to be exposed to view, which are either deformed or shameful, we most carefully clothe and cover; whereas the comely parts have no such need. The wisdom of Providence has so contrived and tempered things that the most abundant regard and honour should be paid to that which most wanted it, v. 24. So should the members of Christ's body behave towards their fellow-members: instead of despising them, or reproaching them, for their infirmities, they should endeavour to cover and conceal them, and put the best face upon them that they can. 6. Divine wisdom has contrived and ordered things in this manner that the members of the body should not be schismatics, divided from each other and acting upon separate interests, but well affected to each other, tenderly concerned for each other, having a fellow-feeling of each other's griefs and a communion in each other's pleasures and joys, v. 25, 26. God has tempered the members of the body natural in the manner mentioned, that there might be no schism in the body (v. 25), no rupture nor disunion among the members, nor so much as the least mutual disregard. This should be avoided also in the spiritual body of Christ. There should be no schism in this body, but the members should be closely united by the strongest bonds of love. All decays of this affection are the seeds of schism. Where Christians grow cold towards each other, they will be careless and unconcerned for each other. And this mutual disregard is a schism begun. The members of the natural body are made to have a care and concern for each other, to prevent a schism in it. So should it be in Christ's body; the members should sympathize with each other. As in the natural body the pain of the one part afflicts the whole, the ease and pleasure of one part affects the whole, so should Christians reckon themselves honoured in the honours of their fellow-christians, and should suffer in their sufferings. Note, Christian sympathy is a great branch of Christian duty. We should be so far from slighting our brethren's sufferings that we should suffer with them, so far from envying their honours that we should rejoice with them and reckon ourselves honoured in them. On Spiritual Gifts. (A.D.57.) 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. I. Here the apostle sums up the argument, and applies this similitude to the church of Christ, concerning which observe, 1. The relation wherein Christians stand to Christ and one another. The church, or whole collective body of Christians, in all ages, is his body. Every Christian is a member of his body, and every other Christian stands related to him as a fellow-member (v. 27): Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular, or particular members. Each is a member of the body, not the whole body; each stands related to the body as a part of it, and all have a common relation to one another, dependence upon one another, and should have a mutual care and concern. Thus are the members of the natural body, thus should the members of the mystical body be, disposed. Note, Mutual indifference, and much more contempt, and hatred, and envy, and strife, are very unnatural in Christians. It is like the members of the same body being destitute of all concern for one another, or quarrelling with each other. This is the apostle's scope in this argument. He endeavours in it to suppress the proud, vaunting, and contentious spirit, that had prevailed among the Corinthians, by reason of their spiritual gifts. 2. The variety of offices instituted by Christ, and gifts or favours dispensed by him (v. 28): God hath set some in the church; first, apostles, the chief ministers entrusted with all the powers necessary to found a church, and make an entire revelation of God's will. Secondarily, prophets, or persons enabled by inspiration, as the evangelists did. Thirdly, teachers, those who labour in word and doctrine, whether with pastoral charge or without it. After that, miracles, or miracle-workers. The gifts of healing, or those who had power to heal diseases; helps, or such as had compassion on the sick and weak, and ministered to them; governments, or such as had the disposal of the charitable contributions of the church, and dealt them out to the poor; diversities of tongues, or such as could speak divers languages. Concerning all these observe, (1.) The plenteous variety of these gifts and offices. What a multitude are they! A good God was free in his communications to the primitive church; he was no niggard of his benefits and favours. No, he provided richly for them. They had no want, but a store-all that was necessary, and even more; what was convenient for them too. (2.) Observe the order of these offices and gifts. They are here placed in their proper ranks. Those of most value have the first place. Apostles, prophets, and teachers, were all intended to instruct the people, to inform them well in the things of God, and promote their spiritual edification: without them, neither evangelical knowledge nor holiness could have been promoted. But the rest, however fitted to answer the great intentions of Christianity, had no such immediate regard to religion, strictly so called. Note, God does, and we should, value things according to their real worth: and the use of things is the best criterion of their real worth. Those are most valuable that best answer the highest purposes. Such were apostolical powers, compared with theirs who had only the gift of healing and miracles. What holds the last and lowest rank in this enumeration is diversity of tongues. It is by itself the most useless and insignificant of all these gifts. Healing diseases, relieving the poor, helping the sick, have their use: but how vain a thing is it to speak languages, if a man does it merely to amuse or boast himself! This may indeed raise the admiration, but cannot promote the edification, of the hearers, nor do them any good. And yet it is manifest from ch. 14. that the Corinthians valued themselves exceedingly on this gift. Note, How proper a method it is to beat down pride to let persons know the true value of what they pride themselves in! It is but too common a thing for men to value themselves most on what is least worth: and it is of great use to bring them to a sober mind by letting them know how much they are mistaken. (3.) The various distribution of these gifts, not all to one, nor to every one alike. All members and officers had not the same rank in the church, nor the same endowments (v. 29, 30): Are all apostles? Are all prophets? This were to make the church a monster: all one as if the body were all ear or all eye. Some are fit for one office and employment, and some for another; and the Spirit distributes to every one as he will. We must be content with our own rank and share, if they be lower and less than those of others. We must not be conceited of ourselves, and despise others, if we are in the higher rank and have greater gifts. Every member of the body is to preserve its own rank, and do its own office; and all are to minister to one another, and promote the good of the body in general, without envying, or despising, or neglecting, or ill-using, any one particular member. How blessed a constitution were the Christian church, if all the members did their duty! II. He closes this chapter with an advice (as the generality read it) and a hint. 1. An advice to covet the best gifts, charismata ta kreittonadona potiora, prstantiora, either the most valuable in them selves or the most serviceable to others; and these are, in truth, most valuable in themselves, though men may be apt to esteem those most that will raise their fame and esteem highest. Those are truly best by which God will be most honoured and his church edified. Such gifts should be most earnestly coveted. Note, We should desire that most which is best, and most worth. Grace is therefore to be preferred before gifts; and, of gifts, those are to be preferred which are of greatest use. But some read this passage, not as an advice, but a charge: zeloute, You are envious at each other's gifts. In ch. 13 4, the same word is thus translated. You quarrel and contend about them. This they certainly did. And this behaviour the apostle here reprehends, and labours to rectify. Only of pride cometh contention. These contests in the church of Corinth sprang from this original. It was a quarrel about precedency (as most quarrels among Christians are, with whatever pretences they are gilded over); and it is no wonder that a quarrel about precedence should extinguish charity. When all would stand in the first rank, no wonder if they jostle, or throw down, or thrust back, their brethren. Gifts may be valued for their use, but they are mischievous when made the fuel of pride and contention. This therefore the apostle endeavours to prevent. 2. By giving them the hint of a more excellent way, namely, of charity, of mutual love and good-will. This was the only right way to quiet and cement them, and make their gifts turn to the advantage and edification of the church. This would render them kind to each other, and concerned for each other, and therefore calm their spirits, and put an end to their little piques and contests, their disputes about precedency. Those would appear to be in the foremost rank, according to the apostle, who had most of true Christian love. Note, True charity is greatly to be preferred to the most glorious gifts. To have the heart glow with mutual love is vastly better than to glare with the most pompous titles, offices, or powers. Servants of Christ An EasyEnglish BibleVersion and Commentary (2800 word vocabulary) on Pauls First Letter to theCorinthians www.easyenglish.bible Hilda Bright The translated Bible text has been through AdvancedChecking. Words in boxes are from the Bible. A word list at the end explains words with a *star by them. About this letter Corinth was an important city. It was on a very narrow section ofland (called an isthmus) in the southern part of Greece. 1. It was the capital city of the region called Achaia. 2. It had two harbours. The harbour on the east coast was 4 miles(6 km) from the harbour on the west coast. Today a canal joins the twoharbours. In Pauls time, people pulled small boats across from one harbour tothe other one. They dragged them on a kind of ship railway. Porters carriedgoods from large boats to the other side. They put the goods on a differentboat. The journey would otherwise have been over two hundred miles round a verydangerous part of the sea. 3. As it was a busy centre for trade, Corinth was a good placefor the *gospel to spread. Merchants and travellers would hear the message andtake it with them. There were many different people in Corinth. There were*Romans because it was a *Roman colony. (A colony is a city or country thatanother country controls.) There were Greeks, *Jews, people from Asia and fromfurther east. There were rich people and many slaves. 4. There was a *temple to Aphrodite, the Greek female god oflove. There were thousands of *prostitutes in the city. Many of them belongedto this *temple. Corinth became well-known for bad *sexual behaviour. To livelike a Corinthian meant to become a drunk often or to visit *prostitutes. 5. The Isthmian Games took place near Corinth. They were famousand only second in importance to the Olympic Games. Pauls first visit to Corinth Acts 18:1-17 On his second journey to take people the good news about Jesus,Paul arrived in Corinth from Athens. He had only very little success in Athensand he did not stay there for very long. But he stayed in Corinth for 18months. He spent longer there than in any other city apart from Ephesus. Hestayed with Aquila and Priscilla, who were tent makers like himself. He*preached first in the *synagogue. When the *Jews opposed him, he used the homeof Titius Justus. Titius Justus lived next door to the *synagogue. Paul*preached very successfully. Crispus, the ruler of the *synagogue, became aChristian. When a new *Roman ruler arrived, the *Jews took Paul to him. Theysaid that Paul was teaching against the law. But the ruler refused to listento the *Jews. This happened in about AD 51. Paul later went to Syria. Pauls letters to Corinth 1. The previous letter. Paul said, I wrote you a letter. Inthat letter, I told you to have nothing to do with men with bad character (1Corinthians 5:9). This letter is either lost or it may be in 2 Corinthians6:147:1. 2. 1 Corinthians. When Paul was in Ephesus, he received newsabout troubles in the church at Corinth. This news came from people who wereliving in Chloes house (1 Corinthians 1:11), and from Stephanas, Fortunatusand Achaicus (1 Corinthians 16:17). A letter also came from the Christians inCorinth. They asked for Pauls advice about various problems. Paul wrote 1Corinthians. 3. The second painful visit. Paul heard that problems inCorinth were worse. So he made a second visit. There is no record about this.But Paul writes about when he visited Corinth for the third time (2Corinthians 12:14; 13:1-2). So there must have been a second visit. 4. The severe letter. Pauls visit was not successful. So hewrote a letter when he was feeling very hurt (2 Corinthians 2:4). He was almostsorry that he had sent it. Some writers believe that chapters 10-13 in 2Corinthians are the severe letter. 5. The letter to show that the Christians at Corinth and Paulwere friends again. Paul was so worried about his severe letter that he wentto meet Titus. Titus had taken the severe letter to Corinth. Paul met Titus inMacedonia and learned that all was well. So, he wrote chapters 1-9 in 2Corinthians. It is possible that someone put the severe letter and the nextletter together in the wrong order. The contents of 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 ~ Greetings and *thanksgiving 1:104:21 ~ Quarrels about leaders in the church 5:1-13; 6:9-20 ~ Bad *sexual behaviour 6:1-8 ~ Christians at the law courts 7:1-40 ~ Marriage 8:1-11:1 ~ Meat that people have offered to *idols 11:2-34 ~ Problems in Christian *worship 12:1-31 ~ *Spiritual gifts 13:1-13 ~ Love 14:1-40 ~ *Prophecy and tongues 15:1-58 ~ *Resurrection 16:1-24 ~ Money for Jerusalem; Pauls plans and greetings Chapter 1 v1 This letter isfrom Paul. It was Gods plan to choose me to be an *apostle of Christ Jesus.This letter is also from our Christian *brother Sosthenes. v2 We aresending this letter to you, the members of Gods church in Corinth. God haschosen you to be his holy people because Christ Jesus has made you holy. He hasdone the same for all those everywhere who *worship our *Lord Jesus Christ. Heis their *Lord and ours. v3 We pray that God our Father and the *LordJesus Christ will give you *grace and peace. Verse 1 Christ is the Greek word for *Messiah. It means theking that God would send to his people. Paul emphasises that he is an *apostlebecause of Gods plan. He describes himself in this way in other letters. Butit was important for him to state his authority to the Christians at Corinth.Pauls words in 1 Corinthians 9:1-23 show that some Christians at Corinthdoubted whether he was an *apostle. They doubted his right to tell them thetruth and to give them advice. Sosthenes may have been the same person as the ruler of the*synagogue in Corinth. People had hit him in front of the ruler Gallio (Acts18:12-17). Sosthenes had become a Christian and he had travelled with Paul toEphesus. He may have acted as Pauls secretary. Paul calls him our *brother.So, the Christians at Corinth must have known him. Verse 2 Paul had written to the church of the people inThessalonica. Here he speaks about the church of God in Corinth. Paul didnot want the Christians at Corinth to feel proud about themselves. So, hereminds them that the church belongs to God. They are like Gods field, Godsbuilding and Gods workers (3:9). The Greek word for church is ecclesia. It means the peoplewhom God called out to be his own people. Their behaviour must be differentfrom the way many Christians at Corinth were behaving. God has made them holybecause they trusted Christ. Paul says to them what he has said to Christianseverywhere. The Christians at Corinth are only one part of Gods church. Verse 3 Paul does not use the usual greetings that began andended letters. He prays that they will know peace. This peace comes as peopleknow the *grace of God. *Grace is Gods love that they do not deserve. And theycannot earn Gods love. God has shown his love by Jesus. When they know thatlove, they will feel safe. God has forgiven them. So they will have innerpeace. Paul here unites Jesus Christ with God the Father. Jesus reallyis God. And Jesus works with God the Father to *save his people. *Thanksgiving 1:4-9 v4 I always thank God for you. I thank him because ofhis *grace. He gave this grace to you by means of Christ Jesus. v5 Godhas blessed you in every way because of him. He has made you speak andunderstand the truth more completely. v6 You know very well the messagethat we gave you about Christ. v7 Therefore there is no *spiritual giftthat you do not have. You wait eagerly for our *Lord Jesus Christ to comeagain. v8 God will keep you strong in your *faith to the very end. Thenyou will be without blame on the day when our *Lord Jesus Christ returns. v9You can trust God. He has chosen you to share life with his Son, Jesus Christour *Lord. Verses 4-7 Paul thanks God because they have accepted *salvationas Gods gift. And that gift comes by Jesus Christ. Paul speaks about Gods*spiritual gifts to the Christians at Corinth. He mentions how they speak. Andhe mentions how they understand. The letter shows that the Christians atCorinth had become very proud of these gifts. Paul writes about understandingor knowledge in chapter 8 and speech in chapter 14. Here, he says that theirgifts show that they have believed the good news about Jesus. The words*grace and gift show that they have no right to praise themselves. Verses 8-9 Paul also reminds the Christians at Corinth that Godwill keep their *faith strong. He will do so until Christ returns. God haschosen them to share Christs life. Arguments in the Church 1:10-17 v10 *Brothers and *sisters, I appeal to you all toagree with each other. I appeal on behalf of our *Lord Jesus Christ. Then therewill not be divisions among you. You will be in complete agreement in all thatyou think. v11 My *brothers and *sisters, some people from Chloes househave told me that there are quarrels among you. v12 Here is what I mean.One of you says, I belong to Paul. Another person says, I belong toApollos. Another person says, I belong to Peter. And still another personsays, I belong to Christ. v13 We cannot divide Christ. Paul did notdie on the *cross for you. I did not *baptise you in the name of Paul. v14I am grateful to God that I did not *baptise any of you except Crispus andGaius. v15 No one can say that I *baptised you in my name. v16(Yes, I also *baptised those who live in the house of Stephanas. I do notremember if I *baptised anyone else.) v17 Because Christ did not send meto *baptise. He sent me to *preach the good news. He told me not to use wordsof human wisdom. Clever words would take the power away from the *cross ofChrist. Verses 10-11 Paul uses the word *brothers twice. He speaks asone who loves them. They should love each other, because they are Christian*brothers and *sisters. They belong to the same *spiritual family. God is theirfather. In complete agreement translates a medical word. It is about away to join bones together that are broken. So, they must mend the broken unityof the church. Then the body of the church will be healthy. Chloe may have been a business woman whose servants had travelledfrom Ephesus to Corinth. They had brought back news about the quarrels in thechurch at Corinth. Verse 12 Paul speaks about four groups: 1. Those who used Pauls name. They may have been *Gentiles. Theywere perhaps using Pauls teaching about Christian freedom as an excuse tobehave badly. One group liked Paul. But other people opposed him. 2. Those who used Apolloss name. Apollos was a *Jew fromAlexandria. He knew the *Scriptures and he could speak very confidently. He hadvisited Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla had taught him more about the Christian*faith. The Christians in Ephesus then encouraged him to go to Corinth. Therehe was very successful when he *preached the *gospel (Acts 18:24-28). 3. Those who used Peters name. We do not know whether Peter evervisited Corinth. But the people there knew that he travelled with his wife (1Corinthians 9:5). His supporters probably said that he had been the leader ofthe 12 *apostles whom Jesus chose. Jesus had called him a rock. Jesus hadmade a special *resurrection appearance to him (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians15:5). 4. Those who used Christs name. Those people probably said thatthey were the only real Christians in Corinth. But the words may be Pauls ownremark about the situation. I, Paul, belong to Christ. Verses 13-16 Paul uses the word Christ. He wants to make theChristians at Corinth understand about the church. It is like Christs body inthe world. The church cannot act as Christs body if it is in pieces. A body inpieces is not alive. Only a few people could say that Paul had *baptised them. Crispushad been the ruler of the *synagogue in Corinth (Acts 18:8). Gaius must havehad a large house. He could be Pauls host and welcome the whole church(Romans 16:23). As he wrote, Paul remembered Stephanas. He was the first personto become a Christian when Paul came to Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:15, 17). ButPaul could not remember anyone else that he had *baptised. He did not wantanyone to think that a person had decided to belong to him. *Baptism was notin his name, but into the name of Jesus. Verse 17 Pauls work was to *preach the *gospel. Who *baptisedwhom was not the most important point. It was important for the Christians atCorinth to know the real nature of the *gospel. The message was simple. Christdied on the *cross. To speak with clever words and ideas would attractattention to the speaker. Then the message of the *crucifixion would lose itspower to *save people. The *gospel and human wisdom 1:18-25 v18 The message of the *cross seems foolish to thosewho are dying. But it is Gods power to us whom he is saving. v19Because God said by Isaiah (Isaiah 29:14), I will destroy the wisdom of thosewho are wise. I will bring to nothing the clever ideas of those who areclever. v20 Find me the wise person. Find me the expert in the law.Find me the great thinker of this time. God has made the wisdom of the worldfoolish. v21 God in his wisdom planned that the world would not know himthrough its own wisdom. But God was pleased to *save those who believe. Theybelieve through the foolish message that we *preach. v22 *Jews demandwonderful signs. Greeks look for wisdom. v23 But we *preach aboutChrists death on the *cross. That offends *Jews. And *Gentiles think that itis nonsense. v24 But Christ is Gods power and wisdom to those whom Godhas called, both *Jews and *Gentiles. v25 The foolish things of God arewiser than human wisdom. The weakness of God is stronger than human strength. Verses 18-21 The world considers that some people are wise. Butthese wise people cannot use their human wisdom to understand Gods ways. Theythink that the message about a *crucified *Messiah is foolish. They want God toact in ways that seem wise and powerful to them. But God *saves those who arewilling to trust him. Verses 22-23 The *Jews thought that the idea of a *crucified*Messiah was an insult to God. The *Romans *crucified only slaves and dangerouscriminals. And the *Jews believed that anyone who hung on a tree as apunishment would suffer Gods anger (Deuteronomy 21:23). They did not thinkthat the message in Isaiah 53 was about someone who would suffer for otherpeople. The *Jews also expected wonderful signs when the *Messiah came.In the past, God had done wonderful *miracles for their nation. So theyexpected him to perform even greater *miracles by his *Messiah. Therefore the*Jews kept on asking Jesus for a sign to prove that he was the *Messiah. Buthe refused (Matthew 12:38-39; John 6:30). The Greeks thought that God does not feel human emotions. Andthey thought that he cannot change. Therefore, God could not become a man onearth. The idea that the word became a *physical person (John 1:14) wasimpossible. The Greeks also liked to discuss ideas. And they liked to speak inclever ways. The message about the *gospel was simple. Paul *preached it inplain words. A *crucified God seemed to be the mad idea of people with littleeducation. Verses 24-25 But Gods plan was to *save all those who believe inChrist. No human wisdom or great effort can bring anyone into a friendship withGod. *Sin has spoiled that friendship. However, Christs death on the *crosswas not foolish and weak. Gods thoughts are not our thoughts. His waysare not our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). The *crucifixion was a sign of Gods wisdomand power. They are greater than any wise efforts that people can make. The Christians in Corinth 1:26-31 v26 *Brothers and *sisters, God called you. Rememberwhat you were then. Not many of you were wise in the opinion of people in thisworld. Not many of you had power over other people. Not many of you were borninto families with an important social position. v27 But God chose whatthe people in the world call foolish. That makes wise people humble. Godchose what the people in the world call weak. That makes strong peoplehumble. v28 He has chosen those who have no value in peoples opinion.The people in the world think that Gods people and his plans are worth nothingat all. But God will use his plans to destroy the ideas in the present age. v29God does all this so that no one can *boast about himself to God. v30Because of what God has done, you belong to Christ Jesus. Jesus has become forus the real wisdom from God. He makes us right with God. He makes us holy andhe sets us free from *sin. v31 So, in the words of *Scripture, Perhapssomeone wants to *boast about something. If so, he should *boast about what Godhas done. Verse 26 Paul reminds them that the church in Corinth has only afew important members. A few of them had more important places in society.Crispus had been the ruler of the *synagogue (Acts 18:8). Erastus was anofficial in the city (Romans 16:23). Gaius had a large enough house to act ashost to Paul and other Christians (Romans 16:23). But many of the Christianswere slaves. Some of them had once been slaves. Other Christians were ordinaryworkers. Verses 27-29 Slaves had no rights. They were things that theirowners could use as tools. They were nothings until the Christian *faith madethem into persons. Then they gained respect. God chose people like these. Hedid this to show that he had defeated the worlds false ways to think. God doesnot depend on what people can offer him. Everyone needs Gods forgiveness. Noone can be satisfied with himself in front of God. Verse 30 God has acted by his Son. Jesus Christs death on the*cross is

Neither Paul nor Apollos was important. Each man hadhis work to do, and God would reward him. God uses people to work together withhim. Paul and Apollos were servants who were working for the same master. TheChristians at Corinth were like a field in which God was working. They werealso like a building. Gods building 3:10-15 v10 God kindly taught me how to lay a *foundationlike an expert builder. Now someone else is building on it. But each one mustbe careful how he builds. v11 No one can lay any other *foundation thanthe one that God has already laid. That *foundation is Jesus Christ. v12A person may build on this *foundation. He may use gold, silver, preciousstones, wood, hay or straw. v13 But whatever the material, on judgementday, God will show the quality of each persons work. The fire of judgementwill test how good each persons work is. v14 If the persons workpasses the test of judgement, God will reward him for his work. v15 If apersons work has no good result, it will be like a burnt building. It will belike a building that the fire has completely destroyed. The builder will besafe. But he will be like someone who just escapes from a fire. Verse 10 Paul worked for 18 months in Corinth (Acts 18:11). Hespent three years in Ephesus (Acts 20:31). Usually he stayed in a city for amuch shorter time. But wherever he went, he laid the same *foundation. He toldthe facts about Jesus Christ. He let other people continue Gods work and helpthe church to grow. Verses 11-12 Jesus Christ alone is the *foundation of a Christianchurch. Those who help it to grow must make sure that their work will last.Then it will be as valuable as precious metals or stones. Wood, hay and straware Pauls picture language for weak efforts that do not last. Verses 13-15 Fire can test how pure a metal is. Fire can alsodestroy. Gods judgement is like fire. On the day when Christ returns, God willjudge the value of each persons work. He will reward those whose work wasvaluable. God will destroy what has no value. The bad builder will only escapeGods judgement like someone who just escapes from a fire. The bad builder willnot lose his *salvation. But he will not receive much reward in heaven. Gods *temple 3:16-23 v16 You should know that you are Gods *temple. Youshould know that Gods *Spirit lives in you. v17 If anyone destroysGods *temple, God will destroy him. That is because Gods *temple is holy. Andyou are that *temple. v18 Do not make a mistake about this. Perhaps one ofyou thinks that he is one of the worlds clever people. Then he should learnhow to become a fool, so that he may become really wise. v19 In the*Scriptures, there are these words: God catches wise people in their ownclever plans. v20 Again, it says, The *Lord knows that the thoughts ofwise people have no value. v21 So then, you must not be proud that youhave a particular human leader. God has given you everything that you need. v22He has given you Paul, Apollos and Peter as your helpers. He has given you thewhole world. Life and even death are your servants. God has given you all ofthe present and all of the future. v23 You belong to Christ. And Christbelongs to God. Verses 16-17 Paul uses the words You should know ten times inthis letter, and only once in other letters (Romans 6:16). The Christians atCorinth were very proud about their knowledge. But they had not reallyunderstood the nature of the Christian church. There were many *temples in Corinth. They all had *idols but noneof them contained a real god. The Christians in Corinth had God among them bymeans of his *Holy Spirit. Therefore they were like a *temple. Because there isonly one God, there was only one true *temple in Corinth. The *spiritual*temple of Christians existed to show that the only real God is holy. But thebad behaviour of the Christians at Corinth was stopping the work of the *HolySpirit. Their jealous quarrels were destroying Gods work. The Christian churchwas becoming like a weak building. God would punish those who were destroyinghis church. Paul does not say how God would punish them. But he is probablythinking about the day of judgement. Verses 18-20 Some people thought that they were wise. Paulrepeats what he had already said about those people. In 1:18-25, he said thatpeople thought that Gods wise actions were foolish. Some people were proudabout their wisdom. But God thinks that those people are foolish. If they wantto be really wise, the Christians at Corinth must become fools. That is, theymust become humble. Paul uses two verses from the *Old Testament to show thathis words are true. In Job 5:13, there is the picture of someone whom God hascaught in a trap. The Christians at Corinth think that they are like a cleverperson. But God has shown that they are foolish. They are as foolish as ananinmal that someone has caught in a trap. They do not realise that they willdestroy themselves. (Esther 5:12-14; 7:9-10 shows us a good example of this.)Psalm 94:11 emphasises that human ways to think are of no use. Verses 21-23 Therefore they must not be confident about their ownways to think. They must trust Christ rather than trust people. They had said,I belong to Paul or I belong to Apollos. I belong to was the kind oflanguage that described the relationship of slaves to their master. TheChristians at Corinth were making themselves the slaves of people. They do notbelong to Paul, Apollos or Peter. Instead, Paul, Apollos and Peter belong to theChristians at Corinth. Those *apostles were servants to the Christians. The whole world belongs to God. So the world belongs to theChristians as well. Christians believe in Jesus death and *resurrection.Therefore, Christians have the real life from God that never ends. They canhave *eternal life now in the present time. They may suffer *physical death,but they can never lose this real life from God. Paul ends with words of praise. Christians possess all thingsbecause they belong to Christ. And Christ belongs to God. God has a plan. Hewill bring everything together, things from earth, and things from heaven.Christ will be the head of them all. (See Ephesians 1:10.) Paul wants theChristians at Corinth to understand that only one person is finally in charge.This person is Jesus. Chapter 4 v1 This is how people should think about us. We areChrists servants. We are *stewards (keepers) of the secrets that God shows tohis own people. v2 Now people who have received a trust must prove thatthey are loyal people. v3 It matters very little to me what you or anyhuman court thinks about me. I do not even judge myself. v4 I do notfeel that I have done anything wrong. But that does not mean that I aminnocent. It is the *Lord who is the only true judge. v5 Therefore judgenothing before the time that God has decided. Wait until the *Lord returns. Hewill bring to light everything that people have hidden in the dark. He willshow the real reasons for peoples actions. At that time, each person willreceive his praise from God. Verse 1 Paul uses two words to describe how the Christians atCorinth ought to think about him and his friends. The words are servants and*stewards. 1. The word in this verse for servants meant slaves who had towork very hard in a *Roman ship. Paul was like a slave. He wanted to work hardto please his owner. 2. A *steward was responsible to the owner of a big house. He wasresponsible for his affairs. He ordered supplies. And he told the slaves what todo. But he himself was responsible to the owner of the house. So whateverposition of authority a Christian may have in the church, he is still Christs*steward. Verses 2-4 The master must be able to depend on his *steward.Paul speaks about three judgements: 1. Other people may judge whether someone has worked well. Someof the Christians at Corinth did not like what Paul said. Some people hadrefused to believe that he was an *apostle (2 Corinthians 10:7-10). But Paulsays that he does not worry about their opinion about him. 2. A person may judge himself. However, he may feel satisfiedwith his own behaviour even when he has made a mistake. 3. God is the only true judge. God knows what circumstances haveaffected someones actions. God also knows the intentions that caused a personto act. Someone may do a good action but have a selfish desire. They may wantsomeone to praise them. Or they may want some other benefit. Verse 5 So people should not judge other people before the timewhen Jesus returns. Then God will show whether someone has done his duties in aloyal way. God alone is the perfect judge. He will reward the people who havebeen loyal *stewards in his house, the church. The need to be humble 4:6-13 v6 *Brothers and *sisters, I have used myself andApollos as examples. I want you to learn to live as *scripture tells us tolive. I do not want you to be proud that one person is your leader instead ofanother person. v7 You are not different from anyone else. You receivedeverything that you have from God. And if you received things you should not*boast. You speak as if you achieved it yourself. v8 Already you haveall that you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings - andyou have left us outside the *kingdom! How I wish that you really had becomekings. Then we could rule with you! v9 I think that God has put us*apostles on display at the end of the procession. We are like men that a rulerhas chosen to die in front of a crowd. We have become a show. The whole of whatGod has created will see. We are a show to *angels as well as a show to people.v10 We are fools for Christ. But you are so wise in the Christian*faith. We are weak, but you are strong. People give you honour. But they thinkthat we have no value. v11 Up to this very hour, we are hungry and wehave nothing to drink. We have no clothes that can keep us warm. People behavebadly towards us. We have no homes. v12 We work hard with our own hands.When other people insult us, we bless them. When they hit us, we sufferpatiently. v13 When they say bad things about us, we answer in a quietway. Up to this very moment, we have become like dust that people walk on. Weare everyones rubbish. Verse 6 Paul and Apollos were humble. They knew that they wereGods servants. God would judge them. In the same way, the Christians atCorinth must be humble. Gods word makes it clear that false pride is wrong.They should not go beyond Gods word. They should not *boast about who wastheir leader. Verse 7 It was Gods love that had *saved the Christians atCorinth. They had forgotten that. Any gifts that they had came from God. Theywere no different from anyone else whom God had blessed. They were behaving asif they earned their own *salvation or their *spiritual gifts. They were notgrateful to God. Verses 8-9 Paul makes fun of the opinion that the Christians atCorinth have about themselves. They think that they have no need to learn anymore *spiritual truths. He says You have all that you want. He means thatthey are like people who have eaten more than enough food. They think that theyhave all the *spiritual gifts that they need. They think that they have alreadybegun to rule in Gods *kingdom. Paul knew that the *kingdom is in the futureas well as in the present. Paul used the picture of a procession. The *Romans had aprocession after they had defeated an enemy. The prisoners were at the end ofthe procession. The *Romans used them for public entertainment before theydied. The prisoners would have to fight wild animals. Crowds of people wouldcome to watch them. Paul and the other *apostles were like those prisoners.They were ready to die for Christ. The people in the world and the *angels werelike the crowd who watched. Verses 10-13 Paul contrasts the life of the *apostles with thelife of the Christians at Corinth. The Christians at Corinth thought that theywere wise. Paul was foolish because he believed the simple truth of the*gospel. The Christians at Corinth believed that they were powerful. They didnot like the way that Paul *preached. He did not use clever words. So theydecided that Paul was weak. They were very proud about themselves. Theyimagined that people respected them. The Christians at Corinth did not givehonour to Christ. So they did not give honour to the *apostles. Paul describes the difficulties that real *apostles had tosuffer. He had often been hungry and wanted a drink. His clothes were poor. Hehad often had nowhere to sleep at night as he travelled from one place toanother place. He had worked hard with his own hands. He had earned money sothat he could live. We know that he was a skilled worker with leather. He madetents and other goods (Acts 18:3; 20:33-34). Paul shows in 1 Corinthians9:14-18 that the Christians at Corinth did not agree with his decision to dothis. So he says, We work hard with our own hands, in this list ofdifficulties. He therefore emphasises that he was a *disciple of Christ. Christhad also suffered so that he could serve other people. The Greek word for hit describes the way that a master mighthit his slave. Paul took the position of a slave to please Christ his master. Paul then replies to those who had behaved badly towards him.Paul knew what Jesus taught. And he knew what Jesus did (Luke 6:28; 23:34). So,when people insulted him, he prayed that they would be happy. He forgave them.Paul was like Jesus. During his *trial and *crucifixion, Jesus had acceptedpatiently the cruel attacks. People told lies about Paul. But he made a humbleappeal to them. He asked them to stop and to be like Christ. Finally, Paul says that the *apostles are like the dust. Peopleswept up dust from the floor. Or they are like the dirt that someone washesfrom the body. This picture language is similar to Lamentations 3:45. Itdescribed anything that people thought had no value at all. Isaiah said thatpeople would think that Gods servant had no value (Isaiah 53:2-3). Paul andthe other *apostles were like this. People thought that they had no value. Pauls love as a *spiritual father 4:14-21 v14 I am not writing these things just to make youashamed. Because you are my dear *spiritual children, I want to warn you. v15You may have ten thousand Christians who are looking after you. But you do nothave many fathers. I became your *spiritual father when I told you the goodnews about Jesus Christ. v16 So I am urging you to be like me. v17For this reason, I am sending Timothy to you. He is like a son that I love verymuch. He is loyally serving the *Lord. He will remind you about my way to liveas I serve Christ Jesus. And that way to live agrees with what I teacheverywhere in every church. v18 Some of you have become proud. So, youbehave as if I were not coming to you. v19 But I will come to you verysoon, if the *Lord wants me to come. Then I will find out what these proudpeople are saying. But I will also find out what power they have. v20The *kingdom of God is not a matter of words. It is about how Christians live. v21I could come to blame you with angry words. Or I could come to you with gentlelove in my mind. I would like to know which you would rather have. Verses 14-16 Paul was writing like a father. A father wants hisson to do what is right. Paul described other Christians who taught them. Theywere like the slave who looked after a child. He took the child to school. Hetaught him how to behave. A child might have more than one of these slaves tolook after him. But he could have only one father. Paul was like a father wholoved his child. He had become the *spiritual father of the Christians inCorinth. He had helped them to trust in Jesus Christ. He told them the goodnews about *salvation. So, he wanted them to behave in the same way as theirfather behaved. Verse 17 Because he loves them, Paul is sending Timothy to visitthem. Timothy is Pauls *spiritual son whom he loves. He knows that Timothy isa loyal servant of Christ. Paul practised what he taught. Wherever he went, hebehaved in the same way. This was how he lived while he was at Corinth. Timothywill remind them about that. Verses 18-21 Some proud Christians in Corinth did not believethat Paul would visit them himself. But Paul intended to visit Corinth as soonas possible. He would go if Christ wanted him to go. Then Paul would discoverwhether the Christians had the power to live in the right way. They had plentyto say. But they must show by their actions that they belonged to Gods*kingdom. Jesus had said, You will know them by their fruit (Matthew 7:16). Aperson might say that he belongs to Christ. But his actions will prove whetherhis words are true. Paul asked whether he should come to punish them. He couldbe like a father whose child had not obeyed him. Or they could change theirbehaviour because of Pauls letter and Timothys visit. Then Paul could comegently to share his love with them. Chapter 5 v1 News has come to me that there is *sexual *sinamong you. A man has been having sex with his fathers wife. Even people who donot know God do not *sin like that. v2 And you are proud! You should bevery sad instead. You should have made the man who did this leave your church. v3Although I am not there with you, my *spirit is with you. And I have alreadyjudged the man who did this. I have done so just as if I were there. v4When you come together in the name of our *Lord Jesus, my *spirit is with you.The power of our *Lord Jesus will also be with you. v5 When you cometogether like that, hand this man over to *Satan. This is in order to destroyhis *sinful nature. And it is to *save his *spirit on the day when the *Lordreturns. Verse 1 The law does not allow sex between two people who arevery close relatives of each other. In the church at Corinth, a man was havingsex with his fathers second wife. It was against *Jewish law (Leviticus 18:8).Even *pagans thought that it was a terrible *sin. It was against *Roman law aswell. Verse 2 Paul felt disgusted that the members of the churchallowed the situation. They even seemed to have been slightly proud of themans action. They may have said that Christians had freedom from the law. Theythought that this action did not matter for a really *spiritual person.Instead, they should have felt as sad as someone whose close relative had died. Verses 3-4 Paul was not there. But he was thinking about them asif he really were present. He had already decided that the man was *sinning.When they met as a group of Christians, Paul felt as if he was *spirituallywith them. They also had the *Holy Spirit with them. The *Holy Spirit wouldgive them the power to act in the right way. Verse 5 The Christians must punish the man. They must tell himthat he must leave the church. He would then be in the world, where *Satanrules peoples lives. There the man would learn the difference between thecompany of Christians and the ways of the world. Paul intended that thispunishment would make the man realise his *sin. Then he would ask for Godsforgiveness. Then on the day of judgement, when Jesus returns, God would notshut him out of heaven. The Christians had to punish him in this way. Thiswould be better for him in *eternity. And it would show that they loved him. The effects of this *sin if it continues 5:6-8 v6 You are wrong to be proud about your church. Youmust know that only a little *yeast spreads through the whole lump of *dough. v7Remove the old *yeast. Be like a new lump of *dough without *yeast. That iswhat you really are. That is because Christ is our *Passover *lamb. He hasbecome a *sacrifice for us. v8 So let us keep the *Feast, but not withthe old *yeast. I mean that hate and wicked behaviour are like*yeast. Let uskeep the *Feast with bread that is honest and pure. Verse 6 Paul uses a picture from *Jewish practice. It shows whythe man should not stay in the church. *Yeast is a tiny substance. People putit in *dough to make bread grow bigger. It affects the whole lump of *dough.The *Jews thought that *yeast was a picture of an evil *influence. *Yeastspreads through *dough. In a similar way, the mans *sin would affect the wholechurch. It is possible that Paul was writing his letter near *Passovertime. The *Jews used to remove every tiny bit of *yeast from their homes before*Passover began. Verse 7 The Christians must remove the guilty man. But the old*yeast can also mean that they must clean out every bit of *sin in their ownlives. That is, they must be like a new lump of *dough with no *yeast in it.They had to be a group of Christians with no *sin among them. They had receivedGods forgiveness for their past *sins. God forgave them by means of Jesus*sacrifice as the *Passover *lamb. Now they are free to live in a new way. Sothey must behave like the new people that God has made them. Verse 8 The *Passover *feast lasted for a week. During thoseseven days, the *Jews did not eat anything with *yeast in it. Christians mustalso be happy that God has forgiven them. Because of this, they must live in aholy way. Hate and wicked behaviour means that they were to remove any kindof *sin in thought and action. They must not hide their real attitudes. Theiractions must be the result of honest and pure thoughts. The church and the world 5:9-13 v9 I told you in my letter to stay away from people whose*sexual behaviour was wrong. v10 I did not mean people of this world who*sin in that way, or greedy people of this world. Or they may cheat or *worshipfalse gods. To stay away from them, you would have to leave this world. v11But now, this is what I am writing to you. Some people say that they areChristians. You must stay away from any of those people if they behave in thesewrong ways. Stay away from anyone whose *sexual behaviour is *sinful. And stayaway from anyone who is greedy. Stay away from him if he *worships false gods.Keep away if he tells lies about other people. Stay away if he drinks too muchalcohol. Stay away if he cheats. Do not even eat with a person like that. v12It is not my business to judge those outside the church. You are supposed tojudge those who belong to the church. Throw the wicked man out. Verses 9-10 The Christians in Corinth had misunderstood Paulsadvice. Perhaps they wanted to say that Pauls advice was stupid. It isimpossible to stay away from everyone who *sins. This was especially true in acity like Corinth. It was well-known for *sexual *sins. Verses 11-12 Paul explains that he was talking about people whocalled themselves Christians. He meant Christians who continued to *sin. Hespoke about: 1. *sexual *sins. These were *sins against a persons realnature. They made people behave like animals. It was selfish and wrong forsomeone to use another person to satisfy his *physical needs. 2. those who were greedy. They had forgotten that other peoplewere like brothers and sisters. They must not steal from them. Instead, theymust love and serve them. The Christian *faith should make it a joy to giverather than to get. 3. the *worship of false gods. This is a *sin against the onlyreal God. If a person does not *worship God, he will *worship something orsomeone else. He might trust in things that he thinks will bring him luck. Hemight make another person, like a singer or a man who is good at sport into an*idol. A person who does all this is not a real Christian. The other Christiansshould not even share a meal with him. To share a meal would make it seem as ifthey agreed with his bad behaviour. Verses 12-13 Only God can judge those who do not belong to thechurch. God alone knows their hearts. But the members of the church must judgesomeone in the church who does wrong things. The people outside the church mustsee that the Christian *faith is a different way to live. If Christians refusedto punish such a serious *sin, they were a poor witness to their new *faith.Paul gave a definite command, Throw the man out. He used words fromDeuteronomy 17:7; 24:7. The Christian church in Corinth must put out evilpeople. Chapter 6 v1 Suppose that one of you has a reason to complainagainst another Christian. You may take your problem to the *pagan law courts.But you should go to Gods people. v2 You must know that one day Godspeople will judge the world. And if you are to judge the world, you should beable to deal with such small matters. v3 You must know that we shalljudge *angels. Then we should be able to judge the things of this life evenmore. v4 If you have such arguments, appoint members of the church to bejudges. They should not be very important members! v5 I write this tomake you ashamed. There must be a single wise man among you able to judgematters between Christians. v6 Instead, one Christian goes to courtagainst another Christian. And this happens in front of people who do notbelieve! v7 Because you have taken another Christian to court, you havealready lost the battle. It would be better to allow other people to cheat you. v8 Instead you cheat anddo wrong. And you cheat your Christian *brothers and *sisters. Verse 1 The Greeks very much liked to go to the law courts. Itwas like entertainment for them. Some of the Greeks had brought this habit intothe Christian church. Paul heard that a Christian in Corinth was taking anotherChristian to a *pagan law court. Paul was disgusted. The *Jews usually settledthings in front of the important men in their village. Or they took the problemto the important men in a *synagogue. They thought that it was wrong to go to a*pagan law court. As a *Jew, and even more as a Christian, Paul believed thatthis legal action was wrong. Verses 2-3 Paul said that one day Christians would judge bothother people and *angels. So it was not sensible to use human law courts todeal with small quarrels. Verse 4 Christians should appoint other members of the church todecide what was right. They should choose Christians who were not important.Pauls words seem like a command. So he is probably reminding them that theyshould be humble. They are wrong to think that one Christian is more importantthan another Christian. But other people have translated the sentence likethis: I do not know how you can let people outside the church judge. Theiropinions are not very important for Christians. Verse 5 Paul makes fun of the Christians at Corinth who are soproud of their wisdom. He wonders if they can find even one wise man to make adecision about the quarrel. Verse 6 *Pagans will see that Christians are going to court.Then, the *pagans will think that Christian behaviour is no different fromtheir own. Verses 7-8 Whatever the result of the matter, the legal actionmeans that people will have a bad opinion about the church. Jesus had said thatChristians must defeat evil things with good deeds (Matthew 5:44). So, theperson who has gone to court is failing as a Christian. To go to law courts atall was to forget that they were *brothers and *sisters in the Christianfamily. Paul uses the word cheat. So the quarrel may have been about abusiness matter. But any quarrel should give the opportunity to show the powerof Christian love. A list of *sins 6:9-11 v9 You must know that wicked people will not have aplace in the future *kingdom of God. Make no mistake. None of these willpossess the *kingdom of God: those guiltyof *sexual *sins and those who *worship *idols; those whobreak their marriage promises, male *prostitutes and *homosexuals; v10 thieves,greedy people and those who drink too much alcohol; people whotell lies and cheat other people. v11 And that is what some of you were. But God hasmade you *spiritually clean. God has set you apart to live in a good way. The*Lord Jesus Christ has made you right with God. The *Spirit of God has madethis change in you. There are other lists of wrong acts in other letters. They allshow the kind of society in which Paul lived. They show what some people arelike. People are like this when they do not accept God and his laws. Verse 9 Paul warns the Christians in Corinth about theirbehaviour. If they continue to *sin, they are in danger of judgement. God willjudge them in the same way as he will judge non-Christians. God will refuse tokeep them in his *kingdom. In Corinth, people *worshipped Aphrodite, the female god of love.Their worship included much wrong *sexual behaviour. Also, many people did notremain a loyal husband or a loyal wife. Male *prostitutestranslates a Greek word that means soft. Probably it describes boys and youngmen who acted like women. They allowed older men to use them for their *sexualpleasure. *Homosexuals describes people of the same sex who have sex witheach other. In the *Roman world, both these forms of behaviour were common.Even the *Roman rulers did these things. Verse 10 Greedy people can become thieves or those who cheatother people. There were many people like this in Corinth. In those days, the water was not good. So the Greeks mixed winewith their water. In Corinth, there were people who drank too much alcohol.They thought only about their own pleasure. To tell lies and to speak evil words about other people areserious *sins. They make it difficult for people to trust each other and to bepart of society. Verse 11 Some Christians had been like all these wicked people.But they had become better. The water used to *baptise them had shown that theywanted to change. God had made them his own people. The *Lord Jesus Christ, byhis death on the *cross, had brought them into right relations with God. GodsSpirit had caused them to become new people. So, Paul uses these words toencourage them to live properly as Christians. That would show that their*faith was sincere. Wrong *sexual behaviour 6:12-20 v12 You say I am free to do anything. Yes, but noteverything is good for me. I am free to do anything. But I, myself, will notlet anything control me. v13 Food is for the stomach and the stomach isfor food, you say. But one day God will destroy them both. God did not intendthe body for *sexual *sins. He intended it for the *Lord. And the *Lord is forthe body. v14 God raised our *Lord from death by his power. He will alsoraise us up. v15 You must know that your bodies are parts of the body ofChrist himself. I can never take parts of Christs body and unite them with a*prostitute. v16 Everyone who joins himself with a *prostitute becomesone body with her. You must know that. *Scripture says, The two people willbecome one body. v17 But he who unites himself with Christ becomes oneperson with him in his *spirit. v18 Keep far away from *sexual *sins. Every other*sin that a person practises is outside the body. But the person who is guiltyof a *sexual *sin acts in a wrong way against his own body. v19 You mustknow that your body is a *temple for the *Holy Spirit. The *Holy Spirit in youis Gods gift to you. You do not belong to yourselves. v20 Christ paid agreat price to *save you. So, use your body in a way that gives honour to God. Verses 12-13 The Greeks taught that the *spirit alone mattered.The body was not important. So they could act in any way at all and it wouldnot hurt their *spirit. It was natural to eat. And it was natural to satisfytheir *sexual desires. Paul had also taught that Christians are free from thelaws demands. So some Christians were continuing to visit *prostitutes after*baptism. Corinth was a city so well-known for *sexual *sin that a girl fromCorinth meant a *prostitute. So it was very easy for Christians to *sin inthis way. And it was very easy to find excuses for this behaviour. Christian freedom does not mean that Christians are free to *sin.Paul reminded them about that. What they chose to do must be helpful to them.It must also be helpful to other people. It was wrong to be like a slave totheir former way to live. Verse 14 The body belongs to God. By his power, God raised Jesusfrom death. By the same power, he will raise both *spirit and body to be alive.God intends the whole person for *eternal life in the future. Verses 15-17 *Scripture says in Genesis 2:24 that a *sexual actbetween two people makes them into one united body. Christians are part ofChrists body, the church. So for a Christian to give his body to a *prostitutewas a terrible *sin. He must unite himself with Christ in a permanent unity of*spirit. Verse 18 The Christians at Corinth may have said that *sin was inthe mind rather than in the body. Paul said that *sexual *sin was against thepersons own body. It is true that to drink too much alcohol or to take drugsare *sins against the body. But God wants to *save Christians bodies and*souls. So Paul explained that other *sins do not affect a persons body in thesame way as *sexual *sins do. Verse 19-20 The body is the *temple of the *Holy Spirit whom Godhas given us. Therefore, the body is holy, set apart for God. Christ died to*save a persons whole nature, both body and *soul. So, a person is not free todo as he likes with his body. It belongs to Christ. Therefore, he must use hisbody in the way that God wants. He must give honour to God. The second part of Pauls letter, chapters 7-15, deals withproblems that the Christians in Corinth had asked Paul about. Chapter 7 deals with various questions about marriage and *sexualrelations. Chapter 7 v1 But now I will deal with the matters that youwrote about. It is good for a man not to marry. v2 But there is so muchwrong *sexual behaviour. So, each man should have his own wife. Each womanshould have her own husband. Verse 1 Some Christians believed that their body was *sinful. Sothey thought that their natural desires were wrong. They believed that theyshould not marry at all. Verse 2 Paul was honest and practical. He knew that there wasmuch *temptation in Corinth. It would be better for a man to marry than to givein to his natural desires in wrong ways. Advice about *sexual relations between husbands and wives 7:3-7 v3 The husband must give his wife the *sexualpleasure that she needs. The wife must give her husband his *sexual rights. v4The wifes body does not belong to her alone. It also belongs to her husband.In the same way, the husbands body does not belong to him alone. It alsobelongs to his wife. v5 Do not stop having sex with each other exceptwhen you both agree to do so. Do so for a time in order to be free for prayer.Then come together again. In that way *Satan will not *tempt you because ofyour lack of control. v6 I say all this as my advice. But it is not acommand from God. v7 I should like you all not to marry, but to remainsingle like me. But each person has his own gift from God. One person has thisgift; another person has a different gift. Verses 3-4 Some Christians in Corinth thought that it was more*spiritual to live as married people without sex. Paul said that sex was aduty of both man and wife to each other. In a Christian marriage, the husbandand wife belong to each other. The *sexual act is a special part of their lifetogether. Verses 5-6 Both husband and wife may agree to stop their *sexualrelations. But this must be for a short time only so that they can spend moretime in prayer. Then they should come together again. Then *Satan cannot *tempteither husband or wife to look for *sexual satisfaction outside marriage. Paulwas not giving an order from God; he was offering his advice. Verse 7 Paul wished that Christians would remain single, likehim. But he recognised that people are different from each other. God gave somethe gift to remain single. He gave other people the gift to be married. Single people and widows 7:8-9 v8 I say this to widows or those who have notmarried. It would be good if they remained single, like me. v9 But ifthey cannot control themselves, they should marry. It is better to marry thanto let strong *sexual desires destroy them. Verses 8-9 Paul thought that there was only a short time leftbefore Jesus returned. So, it would be sensible to remain single. But Paulwarns them not to stay in a situation where they would find it easy to *sin. Itall depended on the character of the person. If they had very strong desires,they should marry. Questions about divorce 7:10-16 v10 I give this command to married people. (It is notmy order, but a command from the *Lord.) A wife must not leave her husband. v11But if she does, she must remain single. Or she must be willing to live withher husband again. And a husband must not divorce his wife. v12 For the other matters, I say this. (It is myadvice; it is not the *Lords command.) Suppose that a Christian has a *paganwife. If she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. v13And suppose that a woman has a *pagan husband. If he is willing to live withher, she must not divorce him. v14 This is because the *pagan husbandhas become holy by his Christian wife. And the *pagan wife has become holy byher Christian husband. If that were not true, your children would not beincluded in Gods purposes. But as it is, they are holy. v15 But if the*pagan leaves, let him or her do so. In such circumstances, a man or woman doesnot have to stay married. God wants us to live in peace. v16 Wife, it isnot clear whether you will *save your husband. Husband, it is not clear whetheryou can *save your wife. Verses 10-11 Paul said that it was wrong to divorce. This was nothis opinion. It was the *Lords command. Jesus said, A man must not separatewhat God has joined together. (See Mark 10:9.) If a wife did leave herhusband, she must not marry again. Or she must be willing to go back to herhusband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. Verses 12-14 Some people believed that a Christian should notcontinue to live with a *pagan husband or wife. Paul had to give his judgementabout mixed marriages. There was no direct command from Jesus to which he couldrefer. Mixed marriages could cause problems. (They still do cause problems.)Christians like to go to church meetings. They like to serve other people. Butthis would mean that a husband and wife would spend less time together. Thekiss of peace with which Christians greeted each other (1 Corinthians 16:20)could easily have caused a quarrel. The *pagan husband or wife might feeljealous and worried. They might not be sure whether they could trust theirpartner. Pauls advice was practical. When the non-Christian partnerwanted to stay in the marriage, there should be no divorce. Because theChristian was holy, the partner and the children would be holy. Theblessings that come from God do not only affect Christians. A Christiansbelief would also benefit the partner who is not a Christian. And it would alsobenefit their children. Verse 15 The *pagan might be so much against the Christian *faiththat there would be quarrels all the time. If he or she wanted to leave, theChristian should allow the *pagan to go. Paul thought that it was reasonable fora marriage like this to end. God wanted peace in a family, not constant war. Verse 16 The non-Christian might stay. Then there was theopportunity to persuade him or her to become a Christian. Peter also believedthat this was possible. Wives, obey your husbands. There may be some husbandswho do not believe Gods message. But if their wives obey them, those husbandsmay believe. They may decide to believe God, even if their wives have saidnothing to them about Gods message (1 Peter 3:1). Changes that are not necessary 7:17-24 v17 But each of you should remain in the place in theworld that the *Lord has given to you. Stay as you were when God chose you.This is the rule that I order in all churches. v18 A man might have been*circumcised when God called him. He should not try to undo his *circumcision.A man might have been *uncircumcised when God called him. He should not want*circumcision. v19 *Circumcision is nothing. To be *uncircumcised isnothing. To do what God commands is what matters. v20 Each one shouldremain in his situation when God called him. v21 You might have been aslave when God called you. Do not let it worry you. But if you can persuadeyour master to set you free, do so. v22 Someone may have been a slavewhen God called him. Now he is the *Lords free man. Someone may have been afree man when God called him. Now he is Christs slave. v23 Christ paidthe price for you. So do not become slaves of people. v24 *Brothers and*sisters, you are responsible to God. So, each person should remain in thesituation to which God called him. Verse 17 Paul believed that a Christian should practise his*faith wherever he was. He did not need to change his place in society. God hadcalled him, whoever he was. Verses 18-20 Paul chose as his first example *Jews and *Gentiles.Some men were *Jews when they became Christians. Some were *Gentiles. A *Jewshould not try to change his *circumcision. A *Gentile need not think that*circumcision was important for him. It did not matter whether a man had themark of *circumcision or not. What was important was to obey Gods commands. Verses 21-23 Some people thought that slaves were things ratherthan people. But when God called a slave, he became the *Lords free man.Instead, he had become the slave of Christ, but with the freedom to serve him.A slave could save enough money to buy his own freedom. Christ had bought humanfreedom by his death on the *cross. Paul encouraged slaves to gain theirfreedom from their masters on earth. But some people thought that slaves had novalue. Slaves should take no notice of those people. Whether someone is a slaveor free person, they are all one family in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). Verse 24 It is Gods opinion about a person that matters. Sothere was no need to change a persons situation after he became a Christian.The important thing is to obey God. The problem of two people who have agreed to marry 7:25-28 v25 Now I will write about *virgins. I have nocommand from the *Lord. But because of the *Lords *mercy, you can trust myopinion. v26 The present times are difficult. So, this is what I think:It is good for you to remain as you are. v27 If you are married, do notdivorce. If you are single, do not look for a wife. v28 But if you domarry, you have not *sinned. And if a *virgin marries, she has not *sinned. Butthose who marry will have many troubles in this life. And I do not want you tohave those troubles. Verse 25 Paul was probably writing about young women who wereengaged. Some Christians at Corinth were trying to persuade engaged people toremain unmarried. They believed that sex was wrong. Paul says that theChristians can trust his opinion on the matter. He does not say because I aman *apostle with Christs authority. They can trust him because the *Lord hasshown *mercy to him. Paul is thinking about what is good for them. Verse 26 The Christians were already having difficulties becausepeople were opposing them. Paul believed that Jesus would return soon. Beforethat happened, there would be a time of even greater danger and trouble. So, itwas not the time to make important changes in their lives. Verses 27-28 Married people should not divorce. Single peopleshould not want to get married. But it is not a *sin to marry. It is not wrongfor a young engaged woman to marry. But marriage would bring extra problems.Paul did not say what these troubles were. But it is not always easy for evena loving husband and wife to share each others needs and emotions. Childrentake up a lot of time and they are not easy to train. The time is short 7:29-31 v29 *Brothers and *sisters, I mean that the time isshort. From now on, those with a husband or wife should live as if they did nothave one. v30 Those who are sad should live as if they were not sad.Those who are happy should live as if they were not happy. Those who buysomething should live as if it were not theirs to keep. v31 Those whouse the things of the world should not become too interested in them. Becausethis world as it now exists is passing away. Verses 29-31 Paul believed that Jesus would return soon. Therewas not much time left to do Gods work. Paul wanted them to stop and think. Sohe wrote in such a powerful way because he wanted them to be serious aboutGods work. He did not expect them to understand his examples in their exactmeaning. But he expected husbands to continue to love their wives. People wouldcontinue to be sad or happy. Trade would go on. But these things should notcontrol their lives. Because of their *faith they already belonged to the worldof *eternity. So, their relationship to the present world was not the mostimportant one. The present world is in the process of passing away. God hasalready decided the course of future events. Therefore, their hope for thefuture should free them from too many worries about the affairs of this life. Freedom from worry 7:32-35 v32 I want you to have nothing to worry about. Asingle man thinks about the *Lords affairs. He wants to know how he can pleasethe *Lord. v33 But a married man is involved in the affairs of thisworld. He wants to know how he can please his wife. He finds it difficult toserve the *Lord completely and to think about his wifes needs. v34There is a difference between a wife and a *virgin. A single woman worriesabout the *Lords affairs. She wants to serve the *Lord with both body and*spirit. But a married woman is anxious about the affairs of this world. Shewants to know how she can please her husband. v35 I am saying thesethings to help you. I am not trying to limit you. I want you to give yourselvescompletely to the *Lord. Verses 32-35 Paul wanted married men and women to think about thedemands of the *Lords work. This could be difficult when they also had theirwifes or husbands needs to think about. Those who were single were free toconcentrate on the *Lords work. For the woman to serve the *Lord with bodyand *spirit means to serve him in every way. Body and *spirit are notseparate. Together they mean the whole person. Paul used similar language todescribe the whole person in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Paul pointed out this problem because he did not want anyone tobe anxious in their Christian lives. He thought that to remain single wouldavoid the difficulty of divided responsibility. But he did not want his wordsto be like a thick piece of string round peoples necks to control them. Theyhad the freedom to choose marriage. He wanted them to do whatever would helpthem to serve the *Lord best. Advice to men about *virgins 7:36-38 v36 Suppose that a man has promised to marry a girl.And he thinks that he is not acting in the right way towards her. Suppose thatshe is getting older. And he feels that he ought to marry her. He should do ashe wants. He is not *sinning. They should get married. v37 But perhapsthe man has decided not to marry the *virgin. And perhaps he has no urgent needto get married and he can control his own desire. If he has made up his mindnot to marry, he also does the right thing. v38 So the man who marriesthe *virgin does right. But he who does not marry her does even better. Paul began to talk about engaged people in 7:25-28. Here hecontinues his thoughts about the subject. Verse 36 Some Christians in Corinth were making this man anxious.He had promised to marry a girl. But they said that he should not marry her.She had passed the age when she could easily find a husband. So, he would befailing in his promise, if he did not marry her. The man should follow his owndesires and marry her. He would not be *sinning. Verse 37 But a man with a strong control of his *sexual desiresneed not marry. The man and woman can live their Christian lives as singlepeople. Verse 38 The man who marries is doing the right thing. The onewho decides not to marry will do better. That is not because marriage is wrong.Pauls opinion is in verse 26. It is better because of the difficulties that hehas spoken about. Marrying again 7:39-40 v39 A woman must stay married to her husband as longas he lives. But her husband may die. Then she is free to marry anyone elsethat she wants to. But the man that she marries must belong to the *Lord. v40In my opinion she is happier if she stays single. And I think that Gods Spirithas led me to say this. Verse 39 The strict *Jews called the Essenes allowed only onemarriage. They thought that the unity of husband and wife continued afterdeath. Paul believed what Jesus taught.

time of Gods planfor the world. Verse 12 Although God had done so much for them, the *Israelitesfailed. It can be easy for someone who is too confident to *sin. Peter saidthat he would be loyal to Jesus, whatever happened. Instead, he said threetimes that he did not even know Jesus. Verse 13 After the warning, Paul encourages the Christians inCorinth: 1. They are not the only people who suffer *temptations. Otherpeople also suffer *temptations. And they defeat them with Gods help. 2. God does not allow anyone to suffer a test that is beyond his*spiritual strength. 3. There is always an end to a *temptation. Christians can defeatit with Gods help. They are like an army in a narrow mountain route who find away to escape from their enemy. The reason that they should avoid *pagan *temple *feasts 10:14-22 v14 Therefore, my dear friends, run away from theworship of *idols. v15 I am talking to sensible people. Judge foryourselves what I say. v16 We give thanks for the cup of wine at the*Lords Supper. It is then that we are sharing in the blood of Christ. When webreak the bread, we are sharing in the body of Christ. v17 We all eatfrom the one loaf. So, we, who are many, are one body. v18 Think about Israels people. Those who eat the*sacrifices share in the *offering on the *altar. v19 I do not mean thatwhat the *pagans give to a god is of value. I do not mean that the *pagan godis real. v20 No, I do not. But the gifts of *pagans are to *demons, notto God. And I do not want you to share with *demons. v21 You cannotdrink the cup of the *Lord and the cup of *demons as well. You cannot eat breadat the *Lords table and at the table of *demons. v22 We are not tryingto make the *Lord jealous. We are not stronger than he is. Verses 14-15 In 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Paul had warned theChristians at Corinth by reminding them about events in Israels history. Nowhe gives them a strong order. They must keep far away from the worship of*idols. They are sensible people. So, they should be able to understand thathis words are true. Verses 16-17 They share the *Lords Supper. The *Lords Supperhas a special meaning. They eat the bread and they drink the wine together toremember Christ. This shows them that there is a unity between them and Christ.There is also unity of Christians with each other. This is because they sharethe cup of wine and eat the bread together. They become like one body becausethey share one loaf. Verse 18 When the *Israelites shared a meal after a *sacrifice,they became united in their *worship of God. Verses 19-21 When *pagans offer a *sacrifice, they are notoffering it to a real god. The Christians at Corinth had agreed that *idols donot really exist (8:4). But they were wrong to think that they could thereforeshare a meal in a *pagan *temple. It was not just a social occasion. Paul gavetwo reasons why they were wrong: 1. To share a meal in a *pagan *temple united them with *paganguests. Therefore Christians would appear to believe that the god of the*pagans was real. 2. People were really *worshipping non-human evil *beings(usually called *demons) when they *worshipped *idols. So because they weresharing a *pagan meal, Christians were becoming partners with *demons. TheseChristians had shown by their actions that they were carrying out the purposeof *demons. They were doing the *demons work because they were destroying the*faith of other Christians (8:11). They were preventing *pagan guests fromknowing the proper *faith. It is not possible to *worship Christ and also to*worship *demons. Verse 22 Paul includes himself in his statement because he sayswe. He warns them about the danger of making God jealous. The second*commandment forbade the worship of *idols because God is a jealous God(Exodus 20:4). God is holy and powerful. He will not allow anything to take hisplace. In the song of Moses, God blamed the *Israelites for their *worship of*idols (Deuteronomy 32:2). By their actions, the Christians in Corinth showedthat they doubted Gods right to punish them. They were quarrelling with God asif pieces of a broken pot could question the maker of the pot (Isaiah 45:9-10).They would fail to please God. The problem of meat from the market 10:2311:1 v23 You say, Everything is allowed! But noteverything is good for us. Again, you say, Everything is allowed! But noteverything builds us up *spiritually. v24 No one should look out for hisown advantage. Instead, we should look out for the advantage of other people. v25Eat anything that they sell in the meat market. Do not ask any questionsbecause of your conscience. v26 Because *Scripture says The earthbelongs to the *Lord. And so does everything in it. v27 Suppose that anon-Christian invites you to a meal. And suppose that you want to go. Then eatanything that your host puts in front of you. Do not ask any questions aboutit. v28 But someone may say to you This food has been part of a*sacrifice to an *idol. Then do not eat it. Think about the man who told you.Think about what is good for him. Do not eat it, because of his sense of whatis right and wrong. v29 I am talking about the other persons feelingabout it, not yours. What someone else thinks should not affect my freedom. v30Perhaps I give thanks when I take part in the meal. I am eating food that Ithank God for. People should not blame me for that. v31 So eatand drink and do everything else for the *glory of God. v32 Do not causeanyone to *sin. It does not matter whether they are *Jews, Greeks, or membersof the Christian church. v33 I try to please everyone in every way. I amlooking out for what is best for other people. I do it to help them to acceptthe way to heaven. (Chapter 11) v1 Imitate me, just as I imitateChrist. Verses 23-24 The Christians at Corinth are emphasising theirfreedom to act as they choose. But not everything that they are free to do willbe good for their *faith. It will not help their Christian *faith to becomestrong. And Christians should think about what is best for other people ratherthan for themselves. Verses 25-26 They can eat any meat that they buy in the market.They need not ask where it came from. Paul uses the words from Psalm 24:1 toremind them that all food comes from God. So, they can be free to enjoy hisgifts. Verses 27-28 Then Paul gives his opinion about meals in privatehouses. It is possible to accept an invitation from someone who is not aChristian. Then the Christian should accept whatever his host provides. Heshould ask no questions about it. But he may hear that the meat has been partof a *pagan *sacrifice. If so, he should not eat it. It should not matter tohim. But the person who told him might have been trying to show respect for theChristians belief. Then the Christian should not eat the meat. He should notoffend someone who was trying to be helpful. It might also offend anotherChristian who was there. The other Christian might have found it difficult tounderstand that an *idol was not real. So, for this reason as well, the Christianshould not eat the meat. He should not worry another Christian whose *faith wasweak. Verses 29-30 Paul is emphasising his own freedom. He should befree to eat food for which he has thanked God. But, in verses 31-32, he showswhy he limits his own freedom. And he shows why they should limit theirs. Verses 31-32 1. Everything that they do should be for the *glory of God. 2. They should think about other people. They must do nothing tocause other people to *sin. It does not matter whether the other people are*Jews, *Gentiles or other Christians. Paul himself behaved in a way that wouldattract people to the good news about Jesus Christ. He would not take advantageof his freedom. He wanted other people to become Christians, and to be strongin their *faith. Chapter 11 verse 1 Paul invited people to see how Christ made adifference to him. Christ affected the way that he acted. So, he urged them toimitate his behaviour. He himself imitated Christ, who always put the needs ofother people first. Paul was not being proud. But he was eager that theChristians at Corinth should correctly understand Christian freedom. Chapter 11 v1 Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ. v2 I praise you because you remember me ineverything. And you are holding firmly to the things that I taught you. Youkept them just as I taught them to you. v3 Now I want you to realisethat Christ is the head of every man. And the man is the head of the woman. AndGod is the head of Christ. v4 Every man who prays or *preaches with acover on his head brings shame on his head. v5 And every woman who praysor *preaches with no cover on her head shames her head. It is just as if herhead were shaved. v6 If a woman does not cover her head, she should cuther hair off. People do not respect a woman with her hair cut off or shaved. Soshe should cover her head. v7 A man ought not to have long hair because he isthe image and *glory of God. But woman is the *glory of man. v8 Becauseman did not come from woman. But woman came from man. v9 And God did notcreate man for woman, but woman for man. v10 For this reason and becauseof the *angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head. v11However, for those who belong to the *Lord, woman cannot live apart from man.And man cannot exist apart from woman. v12 Because, as woman came fromman, so also man is born from woman. But everything comes from God. v13 Decide for yourselves. Surely, it is not rightfor a woman to pray with her head not covered. v14 The very nature ofthings teaches you that it is shame for a man to have long hair. v15 Ifa woman has long hair, it is her *glory. This is because she has received longhair as a cover. v16 But if anyone wants to argue about this, we have nosuch custom. Nor do the churches of God. There were problems when the Christians at Corinth met for*worship. Paul probably learned that from Chloes servants. First of all, theydid not agree on the way that men and women showed their respect to God. Verse 2 Paul praised the Christians at Corinth because they werekeeping the basic facts of the Christian *faith. He had taught them and theyremembered him. Then he went on to deal with the first problem. Verse 3 Head means a part of the body. But here it has twopossible meanings: 1. authority or superior, for example, the head man in a villagehas authority over the people. 2. source, for example, the head of the river is where the riverbegins. So, writers explain Pauls words in one of these two ways: 1. Christ has authority over every person. The man has authorityover the woman. God as Father has authority over Christ the Son. 2. Christ is the source of new life for the believer. Man was thesource of woman (Genesis 2:22-23). God was the source of Christs body when hecame to earth. Verse 4 In Pauls time, people thought that a man with long hairwas trying to look more like a woman. This is because he wanted to behave likea woman. He wanted to have sex with other men. So to pray or *preach with hishead covered would be shameful. Verses 5-6 It is not certain what cover means. It could be apiece of clothing. Many bibles use the word veil. It could have been theusual way for a woman to arrange her hair. This was to make a kind of haircap on the top of her head. People would not understand if a woman removed herveil. They would have the wrong idea if she let her hair down in public. Theywould think that she was imitating women who *worshipped *pagan gods. Or theywould think that she was a woman with bad moral behaviour. Paul said that if she removed her cover, she might as well cutoff her hair. And she might as well shave her head. She would then become morelike women who had wrong *sexual relations with other women. So, a woman shouldavoid public shame; she should keep her head covered. Verse 7 God created man in his own image (Genesis 1:26-28). Manexists to give praise and honour to God (Revelation 4:11). Woman is the *gloryof man, because God created her as the one suitable companion for man (Genesis2:18-23). Verses 8-9 Paul refers to the way that God created people. Mandid not come from woman, because God created him first. Woman came from man, aspart of him (Genesis 2:21-22). Verse 10 Because God created her from man, the woman should keepher head covered to show mans authority over her. because of the *angels. Writers have suggested severaldifferent reasons for these words: 1. Some people think that the story in Genesis 6:1-2 is about*angels who *sinned with human women. In Pauls days, there was a *traditionthat the beauty of womens long hair attracted these *angels. Paul might havebeen thinking about this story. 2. Paul believed that his Christian life was on display in frontof *angels (1 Corinthians 4:9). So he thought about *angels as present atpublic *worship. Women should not offend them. They would offend them if theyhad no cover on their head. 3. Paul said that Christians would judge *angels (1 Corinthians6:3). So Christians ought to be able to decide the right way to show respectwhen they *worshipped. Verse 11-12 The *Jews believed that men are superior to women.God created man first and woman second. But every man is born from a woman. So,the argument about who is more important has no meaning. God createdeverything. So, it was a part of his plan for people that men and women shouldbe equal. For those who belong to the *Lord suggests a contrast betweenbelievers and other people. In the world, people may have thought that women shouldtake second place to men. But in the Christian church, women have equal value. Verses 14-15 Paul appeals to the way that they felt about thingsin their society. Paintings and *statues from Pauls time show that it wasnormal for men to have short hair. People thought that it was shameful for mento have long hair. It was not natural. For a woman, it was the opposite. Longhair was not shameful. It was a cover that God had given to her. And it gaveher honour. Paul was comparing the natural appearance of a woman with that of aman. He was not thinking here about the way that women should appear in public. Verse 16 For anyone who wanted to argue about the matter, Pauldid not give a command. He just told them that, where he was (at Ephesus),women did not pray without a cover on the head. This was true in other churchesas well. The problem that Paul talked about was important for the churchin Corinth in his time. But it is still true that for both men and women thereare ways to show respect in public *worship. These ways will vary with localcustoms in different countries. 2. The wrong way to carry out the *Lords supper 11:17-22 v17 In the following instructions, I do not praiseyou. This is because your meetings do not make things better. They make themworse. v18 First, people tell me that there are divisions among you.There are divisions when you meet as a church. And I partly believe it. v19No doubt there are differences among you to show which of you God agrees with! v20You do come together. But it is not the *Lords supper that you eat. v21As you meet, each of you starts to eat. You do not wait for anyone else. Oneremains hungry and another person drinks too much wine. v22 You havehomes to eat and drink in. Do not cause shame for those who have nothing. Ifyou do, you insult Gods church. I will say this to you. Perhaps you expect meto praise you for this. I certainly will not praise you! Verses 17-18 Chloes servants had given Paul news that disgustedhim. He could hardly believe the news about the behaviour of some people attheir meetings. In those days, Christians shared a meal before they carried outthe *Lords Supper. They brought food and wine to share with each other. Christremoved social differences between rich and poor people. But some Christianswere selfish. They did not care about the poorer people. So, the meeting wasnot a sign of Christian love and unity. Instead, it had no value. Verse 19 The differences among them showed that some were livingas God wanted. But other people were not. Verses 20-21 The Christians who arrived first had the most comfortableseats. They did not wait for the Christian slaves who came later, after theirwork. Instead, they started their own meal. They ate and drank more than theirfair share. So there was little or nothing left when the poor Christiansarrived later. Verse 22 Their attitude showed that they did not care about theunity of Gods church. So, they might as well stay at home for their meals.Pauls severe words show what he thought about their greedy and selfishbehaviour. He had to go on to remind them about the meaning of the *Lordssupper. 3. The meaning of the *Lords Supper 11:23-26 v23 I passed on to you what I received from the*Lord. On the night that Judas handed Jesus over to his enemies, Jesus tookbread. v24 When he had given thanks, he broke the bread. He said, Thisis my body, which I give for you. Do this in memory of me. v25 In thesame way, after supper, he took the cup of wine. He said, This cup is the new*covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink the wine, do it in memory of me. v26You eat the bread and you drink the wine. Whenever you do that, you aretelling everyone about the *Lords death. You will do this until he comesagain. Verse 23 Pauls account of the Last Supper is the earliest recordof this event. He wrote it before the *gospel records. Received and passedon were special words for *Jews, which meant to give instructions in*religious matters. Received from the *Lord means that Jesus himself had toldthis to Paul. The night was the night of the *Passover Meal. Jesus had warnedhis *disciples that one of them would hand him over to his enemies. Later, inthe garden of Gethsemane, Judas showed the soldiers which person was Jesus. Verses 23-24 Jesus said that the bread that he had broken was asign for his body. He would die for their *salvation. Then, whenever they atethe bread in a meeting for *worship, they would remember him. They wouldremember that he died for their *salvation. Verse 25 The *Israelites promised that they would obey Gods Law.Moses signed the *covenant by putting the blood of an animal on the *altar andon the people (Exodus 24:8). Jeremiah spoke about a new *covenant that wasnecessary. The people had not obeyed the one that they made in the time ofMoses. This new *covenant would mean that God would forgive their *sins. Theywould want to obey God because he loved them (Jeremiah 31:31). The blood ofJesus would be the *sacrifice that made the new *covenant final. Whenever you drink it shows that Jesus intended believers tohave a regular time to remember his *sacrifice. The *Passover took place once ayear. But Christians need more than an annual event to remind them about Jesusdeath. Whenever could refer to a daily meal. Every supper that Christiansshare can be called the *Lords supper. Jesus was the *Lords servant whotook the *sin of many (Isaiah 53:12). Verse 26 The meal would be a sign of the *Lords death. A personshould accept what Jesus has done for him. His death brings *salvation to anyperson who accepts that. Jesus death also brings a new unity of people. Thereis now nothing between *Jew and Greek, men and women, free people and slaves.But the Christians at Corinth were not showing this unity. At every meal,Christians should remember Christs death until he comes again. That meal couldbe in a special *religious service or it could be an ordinary meal. 4. Preparation for the *Lords Supper 11:27-34 v27 Therefore it is wrong to eat the bread and drinkthe cup of the *Lord without proper respect. Anyone who does so will be *sinningagainst the body and blood of the *Lord. v28 A person should check his*spiritual health before he shares the bread and the wine. v29 Anyonewho eats and drinks must recognise the meaning of the *Lords body. If he doesnot, God will judge him. v30 That is why many of you are weak and ill.That is why some of you have died. v31 We should examine ourselves. Thenwe would avoid Gods judgement. v32 When the *Lord judges us, hecorrects us. Then we will not receive the same judgement as the rest of the world.v33 So then, my *brothers and *sisters, when you come together to eat,wait for each other. v34 If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home.Then when you come together, God will not judge you. When I come, I will giveyou more instructions. Verse 27 We should remember what the *Lords Supper means. It iswrong to eat it if we do not remember that. The bread and wine are signs of thedeath of Christ. To eat and drink carelessly is to be guilty of Christs death.A careless person is as much to blame as those who *crucified Jesus. Verses 28-29 A Christian eats the bread and drinks the wine. Hemust prepare himself before he does that. He must not forget that he is part ofthe body of Christ. The body of Christ is the church. Christs death was an actof love. Therefore, the members of his body, the church, must show love to eachother. If they do not, God will judge them. Verse 30 Paul understood the illnesses and even deaths at Corinthas Gods judgement on the whole church. Verses 31-32 They should decide whether they have right relationswith other Christians. Paul had already told them that they were one body(10:17). God will judge them if they have the wrong attitude to each other. Godis like a father who corrects his children. God judges in order to correct hisChristian children. Then they will not have to face the final judgement likenon-Christians. Verses 33-34 They must wait for each other and welcome eachother. Those who cannot wait to eat should do so at home. Paul does not say what instructions he will give them. He maymean more teaching about the *Lords supper. He may mean other matters thataffect their progress in the Christian life. Chapter 12 v1 Now about the *Holy Spirits gifts, *brothers and*sisters, I do not want to leave you in any doubt. v2 You know that atone time you were *pagans. You felt a power that you could not oppose. It ledyou to *worship *idols that could not speak. v3 So I tell you something.Anyone who is speaking with the help of Gods *Spirit cannot say, Let God*curse on Jesus. And without the help of the *Holy Spirit, no one can say,Jesus is *Lord. Verse 1 The Christians at Corinth had asked Paul about *spiritualgifts. They may also have asked how to recognise the difference between evil*spirits and the *Holy Spirit. Verse 2 Before they became Christians, they *worshipped *idols.*Idols are not real. But people were really *worshipping *demons when they*worshipped *idols. That is what Paul said. The *demons had led them to believethat wild cries were messages from the gods. Verse 3 There was a way to decide whether a *spirit was good orbad. Those who spoke a *curse on Jesus could not have spoken by Gods Spirit.*Jews would use a *curse like this because Jesus died on a *cross. This wasbecause of the Law in Deuteronomy 21:23. It said that God would *curse anyonewho hung on a tree. Paul had tried to make Christians *curse when he wasopposing them (Acts 26:11). This was before he became a Christian. Later on,*Roman rulers attacked Christians. Then Christians had to *curse Jesus or die. Jesus is *Lord was probably the earliest statement of Christianbelief. It meant that a person obeyed Christ as his master. The *Holy Spiritwould help him to love other people. The selfish Christians divided the church.They were as bad as those who *cursed Jesus. 2. A variety of gifts 12:4-11 v4 There are different kinds of gifts. But the same*Holy Spirit gives them all. v5 There are different ways to serve. Butthey all come from the same *Lord. v6 There are different ways to work.But the same God is giving all of them to people. v7 The *Holy Spiritgives each person a special gift to use for the benefit of everyone. v8 The *Holy Spirits gift to one person is the powerto speak with wisdom. To another person, the same *Holy Spirit gives themessage of knowledge. v9 To another person, the same *Holy Spirit gives*faith. To another person, that one *Holy Spirit gives the power to heal. v10To another person, he gives the power to do *miracles. To another person, hegives the gift of *prophecy. To another person, he gives the power to see thedifference between *spirits. To another person, he gives the power to speak indifferent tongues. And to another person, he gives the power to explain whatpeople said in those tongues. v11 All these gifts are the work of the same *HolySpirit. He gives these gifts to each person exactly as he has decided. Verses 4-7 Paul wants to emphasise the unity of the church. Healso wants to show that in the church there are different gifts. But thesegifts are for the benefit of the whole church. They are not just for thebenefit of the person who received the gift. Paul speaks about God (verse 6),the *Lord (verse 5) and the *Holy Spirit (verse 7) as the source of *spiritualgifts. He did not mean that each gift had a different origin. The same Godgives every gift. Verses 8-10 Paul gives a list of the *Holy Spirits gifts. He didnot intend to write a complete list. There are other gifts in similar lists (1Corinthians 12:28-30; Romans 12:6-8). Paul was just giving examples of the*Holy Spirits gifts to Christians. There are nine examples. Writers try to put them into different groups: 1. wisdom and knowledge, verse 8. Paul probably began with these because the people in Corinthemphasised them. Wisdom comes from God. In 1 Corinthians 2:10-13 Paul speaksabout Gods plan to give us *salvation by Christ. By wisdom, Paul means thatwe understand this with the help of the Holy Spirit. And we speak it. The *HolySpirit speaks to us. And he shows us what God is like. Then we can share*spiritual truth with other people. Knowledge is to understand Gods messagefor a particular situation. 2. *faith, power to heal and *miracles, verses 9-10. *Faith means great *faith that the *Holy Spirit gives. Someonewith this *faith believes that God will show his power or *mercy in a specialsituation. Elijah on Mount Carmel had this *faith (1 Kings chapter 18). Ahundred years ago in England, a man had a home for hundreds of children withoutparents. He had the *faith to believe that God would supply their needs. Goddid supply their needs, sometimes in very wonderful ways. Power to heal The book of Acts showsthat the early *apostles healed the sick in the name and power of Jesus (Acts3:6). Today God continues to heal the sick. He does so through prayer and the*faith of particular Christians. He also works through doctors and medical discoveries. *Miracles These would include power to heal and other works ofpower. The *exorcism of evil *spirits would be one example. 3. *prophecy, verse 10. By *prophecy, Paul means a message that the *Holy Spirit gives.It is to call people to live in Gods way. Like the *Old Testament *prophets, aChristian could warn those who were not obeying God. He would urge them tochange their ways. He would show them the behaviour that God expected. 4. the power to see the difference between *spirits, verse 10. Gods Spirit would tell members of the church who was speakingthe truth. Other *spirits came from the *devil. 5. The gift of tongues and the power to explain their meaning,verse 10. Tongues are sounds usually in no known human language. Othermembers of the church could not understand what the speaker was saying topraise God. It needed someone with a special gift to explain the meaning. Itseems that the Christians at Corinth emphasised this gift very much. In partsof the Christian church today, to speak in tongues is important to the members.Paul shows his own attitude in chapter 13. In chapter 14, he also gives adviceabout what should happen in church meetings. Verse 11 All the gifts that Paul has mentioned are the work ofGods *Spirit. The *Holy Spirit decides what gift or gifts each Christianshould have. He gives them to help all the Christians to work together. Thenthey can spread Gods *kingdom. 3. The body of Christ 12:12-31 v12 A human body is one body. But it has many parts.Although it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ. v13The *Holy Spirit *baptised us all into one body. It was the same for *Jews orGreeks, slaves or free men. Now we all drink from that same Spirit. v14 Now it is not only one part that makes the body.It has many parts. v15 Suppose that the foot says, I am not a hand. SoI do not belong to the body. It would still be part of the body. v16And suppose that the ear says, I am not an eye. So I do not belong to thebody. It would still be part of the body. v17 If the whole body were aneye, it could not hear. If the whole body were an ear, it would have no senseof smell. v18 But God has arranged the parts of the body. They are justas he wanted them to be. v19 It would not be a body if all the partswere the same. v20 As it is, there are many parts. But there is only onebody. v21 The eye cannot say to the hand, I do not needyou! And the head cannot say to the feet, I do not need you! v22 Itis the opposite. We cannot do without the parts of the body that seem to beweaker. v23 And we give special attention to those parts that weconsider less important. We give special care to the private parts. v24The parts that we can see do not need special care. But God has joined togetherall the parts of the body. And he has given more honour to the parts of thebody that had no honour. v25 In that way there should be no divisions inthe body. All of the parts will look after each other. v26 If one partsuffers, every part suffers with it. If one part receives honour, every partshares its joy. v27 You are the body of Christ. Each one of you ispart of it. v28 First, God has appointed *apostles in the church.Second, he has appointed *prophets. Third, he has appointed teachers. Then hehas appointed people who do *miracles. And he has appointed those who have thepower to heal. He has also appointed those who are able to help other people.And he has appointed those who are able to organise things. He has given somethe power to speak in different kinds of tongues. v29 Everyone cannot bean *apostle. Not everyone can be a teacher. Everyone cannot work *miracles. v30Nor does everyone have power to heal. Not everyone can speak in tongues orexplain the meaning of tongues. v31 But you should be eager to have thebetter gifts. And now I will show you the best way of all. Verses 12-13 Paul has already said, We, who are many, are onebody (10:17). The *Holy Spirit had *baptised them all into one body. There wasno difference between those from different nations, or in different places insociety. Christians are like Christs body on earth. They should speak and workfor him. Verses 14-21 Some Christians in Corinth thought that they weresuperior to other people. Their gifts were easier to see and other peoplenoticed them. Other people thought that they had no gifts. Or they thought thattheir gifts were less important. So there was false pride in the church. Andsome people became jealous. A human body is only healthy if all the parts worktogether. Every part is essential. Each limb is important. It would be stupidfor the foot to be jealous of the hand. The word for foot in Greek is verysimilar to the word for ear. So, Paul chose the ear as his second example.Both the ears and the eyes are important parts of the body. One without theother would stop the body from being whole. Paul shows that there would be nosense if a body had only one part. God has created a body with many differentparts. But it is still one body. Verses 22-24 The weaker parts are the internal parts like theheart. Although they are not in view, no one can live without them. Theprivate parts means the parts of the body that are for *sexual functions.People make sure to be modest because they cover them with special care. Thereis no need to give special honour to the parts of the body that we can see. Verses 25-26 God has arranged the parts of the body so that theyall work together. One part that suffers makes the rest of the body suffer. Anache in a tooth affects the whole body. A pleasant meal satisfies the stomach.And it makes the whole person feel good. When believers are really like thebody of Christ, they respect each other. They sympathise with each other. Theyare sad when something or someone hurts another Christian in any way. They areglad when something makes another Christian happy. Verses 27-28 Paul describes the functions of different parts ofthe body of Christ. He seems to give them in order of their importance becausehe says first, second and third. But Paul has been writing about theimportance of all parts of the body. So, he is probably thinking about the waythat people become Christians. Then he thought about the way that people makeprogress in their *faith. *Apostles gave the message about Jesus Christ.*Prophets continued the work because they made them *spiritually stronger.Teachers gave them more information and helped them to understand their*faith better. Paul has already mentioned *miracles and power to heal (12:9-10).He adds the power to help other people. Christians can help in all kinds ofpractical ways. A person who organises things is like a person who guides aship into harbour. It is the same word as the modern Greek word for a pilot whomakes his aircraft land safely. A person with this gift gives wise advice tothe whole church. Paul mentions tongues last of all because it was a problem inthe church at Corinth. He wanted to show that it was only one of many differentgifts. Therefore, he spoke about other gifts first. Verse 31 This command seems to oppose what Paul says in verses29-30. There he emphasises the variety of gifts. And, in verses 21-26, he showshow each persons gifts are necessary for the rest of the Christian body. Heis not saying that some people are more important than other people. But hewill explain in 14:1-25, which are the greater gifts. They are those thatbenefit the church. But he first shows that no *spiritual gift has any valuewithout love. Chapter 13 v1 Suppose that I speak in the languages of peopleand *angels. If I have no love, I am only like a loud gong (a kind of musicalinstrument). Or I am like another noisy musical instrument. v2 Supposethat I have the gift of *prophecy. Suppose that I can understand all Godssecrets. And I know everything about him. And suppose that I have enough *faithto move mountains. If I do not have love, I am nothing at all. v3Perhaps I give everything that I have to poor people. Perhaps I allow people toburn my body. If I do not have love, I get nothing at all. Verse 1 The languages (tongues) of people would be foreignlanguages. But the language of *angels can only mean speech that people cannotunderstand. The Christians at Corinth were not using this gift in the rightway. Without love, their speech would be only a noise. Their speech would alsobe like a musical instrument that produces a loud crash, but no harmony.*Pagans would use such instruments in their excited *worship. A gong is a metalplate. It makes a loud noise when someone hits it with a stick. Verse 2 The Christians at Corinth also emphasised knowledge.But the person with the deepest knowledge and the greatest *faith is worthnothing without love. To move mountains was a way to say to overcome a verydifficult problem. Verse 3 The most generous act to help poor people would be of nouse without love. When he spoke about allowing people to burn his body, Paulmay have thought about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Daniel 3). He wasprobably using picture language for *sacrifice that was the result of pride.This would be of no advantage. 2. The nature of love 13:4-7 The special *New Testament word for love is agape. It is notthe natural love for a friend or a relative. It is the kind of love that Godshows to people. We do not deserve it and we can never earn it. So, when weknow Gods love, we should show that same love to other people. v4 People with love are patient. They are kind. Theydo not feel jealous. They do not *boast. They are not proud. v5 They donot behave badly. They do not look out for their own interests. They do noteasily become angry. They do not keep a record of how people have hurt them. v6They take no pleasure in anything that is evil. But they are happy with thetruth. v7 They always protect. They always trust. They always hope. Theynever give up. Verse 4a What love is like: Patience and kindness show Gods attitude to us (Romans 2:4; 2Peter 3:9). Jesus showed great patience with his *disciples. They were slow tounderstand what he taught. The fruit of the Spirit includes patience andkindness (Galatians 5:22). Verses 4b-7 What people with love do not do: The first five examples refer to the way that some Christians atCorinth were behaving. 1. They do not feel jealous. In Corinth, people were jealous ofeach others *spiritual gifts. There were also groups who were competing witheach other. They said that their leader was superior to the leader of otherpeople. Paul had to show that leaders were all Gods servants. They wereworking together to make his *kingdom grow (1 Corinthians chapter 3). 2. They do not *boast. There was a *Pharisee in the story in Luke18:9-12. He told God what a good person he (the *Pharisee) was. Some of theChristians at Corinth were *boasting that they had wisdom and knowledge. It isnot possible to *boast and to love at the same time. To *boast is to makepeople notice you. To love is to think about other people. And it is to workfor the whole church. 3. They are not proud. A proud person thinks too much about hisown importance. A Christian who shows love is humble. William Carey was ashoe-maker who went to India about 200 years ago. He translated parts of theBible into many different languages. But he did not think about himself as morethan someone who mended shoes. 4. They do not behave badly. To behave well means more than to bepolite. Some Christians at Corinth were not respecting other people. Somepeople were greedy and they were not thinking about other people at the *LordsSupper. They were without shame. To love means to think about other peoplesfeelings. 5. They do not look out for their own interests. Paul has alreadysaid that Christians should not use their freedom to act only for their ownbenefit (10:24). He repeated this advice to the Christians in Philippi(Philippians 2:4). 6. They do not easily become angry. Paul began his description oflove with the word patient. One kind of patience is to be able to keep calmwhen other people are angry. It does not answer insults with anger. 7. They do not keep a record of how people have hurt them. God inChrist does not keep a record of our *sins (2 Corinthians 5:19). So, the personwho loves does not keep remembering an action or insult against him. Somepeople say, I will forgive but I will not forget. This statement means thatthe person has not really forgiven his enemy. 8. They take no pleasure in evil things. They are happy with thetruth. It is a sad fact that people like to hear about the failures of otherpeople. Newspapers, television and radio often encourage an interest in otherpeoples *sins. A loving Christian does not try to find fault in other people.Love covers over a great number of *sins (1 Peter 4:8). Gossip can ruin apersons life. But a loving person is happy when anyone succeeds. 9. Verse 7 Paul ends his list by emphasising that love neverchanges. People with love do not talk about other peoples faults. They do notgive in to insults and difficulties. Christians can trust Gods promise to givethem hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). Christians can live with courage inevery circumstance. This is because of their trust in Gods love for themselvesand for other people. 3. Love is permanent 13:8-13 v8 Love never comes to an end. But where there are*prophecies, they will become of no use. Where there are tongues, they will becomesilent. Where there is knowledge, it will no longer be necessary. v9 Weknow only part of the truth now. And our *prophecy is only partly accurate. v10But that which is complete will come. And then what is not complete willdisappear. v11 When I was a child, I talked like a child. I thought likea child. I used to reason like a child. When I became a man, I did not behavelike a child any longer. v12 Now we see only a poor image in a mirror.Then we shall see face to face. Now I know only part. Then I shall knowcompletely. v13 And now, these three remain - *faith, hope and love. Butthe greatest of these is love. Verse 8 In verses 1-2, Paul spoke about three gifts. They were*prophecy, tongues and knowledge. He said that without love they had no value.Here he contrasts love with these gifts. Love is permanent. These gifts willall become unnecessary. Verses 9-10 In this life, our knowledge of God can never becomplete. One day, we will no longer need anything that is not complete. Thatwill happen in *eternity when Christ comes again. Verses 11-12 Paul uses two examples to show what he means: 1. An adult does not speak or think like a child. And he does notreason like a child. The behaviour of a child is only suitable while he remainsa child. *Spiritual gifts are necessary for the growth of the church. But theywill no longer be necessary in *eternity. 2. Corinth was famous for good mirrors. They did not have clearglass then, so they made them out of metal. But highly polished metal is not asgood as a modern glass mirror. It would reflect the image of a person, but nota perfect image. John said, We know that when Jesus appears, we shall be likehim. Because we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2). God already knows uscompletely. In the next age, we shall understand Gods ways. We cannotunderstand them completely in this life. Verse 13 *Faith, hope and love seem to have been a well-knowngroup of qualities. Paul speaks about them in other letters. For example, 1Thessalonians 1:3; Colossians 1:4-5. These three words explain the whole of theChristian life in this world. Christians have *faith that God will forgivethem because of Christs *sacrifice. They have hope for the future, becauseof Christs *resurrection. They live a life of *faith and hope among Christian*brothers and *sisters whom they love. Of these three, only love will remaininto *eternity. *Faith will no longer be necessary. Hope will become knowledge.Love is the greatest, because God himself is love (1 John 4:8). A friendshipwith him will never end, but it will continue into *eternity. Chapter 14 v1 Follow the way of love. You should be eager tohave the gifts of the *Holy Spirit. Most of all, you should want the gift of*prophecy. v2 Anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people. Hespeaks only to God. In fact, no one understands him. What he says with his*spirit is a mystery. v3 But anyone who *prophesies, speaks to people.He says things that make them stronger. He encourages and comforts them. v4The one who speaks in a tongue benefits his own *spiritual life. But the onewho *prophesies benefits the church. v5 I would like all of you to speakin tongues. But I would prefer that you *prophesy. Those who *prophesy are moreimportant than those who speak in tongues. But maybe those who speak in tonguesexplain what they have said. Then the whole church can receive *spiritual helpto benefit it. Verses 1-5 The Christians in Corinth were emphasising the gift oftongues. Paul possessed the gift himself (verse 18). But he was thinkingabout how all the members of the church could grow in their *faith. Verses 1-2 He urges the Christians at Corinth to desire *spiritualgifts. But especially they should want the gift of *prophecy. A Christian whopraised God in a tongue was helping himself. He was using sounds in no knownhuman language when he could not find words to use. But other people could notunderstand him. Verse 3 To give a message from God benefited the church. Peoplecould understand, so their *faith would grow. *Prophecy encouraged andcomforted members of the church. Verse 4 Paul makes the contrast clear. To speak in a tongue willhelp one person. To give a message from God for a particular situation helpsthe whole church. Verse 5 So Paul would prefer the Christians to *prophesy. It wasmore important for the church to understand what God wanted. Unless someoneexplained the tongues, the church would not become stronger. 2. Without meaning, speech is no use 14:6-12 v6 Now, *brothers and *sisters, suppose that I wereto speak in tongues to you. I would be no use to you. I would be no use unlessI came with some truth, knowledge, *prophecy or teaching. v7 Think aboutcertain things that make sounds. Musical instruments are examples. No one willknow the *tune unless they play different notes. v8 If the *trumpet doesnot make a clear call, no one will get ready for battle. v9 It is thesame with you. You must speak words that people can understand. If not, no onewill know what you are saying. You will just be speaking into the air. v10It is true that there are all kinds of languages in the world. They all havemeaning. v11 But I may not understand what someone is saying. Then I ama foreigner to that person. And he is a foreigner to me. v12 So it iswith you. You want to have *spiritual gifts. So, try to do your best. Use giftsthat benefit the church. Tongues are not helpful in church meetings, unless someoneexplains them. Paul uses four different ways to show this: 1. Verse 6 The church would not benefit if Paul spoke to theChristians at Corinth in tongues. He would help them only with messages thatthey could understand. 2. Verse 7 If musicians do not play distinct notes on theirinstruments, nobody will listen. Because they are not playing a proper tune (apleasant series of notes), nobody will enjoy the music. 3. Verses 8-9 The army used a *trumpet to call people to battle.They must prepare for battle. But if the sound was not clear, no one would getready. Christians are fighting a battle against *Satan. So, they must be ableto make people understand the dangers in their *spiritual lives. They arewasting their breath if people cannot understand their words. 4. Verses 10-11 There are many different languages. Each has itsown meaning. But two people cannot talk to each other if they do not understandeach others language. The Greeks described foreign languages as ugly noiseslike bar, bar, bar. Verse 12 Paul tells the Christians in Corinth that they too arepreventing people from understanding them. They are like musical instrumentsthat are not playing in harmony. They are like a *trumpet that does not warnabout danger. It is as if they are speaking a foreign language. They must notbe selfish. Instead, they should use the *spiritual gifts that make the wholechurch strong. 3. The need to pray for understanding 14:13-19 v13 For this reason, anyone who speaks in a tongueshould pray for the power to explain his words. v14 Because if I pray ina tongue, my *spirit prays. But my mind does nothing. v15 So this iswhat I shall do. I will pray with my *spirit. But I will also pray with mymind. I will sing with my *spirit. But I will also sing with my mind. v16Suppose that you are praising God with your *spirit. And perhaps there arepeople among you who do not understand. These people cannot say *Amen whenyou give thanks. They do not know what you are saying. v17 You may begiving thanks well enough. But the other person is not receiving help to growin his *faith. v18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any ofyou. v19 But in the church, I would rather speak 5 words that people canunderstand than speak 10 000 words in a tongue. That is because I would then beteaching other people. Verses 13-15 It is important to

splendid flower with bright coloursgrows from the seed. In the same way, when the human body dies, the risen bodywill be much more wonderful. It has a relationship with the human body, but itis different. When Jesus rose again, his friends could recognise him. But hisappearances were sudden. He could enter a room, although the *disciples hadlocked the doors. As soon as the two people who had walked to Emmaus recognisedhim, he disappeared (Luke 24:31). The risen body will not die or have any *physical weaknesses. Thehuman body has lost some of its honour because of *sin. All people fall shortof the *glory of God (Romans 3:16). But the risen body will be *glorious. The*Lord Jesus - - - will change our weak human bodies. He will make them like his*glorious body (Philippians 3:20-21). In the *Lords prayer, we say that thepower and the *glory belong to God. Our risen bodies will have both power and*glory. They will be more like God. And so they will be suitable bodies for usto live in heaven. Verses 45-50 The first man, Adam, was a man of dust (Genesis2:7). All of us are like Adam. God raised Jesus, the last Adam, from thedead. The *resurrection of Jesus showed that he was the man from heaven. Allthose who belong to Jesus will receive his life. Jesus is a *spirit who giveslife. These human bodies cannot enter heaven after death, because there is nodeath in heaven. The time of the *resurrection body 15:51-57 v51 Listen! I tell you a mystery. We will not alldie, but God will change us all. v52 That will happen in a flash, asquickly as an eye shuts and opens again. It will happen when the last *trumpetsounds. The *trumpet will sound and God will raise the dead to live for ever.And God will change us. v53 Our natural bodies do not last for ever. Theymust put on the clothing of a body that lasts for ever. What dies must have theclothing of what does not die. v54 That is what will happen. The bodythat does not last will receive the clothing of a new body. It will be a bodythat lasts. The body that dies will receive a new body. It will be a body thatwill never die. Then what *Scripture says will come true: God will destroydeath completely. v55 Death will have no *victory. Death will have nosting. v56 The sting of death is *sin. And the power of *sin is thelaw. v57 But we give thanks to God. He gives us the *victory through our*Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 51 Christians who have died will receive a *resurrectionbody. Paul has explained that. Now he speaks about other Christians. ThoseChristians will still be alive when Jesus comes again. The *Holy Spirit hasshown Paul what nobody knew before. Those still alive will need a differentbody. It must be suitable for heaven. Verses 52-54 In a flash translates the word atom, which issomething very tiny. So it will be in the very shortest time. The change from ahuman body to a *spiritual body will happen very quickly. A *trumpet gave asignal that the enemy had lost the battle. In the *Old Testament it is oftenone of the signs of the Day of the *Lord (for example Joel 2:1). The sound ofthe last *trumpet will tell everyone that Jesus has defeated death. It is thetime of Jesus return. Then God will change our human bodies into *spiritualbodies. It will be like when a person changes his clothes. Paul used the wordsfrom Isaiah 25:8 to show that Gods *victory over death was complete. Verses 55-56 The *prophet Hosea spoke about death as if it were aperson. He asked where its *victory came from (Hosea 13:14). Paul used thesewords to show that there is no longer a need to fear death. A sting is thepainful and poisonous attack from an insect or a snake. The law showed what*sin is like. And it made us all guilty in front of God. *Sin is like thepoison that leads to death. It makes us afraid to meet God. Verse 57 Christs last words on the *cross were It is finished(John 19:30). He had destroyed the power of death. God raised Christ from thedead. So he will also raise those who belong to Christ. So Paul ends histeaching about the *resurrection with words of praise. The demand for action 15:58 v58 So my dear *brothers and *sisters, stand firm. Donot let anything move you from your *faith. Always do the *Lords work with allyour power. Your work will not be without worth. Since you belong to the *Lord,you can be sure about that. Verse 58 Paul ends by encouraging his Christian *brothers and*sisters. They have the promise of the *resurrection. So they should not letanything disturb their *faith. They should not let anything destroy their*faith. They should do all that they can to work for Christ. Anything that theydo for the *Lord will certainly be worthwhile. Chapter 16 v1 Now I will write about the money for Gods people.Do what I told the churches in Galatia to do. v2 On the first day ofevery week you should put some money away. The amount of money should be inproportion to the amount that a person earns. Save the money. Then, when Icome, you will not have to collect money. v3 Then, when I arrive, I willrecommend some people to take your gift to Jerusalem. They will be men that youconsider to be honest. v4 If it seems right for me to go as well, theywill go with me. 1. Paul had promised the leaders of the church in Jerusalem thathe would remember the poor people in Jerusalem (Galatians 2:9-10). There hadbeen a great lack of food (Acts 11:27-30). There were many Christian widows(Acts 6:1-6). There was probably a lack of paid work. 2. Paul wanted Christians to realise that *faith must cause us toact practically. They could show their love for each other if they helped poorpeople by gifts of money. Paul used the word charis to show that their moneywas a gift (1 Corinthians 16:3). He also talked about this gift in 2Corinthians 8:4. There he used the Greek word koinonia to emphasise that theywere sharing with each other. It was an honour to give this help (2 Corinthians9:12). 3. Paul was eager to unite *Jewish and *Gentile Christians. Theywere part of one church, with responsibility for each other. The questions Verse 1 Now I will write about shows that Paul was replying toquestions from Corinth. They may have asked him 1. how to organise the collection of money; 2. what the arrangements were to send the money to Jerusalem. Pauls advice Verses 2-3 The first day of the week was the day of the*resurrection of Jesus. So it was a day on which Christians met for *worship(Acts 20:7). So to set aside money on that day was part of their *worship. Itwas a way to thank God. A single collection would produce some money. Butregular collections over a period of time would produce more money. If oneChristian was not as rich as another Christian, he would give less. The richChristians should give more. But they all had the opportunity to share. A number of people together would make travel safer. They wouldbe carrying a large sum of money. They should be men that the local churchesapproved of. That would remove any idea that Christians were not honest. Acts20:4 gives the names of some of these men. The Christians in Corinth took more than a year to make theircollection. We know that from 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9. So Paul had tourge them to complete it. But the collection did reach Jerusalem. Later, Paultold Felix that he had come to Jerusalem to bring gifts to his nation (Acts24:17). Pauls plans 16:5-9 v5 After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you.I will be travelling through Macedonia. v6 So perhaps I will stay withyou for a while. I might even spend the winter with you. Then you can help meon my journey wherever I go. v7 I do not want to see you now and makeonly a passing visit. I hope to spend some time with you, if the *Lord allowsit. v8 But I will stay on at Ephesus until *Pentecost. v9 That isbecause there is a very good opportunity for me to do some good work here. Andthere are many people who oppose me. Verses 5-6 Some Christians in Corinth had doubted whether Paulwould visit them (4:19). Pauls plans were not certain. But he hoped to visitCorinth after he had gone through Macedonia. He intended just to make a quick tourof the churches in Philippi and Thessalonica, but not to stay long. Perhaps hewas worried about whether they were believing the right things. Some *JewishChristians were trying to say that *Gentile Christians should keep *Jewishlaws, including the law about *circumcision. Maybe that is why Paul needed tovisit them. But Paul hoped to spend some time at Corinth. He might even spendthe winter there. People did not usually travel during the winter. Verses 8-9 Paul thought that there was a great opportunity to*preach the *gospel at Ephesus. So he would stay there until *Pentecost. Otherchurches in Asia were the result of Pauls stay in Ephesus for two years.People who had become Christians visited other places. They started churchesthere. For example, Epaphras had probably started the church at Colossae(Colossians 1:7). These churches were probably the ones that John named as theseven churches in Asia (Revelation 1:11). Paul was the *Lords servant. So his plans always changed if the*Lord guided him. Paul had many enemies in Ephesus. Acts chapter 19 tells ushow *Jews spoke out against him. And so did Demetrius and other workers, whomade money from the *worship of Diana. Because they were losing trade, theybegan a public protest against Paul. He could easily have died. Acts 20:1-3shows that Paul carried out his plan to go through Macedonia to Corinth. Hestayed in Corinth for three months. Timothy and Apollos 16:10-12 v10 Timothy might come. If he does come, he will bestaying with you. Make sure that he has nothing to worry about. He is doing the*Lords work, just as I am. v11 So nobody should refuse to accept him.Send him on his way happily, so that he can return to me. I am expecting himalong with the *brothers. v12 Now I want to speak about our *brother Apollos. Iwanted him to go to you with the *brothers. I tried hard to persuade him. Hedid not want to go now. But he will go when he has the opportunity. Verses 10-11 Paul had said that he would send Timothy to visitthem (1 Corinthians 4:17). From Acts 19:22, we learn that he sent Timothy withErastus before him into Macedonia. Timothy was young (1 Timothy 4:12). Paulthought that some of the Christians in Corinth might not behave in a loving waytowards a young man. So, he reminded them that Timothy was doing the same workas himself. They should help Timothy as they would have helped Paul. It is notclear whether Paul and some Christians with him were expecting Timothy. Itcould be that Timothy and Erastus would be returning from their journey withsome other *brothers to meet Paul. Verse 12 Now I want to speak about suggests that the Christiansin Corinth had asked about Apollos. There were Christians there who admired theway that Apollos *preached (1:2). Paul showed that he and Apollos were friends.He had tried to persuade him to go back to Corinth. For some reason, Apollosdid not want to go at that time. He may have been too busy with the work inEphesus. If he went back to Corinth, perhaps the Christians there would divideagain (1:10-12). Perhaps he was worried about that. But Apollos would go at asuitable time. Some commands 16:13-14 v13 Watch all the time. Be firm in the *faith. Bebrave. Be strong. v14 Do everything with love. Verse 13 Paul means that they must watch out for the enemy ofChrist. The *devil is like a lion that is looking for someone to destroy (1Peter 5:8). They must not allow people with wrong ideas to make their *faithweak (Acts 20:30-31). They must be ready at all times for Christs return (Mark13:38). They must have courage and act like responsible adults. They will needstrength to keep their *faith pure from wrong ideas and wrong behaviour. Verse 14 This final command is about the relationships ofChristians to each other, and to those outside the church. Paul had shown themwhat love was like in chapter 13. Everything was a necessary word because ofall their quarrels and selfish behaviour. Paul had heard about the way thatthey went to the courts with each other (6:1-11). He had blamed them for the waythat they behaved at the *Lords Supper (11:17-22). They did not think aboutthe gifts of other people when they met for *worship (chapter 14). So they mustact with love in all that they do. In that way, they would show their*spiritual strength. Stephanas 16:15-18 v15 You know that the first believers in Achaia werefrom the family of Stephanas. They have spent all their time to serve Godspeople. *Brothers and *sisters, v16 I urge you to obey people like that.Follow everyone who works hard at the task with me. v17 I was glad whenStephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived. They gave me what you could notgive me. v18 They have cheered me up and they have cheered you up aswell. You should appreciate people like them. They deserve your honour. Verse 15 Paul had *baptised Stephanas and his family (1:16). Theywere the first people to become Christians in the region called Achaia.Stephanas and his family had taken the responsibility to serve otherChristians. Verse 16 Paul says that those who serve can lead other people. Heurged the Christians at Corinth to obey people like Stephanas. They should obeyanyone else who worked in this way. He used the word task. It meant that suchwork was not easy. It required great effort. Verse 17 Fortunatus and Achaicus may have been slaves whobelonged to the home of Stephanas. They had arrived from Corinth with newsabout what was happening there. Paul had felt sad without his friends inCorinth. These three made him feel that he was not completely separate from allof his friends in Corinth. Verse 18 It had been a great pleasure for Paul to receive them.It was good for the Christians at Corinth to send their messages to Paul. Thethree men may have taken Pauls letter back to Corinth. Final greetings 16:19-24 v19 The churches in Asia send you greetings. Aquilaand Priscilla send you warm good wishes in the *Lord. So does the church thatmeets in their house. v20 All the *brothers send you greetings. Greeteach other with a holy kiss. v21 I, Paul, write this greeting with myown hand. v22 If anyone does not love the *Lord, let a *curse be uponthat person. Come, *Lord. v23 I pray that the *grace of the *Lord Jesuswill be with you. v24 I give my love to you all because of your *faithin Christ Jesus. Verse 19 The churches in the region called Asia were those thatChristians had established during Pauls stay in Ephesus. He stayed there fortwo years. Revelation chapters 2 and 3 tell us the places where those churcheswere. Aquila and his wife Priscilla were good friends of Paul. They hadlived in Rome. But the *Roman ruler Claudius had ordered the *Jews to leaveRome. This was perhaps because of trouble in a *synagogue. This trouble mayhave been because *Jews opposed Christian *preaching (Acts 18:2). When Paularrived in Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla gave him a home. He worked with themin their business to make tents (Acts 18:1-3). They travelled with Paul toEphesus. They remained there when he returned to Antioch. While he was away,they taught Apollos more about *Christianity (Acts 18:24-26). Then theyreturned to Rome, perhaps to prepare for Pauls intended visit. A group ofChristians met in their house. Paul says that they risked their lives for him.We do not know when this was. Paul says that he and the members of all the*Gentile churches are grateful to them (Romans 16:3-5). Verse 20 Paul does not name the *brothers. But he means all theChristians who were working with him in Ephesus. Paul encourages them to greet each other with a holy kiss. Akiss was a normal greeting in Pauls time. Paul refers to this in three otherletters. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 2 Corinthians 13:12; Romans 16:16.) Peterrefers to a kiss of love (1 Peter 5:14). It was a holy kiss because itshowed the special relationship of Gods holy people with each other. Itbecame part of the service of the *Lords Supper. But Judas used a kiss thatwas a false greeting (Luke 22:48). Verse 21 Pauls personal greeting is in his own handwriting. Heusually dictated his letters to someone who wrote them down. We know thatTertius wrote down the letter to the Christians in Rome (Romans 16:22). Paulssignature would show that the letter was genuine. He wrote in Galatians 6:11about his large handwriting. In 2 Thessalonians 3:17, he said that the greetingin his own handwriting was in all his letters. Verse 22 All those who did not love Jesus ought to suffer Godspunishment. Maranatha is an Aramaic word that means Our *Lord, come.(Aramaic was the language that Jesus spoke.) Even Christians who spoke Greekknew this word. So the early Christians must have used it. It may have been asecret sign of Christians to each other. But it certainly was a prayer thatJesus would return soon. It is like the prayer at the end of Revelation(Revelation 22:20): Come, *Lord Jesus. Verse 23 Paul prays that the *grace of the *Lord Jesus will bewith his friends. Paul always ended his letters like this. Verse 24 Paul ends this letter by sending his love to them all.In parts of his letter, he had blamed them for their actions. Many people hadopposed Paul in Corinth. But he sent his love to all of them. They were allunited because of their *faith in Christ Jesus. So the *apostle of Christ Jesus(1:1) showed the same love as his *Lord. Word List altar ~ a table on which people placed *sacrifices. Amen ~ we agree; it is true; that is right; let it be so. ancestor ~ a member of ones family in the past from whomones parents came. angel ~ Gods special servant, who brings his messages. apostle ~ a person that God or Jesus sent out to teachabout Jesus. baptise, baptism ~ to put a person in water as a sign thathe is clean from past *sins. being ~ a person or animal that is alive. blessings ~ causes of happiness. boast ~ talk with too much pride. brother ~ Paul calls the Christians his brothers and*sisters because they are all in Gods family. Christianity ~ what people believe and teach about Jesus. circumcise, circumcision ~ to remove loose skin from theend of the male sex part; a sign of Gods agreement with the *Jews. commandments ~ rules that God gave; the ten importantrules that God gave to Moses on the mountain of Sinai. covenant ~ agreement. cross ~ wooden structure on which the *Romans killedpeople; to move one thing over another thing. crucify, crucifixion ~ kill on a *cross. curse ~ wish evil upon someone. demon, devil ~ a bad *spirit that acts against God. Thedevil is Gods chief enemy. disciple ~ person who learns from his master. dough ~ bread mixture before you bake it. eternal ~ without beginning or end. eternity ~ the future life in heaven; time with no end. exorcism ~ when someone frees a person or place from anevil *spirit. faith ~ trust in someone or something; what people believeabout Jesus. feast ~ special meal, *religious ceremony. foundation ~ base on which a building or a belief rests. Gentiles ~ people who are not *Jews. glorious ~ very beautiful and splendid. glory ~ great beauty and honour. gospel ~ the good news about Jesus. grace ~ Gods love that no one deserves. grape ~ a small, sweet fruit that people make wine (adrink with alcohol) from. Hebrew ~ the language that the *Jews spoke. Holy Spirit ~ the Spirit of God; the Spirit of Jesus. homosexuals ~ people of the same sex who have sex witheach other. idol ~ false god. influence ~ the power to persuade. Israelite ~ a *Jewish person. Jew, Jewish ~ a person whose *ancestor was Abraham. kingdom ~ area that a king rules; people that God rules. lamb ~ young sheep. Levite ~ a person from the*tribe of Levi. God chosethem to work for him in his*temple. Lord ~ master, God, Jesus. manna ~ food from God. It came down from the sky. It waslike bread. mercy ~ to be kind when you do not have to be kind. Messiah ~ *Jewish word for the king who would come torescue them. miracle ~ a great thing that only God can do. New Testament ~ the last part of the Bible, which thewriters wrote after the life of Jesus. offering ~ a gift to please God. Old Testament ~ the first part of the Bible, which thewriters wrote before the life of Jesus. pagan ~ a person who *worships many gods or who has no*religious belief. Passover ~ annual ceremony to remember Gods rescue of the*Jews from Egypt. Pentecost ~ day when the *Jews thanked God for their food;day when God gave the *Holy Spirit to the church. Pharisee ~ one of a group of *Jews who thought that theykept all Gods rules. They did not like the things that Jesus taught. Theythought that they did not do any wrong things. So, they thought that they werevery important and clever. physical ~ about the body. preach ~ tell people about Jesus and how to live forJesus. priest ~ a man who gave gifts and burned animals as a*sacrifice to God for the *Jews; a man whom God chose to do things for him. prophecy ~ a message from God. prophesy ~ to give a message from God. prophet ~ a person who tells what God wants. prostitute ~ a woman who has sex with men for money. religious ~ something that people do as part of the*worship of God. resurrection ~ to become alive after death. revelation ~ something that God makes known to people. Roman ~ Rome was the capital city of the rulers at thattime. That which belonged to Rome was Roman. sacrifice ~ a gift to God to ask him to forgive sins; orto thank him for something. A gift to God, often an animal or bird, by the*Jews to ask God to forgive their *sins. Jesus gave himself to die as a*sacrifice for our *sins. salvation ~ rescue from evil things; Gods forgivenessthat makes us well in body, mind and *spirit. Satan ~ the chief evil *spirit. save ~ rescue from *sin and its results. Saviour ~ the one who rescues people from evil things. Scripture(s) ~ book(s) of the Bible. seal ~ a sign that something is genuine. sexual ~ about sex. sin ~ to break Gods laws; to fail to give God honour;what we do when we break Gods laws. sinful ~ when people do things against God or otherpeople; when we do not obey Gods rules; when we do not do what God wants us todo; the bad things that are in us which we have from birth. sister ~ Paul calls the Christians his *brothers andsisters because they are all in Gods family. soul ~ the part of a person that lives on after death. spirit ~ the part of us that lives when our body dies; a*being that is always alive, even without a body; the part of a person thatwill always be alive, even after their body is dead. There are good spirits,like Gods Spirit and his *angels. And there are bad spirits, like *Satan andhis *angels. spiritual ~ about the *spirit. statue ~ a person or animal that someone made out of metalor wood. steward ~ a person who looks after another persons houseor land. synagogue ~ a building where *Jews gather for prayer; aplace for *Jews to meet. temple ~ building in which to *worship a god; the buildingin Jerusalem where *Jews went to *worship God. tempt, temptation ~ try to make someone do wrong. thanksgiving ~ an expression of thanks to God. thresh ~ to hit material like wheat so that the grains fallout; to separate grain from straw. tradition ~ belief that passes from person to person. trial ~ a legal examination by which a judge decides if aperson has done a crime; the examination of a person in a court of law todiscover whether he is guilty of a crime. tribe ~ the whole family of one of Jacobs 12 sons. Afamily from the same father. trumpet ~ loud musical instrument; to play it, you blowinto the tube. tune ~ a pleasant series of notes. uncircumcised ~ people that had not got *circumcision. victory ~ success against an enemy. vineyard ~ place where *grapes grow. virgin ~ woman who has never had sex with a man. warning ~ when we warn someone. We say that we are givingthem a warning. worship ~ show honour to God. yeast ~ yeast is put into flour and water to make bread.The yeast grows in the bread and makes the bread grow bigger. Book List William Barclay ~ The Letters to the Corinthians ~ St AndrewsPress, 1975 Donald Coggan ~ Meet Paul ~ SPCK, 1998 Gordon D. Fee ~ The First Epistle to the Corinthians ~ NewInternational Commentary ~ Eerdmans, 1987 Hans Fror ~ You wretched Corinthians (translated by John Bowden)~ SCM, 1995 Michael Green ~ To Corinth with love ~ Hodder & Stoughton,1982 Leon Morris ~ 1 Corinthians ~ Tyndale NT Commentaries ~ IVP, 1985 Jerome Murphy-OConnor ~ 1 Corinthians ~ Peoples BibleCommentary~ BRF, 1999 David Prior ~ The message of 1 Corinthians ~ The Bible speakstoday ~ IVP, 1993 Concise Oxford Dictionary Chambers 21st Century Dictionary Thesaurus ~ Geddes and Grosset Bibles NIV NIV Readers version J B Phillips Jerusalem Bible TEV 1997-2004, Wycliffe Associates (UK) This publication is written in EasyEnglish Level B (2800 words). December 2004 Visit ourwebsite: www.easyenglish.bible 1. (1 Corinthians 12:1-3) Introduction to the topic of spiritual gifts. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. a. Now concerning spiritual gifts: The word gifts is added by the translators. Literally, Paul now addresses spirituals, after discussing all the areas of Corinthian carnality. But adding gifts is justified by the context. i. Clarke defines spiritual gifts as Gracious endowments, leading to miraculous results these all came by the extraordinary influences of the Holy Spirit. b. I do not want you to be ignorant: The Corinthian Christians are given a reminder that is good for us, also. Perhaps we are ignorant of things regarding spiritual gifts, and we should not be. i. Paul, in his letters, names three things he does not want Christians to be ignorant of: Sadly, many Christians are ignorant on these exact points. c. You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols: Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to remember that their past of pagan idolatry did not prepare them for an accurate understanding of spiritual gifts. He did not want them to be ignorant, but because they were Gentiles, they came to the issue of spiritual gifts as ignorant. i. Our past teaching and experiences have perhaps built a poor understanding of the Holy Spirit and His gifts. It is easy for us to take our materialistic or superstitious views into our understanding of spiritual gifts. d. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed: Here, Paul lays down a broad principle for discerning matters regarding spiritual gifts - judge things by how they relate to Jesus Christ. Does a supposed spiritual gift glorify Jesus? Does it promote the true Jesus or a false one? i. Jesus made it plain, saying that when the Holy Spirit would come, He will testify of Me (John 15:26), and He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you (John 16:14). The ministry of the Holy Spirit is not to promote Himself or any man, but to glorify and represent Jesus. We can, therefore, trust that the true ministry of the Holy Spirit will be according to the nature of Jesus. 2. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6) Diversity and unity of the gifts. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. a. There are diversities of gifts: Paul will go on to list some nine spiritual gifts in the following verses, and more in other places. There is indeed a diversity of gifts! Yet there is only one Giver, who works through the diverse gifts. b. Diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit: The gifts are diverse, the ministries are different, and the activities are diverse. But it is all the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God doing the work through the gifts, the ministries, and the activities. i. Ministries probably has in mind the different gifted offices in the church, such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers, as Paul also described in Ephesians 4. Pauls point is clear: though there are different offices, it is the same Lord granting the offices and directing the service. ii. The Greek word for activities is energemata, where we get our words energy, energetic, and energize from. It is a word of active, miraculous power. Activities is the same word as working in 1 Corinthians 12:10 (the working of miracles). Differences of activities means that God displays and pours out His miraculous power in different ways, but it is always the same God doing the work. c. Gifts, ministries, activities: What are the differences between gifts, ministries, activities, and the manifestation of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7)? All of these are gifts. Some gifts are ministries standing offices or positions in the church. Some gifts are activities miraculous events or outpourings at a particular time and place (such as the manifestation of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:7). i. Habits and powers, by which men performed holy offices in the church, or wrought miracles, are called gifts. The acts or exercise of these powers are called administrations and operations. These latter differ one from another, as the former signify standing and continuing acts in the church; operations, rather signify miraculous events, such as healing the sick without the application of miraculous means, speaking with diverse tongues, [and so forth]. (Poole) d. Gifts, ministries, activities: It is easy for us to focus on our own little area of gifts, ministries, or activities and believe that those who have other gifts, ministries, or activities are not really walking or working with God. Yet the one God has a glorious diversity in the way He does things. We should never expect it to be all according to our own emphasis and taste. e. Spirit, Lord, God: This passage also declares the Trinity in a typical, subtle New Testament flow. The gifts are the work of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus, and Father God. 3. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) The varieties of the manifestations of the Spirit. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. a. The manifestation of the Spirit is given: The Holy Spirit is always present in and among Christians. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, He may abide with you forever (John 14:16). However, at some times the Spirits presence is more apparent than at other times. There are times when He may choose to manifest Himself, that is, to make Himself apparent. i. However, we should never think the Holy Spirit is more present when He is manifested through the gifts. The Holy Spirit is always present with believers, but at times He is more apparent through the manifestation of the Spirit. b. Given to each one for the profit of all: The purpose of the manifestation of the Spirit is to benefit the whole church family, not just a particular individual. c. The manifestation of the Spirit: As Paul begins to mention different manifestations of the Spirit, he begins by mentioning the word of wisdom. This is the unique ability to speak forth the wisdom of God, especially in an important situation, as shown in Stephen (Acts 7) and Paul (Acts 23). d. The word of knowledge: The unique ability to declare knowledge that could only be revealed supernaturally, as shown in Jesus (Matthew 17:24-27) or Paul (Acts 27:10, 27:23-26). When Charles Spurgeon was saved, it was at the preaching of a man who directed a portion of his sermon right to young Spurgeon, and who supernaturally spoke right to where Spurgeons heart was. This is another example of the word of knowledge. i. We do well to understand the difference between the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. One may have great knowledge, even supernatural knowledge, yet have no wisdom from God in the application of that knowledge. ii. As well, we must always use discernment in receiving a word of knowledge, remembering that God is not the only source of supernatural knowledge. Even if a word is true, it does not mean that it is from God and that the one speaking the word is truly representing God. e. The gift of faith: Though faith is an essential part of every Christians life, the gift of faith is the unique ability to trust God against all circumstances, as Peter did when he walked out of the boat onto the water (Matthew 14:22-33). Another mighty example of the gift of faith was the Christian leader and philanthropist George Mueller, who in nineteenth century England provided for thousands of orphans completely by prayer, without ever asking for donations. f. Gifts of healings: This is Gods healing power, either given or received, and has been repeatedly documented in the New Testament and since. i. Adam Clarke on gifts of healings: The power which at particular times the apostles received from the Holy Spirit to cure diseases; a power which was not always resident in them; for Paul could not cure Timothy, nor remove his own thorn in the flesh; because it was given only on extraordinary occasions, though perhaps more generally than many others. g. Working of miracles: Literally dynameis, or acts of power. This describes when the Holy Spirit chooses to override the laws of nature (as a pilot might use manual controls), working in or through an available person. i. Gifts of healing and working of miracles often operate in conjunction with the gift of faith, as in Acts 3:1-8. These things are not done on the whim of the individual, as if the power to heal or work miracles was at their permanent disposal. Instead, they operate as an individual is prompted by God and given the faith to perform such a work (another example of this is in Acts 14:8-10). h. Prophecy: The telling-forth of Gods message in a particular situation, always in accord with His Word and His current work. Sometimes this has the character of foretelling the future, as in Acts 21:10-11 and Acts 27:21-26. i. Oftentimes, people who believe the miraculous gifts have been removed from the church, wish to define prophecy as preaching. Though this is common, it is inaccurate. There is a Greek word for preaching, and a Greek word for divinely-inspired speech. Paul uses the word for divinely-inspired speech, not preaching. Although good, Spirit-anointed preaching will often use the spontaneous gift of prophecy, it is inaccurate to define prophecy as good preaching. i. Discerning of Spirits: The ability to tell the difference between true and false doctrine, and between what is of the Holy Spirit and what isnt (Acts 8:18-23 and 16:16-18). i. Satan appears as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). He deceives with a false, tempting message (Genesis 2:16-3:5). There can be lying spirits in the mouths of prophets (1 Kings 22:21-23 and 2 Chronicles 18:20-22). Satan can speak right after God speaks (Matthew 16:23). Sometimes people who seem to say the right things are really from the devil (Acts 13:6-12 and 16:16-18). It is important to test the word of anyone who claims to speak from God (1 John 4:1-3). Satan can work deceiving miracles (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 and Revelation 13:11-14). The devil will try to infiltrate the church with false teachers (Jude 4 and 2 Peter 2:1-2). How we need the gift of discernment in the church today! j. The gift of tongues is a personal language of prayer given by God, whereby the believer can communicate with God beyond the limits of knowledge and understanding (1 Corinthians 14:14-15). Language is an agreement between parties, where it is agreed that certain sounds represent certain objects or ideas. When using the gift of tongues, we agree with God that as the Holy Spirit prays through us, though we may not understand what we are praying, God does. i. Tongues have an important place in the devotional life of the believer, but a small place in the corporate life of the church (1 Corinthians 14:18-19), especially in public meetings (1 Corinthians 14:23). ii. When tongues are practiced in the corporate life of the church, it is to be carefully controlled, and never without an interpretation given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:27-28). iii. The ability to pray in an unknown tongue is not a gift given to every believer (1 Corinthians 12:20). iv. The ability to pray in a tongue is not the evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit; this emphasis has led people to seek the gift of tongues (and to counterfeit it) merely to prove to themselves and others that they really are filled with the Holy Spirit. v. Many people believe the gift of tongues died with the apostles. Curiously, many of these define the gift of tongues as merely the ability to speak in other languages for the purpose of spreading the gospel in other languages. But that need has not changed one bit since the days of the apostles. Instead, the Bible clearly says that the gift of tongues is meant for an individuals communication with God, not with man (1 Corinthians 14:2). Even on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples spoke in tongues, they were not preaching to the crowd (Peter did that in the Greek language which was common to them all). Rather, they were praising God (speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God, Acts 2:11), and the crowd at the day of Pentecost heard the disciples excitedly praise God. vi. Often, those who speak in tongues today are mocked by those who deny the gift with the accusation that they are speaking gibberish. Acts 2 is wrongly used to support this, because Acts 2 tells us that those speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost were speaking intelligible languages understood by others. But it does not tell us that all of the 120 or so who spoke in tongues spoke in languages that could be understood. And we should not assume that those who were not immediately understood by the bystanders spoke gibberish, as tongues are referred to with derision. They may have praised God in a language completely unknown, yet human (what would the language of the Aztecs sound like to Roman ears?), or in a completely unique language given by God and understood by Him and Him alone. After all, communication with God and not man, is the purpose of tongues (1 Corinthians 14:2). The repetition of simple phrases, unintelligible and perhaps nonsensical to human bystanders, does not mean such speech is gibberish. Praise to God may be simple and repetitive, and part of the whole dynamic of tongues is that it bypasses the understanding of the speaker (1 Corinthians 14:14), being understood by God and God alone. k. The gift of the interpretation of tongues: This gift allows the gift of tongues to be of benefit for those other than the speaker, as they are able to hear and agree with the tongue-speakers words to God. l. Though in these verses we tend to focus on the list of gifts, Paul does not. Since he does not give a detailed description of each gift, it is probable that the Corinthian Christians were familiar with them all. What Paul emphasized is that each of these is by or through the same Spirit, repeating the idea five times and concluding with the statement, But one and the same Spirit works all these things. i. Apparently, the tendency for division among the Corinthian Christians had made them think separately or competitively about the gifts. Perhaps the tongues speakers thought themselves superior to the prophesiers, as if the gifts had come from two different gods! Paul emphasizes to them that one and the same Spirit works all these things, so they should reflect that same unity among themselves. m. Distributing to each one individually as He wills: Here is another reason for unity, and a reason against any sense of superiority regarding the gifts. They are distributed not according to the will of man, but as the Spirit of God wills - as He wills. i. As they are given as He wills, and sometimes if not often, the will and wisdom of God is different than our will and wisdom (Isaiah 55:8-9), we should never assume the gifts are distributed as we would distribute them. ii. Often, we assume spiritual gifts are given because a person is especially spiritually mature or closer to God, but this may not be the case at all. We should never assume that giftedness is connected to maturity. God can and does, for His own glory and purpose, distribute spiritual gifts to those who are not especially spiritually mature or close to Him. This is why spiritual giftedness is never the criteria for positions of leadership among Christians, but Christian maturity and character are (1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9). God can grant anyone remarkable spiritual gifts in a moment, but character and maturity take time to build. n. If the Spirit distributes to each one individually as He wills, why would He choose to give a particular gift at a particular moment? The larger reasons may not be apparent, but the goal of the Holy Spirits work is always to glorify Jesus and to build His nature and character in us. The Spirits goal is never to amaze or confuse, but to build the fruit of the Spirit, and He will use or not use any gift He thinks right towards that end. o. Distributing as He wills: Though the manifestations of the Spirit are given as the Spirit wills, the believer still must receive them with faith. He distributes and we receive, and the receiving and exercising of the gifts is often very natural. B. Are some of these gifts of the Holy Spirit no longer given to the Church today? 1. This is an issue that has greatly divided the body of Christ, both theologically, and spiritually. There are some who think those who believe all the gifts are for today (usually called Charismatics or Pentecostals) are deceived by Satan. There are others who think those who believe some of the gifts are no longer given are unspiritual and dead in their walk with God. a. Often, Calvary Chapel churches are respected for their Biblical balance when it comes to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and their place in church life. Calvary Chapels have sometimes been rightly seen as too Pentecostal for the Baptists and too Baptist for the Pentecostals; we have been called Pentebaptist or Baptcostal. b. However, balance is meaningless unless it is a Biblical balance. We dont want to strike a balance between heresy and truth. 2. First, we must understand the issue. Virtually no Christian believes all the gifts have ceased in the church today. All Christians believe the gifts of teaching and administration are given and needed in the church today. It is the gifts that have a miraculous nature which are in dispute. a. Therefore, many people divide up the gifts into different categories: communicative, administrative, miraculous. Then, they often say the miraculous gifts died out with the apostles or when the New Testament came together. Yet it is important to observe that such divisions and categories are not Biblical. Nowhere does any Biblical writer categorize the gifts in such a way, and then say some categories of gifts will remain but others will cease. b. So, more accurately, the question would be: Are all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit for today? Are some of them no longer being given by God? Those who teach against the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit definitely believe they have the gift of teaching, and they believe God still gives that gift today. 3. What does the Bible say about the continuation of all the gifts of the Spirit? a. Jesus made a promise in Mark 16:17-18: And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. i. This is a simple and straightforward promise, in context, given to those who are involved in spreading the gospel - they will be unstoppable, and God will even use miraculous means to protect them and make them effective. b. Acts 2:33, 39: Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call. The promise of the Holy Spirit - specifically including miraculous gifts - is a promise made to all generations. c. 1 Corinthians 14:12: Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. The purpose for spiritual gifts, even miraculous gifts, is the building up of the body of Christ and individual Christians; that need remains today. d. The natural, consistent testimony of the New Testament is that the miraculous gifts described in the New Testament have not been retracted. No one with a fresh reading of the Scriptures could ever come to such an understanding. i. There is no indication that miraculous gifts would die out when the apostles died. ii. There is no distinction made between sign gifts or miraculous gifts and other gifts in the New Testament; they come always and only as a package. iii. Little is said about the continuation of all the gifts because it was a given among the apostles. One might just as well ask, Where is the Scriptural evidence that someone can be saved beyond the time of the apostles? One would be hard pressed to find one conclusive verse to refute the argument, because it was simply assumed. 4. Why do some Christians believe some gifts of the Holy Spirit are no longer given by God today? a. They have a wrong understanding of history, and they believe that historically, the miraculous gifts actually did cease when the apostles died (or perhaps even before). b. They have a wrong understanding of 1 Corinthians 13:8, which says that tongues will cease (expl