

Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Studies

I Corinthians

“A Church Divided”



Bible Studies from Southside Bible Church
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I Corinthians



“A Church Divided”

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I CORINTHIANS

Introduction Part 1

Linda Justice

HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

The MacArthur New Testament Commentary of I Corinthians

Corinthian Church Established

Paul established the church at Corinth on his second missionary journey around A.D. 56.

We can read Paul's account in Acts 16:11-18:1. Paul had been preaching and working in Macedonia and other Greek cities for some time. After Phillipi, where he first ministered in Europe, he went to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and then Corinth.

When first arriving in Corinth he meets Aquila and Priscilla-tentmakers like himself. They were Jews who had been driven out of Rome. He stayed with them and began preaching in the synagogue weekly.

Paul stays in Corinth about 1 ½ years. (Acts 18:11) The opposition from the Jews became so strong he ended up before a Roman tribunal. Because the charges were religious the case was thrown out. He stays a little longer then leaves for Ephesus.

Culture in Corinth

To understand the book of I Corinthians it is vital to look at the culture in Corinth at the time the church was established.

Corinth is located on a large plateau. It is an isthmus between Athens and southern Greece. All north and south traffic had to pass through Corinth. Because sea travel was so treacherous many ship captains chose to load their ships on skids on rollers and cross the narrow isthmus by land directly past Corinth. This was much safer then sailing 250 miles around the peninsula. Corinth became a major trade center.

Corinth was destroyed by Romans in 146 B.C. then 100 years later rebuilt by Julius Caesar. The cosmopolitan population was made up of Greeks, Roman officials and business men, near eastern people, and Jews.

Most Greek cities had what was called a 'high city' or 'acropolis'. In Corinth this place was called the 'Acrocorinth'. It was situated about 2,000 feet high on a granite mound. It was used as a place of defense and for pagan worship. It was so large it could hold all the people of Corinth.

'Acrocorinth' was the home for the temple of Aphrodite or the goddess of love. Over 1,000 priestesses and prostitutes lived there and each night would visit the foreign travelers and local men in the city below.

The city of Corinth and its culture is one of the most vile mentioned in all of scripture. There is actually a Greek word 'corinthiazesthai' which means 'to practice sexual immorality' or 'to behave like a Corinthian.'

A Church in Crisis

It begins with consistent leadership or lack of. Paul starts the church then Apollos and Cephas (Peter) preach for a period time.

We know from the book of Acts Apollos was an eloquent speaker and a Jewish convert. He preached in Ephesus first before coming to Corinth. In Ephesus he meets Aquilla and Priscilla who help Apollos correct doctrinal errors. It is unclear if Apollos could have created some of the confusion while he was preaching at Corinth because of his inexperience and lack of wisdom. The church of Ephesus did give him a letter of recommendation.

Perhaps because of these changes in leadership with no one to shepherd and build a solid foundation for any length of time mass confusion resulted. The Jewish synagogue in the city was believed to be weak.

Three men- Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus came to Paul in Ephesus to make a contribution to his ministry. We see in I Cor. 5:9-10 that Paul had written previously to the church about their moral laxness. (This letter never published). Paul finds it necessary to write yet again. He now finds it necessary to clarify his instruction and to urge immediate and drastic action because the church continued to practice the culture.

The following is an outline describing the errors and problems plaguing the church. Paul is very specific in pointing out and solving issues directly related to the culture at that time. (Example- Chapter 7 is about 4 different types of marriages. Paul addresses each one and tells the church if they are right or wrong and why.)

OUTLINE

Calling and Benefits of Sainthood (1:1-9)

Errors and Problems in the Church Regarding:

Unity (1:10-16:4)

Servanthood (4:1-21)

Morality (5:1-6:20)

Marriage (7:1-40)

Liberty (8:1-11:1)

Men&Women (11:2-16)

Lord's Supper (11:17-34)

Spiritual gifts (12-14)

Resurrection (15)

Stewardship(16:1-4)

Greetings (16:5-24)

I CORINTHIANS

Introduction Part 2

Linda Justice

Life of the Apostle Paul

What does scripture tell us about the author?

I. His ancestry

- A. From the tribe of Benjamin. (Phil. 3:5)
 - 1. Twelfth son of Jacob (Gen. 49:1)
 - 2. After Solomon's death, Israel was divided.
 - 3. Tribe of Benjamin remained true to God and became part of the southern kingdom of Judah.
- B. After exile of the Jews from Babylon his ancestors migrated.
 - 1. Lived in the area of Asia Minor.
 - 2. Some Jews went to Jerusalem but Paul's family settled in Tarsus of Cilicia.

II. His family

- A. Mother was Jewish and mentioned only once in scripture. (Gal.1:15)
- B. Father was a Pharisee. (Acts 23:6)
- C. He had a sister and a nephew who took care of Paul's needs on occasion and protected him. (Acts 23:12-24)

- D. Andronicus and Junia-relatives that lived in Rome. (Rom.16:7,11,12)
1. They were saved before Paul and possibly witnessed to him.
 2. They were fellow prisoners in Rome. (We don't know the reason.)

III. **His birthplace**

- A. He was born in Tarsus of Cilicia about the same time Jesus was born.
(Acts 21:39) (Perhaps as children, Jesus was playing in the streets of Nazareth as Paul was growing up in Tarsus.)
- B. Tarsus-the city.
1. The city was 1,000 years old when Paul was born.
 2. It was a commercial trade center near the coast in Asia Minor.
(modern day Turkey)
 3. Timber and goat hair (for making tents) were the main commodities.
 4. Most of the population was native born with the exception of groups of wealthy Greeks.
 5. The city of Tarsus was rivaled only by the great city of Rome.
6. The city had well-known universities especially in arts and sciences.
7. Many people were Roman citizens and were self-governing.
- Note-Paul learned about Greek and Roman culture which was so valuable to him as he traveled and preached to the Gentiles.

IV. **His name**

- A. At birth he was named *Saul*. This Jewish name means "asked for, he asked, sought or inquired."
1. He was probably named after King Saul; the first king of Israel; from the tribe of Benjamin. (I Samuel 9:1-2,21)
 2. His name was changed to *Paul* (Acts 13:9) on his first missionary trip.

a. This name was acceptable to both Romans and Greeks which was important to his ministry because in Latin it means 'little'.

b. This indicates he was a small man physically but not weak which is also supported by the definition of the name *Paul*

in Hebrew-"extraordinary, wonderful, strong willed."

V. **His Jewish Heritage**

A. He was born a Jew.

1. He was circumcised on the eighth day. (Gen. 17:9-13)

2. Philippians 3:5 says he 'was of the stock of Israel.'

B. He characterizes the tribe of Benjamin.

1. Jacob's blessing on his son Benjamin.- "Benjamin shall ravin (rend in pieces) as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." (Gen. 49:27)

a. Acts 8:3 says that the then Saul of Tarsus would make "havoc of the church, entering into every house." So he would hunt down Christians just like an animal would its prey.

C. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews. (Phil. 3:5)

1. He was considered a pure-blooded Israelite because both his father and mother were Israelites, also.

2. He was the physical seed of Abraham.

3. "I lived as a Pharisee". (Acts 26:4-5)

4.

VI. **His Roman citizenship.**

A. Paul was a citizen because he was 'born free.' His parents were citizens.

B. There were four other ways to become citizens:

1. By doing a great deed for Rome.

2. A great reward for soldiers and their bravery.

3. By being purchased.

4. By being famous like an athlete or great scholar.

VII. His occupation

- A. Paul was a tent maker. (Acts 18:1-3)
 - 1. A good business because of the bedouins.
 - 2. A family business- It is possible his family was awarded Roman citizenship because of their craftsmanship.

VIII. His education

- A. He was educated to be a strict Jew.
 - 1. He was taught to obey God's word. (Deut.6:4-5) "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."
 - 2. He knelt in prayer always facing Jerusalem because that is where the temple was.
 - 3. At age 4 his mother taught him Bible stories.
 - 4. She took him to synagogue to observe.
 - 5. At age 5 his father became his teacher showing him the Law of Moses and Torah.
 - 6. At 6 he became a student of a Rabbi. He progressed from knowing Law to understanding rituals, ceremonies, and feasts.
 - 7. He studied in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin.(language of Rome)
 - 8. At 14 or 15 he went to Jerusalem to study with Gamaliel who was the most honored Rabbi of the first century. This training usually lasted until age 30.
- B. God used this education to equip Paul for service in His kingdom.
 - 1. Paul knew Old Testament Law, history, and prophecy.
 - 2. Paul was a genius in theology and understood the fulfillment of the New Testament.
 - 3. He could minister to both Jews and Gentiles.
 - 4. He wrote 13 epistles and the book of Hebrews.

IX. His early manhood

- A. Paul was now a graduate from the Jewish seminary in Jerusalem with Rabbi Gamaliel.
- B. He has the 'zeal' of a Jew. (Romans 10:2-3) "For I can testify about

them (Israelites) that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they do not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness."

C. He has heard about Jesus and the disciples.

1. It is believed he never saw Jesus until his conversion.
2. He might have been present at Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-40) in Jerusalem because Jews came from where Paul was at that time.

D. His persecution of the early Christians.

1. He was well-known as one who opposes the early church. (Acts:1-4, 5:17-33)
2. Paul (Saul) had the 'clothes of the witnesses laid at his feet' at stoning of Steven. (Acts 7:57-58)
3. By now he was violent, cruel, and obsessed with killing Christians (Galatians 1:13-14) and named himself chief persecutor of the church. (I Timothy 1:12-13)

X. His marital status.

A. Many believe Paul was a bachelor. (I Cor. 7:8)

B. Others believe that since being a proud Jew meant having a family especially sons that he was either married or a widower.

C. He was a member of the Sanhedrin. (Acts 26:10)

1. One of the qualifications of these rulers was to be a father.
2. Because he was one of the judges that condemned Stephen it was necessary for him to be married.
3. As Paul traveled, he chose elders who were married. (I Timothy 3:4)
4. He understood God's plan for man in the Old Testament when it said that a man should leave his mother and father and cleave to his wife. (Gen. 2:23-24)

Road to Damascus

Why Damascus?

1. Paul just finished his brutal killing campaign of Christians in Jerusalem with the stoning of Stephen. (Acts 7:58-8:1)
2. Paul did not realize the power of the 'blood of martyrs' and how the word of the Gospel was spreading because of it. (Acts 8:1-3)
3. Paul went to Damascus because he heard it was a safe haven for Christian refugees. He asked the high priest for the authority to forcefully remove Christians from their homes and bring to Jerusalem.
(Acts 9:1-2, 22:5)
4. Damascus was also a very important city to the Roman Empire. Many people came from all over to trade at this commercial center. Saul and the Sanhedrin did not want Christians to get a foothold in this area. The church would grow even more quickly and the threat would be difficult to control.

What were the 'goads' kicking Paul? (Acts 26:14)

(Goad- To prick or wound like a pointed stick or a cattle prod.)

First of all Paul had about six days (160 miles) to think about and evaluate his mission from Jerusalem to Damascus. What could he possibly be pondering?

1. The last speech he heard was from Stephen at his stoning. (Acts 7:1-53). The power of God's Word in that speech had to be searing Paul's mind.
2. Perhaps Isaiah 64:6 "all our righteousness are as filthy rags" became clear as he tried desperately to become right with God on his own merit.
3. Maybe he was thinking of his horrible crimes he committed such as beatings and murder against the Christians. (Acts 9:1-2, 13-14)
4. The statement by Gamaliel in Acts 5:34-39 "If it (Christianity) be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." In other words, Paul could not win the battle against the new church.
5. He might have visualized the faces of the martyrs especially that of Stephen as they suffered and died.
6. He definitely did not realize the power of prayer. He had saved family members maybe praying for him and Jesus was knocking at his door.

Paul the Apostle, by Robert T. Boyd

Paul's Conversion (Acts 9:1-18)(Acts 26:9-18)

Why do you think Paul's conversion happened the way it did?

1. He was not a part of the 12 disciples so it was necessary to physically see Jesus to qualify as an apostle especially since he persecuted all those spreading the gospel.
2. He needed Ananias to testify to what God had done for Paul.
3. Perhaps because Paul was so headstrong something very dramatic had to happen to get his attention.

What was God's plan for Paul?

1. He would no longer worship the Law but the promised Messiah. (Gal. 3:24-25)
2. He is now part of the church and will produce fruit for the Kingdom of Jesus. (Mat. 21:42-45)
3. He is now a new creation. (2Cor. 5:17)
4. He will desire the "righteousness of God." (Mat. 5:6)
5. He became obedient to Jesus and went into the city. (Acts 9:8)

Paul the Apostle, by Robert T. Boyd

What made Paul so special?

1. At Paul's conversion he understood God's authority over him, completely submitted and immediately began what he was called to do. (Acts 9:20) "At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God."
2. Paul had a very big God!! Paul saw God outside the box!! As he went from city to city he was constantly faced with danger and possible death but as

God's instrument and mouthpiece he trusted the Mighty One to take care of him.

3. He never focused on the circumstances around him but as he traveled he knew 'the secret of royalty.' He was a child of the almighty God.
4. He responded to the evil in the world in a bold way. He 'frustrated the enemies of the cross' by preaching the Gospel. He knew there was no greater message or greater power than that!

BIBLE STUDY HOMEWORK
I CORINTHIANS-INTRO PART II
THE LIFE OF PAUL-AUTHOR

- Read Stephen's speech-Acts chapter 7
- Read Acts 26:14
- What is a "goad?"
- Saul just participated in the stoning of Stephen and is now on his way to Damascus-about a 6 day journey.
- What do you think was going through Paul's mind?
- What were the "goads" Paul was kicking against?
- Do you think God was speaking through Paul's companions?
- Do you think God was preparing Paul's heart for what was about to happen to him?
- Read Acts 9:1-16 and Acts 26:12-18 Paul's conversion.
- Many believe Paul was the greatest missionary that ever lived. Why do you think that is true and what made Paul so special?

Application:

- Think about your own conversion.
- Were there people in your life or an event that happened before your conversion?

- Paul made an immediate about face and became a new creation. How are you a new creation?

I Corinthians 1:1-9

Margie Hart

Casting our net. – Homework for 1 Cor. 1 Lessons

1. What is an apostle?
 - a. Rom 1:1
 - b. 2 Cor 12:12
 - c. Gal 1:1
 - d. Heb 3:1

2. Who is Paul writing to?
 - a. Matt 16:18
 - b. Acts 2:47
 - c. Acts 14:23
 - d. Acts 15:22
 - e. 1 Cor 1:2
 - f. Col 4:15
 - g. Rev 2:1

3. Who is Holy before God?
 - a. Dt 7:6
 - b. Dt 28:9
 - c. Ro 11:17
 - d. 1 Pe 2:9

4. What is faith?
 - a. Ro 4:5
 - b. Ro 14:23
 - c. 1 Cor 15:14
 - d. Hb 11:1

Paul has presented for us a very simple definition of the Gospel in Romans that he uses as his springboard to all his writings. Understanding this will help us unlock the difficult passages of Paul.

Corinthians gives us an illustration of the Christian life, the church life, and the Body life. Each of these lives is fully illustrated in 1 Corinthians. However, not many Christian teachers realize that what is revealed in Romans in the way of a sketch is fully illustrated in 1 Corinthians. To repeat, in Romans we have the sketch of the Christian life and the church life, whereas in 1 Corinthians we have an illustration of the Christian life, the church life, and the Body life. I shall refer to Christian life as that life that is private within us, with God and others, our personal testimony about God. I am using church life as the life of the entire body in the community, the testimony of God as a unit. And I am using body life as the life within the "herd", the members with each other.

Facts:

- God is Righteous and Holy. [Psa 116:5, Isa 45:21, Psa 14:5, Act 10:22, Isa 5:16]
- Man is sinful in nature and in actions.[Rom 7:5, Rom 7:18, Rom 7:25,Rom 8:3,Rom 8:8, Gen 4:7,Gen 39:9,Exd 32:31,Psa 51:2,]
- To have life we must become righteous before God.[Gen 2:7,Mat 19:17, Gen 6:9, Jam 2:23]

Problem:

Because man is sinful by nature and in action – both nature and sin must perish.

Solution = Jesus

Jesus – the divine son must become temporal (man) live, die for payment of sin and resurrect to the glory of his name.

How? (The ABC's of the Gospel)

A + **B** + **C** = **Gospel Message**
Blood + **Cross** + **Resurrection**

- A. The **blood pays** for the sin actions = we are justified by his blood. [Lev 17:11, Ex 12:23, Mt. 26:28, Lk 22:20, Ro 3:25, Ro 5:1, Ro 6:23]
[justified – to be accounted as right before judgment, to give answer for, to make payment for]
- The blood satisfies God – it is His requirement as payment for sin
 - If we are going to understand the value of the blood, we must ACCEPT God's valuation of it.
 - 1 Peter 1:18-19 – tells us how precious Jesus' blood is to God

Background: Paul's Thread of Truth

- B. The **cross crucifies us** because we are in the seed of Christ. Our sinful nature dies. [Ro 5:12, Ro 5:15, Ro 5:17, Ro 8:6-9]
- We are members of a race of sinners, it is our nature
 - We are constitutionally unable to please God
 - We are naturally in Adam and inherit his nature
 - Our despair is in Adam and our hope is in Jesus
 - The Death of Christ is inclusive, we die in Him. (Ro 6:5)
- C. The **resurrection gives us a new nature** so that we are in complete union with the Father, and in fellowship with Him, His will. [Eze 36:26, Ro 8:10-12]
- If we died in Christ it also means we live in Him. Ro 6:8
 - Christ lives and we live in Him.
 - The resurrection is inclusive

With Our New Nature

- We can believe that God's provision is sufficient.
- We can believe that we are victorious even in the muck of life.
- We can react differently to life because we now have a new way.

How do I use my new nature?

- Get to know the one in whose image you are now made – God. Read the bible
- Talk with God, listen, do word studies
- Practice your faith – believe the facts about God and His provision (above)
- When you fall down, get up and try again
- Turn off the TV and read the word of God.
- Make Him your priority of the day, walk with Him, breath Him in
- Ask Him to help your faith grow, see life in the spectrum of eternity.
- Old nature reacts with intellect, emotion and self will – new nature reacts with the Truths of God and eternal eye.

Important Points: The Seen

(The things that are clear with little observation, at first glance, the outline.)

In 1:1-9 Paul covers a number of important points.

The main points in 1:1-9 are:

- The apostle
- The church
- The saints
- The initial gifts
- Fellowship of Christ

In these verses we first have a proper understanding concerning the apostle. Then we have a clear view of the church and of the believers, the saints. As we shall see, Paul then covers something that we may term the initial gifts. If we are to understand 1 Corinthians, we must know what are the initial gifts and what are the developed gifts. In chapter one we do not see the developed gifts, gifts that come from the growth of life, but only the initial gifts. Verse 9 is crucial. Here Paul says, "God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Here Paul speaks of the fellowship of Christ into which God has called us.

Most readers of 1 Corinthians have a negative impression of the church in Corinth.

Do you like this church of Corinth?

If you are truthful, you will admit that you do not appreciate this church, particularly at first glance. Many years ago, I did not care very much for the church in Corinth. But now I appreciate this local church. To me, the book of 1 Corinthians is very sweet and enjoyable. I enjoy this book not because it solves

problems or deals with gifts, but because it illustrates the Christian life, the church life, and the Body life.

- Every local church is a Corinth. Do not consider your local church better than the church in Corinth. The church life in Corinth is an accurate illustration of every local church.
- What about your experience of the Body life? It was certainly according to the wisdom of God to use the church in Corinth as a complete illustration of the Christian life, church life, and Body life found in every locality.

Foolishness of Man 1 Cor. 1:1-9

Understanding: The Hidden

(The concepts that are understood when we study the word of God and ask the spirit of God to teach us.)

1. From what source did Paul claim his apostolic authority? (1)

An apostle is a sent one with a message. Paul was such a one, not self-appointed but called by the Lord. His apostleship was authentic (9:1-5; 2 Cor. 12:11-12; see also 2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:2), having the authority of God's New Testament government (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10). Based upon this position with this authority, the apostle wrote this Epistle.

It is worthwhile to compare the way Paul refers to his apostleship in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus with what he says in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Timothy 1:1 Paul says that he was an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the command of God and of Christ Jesus. In 2 Timothy 1:1 he speaks of himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus. In Titus 1:1 and 2 Paul says that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's chosen ones, and the full knowledge of the truth that is according to godliness, and in the hope of eternal life. First Corinthians 1:1 emphasizes two

matters pertaining to Paul's apostleship, that Paul was a called apostle of Christ Jesus and that he became an apostle through the will of God.

Because Paul was called to be an apostle according to Christ's initiative and through the will of God for the carrying out of His administration, Paul had both the position and authority of God's sent one. Thus, he had the ground to write this Epistle.

Definitions:

Called to be = klā-to's – Strongs G2821

1) called, invited (to a banquet)

a) invited (by God in the proclamation of the Gospel) to obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom through Christ

b) called to (the discharge of) some office

1) divinely selected and appointed

an apostle - ä-po'-sto-los – Strongs G652

1) a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders

Personal Reflection:

Are you called?

Sosthenes the Brother

In 1:1 Paul not only refers to himself but also mentions Sosthenes the brother. Probably this Sosthenes was not the same person as the Sosthenes in Acts 18:17. That Sosthenes was a ruler of the synagogue in Corinth when Paul was persecuted there. This Epistle was written in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8) not long after the apostle left Corinth. This Sosthenes, as a brother in the Lord, must have joined the apostle in his traveling ministry. The mention of him here strengthens Paul's apostleship and indicates the principle of the Body. (The way members treat each other.) Paul considers and respects the integrity and authority of his brother Sosthenes.

2. To whom was I Corinthians written? (2,12:1)

In 1:2 we are the receivers of this Epistle. It was written to "the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints." The church of God! What an expression! It is not the church of Cephas, of Apollos, of Paul, nor of any practice or doctrine, but of God. In spite of all the division, sin, confusion, abuse of gifts, and heretical teaching in the church in Corinth, the apostle still called it the church of God, because the divine and spiritual essence, which makes the assembled believers, the church of God was actually there. Such a spiritual address by the apostle was based on his spiritual view in looking upon the church in Christ. Such a simple address alone should eliminate all division and confusion both in practice and in doctrine.

In verse 2 Paul speaks of "the church of God, which is in Corinth." The church was constituted of the universal God, but existed in Corinth, a definite locality on this earth. In nature the church is universal in God, but in practice the church is local in a definite place. Hence, the church has two aspects: the universal and the local:

Without the universal aspect, the church has no content; without the local aspect, it is impossible for the church to have any expression and practice. Hence, the New Testament stresses also the local aspect of the church (Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rev. 1:11).

- The church is the church of God, for it is constituted of the divine nature. The expression “the church of God” indicates that the church has the nature of God, that it is constituted of the element of God. Therefore, the church is of God. This is the universal aspect of the church. But the church, which is of God, is also local. In this case, it is the church of God in Corinth. On the one hand, the church is constituted of God; on the other hand, the church is expressed in a particular locality

Foolishness of Man 1 Cor. 1:1-9

- According to grammar, “to the church of God” is in opposition to “to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus.” This indicates that “to the church of God” equals “to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus.” This strongly indicates that the church is a composition of the saints, and the saints are the constituents of the church. The two should not be considered separate entities. Individually, we are the saints; corporately, we are the church. Thus, the church is not only constituted of God, but is also composed of the saints.

3. Do you have the boldness to say that you are holy?

Some may reply, “I cannot argue with Paul’s word in 1 Corinthians 1:2. According to this word, I have been sanctified. But still I don’t feel that I’m holy.” Concerning this, we should not look at ourselves. Paul does not say that the Corinthians were sanctified in themselves; he declares that they had been sanctified in Christ Jesus

To be sanctified is to be made holy, separated unto God for the fulfillment of His purpose. Saints are separated ones, those who have been set apart to God.

In this verse Paul says that we have been “sanctified in Christ Jesus.” We are sanctified in the element and sphere of Christ. Christ is the element and sphere that separated us, made us holy, unto God when we believed in Him, that is, when we were brought into organic union with Him through our faith in Him.

The expression “called saints” indicates that the believers in Christ are the called saints; they are not called to be saints (as in KJV). This is a positional matter, sanctification in position with a view to sanctification in disposition.

- We need to forget ourselves and see that it is in Christ that we are sanctified.
- God does not look at us as we are in ourselves; rather, he looks at us in Christ. This may be illustrated by the words the prophet Balaam uttered about the children of Israel. Apparently the children of Israel were full of evil. But when Balaam prophesied concerning them, he declared, “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel” (Num. 23:21). Likewise, Paul knew all the evil things about the church in Corinth. Nevertheless, in his opening word he addressed them as those sanctified in Christ Jesus, and he called them saints.
- Every saved one is a called one. To be called is to be saved. When the Lord Jesus said to Peter, “Follow Me,” that was His calling of Peter. We, the saved ones, have all been called. Once we were called, we became saints.

Foolishness of Man 1 Cor. 1:1-9

- Instead of saying “called saints,” the King James Version says “called to be saints.” According to this translation, being a saint is pending; it is not already an accomplished fact. But Paul did not say that we are called to be saints; he says that we are called saints. If we turn away from ourselves and look at Christ, we shall be able to declare that we are saints. We shall realize that a saint is simply a called one.

4. You have been called by the Lord, but are you calling on Him?

In verse 2 Paul also says, “With all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, theirs and ours.” Notice that here he does not say “and all those,” but “with all those.” This indicates that a local church, like the church in

Corinth, is composed only of those local believers, not of all believers in every place. It also indicates that this Epistle was intended not only for the believers in that one church in Corinth, but for all believers in every place. First Corinthians is for all believers of whatever place or time.

- When referring to the local saints at Corinth, Paul uses the expression “called saints.” But when he speaks of all the saints on earth, he uses another description: “all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place.” In this verse we see two callings: first, we are called saints; second, we call upon the name of the Lord. This indicates that we, the believers, the saints, have been called by God to call upon the name of the Lord. We have been called to call! To be called is a matter once for all, but to call upon the name of the Lord is a lifelong matter. Continually we need to call on Him.
- To call upon the name of the Lord implies to believe in Him (Rom. 10:14). All believers in the Lord should be His callers (Acts 9:14, 21; 22:16). We have been called to call, called by God to call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

I am concerned that even among us there are some who do not call on the name of the Lord. They are still concerned about losing face, testing their trust in him. The more we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, the more we are released and uplifted.

Furthermore, this calling designates us as called saints.

**** Truth ****

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal savior and have chosen to serve Him and you Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength (Dt 6:5) you are forever sealed with Him.

You are a Saint of the Most High God!

We **call upon** Him when:

- We declare by faith what God has done.
Where faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hb11:1)
- When we seek him for matters of our daily life.
He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. Ps 91:15

Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord. Gen4:26

- When we study His word, spend time with Him and make him a priority.

Definitions:

To call – epikaleō – strongs G1941

- 1) to put a name upon, to surname
 - a) to permit one's self to be surnamed
- 2) to be named after someone
- 3) to call something to one
 - a) to cry out upon or against one
 - c) to summon one on any charge, prosecute one for a crime
 - d) to blame one for, accuse one of
- 4) to invoke
 - a) to call upon for one's self, in one's behalf

- 1) any one as a helper
- 2) as my witness
- 3) as my judge
- 4) to appeal unto
- 5) to call upon by pronouncing the name of Jehovah
 - a) an expression finding its explanation in the fact that prayers addressed to God ordinarily began with an invocation of the divine name.

In verse 2 Paul says that the Lord Jesus Christ is “theirs and ours.” Christ as the all-inclusive One belongs to all believers. He is our portion given to us by God (Col. 1:12). The apostle added this special phrase at the end of this verse to stress the crucial fact of Christ’s being the unique center of all believers in whatever place or situation. In this Epistle the apostle’s intention was to solve the problems existing among the saints in Corinth. For all the problems, especially the matter of division, the only solution is the all-inclusive Christ. We have all been called into the fellowship, the participation, in Him (v. 9). All believers should be focused on Him, not distracted by any gifted person, any overemphasis on doctrine, or any particular practice.

Personal Reflection:

What distractions do you have that get in the way of fellowship with God?

5. For what did Paul thank God? (4-6)

The apostle's thanksgiving to God for the Corinthian believers was based upon the grace of God given to them in Christ, not upon their condition in themselves.

- Casting with eternal eyes with Heb 11 – giving thanks to God based on His completed work.
- Praying with faith for each other.
By faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.
- Praising for what will be -- regardless of where each person is in this present moment.

Personal Reflection:

Can we give God our vain imaginations, expectations and will? Can we give thanks to God for others based on Christ and not their present condition?

Introduction: to Jewish Prayer

River rock release = baggage release

The English word "pray" derives from a root word meaning, "to beg or entreat," whereas the Hebrew word *hitpallel* comes from a verb meaning "to judge oneself."

When we pray, we first inwardly examine ourselves and then sincerely call upon the Lord with reverent singleness of heart.

In Jewish thinking, devotion from the heart, called *kavanat* ha lev, is considered essential to true prayer.

Kavanah implies concentration, worship, and single-mindedness: you simply cannot reach the Lord without earnestness and passion of the whole heart (see Jer. 29:13, Heb 11:6).

One of the Jewish sages wrote, "Prayer without *kavanah* is like a body without a soul," suggesting that merely mouthing the "right words" of a prayer is empty hypocrisy if the inmost heart is not also profoundly involved.

And will God, who is Spirit, listen to such insincerity from our lips? (see Isa. 29:13)

- Pray to surrender your self, leave your baggage behind and die at the cross. We symbolically do this by releasing “the river rock” to God. Each rock becomes a stone in the altar upon which we sacrifice our will.
- Reveal yourself to God, let God see all of you, be honest with your self and offer yourself a trustworthy servant of the Lord Most High.
- Pray by faith, in the spectrum of eternity only what has eternal value matters. We must praise God for what he will complete and accomplish as if we can see it done now. We must be sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hb 11:1)

Prayer Notes:

Hebrews 4:16, 11



I Corinthians 1:10-31

Margie Hart

Casting our net – Homework for “Foolishness of Man” 1 Cor. 1:10-31

Instructions: *Find, read and meditate over 1 Corinthians 1 and other mentioned scripture to answer the questions below.*

1. How did the Corinthians create this four-way division? Why is that significant to us now?
2. What is this new man (or woman) in me is supposed to look like?
 - a. Colossians 3
3. What is our portion as a believer?
 - a. Colossians 1:12
4. What is at the center of accomplishing the new testament economy that Paul speaks about?
 - a. Gal. 2:20; 3:1; 5:11, 24; 6:14;
 - b. Eph. 2:15;
 - c. Phil. 2:8; 3:18;
 - d. Col. 2:14
5. How do we become a fool for God?
6. Do you realize that, as one who believes in Christ, you have a divine status, that you are a child of the King of kings?
 - a. 1Pe 2:9
 - b. Act 10:41
 - c. Luk 23:35
 - d. Psa 33:12
 - e. Song of Songs – for journey of intimacy for all believers.

Important Points: The Seen

(The things that are clear with little observation, at first glance, the outline.)

CHRIST, THE UNIQUE CENTER

In 1:1-9 Paul impresses us with the fact that in God's economy Christ is the unique center. God's intention is to make Christ His Son the center of His economy and also to make Him everything to all the believers. This is why Paul tells us in verse 9 that we have been called into the fellowship of the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. It is also the reason he points out in verse 2 that Christ is both theirs and ours. In His economy God's intention is to make Christ everything, to give Christ to us as our portion, and also to work Christ into us.

Called into Fellowship: 1 Cor. 1:10-25

- Learning to have no preferences
- Christ the Center of God's Economy
- The saints portion
- The Cross of Christ
- The word of the cross
- Destroying the wisdom of the wise
- The foolishness of the preaching
- Signs and wisdom
- Preaching Christ crucified

God's Choice. 1 Cor. 1:26-31

- The Foolish to Shame the Wise
- No Flesh Boasting before God
- Of God we are in Christ
- Christ became wisdom from god

Understanding: The Hidden

(The concepts that are understood when we study the word of God and ask the spirit of God to teach us.)

Learning to have no preferences. The division in the church:

Paul begins to deal with the divisions among the Corinthians. First, he beseeches them through the name of our Lord, which is the name above all names (Phil. 2:9) and should be the unique name among all His believers. However, by ranking the names of Paul, Apollos, and Cephas with the name of Christ, the divisive Corinthians made the same kind of mistake Peter did on the mount of transfiguration when he ranked Moses and Elijah with Christ (Matt. 17:1-8). To keep the oneness in the Lord and to avoid divisions, we need to uplift and exalt the unique name of our Lord by dropping all names other than this highest name.

When the Corinthians believed in Christ, they did not receive anything from Paul, Apollos, or any other servant of God. No doubt, Paul and Apollos were a great help to the believers in Corinth. But the One received by them was Christ. In 1:13 Paul asks them, “Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?” No, Paul was not crucified for them, and they were not baptized into Paul’s name. Christ was the One who was crucified for them, and the believers were baptized into the name of Christ. Here Paul seems to be saying, “Actually, you did not receive anything from Paul, Apollos, or Cephas. You should not even be limited to a narrow Christ. You must pay your full attention to the unique Christ. This Christ is not only yours and ours—He belongs to everyone. He is theirs and ours, for He is the portion of the saints in every place. God has given this Christ to us, and He has called us into His fellowship.”

- **CALLED INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SON OF GOD**
We have been called uniquely into the fellowship of God's Son. This means that we have been called into the reality, the embodiment, of the Triune God. In this fellowship we enjoy the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. In this fellowship we also enjoy all the believers, and the believers enjoy us. Furthermore, the Triune God enjoys us and all the other believers in every place.

God **does not** pay attention to anything other than **Christ**.

Not legalism, not how much we do, not who we know, not what we know.

1. How did the Corinthians create this four-way division?

Certain of the believers in Corinth devoted their attention to Paul. To them Paul would say, "Why do you pay attention to me? I am not worthy of your attention. And why do some of you prefer Cephas or Apollos? They should not be the objects of your attention either. Neither should you concentrate on practices or doctrines. No person, practice, or doctrine is worthy of your attention. Your attention must be focused solely, wholly, and absolutely on Christ, the One into whose fellowship we have been called by God."

It is crucial that the saints learn not to have any preferences. The saints in a particular church should not prefer one elder over another. Our only preference should be Christ. We all should be able to say that our preference is the all-inclusive and extensive Christ.

We also should not have any preference with respect to churches. We should not prefer our local church above others, or some other local church above the church in our community. We should be content to simply be in the church in the place where God has put us according to His sovereign arrangement. Yes, verse

1:2 does speak of the church of God that is in Corinth. But in this verse Paul goes on to mention every place. We should be willing to be in the church of God anywhere. If the wind of the Spirit blows you to a certain location, you should simply be in the church there, without any preference. If after a period of time the spiritual wind blows you to another city, you should be equally content to be in the church there. Regarding churches, we should not have any preference. We should never say that we prefer the church in our location or in some other location. Rather, we should be able to say, "My preference is only in Christ. I am willing for the wind to blow me in any direction, for in every place Christ is the same."

If all Christians preferred only the all-inclusive Christ, the entire world would be subdued.

Definitions:

Division –schisma -- Strong's G4978

- 1) To cleave, cleave asunder, rend
- 2) To divide by rending
- 3) To split into factions, be divided

Personal Reflection:

What divisions do you entertain?

Christ the Center of God's Economy

As we consider the Epistle of 1 Corinthians, we see that here Paul gives us an illustration. This does not mean, however, that we should follow the Corinthians in their way of having the Christian life, the church life, and the Body life. On the contrary, it means that we should not complain about our local church. We should not think that the local church where we are is inferior and that, according to our preference, we should move to a place where we imagine the church life is better. We need to see that wherever we may be, the actual church life is like that described in 1 Corinthians.

Since we are all in such a situation, **what should we do?**

- First, we must drop every name other than the name of Christ. We should drop the names of any persons or servants of God whom we may prefer, and we should also lay aside all denominational names.
- Furthermore, we must turn from all doctrines and practices and take Christ, the unique center of God's economy, as our everything.

2. How is Christ the center of our everything?

Christ is the center of God's economy. Among the thousands of verses in the Bible, one verse is extremely crucial regarding this matter, and this verse is Colossians 3:11. *"Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all."*

Speaking of the new man, Paul says, "Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but Christ is all and in all." In the light of this verse none of us should boast in matters of race or nationality. During my travels around the world, I have observed that everyone is proud of his country and race. But as believers in Christ, we should not pride ourselves in our race or nationality. According to Colossians 3:10 and 11, the church, the Body of Christ, is the new man. In the new man there are no

distinctions of race or nationality. As Paul says, in the new man there cannot be Greek and Jew. The Jews are known for their religion, and the Greeks, for their culture, especially for their philosophy. However, there is room for neither Greek nor Jew in the new man. Paul goes on to say that there cannot be circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or freeman. This indicates that in the new man there is no place for religion or culture, no matter what a particular culture may be. Rather, Christ is all and in all

Colossians 3:11 gives us a strong basis for saying that in God's economy Christ is everything. He is every person, every matter, and every thing. Christ must be our race and nationality. If someone asks you to what race you belong, you should reply, "I belong to the race of Christ." We should have the realization within that we are not Chinese, Germans, French, Mexicans, Americans, or any other nationality, but are members of Christ. If all Christians knew that Christ is the center of God's economy, all divisions would disappear.

In his preaching to the Corinthians, Paul testified to them of the all-inclusive Christ, of the Christ who is the center of God's economy and everything in God's economy. According to his background, Paul was an authentic and typical Jew. As such, he should have avoided all social contact with Greeks. But because Paul realized that in the new man there is no Jew or Greek but that Christ is everything, he could testify to the Greeks in Corinth concerning Christ.

He could say, "I wish to testify that Christ is everything and that in the new man there cannot be Jew and Greek. In the new man, I am not a Jew—I am a person constituted of Christ. But although I have testified concerning this, you insist on remaining in your old social status. You have not taken Christ as the unique, all-inclusive center. Although I declare to you that I have dropped my religion and that I now uplift Christ, you still hold to your Greek culture and philosophy. You know that I was deeply involved with Judaism. I advanced in Judaism beyond many others. But I have abandoned all this. When I came to you, I decided not to know anything among you but Christ and Him crucified. God does not care for Jewish religion or Greek

philosophy. He cares only for Christ, because in His economy Christ is the center and everything to us."

The fact that Christ was crucified implies many things.

- It implies that He was despised, rejected, and defeated.
- No one could be crucified without first being rejected and defeated.
- Through crucifixion Christ suffered man's rejection. He was able to avoid death by crucifixion, but He did not do so. He could be crucified only because He was willing to be killed.

The crucifixion of Christ has silenced the entire universe and simplified the extremely complicated situation in the universe.

Deep in his spirit, Paul was yearning to impress the distracted, philosophical Christians in Corinth with this crucified Christ. Among the saints there was turmoil and trouble. Many voices were speaking different things: "I am of Apollos," "I am of Cephas," "I am of Paul," "I am of Christ." What could silence all these voices? Paul knew that they could be silenced only by a crucified Christ. Therefore, in Paul's spirit was the burden to bring the believers back to the Christ whom he had preached to them and testified to them. Paul could say, "The Christ I preached to you was a silent Christ, a Christ who was willing to be crucified without a word. He was willing to be despised, rejected, and put to death. This is the Christ I ministered to you when I came to you. Now I want you to know that such a Christ is God's power. Only a crucified Christ can save you. God's saving power is not a strong Christ but a crucified Christ, not a fighting Christ but a defeated Christ." I repeat, Paul's spirit was to bring back these striving, philosophical Christians to the simplicity and silence of the crucified Christ.

Colossians 3:11. *"Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all."*

And

1 Cor 1:10 *"I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought."*

Definitions:

All – pas - Strong's G3956

1) Individually

a) Each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone, all things, everything

2) Collectively

a) Some of all types

Personal Reflection:

What is your economy, how do you step into God's economy? Can you ask God to make your all Him?

The Saints' Portion

1 Cor 1:10 *"... that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought"*

Colossians 1:12 says, *"Giving thanks to the Father, Who qualified you for a share of the portion of the saints in the light."*

3. What is our portion as believer?

All Christians know that God has redeemed us, but not many realize that He has also qualified us to partake of Christ as the portion of the saints. The word portion in Colossians 1:12 indicates enjoyment. Christ is the unique enjoyment for all the saints. Nothing should be allowed to replace Him as our portion. Things such as

baptism, speaking in tongues, or healing must not replace Christ Himself. Only the living Person of Christ, not any doctrine or practice, is our portion.

We should not be proud of our local church or any other place. In a sense, every local church should be lowered down in my estimation so that we may uplift Christ, our unique portion. The unique portion of the saints is not the church in any particular location. **Our unique portion is Christ.**

The cross of Christ

Verse 18 says, “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” The little word “for” at the beginning of this verse indicates that verse 18 is an explanation of verse 17. In verse 17 Paul declares, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in wisdom of speech, that the cross of Christ should not be made void.”

4. What is at the center of accomplishing the new testament economy that Paul speaks about?

The cross of Christ is the center in the accomplishment of God’s New Testament economy, which is to have a church produced through the redemption of Christ.

Paul preached Christ crucified (v. 23; 2:2; Gal. 3:1) and boasted in the cross of Christ (Gal. 6:14), not the law with circumcision, which the Jews and some of the Jewish believers fought for (Gal. 3:11; 5:11; 6:12-13), nor the philosophy which was promoted by the Greeks and some of the Gentile believers (Col. 2:8, 20). The cross of Christ abolished the ordinances of the law (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14), and we the believers have died to philosophy, an element of the world (Col. 2:20). But Satan instigated the Judaizers and philosophers to preach their isms of worldly wisdom that the cross of Christ might be made void. The Apostle Paul was alert in this matter. In dealing with the division among the Corinthian believers, which came mostly from the background of Jewish religion and Greek philosophy, the

apostle stressed Christ and His cross. When Christ is taken to replace religious opinions and philosophical wisdom, and His cross is working to deal with the flesh attached to any background, divisions will be terminated. The exaltation of natural preference and human wisdom cannot stand before Christ and His cross.

The word of the cross

Paul did not want the cross of Christ to be made void through preaching in wisdom of speech, that is, in philosophical speculations. Christ did not send Paul to preach the gospel in the wisdom of speech. Paul refused to indulge in philosophical speculations. He was concerned lest the cross of Christ be made void. He realized that the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. They regard the word of the cross as too simple and consider it foolishness.

The Greek term rendered word in this verse is the same as that translated expression in 1:5. The word of the cross is the expression, the speech, the preaching, of the cross. Such preaching is despised and considered foolishness by those who are perishing, but honored and received as the power of God by us who are being saved. Paul, in his ministry, stressed the cross as the center of God's salvation (Gal. 2:20; 3:1; 5:11, 24; 6:14; Eph. 2:15; Phil. 2:8; 3:18; Col. 2:14).

In **verse 18** Paul speaks of "us who are being saved." I appreciate the expression "being saved." If someone asks you if you are saved, you may wish to reply, "I am in the process of being saved. I have been saved partially, saved to a certain extent. However, I have not yet been saved to the full extent. But I am being saved." To us who are in the process of being saved, the word of the cross is the power of God.

Destroying the wisdom of the wise

In **verse 19** Paul continues, "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the prudent I will set aside." Once again Paul introduces this verse with the word "for," showing that it also is an explanation of what has

gone before. Here Paul points out that God does not care for the wisdom of the wise or the understanding of the prudent. Rather, He will destroy this wisdom and set aside this understanding.

Paul's intention in **verse 19** was to refer in particular to the philosophical Greeks. It seems as if Paul was saying, "You Greeks think that you are wise and prudent. You do not realize that God will destroy the wisdom of the wise and set aside the understanding of the prudent. If you regard yourselves as wise, God will destroy your wisdom. If you consider yourselves prudent, God will set aside your prudence. It is dangerous to regard yourselves as wise or prudent, for you run the risk of being destroyed by God or of being set aside by Him."

In **verse 20** Paul asks a number of questions: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" Where are the wise today? Are they in Greece? In New Zealand? In America? In Taiwan? It is common for those with a certain national or cultural background to regard themselves as the most wise and philosophical of people. Perhaps such ones are wiser than others, but they are not wiser than God in the heavens. In the church life we should not practice any particular wisdom. Furthermore, in the church life we should not be scribes or disputers. However, the leading ones in certain places may pride themselves in thinking that the young people under their training are scribes and disputers. But the Bible asks, "Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age?" God has in fact made foolish the wisdom of the world.

The foolishness of the preaching

In **verse 21** Paul goes on to say, "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, God was pleased through the foolishness of the preaching to save those who believe."

Here the preaching differs from what we commonly think of preaching. Preaching is the means to minister the word. The preaching here is the thing preached, that

is, the message. God is pleased through the foolishness of the preaching, the message, the thing preached, to save those who believe.

In preaching Christ and the cross to philosophical people Paul spoke in a simple way.

Paul went to Corinth to preach Christ and the cross; he chose not to know anything of excellent utterance.

On the contrary, he used simple and brief expressions, expressions that may have been regarded as foolishness by philosophical Greeks. Nevertheless, Paul says that God uses the foolishness of the preaching to save those who believe.

**By the preaching of Christ and the cross in a simple way,
people believe and are saved.**

Signs and wisdom

Verse 22 says, “Since Jews indeed ask for signs and Greeks seek wisdom.” A sign is a miraculous token (Matt. 12:38-39) to substantiate what is preached. Religion needs signs, and the Jews kept requiring them. Wisdom pertains to philosophy and was constantly sought by the Greeks.

In **verse 22** Paul refers to two kinds of people—to religious Jews and philosophical Greeks. The religious ones desire signs, miracles, and the philosophical ones pursue wisdom. But in preaching Christ crucified, Paul cared for neither wisdom nor signs.

- When the Lord Jesus was on the cross, the Jews mocked Him and said, “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!” (Matt. 27:40).
- The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders said, “He saved others; himself he cannot save! He is king of Israel, let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe on him” (v. 42). They challenged the Lord to prove that He was the Christ, the Son of God, by delivering Himself from the cross.

However, the Lord remained silent; He did not do anything to save Himself. Instead of a miracle and wisdom, there were weakness and foolishness. According to man's wisdom, it would be utterly foolish to be crucified.

In saying, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Cephas," the Corinthians were exercising their wisdom. They were following their philosophy, not following Christ. But Paul preached to them Christ crucified, an offense to miracle-seeking Jews and wisdom-pursuing Greeks. But to those who are called, this Christ is God's wisdom and God's power.

Personal Reflection:

What signs or wisdom are you looking for? The letter of the law, the doctrine, the anything is ok approach, the do's and don'ts without the grace What is the poisoning your preaching?

Preaching Christ crucified

It is significant that Paul did not tell the Corinthians, "We preach Christ resurrected." The focus of the preaching in Acts is on the resurrection of Christ. According to the book of Acts, this preaching is a testimony that Jesus Christ, the One who was crucified, has been resurrected. But in this Epistle Paul does not emphasize Christ's resurrection. Rather, he emphasizes the preaching of Christ crucified. No doubt, both the Jews and the Greeks would have preferred to hear of a resurrected Christ. For Jews, this would have been a great miracle. How miraculous for someone to rise out of the tomb and ascend into the heavens! The Greeks may have regarded a word about resurrection as very philosophical. In their quest for wisdom they may have been interested to learn how a dead person could become alive again. Nevertheless, Paul preached a crucified Christ, a Christ who did not do anything to save Himself. Paul followed this crucified Christ

and preached Him to the Corinthians. Therefore, **verse 23** declares, “But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews an offense, and to the nations foolishness.” It was offensive to Jews and foolishness to Greeks that Paul followed a crucified Christ.

In **verse 24** Paul goes on to say, “But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, God’s power and God’s wisdom.” Those who are called are the believers who were chosen by God in eternity (Eph. 1:4) and who believed in Christ in time (Acts 13:48). To these called ones, the crucified Christ preached by the apostles is God’s power and God’s wisdom. Wisdom is for planning, for purposing; power is for carrying out, for accomplishing, what is planned and purposed. In God’s economy Christ is both. Praise the Lord that for us today the crucified Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God!

In **verse 25** Paul concludes, “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” Even God’s foolishness is wiser than our wisdom, and His weakness stronger than our strength.

**When we experience the crucified Christ,
we are terminated.**

All that we are, all that we have, and all that we can do—all is completely terminated. To be terminated, there is no need for you to crucify yourself. There is not even any need for you to reckon yourself dead. You are terminated simply by experiencing the crucified Christ. Actually, it is impossible for anyone to crucify himself. But when we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, as we are enjoying Him and experiencing Him, His crucifixion will terminate us. All that we are is terminated by this crucified Christ.

- Crucifixion is the way for us to be delivered from the flesh, the natural life, and the old creation.
- Christ crucified is not only the power; He is also the way. To the Jews, such a Christ is an offense, and to the Greeks, He is foolishness.

- But to us who have been called, the crucified Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom for us to be delivered from all negative things.
- We thank Him and praise Him that we are now in the process of being saved. The more we are saved by experiencing the crucified Christ, the more we enjoy Him.

GOD’S CHOICE . . .

The Foolish to Shame the Wise

In **verse 26** Paul says, “For you see your calling, brothers, that there are not many wise according to flesh, not many powerful, not many wellborn.” Here we see that among the believers there are not many wise according to flesh. In **verse 27** Paul says, “God has chosen the foolish of the world that He might shame the wise.”

- To be wise is related to the mind
- To be powerful is related to the will.

5. How do we become a fool for God, how do we become weak?

The Weak to Shame the Strong

In **verse 27** Paul also says, “God has chosen the weak of the world that He might shame the strong.” When I read these verses many years ago, I wondered how a loving God could shame people. I wondered how He could use the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and the weak of the world to shame the strong.

Nevertheless, Paul clearly says that God shames the wise and the strong.

- Only the simple will be humble enough to seek understanding from the Lord most High.
- Only the weak will reach up their hand for help.
- Man must come to the end of himself to look for God. So as we walk with others we respect that sacred ground where people break, and deliver compassion – but God is the one that heals and fixes souls.

In **verse 27** Paul twice uses the word “chosen.” God’s calling (vv. 24-26) is based upon God’s choosing, God’s selection. Both are according to His purpose (Rom. 9:11; 2 Tim. 1:9). God’s choosing was ordained before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4); His calling is accomplished in time to carry out His choosing. God’s calling and choosing are the initiation of the salvation of His predestined people. We did not choose Him; He chose us. We did not call upon Him until He called us. He is the Initiator. All the glory should be to Him!

In **verse 26** Paul points out that among the believers in Corinth there were not many wellborn. In verse 28 he goes on to say, “And the lowborn of the world and the despised has God chosen, things which are not, that He might bring to nought things which are.” The Greek word rendered wellborn in verse 26 means highborn, noble, that is, born of a noble or royal family. The church of God is composed not mainly of the upper class, but of the lowborn of the world and the despised. To appreciate the upper class is against God’s mind and a shame to the church.

In **verse 28** the word lowborn means base, ignoble, that is, born of common people. Despised also means contemptible. The expression “things which are not” refers to the lowborn and the despised as being as good as having no existence. The lowborn and the despised are of no account in the world.

The threefold repetition of “God has chosen” in verses 27 and 28 unveils to us God’s sovereign dealing with three kinds of people of the world—the wise, the strong (the powerful), and the wellborn. Hence, “things that are” refer to the wellborn, who are counted much in the world but brought to nothing by God in His economy.

In the eyes of man, the lowborn, the despised ones, seem not to exist. They are so looked down upon that they seem to have no existence. Thus, they are “things which are not.” But God uses these very things to bring to nothing the things which are, the wellborn who are counted much in the world. God has chosen the lowborn, the low class, that He might shame the wellborn, those of the upper class.

On the one hand, in verses 26 through 28 Paul refers in a general way to everyone. On the other hand, he refers in a particular way to the Greeks. Certain of the Greeks who had been saved still regarded themselves as wise. In these verses Paul points out that such an attitude is mistaken. Paul seems to be saying, “Believers at Corinth, do not consider yourselves wise. God does not choose the wise. If you regard yourselves as wise, this means that you have not been chosen by God. Likewise, God has not chosen the powerful ones or the highborn ones.”

Personal Reflection:

*What do you think about yourself? Do you consider yourself wise or foolish?
Strong or weak? Wellborn or lowborn?*

Once again we need to know Paul's spirit in writing this Epistle.

The emphasis in Paul's spirit was that the Corinthian believers were not living as saved ones.

Paul seemed to be telling them, "Dear saints in Corinth, you are saved ones, God's chosen ones. But you are not living the life of chosen ones. Rather, you are living as if you had not been chosen by God. There is no indication in your living that God has chosen you, for you think of yourselves as wise, strong, and wellborn. Brothers, you must realize that God does not choose such ones. If you regard yourselves as wise, this indicates that God has not chosen you. Remember, He has chosen the foolish ones to shame the wise, the weak ones to shame the strong, and the lowborn to shame the wellborn. Thus, do not regard yourselves as wise, strong, and wellborn."

It is easy to talk about living Christ, but it is difficult to practice living Him.

As long as we consider ourselves wise, we do not live Christ.

All those who truly live Christ regard themselves as foolish, weak, and lowborn. They think of themselves as nothing and realize that their existence on earth does not mean anything. They can say of themselves, "I am among the things which are not. I live in a certain location, but my existence here does not mean anything. But although I am nothing, God has chosen me."

I repeat, God does not choose the wise, the strong, or the wellborn.

If you consider yourself wise, strong, and wellborn, you reject God's choosing.

By the way you live, you renounce God's choosing. God shames the wise, the strong, and the wellborn.

We all should be able to say, "Lord, I confess that I am not wise or powerful. Instead, I truly am foolish, weak, and among the lowborn." What was in Paul's spirit in writing this portion of 1 Corinthians was an emphasis on this matter.

In his spirit Paul also sensed the need to lower down the haughty Greek believers. Certain ones among them may have been very intelligent and wise, but Paul paid no attention to that. On the contrary, he was seeking to point out that the very fact that they had been chosen by God proved that they were foolish, not wise; weak, not strong; and lowborn, not wellborn. Therefore, it was a mistake for the believers in Corinth to think that they were wise and powerful.

We have seen that in **verse 28** Paul says that God will “bring to nought” the things which are.

The meaning of the Greek word here, as in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 and Hebrews 2:14, is to destroy. To be brought to nought by God actually means to be destroyed by Him. If we study history, we shall see that many people of honor have been brought to nought by God. Many with a high social standing have been destroyed, made nothing, by Him. We should never consider ourselves something. If we view ourselves as something, God will bring us to nothing.

No Flesh Boasting before God

In **verse 29** Paul says, “So that all flesh should not boast before God.” This declares the reason for God’s particular favor in His choosing of us. It is that no flesh, no human being, may have any boast, any glory, before Him.

Of God we are in Christ

Paul opens **verse 30** with the words, “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus.” What we believers, as the new creation, are and have in Christ is of God, not of ourselves. It is God who put us in Christ, transferring us from Adam into Christ. It is God who has made Christ wisdom to us. God has transferred us out of Adam into Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) through Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection (Gal. 2:20) and by our believing and being baptized (John 3:15; Gal. 3:26-28).

The word “but” at the beginning of verse 30 implies a strong contrast with the preceding verses. Furthermore, being in Christ implies that now, in Christ, we are wise, strong, and wellborn. However, very few believers consider themselves wise in Christ, strong in Christ, and wellborn in Christ. If the sisters realized that they were wise and strong in Christ, they would not weep so much. It is very easy for sisters to shed tears. This indicates that, as far as their experience is concerned, they are not wise or strong in Christ. According to our experience, too many times we are wise in the flesh, but foolish in Christ; strong in the flesh, but weak in Christ. This means that in our Christian life there may not be the “but” inserted by Paul into verse 30. In our experience there should be this “but.” Although we were born foolish, weak, and low, we should be able to say, “But of God we are in Christ.” Now that we are in Christ, we are wise, strong, and wellborn in Him.

Re-creation, our new man causes us to be wellborn, and it gives us a very high status, the status of a child in a royal family.

6. Do you realize that, as one who believes in Christ, you have a divine status, that you are a child of the King of kings?

We have been born into God’s family! This means that we have a status higher than that of the angels. We are members of God’s household, and the angels are our servants. In Christ, we are truly higher than the angels. How good it is that God has chosen us foolish, weak, and lowborn ones and has caused us to be in Christ! This is not our own doing or the work of any other person; it is absolutely of God that we are in Christ.

According to the context, in Christ here implies that we are wise, strong, and wellborn in Christ. It is crucial for us to realize that we are in Christ. We should also boast of the fact that we are now in Christ. Furthermore, we can testify that because we are in Christ we are no longer foolish, weak, or lowborn.

If in your experience you are strong in Christ, you will have a foretaste of the New Jerusalem and not be so quick to shed tears. In the New Jerusalem there will be no more tears. Sometimes at the Lord's table we thank Him for the foretaste of the coming New Jerusalem. When we experience the full taste, there will not be any tears. Instead of tears, there will be the flowing of the water of life. Sisters, when you are inclined to weep, remember Paul's words: But of God you are in Christ. In Christ you are wise and strong.

Praise the Lord that in Christ we are wellborn, children of the royal family! What a marvelous status!

Christ became wisdom from god

In 1:30 Paul says that Christ Jesus "became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

Paul does not say that Christ is wisdom to us; he says that Christ became wisdom to us.

This indicates that at one time Christ was not wisdom to us, but that He later became wisdom to us.

For example, to say that I am your friend is somewhat different from saying that I became your friend. To say that I became your friend implies that once I was not your friend, but now I have become a friend to you.

Christ could not become wisdom to us before we were in Him. But when we believed in Christ, God put us into Him. Then Christ became wisdom to us.

Suppose that a certain young lady is in poverty. One day she marries a millionaire. On that very day she becomes rich. Formerly she was poor, but now she has become rich.

In a similar way, formerly, because we were not yet in Him, Christ was not wisdom to us. But once we believed into Christ and God put us in Him, He became wisdom to us.

Notice that in verse 30 Paul does not say that Christ became our wisdom; he says that Christ became wisdom to us.

For Christ to become wisdom to us is different from His becoming our wisdom. Day by day, we need Christ to be wisdom to us.

We may use electricity as an illustration. To speak of our electricity is different from speaking of electricity being to us. When electricity is to you, you receive an electrical charge. For electricity to be your electricity means that it belongs to you, but for electricity to be to you means that it is transmitted to you and that you experience it.

Likewise, to say that Christ is our wisdom is rather general, not experiential. But when Christ becomes wisdom to us, we experience Him.

Paul had not only knowledge but also a great deal of spiritual experience. Furthermore, he knew the situation among the believers. As Christians, we may say, "We have Christ as our wisdom." However, this does not mean very much in experience. It is similar to saying, "We have electricity as our power." We may say this and actually not have light or heat, because electricity is not yet to us. We may also have Christ as our wisdom without having Christ being wisdom to us. We need Christ to become wisdom to us.

In verse 30 I appreciate the two phrases "to us" and "from God." Christ became wisdom to us from God. The expression "to us from God" indicates something present, practical, and experiential in the way of transmission. Continually, Christ must become wisdom to us from God. This indicates a living, ongoing transmission.

The words "to" and "from" indicate that a present, living, and practical transmission is taking place from God to us.

Christ was made wisdom to us from God as three vital things in God's salvation:

- **righteousness (for our past)**, by which we have been justified by God, that we might be reborn in our spirit to receive the divine life (Rom. 5:18);
- **sanctification (for the present)**, by which we are being sanctified in our soul, that is, transformed in our mind, emotion, and will, with the divine life (Rom. 6:19, 22);
- **redemption (for the future)**, that is, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23), by which we will be transfigured in our body with His divine life to have His glorious likeness (Phil. 3:21).

It is of God that we participate in such a complete and perfect salvation, making our entire being—spirit, soul, and body—organically one with Christ, and making Christ everything to us. It is altogether of God, not of ourselves, that we may boast and glory in Him, not in ourselves.

In the church life and body life we also need redemption because in many matters we are still very natural. Some may dislike a certain brother or a certain sister. Others may lack a proper care for the young people or for the older ones. Still others may have a preference for a particular doctrine, or certain rules. Others may have a preference on how the congregation must act in the location God has placed them.

All these are related to the natural life and point to the need for redemption.

Thus, in the church life and the body life need to be terminated, replaced with Christ, and brought back to God.

In all things we need to be righteous, sanctified, and redeemed.

When Christ becomes wisdom to us from God, eventually in everything He will be our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. How deep and profound is Paul's thought here!

Boasting in the lord

In verse 31 Paul concludes, “That according as it is written, He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord.” It is of God that we are in Christ, and it is Christ who became wisdom to us from God to meet all our need.

Therefore, our boast should be only in Him.

Jewish Roots – Wisdom of the Hidden
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Introduction: using the hidden truths as wisdom

Your words are like an acorn, in every one there is a forest, every word changes eternity. Every action we take must honor the Lord Most High. Every circumstance is an opportunity to grow in faith and wisdom, it is also like a seed that will produce a forest of consequences, use wisdom and faith in one occasion and you will grow in wisdom and broaden the reach of your faith for the every day things in your life.

A child was found dead in a village. A Jewish man was immediately accused of committing the crime even though he was innocent. Thrown in prison the man knew he was a scapegoat and stood no chance in the upcoming trial. He asked to see his Rabbi. In despair the accused man told the Rabbi his circumstance, who comforted him by saying “don’t ever believe there is no way out, God has your life in His hands and your destiny is already declared.” “Don’t give up and lose trust on your Lord Most High.” When the day of the trial arrived, the judge wanted to pretend that the accused would be allowed a fair trial and a chance to prove his innocence so he told the prisoner before all those in the village: “Since you Jews have faith. I will let the Lord decide this matter. On one piece of paper I will write with the word “innocent” and on the other with the word “guilty.” You will pick one and the Lord will decide your destiny.” The judge prepared the two papers

but wrote guilty on both, as the prisoner watched in anguish. The prisoner remembered about His Lord and how He was watching over his destiny. The prisoner suddenly grabbed one piece of paper and swallowed it in a gulp. Upset the judge said, “why did you do that, how will we know your destiny?” Easy replied the accused just read what the other paper says and you will know that I chose the opposite.” The judge not wanting to reveal his own dishonesty honored the decree and declared the accused innocent of the charge.

By handling the situation in this manner, the accused respected the delegated authority of the judge and allowed God to provide a solution for him, by simply trusting on God’s promises.

Prayer: Ask God to help you trust Him more and more, so you can begin to experience your new creation.

**RELYING ON GOD'S WISDOM
TO PROCLAIM HIS MESSAGE, THE GOSPEL**

I Corinthians 2
Donna Kakavec

Paul continues to define the divisions in the church at Corinth in Chapter 2. Paul desired for the church to preach the Gospel not with human wisdom but with wisdom from God.

What is human wisdom? What is wisdom from God? Paul is clear in defining the differences.

<u>Verse</u>	<u>Man's Wisdom</u>	<u>Verse</u>	<u>Wisdom from God</u>
1	eloquence of speech	1	testimony of God
1	superiority of wisdom	2	Jesus Christ, Him crucified
3	weakness, fear, much trembling	4	demonstration of the Spirit and of power
4	persuasive words of wisdom	5	power of God
5	wisdom of men	7	God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden wisdom, predestined by God before the ages to our glory
6	wisdom not of this world, not of rulers of this age who are passing away	9	Things which the eye has not seen, nor ear heard, not entered the heart of man,
8	none of the rulers of this age understood God's wisdom – or they would not have crucified the Lord of glory	10	God revealed them through the Spirit; the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of
9	Eye has not seen nor ear heard, and have not entered the heart of man all that God as prepared for		

	those who love Him		God
11	Man does not know the thoughts of man except the spirit of the man which is in him.	11	The thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God
12	The spirit of the world	12	We have received the Spirit of God that we might know the things freely given to us by God
13	words taught by human wisdom		
14	natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised	13	words taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words
		15	he who is spiritual, appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man
		16	We have the mind of Christ!

The philosophers and teachers of Paul's day depended on their wisdom and eloquence of speech to gain followers, to start a religious "fan club." Corinth was full of such spellbinding philosophers and teachers. Paul, however, did not rely on eloquent speech or clever arguments. Paul's **approach** (vv. 1-2) was to simply declare the Word of God in the power of the Spirit. He was not a Christian salesman – he was a true Christian proclaiming the Gospel of Christ and its transforming power.

Had he used the methods of man's wisdom, he would have elevated himself, boasted in himself and his abilities, and hidden Christ, the very heart of the message he was proclaiming. Paul's **attitude** (vv. 3-4) was one of humility and that of a servant. He became nothing that Christ might be everything. He depended on the power of the Spirit, and his proclamation became a demonstration of the Spirit's power. It was evident to those around him that the Spirit of God used Paul's message to transform lives – it was proof that his message was from God.

Paul's focus, **aim** (v. 5), was for those who heard his message to trust in God. He did not want those listening to focus on him. His aim was to proclaim Christ crucified and see others experience God's transforming power at work in their lives. The Gospel is God's message of hope for a lost world. God's power changes people's lives. Effective evangelism is evidence of the power of God at work in our lives and through the Word that we share with others.

In sharing the Gospel message, we should rely on the wisdom of God and the power of God's Spirit. This wisdom

- * comes from God, not man (v. 7)
- * has been hidden (v. 7)
- * was predestined by God (v. 7)
- * results in our glory (v. 7)
- * is hidden from the unregenerate world (v. 8)
- * applies to the believer's life today (v. 9)

And, the Spirit

- * reveals God's truths to us (v. 10)
- * searches all things, even the depths of God (v. 10)
- * indwells believers (v. 12)
- * teaches, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words (v. 13)
- * matures the believer (vv. 14-16)

“One of the marks of maturity is discernment—the ability to penetrate beneath the surface of life and see things as they really are. Unsaved people ‘walk by sight’ and really see nothing. They are spiritually blind. The maturing Christian grows in his spiritual discernment and develops the ability (with the Spirit’s help) to understand more and more of the will and mind of God. The Corinthians lacked this discernment; they were spiritually ignorant.”

- Warren Wiersbe, THE BIBLE EXPOSITION COMMENTARY

Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 2, the Gospel message

- * Centers in the death of Christ – Christ crucified (vv. 1-5)

- * Is part of God's eternal plan (vv. 6-9)
- * Is revealed by the Spirit of God through the Word of God (vv. 10-16)

APPLICATION:

As believers, our responsibility is to proclaim the Gospel message to those around us: family, friends, co-workers, students, neighbors, etc. The life-changing power of God through His Spirit is demonstration to those around us of the Gospel message. Do others see a life

- * with values based on an eternal hope of glory?
- * characterized by the fruits of the spirit?
- * maturing in knowledge and understanding of the Word?

Not only are believers responsible to live out the Gospel message in our daily walk in the world through the Spirit, we are to verbally share the testimony of God in our lives with others.

- * Did you share the Gospel message with someone last month?
- * When was the last time you verbally shared the Gospel message with someone?
- * With whom will you share the Gospel message this week?

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I CORINTHIANS

Chapter 3

Linda Justice

WHATA 'BOUT ME?

In the book of I Corinthians Paul addresses every kind of Christian we would find in any church today. He speaks to the mature, the infant or one who was just saved, the natural or one drawn to the wisdom of the world, and the carnal or one who is totally selfish and loves his flesh more than anything.

Being saved is just the beginning of a battle – a spiritual battle. **ISamuel 17:47 “All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”** In this passage Samuel is talking to the Israelite and Philistine armies. He proclaims that it is wrong to put our trust in any human devices to win the battle because there is nothing mightier and nothing too big for our God! God fights in the spiritual realm!

2Corinthians 10:3-4 “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”

In Corinth, as in any church today, we are attacked by two fronts. Satan’s tools of temptation are quite effective no matter what time period or what culture we are living in. The first front is the world or what is outside us and the second is the flesh or what is inside us. These are enormous challenges for any Christian to fight every day and be victorious in our walk with Jesus.

The Christian life is like swimming in a lake with a strong current. The current is so strong no matter which way we swim we are still being pulled in the direction of the current and we are getting weaker.

Just like the current, the Spirit of God within us wages war on the world and our flesh. Which one do you think is hardest to fight?

OUTSIDE IN? OR INSIDE OUT?

>>>MAN<<< <<<MAN>>>

WORLD VS. FLESH

The outside, or world, would be the do's and don'ts of our everyday lives and the choices we make.

How do we know what choices to make?

Do these choices get in the way of spending time with God?

Do we begin to worship these things because of the time we spend with them?

Do these choices get in the way of working in the Kingdom?

Do these choices feed the flesh and give us pleasure or do they feed the Spirit?

Make a list of your own questions.

Why do you think the flesh is hardest to fight? We are born with it because we are from the seed of Adam. Our natural desire is to sin. It is what appeals to us.

We know Christ paid the price for all sin and is victorious but how do we get from:

OLD SELF.....TO....NEW CREATION....TO...LIVING IN

VICTORY?

Even though sin was once for all crucified on the cross as believers God continues to crucify our old self. We can't do it ourselves but must be willing for God to work in us.

What is an example of this? What does it look like? How do we get there?

OLD SELF---

- Bitterness
- Envy/Jealousy
- Pride/Unforgiveness
- Resentment
- Self-Pity

VS. NEW CREATION/VICTORY

Gal 5: ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

David gives us an example of how he battled his flesh and put his trust in God to help him. Do you think David could have possibly become the king God wanted him to be if he didn't go through the trials God allowed in his life? Could you be all God wants you to be without trials?

Psalms 139:23 "Search me O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way."

As believers, do you think we spend more time judging and being critical of others or asking God to search our hearts? Why?

When we ask God to examine us and He reveals something that is "offensive" to Him (like something in our old self) what do we need to do before He can change us? **REPENT!**

Are you willing to be broken and rejected so you become completely dependent on God and go through the pain of letting God change you?

What are the weapons God has given us to fight the battle and bring about this change? **Prayer, the Word and the Holy Spirit!**

Ezekiel 36:26-27 “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” (“The heart of flesh” is one that is soft and can be molded easily.)

John 14:26 “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

Jesus leaves with a promise to His disciples of a counselor and teacher. How is the Holy Spirit going to “remind you of everything I have said to you?” What is He going to point to?-The Word-Who is the Word? John 1:1-4) Jesus!

What a merciful God we have. He never gives up on us. **Jeremiah 18:4** “But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.”

Jeremiah is referring to the Israelites but this can also be applied to us. What gentle loving hands our Lord has. He shapes us in a form that **He** desires.

When God changes our hearts it is not just what we do or don't do that gives us victory (because we will pat ourselves on the back and not give God the credit) but who we are. Our mindset and motive is now what is pleasing to God. Our standard is the Word. If we have a problem we go to the Word first.(that is where the Holy spirit can counsel and teach us) As we learn who God is, the more aware we become of heart changes we need to make and open ourselves up to the sometimes painful process!

This is a quote from a book called *Hinds' Feet on High Places* “The Shepherd (Jesus) laughed. “I love doing preposterous things,” he replied. “Why I don't know anything more exhilarating and delightful than turning weakness into faith, and that which has been marred into perfection...”

What a blessing it is that God can **transform** anyone!-Even me! The apostle Paul is a great example. At his conversion God did not give Paul a makeover but made him completely new and Paul shares his life with us and shows us how God **transformed** him from:

OLD SELF>>>NEW CREATION>>>LIFE OF VICTORY

Think of your own journey. Is there something God has changed in your life to make you more like His Son?

This brings us to chapter 3 as Paul painstakingly addresses divisions in the church. He shows them the cause, the symptoms, and the cure for their problems.

3: ¹Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. ³You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

Who is Paul talking to?

He is talking to **brothers** or fellow believers.

How do we know these are believers that have been saved for a while and not baby Christians in the sense that they were just saved?

He says they are “mere infants”. He could not give them solid food because they were not ready earlier in their Christian walk and they “are still not ready”. Just like an infant they are completely selfish in nature and need all of their needs met by someone else. They are of the “Whata ‘bout me?” doctrine!

Why “are they still not ready?”

They “are still worldly”. So what is interfering with their walk? Why are they not growing? What was the standard they used to solve problems?

Hebrews 5:¹²In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Obviously, since they continued to have “jealously and quarreling among you” and were “acting like mere men” they were trying to solve the conflict by selfish, human ways and it was not working! Their righteousness was from man and not the righteousness of Jesus.

⁴For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?

⁵What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. ⁷So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. ⁹For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

Paul already talked about this problem once in chapter 1. Why do you think he is bringing it up again? This is like teaching a child a concept that must be understood before they can go on to the next one. It is a building block that brings you to the next step.

The church members could not get to the next step or grow spiritually because they were stuck on this problem. Paul is going to explain it in a different way to see if they get it!

The problem here wasn't just the fact that one group preferred the preaching of one man over the other but that one group was more spiritual than the other and that following a man took the place of following Christ.

(*Think about a cult. Cults unite and follow a **man** who feeds their flesh and makes up rules as he goes.)

Paul describes himself and Apollos as servants who spread the gospel and did the job the Lord gave them to do.

Just like a parent teaching his child in yet another way, he compares the church to a garden.

Picture in your mind your own garden in your yard. In the mound of dirt you (Paul) plant a seed (starts the church in Corinth). Your friend (Apollos) brings a watering can and waters (preaches at the church) it. The sun (controlled by God) comes out and decides if it grows or rots.

¹⁰By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds."

Why does Paul call himself an "expert builder"? In the Greek it is one word (*architekton*) meaning architect. An architect doesn't just randomly begin building but has a plan or strategy. Paul's wisdom came from "the grace God has given me."

In Acts 18:4-8 Paul preaches in the synagogue in Corinth. Even though he was thrown out he knew the Jewish converts that did listen would have a great impact in the city and could help him reach the Gentiles.

The "foundation" was only the beginning of the building process. Those leaders who came after him must also be faithful. Even though this mainly applies to Apollos etc. it applies to each one of us as we represent our Lord and His Word.

¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

All of scripture makes up the "foundation". The Old Testament not only predicted the Messiah but testified to His coming. The gospels give us eyewitness

accounts of the history of His earthly ministry. Acts shows us the history of the early church. The epistles tell us how His message and His work has affected the church and Revelation testifies to His Kingship and return.

Just like the Pharisees many have tried to build their foundation as a religious system. It was like building on sand (Matt. 7:24-27).

¹²If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. ¹⁵If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

As believers we should always be building. We build our Christian life, fellowship and service for the Kingdom. Notice the two types of materials mentioned. In Paul's time the first three were of equal value. These were the highest quality materials. The next group of materials is of the lowest quality.

Just like an inspector has a standard of codes to follow to see if the house has been built properly God has a standard of conduct as well. It is not what we do but how we do it!

These various materials represent how we build and what our attitudes are as we do works. What motives or conduct do we use as we worship and serve together? We either honor or dishonor God by using high quality materials and please God or we use inferior and leftover materials and please ourselves. Will your attitude and motives stand the test of fire when God judges your works? Or will they be burned up with no reward?

When you think of your own works or ministry what are they going to look like as you present them before the Lord? Will you say you taught Sunday School for 10 years but didn't really enjoy it because the kids were brats or will you say you taught for ten years and prayed and witnessed to each one because of Jesus' love for them. Should they both have the same value because of the time and faithfulness you put in or does one count more than the other? Why would God judge our attitudes instead of our works?

What are some examples of building blocks or works that are eternal in value? A pastor who preaches sound doctrine or a believer's life that is holy and submissive yet full of compassion and grace for the lost are two great examples. They will receive their reward and it will withstand the flames.

¹⁶Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? ¹⁷If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

In these Ephesians passages Paul is speaking to new believers and explaining what it means to be "one in Christ" just like the body in the church.

¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Paul is speaking to the church as a unit because he says "you yourselves are God's temple". (Later on in chapter 6 he talks to the individual.) Just like in the Old Testament, we should value our meeting together as a church body as a sacred place for worship and service. Remember God is a jealous God and guards that which is holy. An example is how God has protected Israel and the chosen or holy people over the centuries. In the Old Testament if anyone other than the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement God would strike him dead. God will discipline those who threaten or defile His holy people.

So as fellow believers how do we fight those who want to "destroy God's temple" or the unity of the church? Who are they? It could be those who belong to the 'Whata 'bout me doctrine'!

¹⁸Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"^[a]; ²⁰and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."^[b]

It is interesting that the Greek words for "fool" is *moros* and foolishness is *moria* and both root words for *moron*!

We must first have a proper view of ourselves or the church. “The church must create an atmosphere in which the Word of God is honored and submitted to, in which human opinion is never to judge or qualify revelation. As far as the things of God are concerned, Christians must be totally under the teaching of Scripture and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Only then can we be open to God’s wisdom and truly become wise. Common commitment to the Word of God is the basic unifier. Where the Word of God is not set up as the supreme authority, division is inevitable.” *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*

Isn’t it interesting that the “wisdom of this world is foolish in God’s sight” and almost always involves pride! As we elevate our own wisdom or ways of doing things we devalue scripture. Nothing we do as man will save anyone or further God’s Kingdom.

²¹So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, ²²whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas^[a] or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, ²³and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

We took a good look at “ourselves” or the church as a whole now we need to look at others as in leaders. Paul, Peter and Apollos were all sent to the church at Corinth by God and all were a blessing! They were God’s teachers that taught the same truths and were meant to be a source of unity not division.

What about our possessions? **“All things are yours,”** The world is ours. The Father made it for the Son but for us to enjoy as well. We have been given spiritual life and death has been overcome on the cross! Even though God controls everything we still have the experiences of this present life time and the spiritual blessings of the things to come! Our greatest possession is the inheritance we have from Christ and not man!

Being in Christ and Christ being in us is the greatest motivator for church unity. **Philippians 2: ¹If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

Homework for I Corinthians Chapter 3

1. In Chapter 3 verses 1-3 how do we know Paul is talking to believers?
 2. How do we know they are Christians who have been saved for a while and not 'baby Christians'?
 3. Why are they not growing spiritually?
 4. In verses 4-5 we see a recurring problem that can't be solved. What is it?
 5. In verses 6-8 Paul makes a comparison. What does he compare Paul and Apollos to?
 6. What does verse 10 mean?
 7. Verses 11-15 is talking about works. What do the different materials represent?
 8. When Paul says in verse 16 "you yourselves are God's temple" who is this referring to?
 9. Verses 18-20 talks about the world's wisdom. Why is it foolish?
 10. Write out what verses 21-23 mean to you.
(If you want to know how the Apostle Paul dealt with sin read Romans chapter 7)
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I Corinthians 4

Margie Hart

Casting our net – Homework for “Stewards of the Mystery of God” 1 Cor. 4

Instructions: *Find, read and meditate over 1 Corinthians 4 and other mentioned scripture to answer the questions below.*

What is the mystery (secret things) of God?

Colossians 2:2

John 14:9

Mt 13:11

Mrk 4:11

Ro 16:25

What defines a faithful servant of Christ?

Acts 26:16

Mt 24:45

Lk 12:42

How do we become a spectacle to angels and man?

Acts 19:29

Acts 19:31

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD

Important Points: The Seen

(The things that are clear with little observation, at first glance, the outline.)

If we read 1 Corinthians 4 carefully, we shall see that this chapter is about the stewards of the mysteries of God emphasizes four main points:

- Faithful servants of Christ (vv. 1-5),
- A spectacle both to angels and to men (vv. 6-9)
- The refuse of the world and the scum of all things (vv. 10-13),
- And the begetting father (vv. 14-21).

Understanding: The Hidden

(The concepts that are understood when we study the word of God and ask the spirit of God to teach us.)

The subject of 1 Corinthians 4 is, stewards of the mysteries of God (4:1-21). The focus of this chapter is neither Christ nor the church; it is the stewards of God's mysteries.

In 4:1 Paul says, "In this way let a man account of us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."

Definitions:

Steward - Strong's G3623 – oikonomos

1) The manager of household or of household affairs

a) esp. a steward, manager, superintendent (whether free-born or as was usually the case, a freed-man or a slave) to whom the head of the house or proprietor

has entrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures, and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age

- b) the manager of a farm or landed estate, an overseer
- c) the superintendent of the city's finances, the treasurer of a city

2) metaph. the apostles and other Christian teachers and bishops and overseers

The Greek word rendered stewards in this verse is of the same root as the word economy or dispensation in 1 Timothy 1:4 and Ephesians 1:10. It means a dispensing steward, a household administrator, **one who dispenses the household supply to its members.**

The apostles were appointed by the Lord to be such stewards, dispensing God's mysteries, which are Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ (Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4), to the believers. The dispensing service, the stewardship, is the ministry of the apostles.

In God's economy revealed in the New Testament there are mainly two mysteries.

1. The first mystery, revealed in the book of Colossians, is **Christ as the mystery of God.**

In Colossians 2:2 Paul speaks of the "full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ." Christ is God's mystery. In Himself God is a mystery. He is real, living, and almighty; however, He is invisible. Because no one has ever seen God, He is a

mystery. This mysterious God is embodied in Christ. Hence, Christ is the mystery of God. Christ is not only God, but He is God embodied, God defined, God explained, and God expressed. Therefore, Christ is God made visible. The Lord Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). The first mystery in God’s economy is Christ, God expressed, as the mystery of God.

2. The second mystery, revealed in the book of Ephesians and explained in it, especially in chapter three, is **the mystery of Christ**. Christ also is a mystery. In Ephesians 3:4 Paul uses the expression “the mystery of Christ.”

Furthermore, Colossians 1:27 says, “To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

As believers, we have Christ dwelling in us. But this Christ whom we have is a mystery. Although Christ lives in us, worldly people do not realize that He is in us. To them, this is a mystery. But although Christ is mysterious, the church is the manifestation of Christ. As the Body of Christ, the church is the expression of Christ. When we see the church, we see Christ. When we come into the church, we come into Christ. When we contact the church, we contact Christ. **The church is truly the revealed mystery of Christ.**

When in 4:1 Paul refers to the mysteries of God, he means Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ. Paul and the other apostles were stewards of these mysteries.

FAITHFUL SERVANTS OF CHRIST

In 4:1 Paul says, “In this way let a man account of us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” By “this way” Paul means the way described in 3:21-23. In these verses Paul charges us not to boast in men, for all things are ours, we are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.

In “this way”, Paul says, he was to be accounted or regarded as a servant of Christ.

Definitions:

Account - Strong's G3049 – logizomai

- 1) to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over
 - a) to take into account, to make an account of
 - 1) metaph. to pass to one's account, to impute
- 2) a thing is reckoned as or to be something, i.e. as availing for or equivalent to something, as having the like force and weight
 - b) to number among, reckon with
 - c) to reckon or account

The Greek word rendered “account” here also means reckon, measure, or classify. Paul is saying that he was to be evaluated, or estimated, in this way as a servant of Christ.

The word servant in this verse means an attendant or appointed servant, an official servant appointed specifically for a certain purpose (Acts 26:16).

In verse 2 Paul goes on to say, “Here, furthermore, it is sought in stewards that one be found faithful.”

The word “here” means in the stewardship, in the dispensing ministry. In this dispensing ministry it is most important that stewards be found faithful.

Paul seems to be talking about himself. Today many so-called spiritual people think that it is always wrong for Christians to talk about themselves. But Paul seems to indicate that he was faithful as a steward. He realizes that the relationship with God is one built upon with mutual faithfulness and trust. So we also must become faithful with God’s commands for our daily life – internally and externally.

In verse 3 Paul continues, “But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you or by human court nor do I even examine myself.”

The word examined means examined for judgment or in judgment. It also means to be criticized. Paul is saying that he regarded it as a small thing to be criticized by the saints or by human court.

In this verse Paul also tells us that he did not even examine himself. He regarded it as a very small matter to be examined by the Corinthians or by human court, and he would not examine himself.

In this verse there are two basic matters we all need to learn.

1. First, **we should not care about being criticized** or judged by others.

Most Christians find it unbearable to be judged or criticized. Certain sisters, if they learn that others have criticized them, may not be able to sleep well for a long period of time. Suppose a certain person who is an elder or leader learns that someone has spoken critically of him. He may not be able to rest well that night, for he may say to himself, “I am one of the elders, a leader in the church, but certain ones are criticizing me.” If we are bothered by criticism, it indicates that it is a great thing, not a small thing, for us to be examined by others. We cannot yet say with Paul, “To me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you.” We must tread carefully and examine if the offense we take is due to pride or indiscretion. In other words is it our pride that injured or is it because truly there are selfish motives in our heart when we are ministering.

2. The second matter we need to learn from these verses is not to criticize ourselves or over examine ourselves.

Early in my ministry I examined myself after every teaching. I spent much time to consider how others reacted to the teaching. Often, it would take days before I could be fully at rest concerning a lesson I had given. Then the time would come to give another lesson.

Today I do not examine myself like this. I have learned that it is not a healthy practice to engage in this kind of self-examination. I call this examination “navel gazing”, looking at my humanity. Instead I examine my motives, where I am with my Father and was I obedient, did I do my best, did I give the teaching time and priority – and that is where it where it ends. Camping on self-examination is wrong. Actually, we are not worthy of such examination. But if we engage in self-

examination or navel gaze, we may become very disappointed. If the elders or ministers all examine themselves in this way, they will feel that they are not qualified to be leaders and will certainly try to resign. Paul could say that he did not examine himself, and we need to learn of him in this matter.

In verse 4 Paul says, “For I am conscious of nothing against myself; but I am not justified by this; but He who examines me is the Lord.” Although Paul felt that he was right, he did not think that he was therefore justified. Knowing that the One who examines him is the Lord, he was willing to leave the matter of judgment with Him. Paul seems to be saying, “Let the Lord examine me. He will judge me in the day of His appearing.” In other words God will do with me what is right, when it is right.

In verse 5 Paul concludes, “Therefore do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who shall both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then there will be praise to each one from God.”

The phrase “before the time” means before the Lord has completed His work. This hints about the tradition of Teshuva and seeing others and self with Eternal Eyes. Teshuva – is the complete repentance that yields a new beginning. The new beginning happens after the completed work of Christ, when we are living in the spirit, with His faith, His victory. Seeing someone with eternal eyes is the acceptance that by faith, God will and is completing His intent with each of us. To judge before the work is done would cause us to sin. So we cannot judge before the time, we can only respond to the current with the faith that God is faithful to complete.

Paul's words in verses 2 through 5 indicate that he was a faithful steward. He did not care for the criticism of others, and he did not criticize himself. He left the entire situation with the Lord. This indicates his faithfulness.

If we care for others' criticism of us or if we examine ourselves, we are not faithful. On the contrary, we may be rather political and try to avoid criticism in order to feel better. We need to turn from this and leave judgment to the Lord. Then we shall be faithful. Concentrate all your life energy to be as obedient to God's commandments and calling for your life. For God has written in Eccl 12:13

"Now all has been heard;

here is the conclusion of the matter:

Fear God and keep his commandments,

for this is the whole duty of man. "

A SPECTACLE BOTH TO ANGELS AND TO MEN

First Corinthians 4:6 says, "Now these things, brothers, I have applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to go beyond what has been written, that no one be puffed up on behalf of the one against the other."

By "**these things**" Paul refers to the things mentioned in the preceding passage, from chapter one to this chapter.

The Greek word rendered “applied” literally means transfigured, transferred in a figure. It is a metaphoric term. What the apostle has written in the preceding passage, beginning with chapter one, gives a figure or example. His intent is not to disrespect the work of Christ on the cross; he simply takes the example of the crucifixion and applies it to himself to make a point. He transfers that figure or example to himself and Apollos, that is, he applies it figuratively to himself and Apollos.

Some translators and expositors think that the expression “what has been written” refers to the writings of the Old Testament. I disagree. This phrase must refer to two things at the same time, the old testament and what has been written in the preceding chapters, such as: “Was Paul crucified for you?” (1:13), “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul?” They are simply ministers of Christ, a planter and a waterer (3:5-7). They are not Christ crucified for the believers. They are not God, who makes the believers grow. They should not be appraised beyond being ministers of Christ, planters and waterers. Otherwise, their appraisers, like the fleshly Corinthian believers, may be puffed up on behalf of the one against the other.

Verse 7 continues, “For who makes a distinction between you and others? And what do you have that you did not receive? And if indeed you received it, why do you boast as not receiving it?” It is God who makes a distinction between others and us. And what we have we received from God. Hence, all the glory should be ascribed to God, and we should boast in Him, not in ourselves or in any servants, such as Paul or Apollos, whom He has used. Here Paul seems to be saying, “Do you think that it is Peter, Paul, or Apollos who makes a distinction between you and others, or who makes you different from others? Don’t think like this. Furthermore, what you received you received not from Paul, Cephas, or Apollos—you received it all from God. Therefore, you should not boast as if you have not received it. If you have something, which makes you different from others, or

distinct from others, that is something you have received from God. Since God has given it to you, you should boast in Him alone, not in any man.”

Verse 8 says, “Already you are filled; already you have become rich; you have reigned without us; and I would that you really did reign, that we also might reign with you.”

The Corinthian believers, proud of what they obtained, became satisfied with what they had. They became self-sufficient and reigned independently of the apostles. This was altogether in themselves and in their flesh.

Once again Paul refers to the situation among those philosophical Greek believers at Corinth. They thought they were sufficient, that they were rich and full. They acted as if they were kings reigning without the apostles. Speaking very faithfully, Paul says to them, “I would that you really did reign, that we also might reign with you.” This word is not sweet, pleasant, or sugarcoated in any way. It is a word that shows Paul’s faithfulness.

In verse 9 Paul goes on to say, “For, I think, God has set forth us the apostles last of all, as doomed to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.” Paul says that God has set forth the apostles last, because the Corinthians were acting as if they were already kings. Here Paul is telling them that they had become kings before the apostles did. This means that God has set forth the apostles last; they would be the last to become kings.

In Paul’s time, when criminals fought with wild beasts in the amphitheater for the entertainment of the populace, the criminals were exhibited last of all. The criminals were regarded as nothing, for they were the lowest of people, those

who had committed crimes deserving the death penalty. The Roman government often would have them fight against wild beasts in the amphitheater as an exhibition. Whenever there was such an exhibition, the criminals were exhibited last of all. Paul uses this as a metaphor to illustrate that the apostles have been set forth by God to be the last show, the last exhibition. The Corinthians were not last; the apostles were those who were last. The apostles considered themselves as criminals doomed to death before the world, not as kings destined to reign like the Corinthians.

Paul also tells the Corinthians that the apostles had become “a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.” This also is a metaphor, referring to fights between criminals and wild beasts in the Roman amphitheater. The apostles became such a spectacle to the world, seen not only by men but also by angels. Both men on earth and angels in the air were watching the exhibition of the apostles. Hence, they were a spectacle to the whole universe.

By using these metaphors Paul was telling the Corinthian believers that they should not act as if they were kings or as if they were rich and had everything. Paul seems to be saying, “Don’t behave like kings. God has made us, the apostles, last in the divine exhibition. We are as criminals doomed to death. This is our destiny. But you seem to be enjoying another kind of destiny. You are rich, you are full, and you are reigning. We, however, are a spectacle.”

Paul’s word to the Corinthians applies to us today. We also should be like the apostles in verse 9—criminals doomed to death and a spectacle both to angels and to men. We should not consider ourselves those who are full, rich, and powerful. This attitude is altogether wrong. We in the spirit must give others the impression that we are as criminals condemned to death, we are nothing outside of God and His grace. Yet, wrapped in this truth we are also children of the King, the Lord Most High.

In 4:9 Paul says, “For, I think, God has set forth us the apostles last of all, as doomed to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.”

It is significant that here Paul says “I think.” This means that Paul was not fully assured. This is not a matter of humility; it is a matter of speaking according to the discernment of man. It is his thoughts and he dares not claim that they are God’s.

In this chapter Paul speaks soberly, yet in a very intimate way. He was rebuking, instructing, correcting, adjusting, and disciplining the believers, but he was doing all this in a very intimate manner. Then at a certain point he inserted the words “I think.” I believe that Paul knew that his speaking was truly of God. Nevertheless, he said “I think” because he knew that there is the reality that when we have accepted Christ, we are in union with Him and He with us. According to this principle of unity, God speaks in our speaking, God and man become one. When man is mingled with God in doing a certain thing, it is simultaneously both God’s doing and man’s doing. Because the words “I think” illustrate this principle, I regard his insertion in verse 9 as very precious. How meaningful it is that God may speak in our speaking! The clause “I think” indicates that Paul was speaking. Nevertheless, in keeping with the principle of unity with the Messiah Jesus, Paul’s speaking was God’s speaking. Because Paul and God were one, when Paul spoke, God spoke also. This is the significance of the words “I think” used in this verse.

In verse 9 Paul uses the phrase “last of all.” This expression, commonly understood at the time, refers to the last part of the performance in the amphitheater. According to ancient custom, when criminals fought with wild beasts in the amphitheater for the entertainment of the populace, the criminals were exhibited last of all. The last act, the last show, was that of condemned

criminals fighting with wild beasts for the entertainment of the people. The phrase “last of all” refers to this. In verse 9 Paul uses this expression metaphorically to convey the thought that God has set forth the apostles last of all, as if they were the lowest criminals condemned to death, to be entertainment for the people.

In Greek the word rendered “spectacle” is the word for theater. It refers to a show, a display, made in a theatrical way as entertainment. Thus, Paul was saying to the Corinthians, “You are already filled. You have become rich, and you have reigned without us. I would that you really did reign as kings so that we could reign with you. For, I think, God has set forth us the apostles last, as doomed to death.”

When Paul says, “I would that you really did reign,” he indicates that the Corinthian believers were not actually reigning as kings. On the contrary, they were in a dream, living a false reality. The fact that they were not yet kings is proved by Paul’s word about the apostles being set forth last of all. Paul seems to be saying, “God has not made us kings in this age. Rather, He has set us forth as if we were criminals doomed to death, to fight with beasts.”

This metaphor presents a vivid picture of the apostles’ situation. Far from reigning as kings, they were as criminals doomed to fight with wild beasts for people’s entertainment. Today this is also our destiny in the sight of man. If you are the only believer in your family, are you not the object of ridicule and entertaining conversation of others. However, in the sight of God, our destiny is to enjoy Christ. We who enjoy Christ have become as criminals in the sight of man for their enjoyment. But in the sight of God Christ is our destiny for our enjoyment. Many have ridiculed us and mocked us. But while they mock us for their entertainment, we are enjoying Christ. This shows that we have two destinies.

- Our destiny in the sight of God is to have Christ for our enjoyment.
- Our destiny in the sight of man is to be regarded as criminals condemned to death for others' entertainment. If we are faithful to the Lord, as Paul was, this will be our destiny before men. We shall be set forth last of all, and we shall be made a spectacle both to angels and to men.

THE REFUSE OF THE WORLD AND THE SCUM OF ALL THINGS

After pointing out that the apostles have become a spectacle to the world, Paul goes on to say in **verse 10**, "We are fools because of Christ, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are glorious, but we are dishonored." The apostles were willing to be foolish by forsaking their human wisdom for the sake of Christ. But the fleshly Corinthian believers remained prudent in their natural wisdom, while claiming they were in Christ. Paul did not say that they were philosophers because of Christ; he declares that they were fools because of Christ. In a sense, every believer in Christ must become a fool. Many who were wise in this world have become fools of Christ. But although the apostles had become fools because of Christ, the Corinthians sought to remain prudent.

In verse 10 Paul also says, "We are weak, but you are strong." The apostles while ministering Christ appeared to be weak, for they used no strength or power of their natural being (2:3). But the fleshly Corinthian believers were strong, claiming prominence among the believers by exercising their natural ability.

In verse 10 Paul also tells the Corinthians, "You are glorious, but we are dishonored." The Corinthian believers were glorious, or honorable, in a display of splendor. But the apostles were dishonored and despised by the glory-seeking Corinthians. By this we can see that the Corinthians were altogether wrong in their way of running the Christian course.

In verses 11 through 13 Paul continues, “Until the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and beaten and wander without a home; and we labor, working with our own hands; being reviled we bless, being persecuted we bear it, being defamed we appeal.” Defamed means insulted, spoken of injuriously.

In verse 13 Paul says, “We have become as the refuse of the world, as the scum of all things until now.” Refuse of the world and scum are synonyms. Refuse of the world denotes that which is thrown away in cleansing; hence, refuse, filth. Scum denotes that which is wiped off; hence, rubbish, refuse. Both synonyms are metaphorically used, especially of condemned criminals of the lowest class, who were cast into the sea or to the wild beasts in the amphitheater. Here Paul likens himself to the lowest criminals, scum, rubbish, refuse. Compared to many of my friends from the past, I also am scum and refuse of the world. They have become very successful and have acquired much wealth. They regard me as a fool and wonder what I have been doing with my life. We people of the word, people of the kingdom, are qualified only to be cast aside as waste. What we say, what we do is foolishness, and not amount to any worldly possessions or prestige. This was Paul’s estimation of himself with respect to both the Jews and the Gentiles.

THE BEGETTING FATHER

Verses 14 through 21 are the most intimate portion of this chapter. Here we see that Paul was a begetting father. He seems to be saying to the Corinthians, “Yes, I am scum and refuse of the world. But I am a father who has begotten many children. In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”

In verse 14 Paul says, “Not as shaming you am I writing these things, but as my beloved children I admonish you.” Paul says that he wrote these things not to shame them, but to admonish them as his beloved children.

In verse 15 Paul goes on to say, “For though you have ten thousand guides in Christ, yet not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” The Greek word rendered guides literally means child-conductors, teacher or guide, as in Galatians 3:24 and 25. Guides, child-conductors, give instructions and directions to the children under their guardianship; fathers impart life to their children whom they beget. The apostle was such a father. He had begotten the Corinthian believers in Christ through the gospel, imparting the divine life into them so that they became children of God and members of Christ.

Verse 16 continues, “I appeal therefore to you, become imitators of me.” The Greek word for appeal is the same as that used in verse 13. In appealing to the Corinthians to imitate him, Paul seems to be saying, “My children, don’t be kings, but be willing to be despised as criminals in the sight of men. Don’t be philosophers, but be refuse of the world and scum. Turn from what you were in the past and become imitators of me. Today we, the apostles, are despised before man for the sake of Christ. We have become fools because of Christ. We have been made a spectacle to angels and to men, we are like criminals sentenced to death, and we are scum and refuse of the world. But to you I am a begetting father.”

In verse 17 Paul says, “Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.” The ways here refer to the ways in which the apostle conducted himself as he taught the saints in every church. The expression “everywhere in every church” indicates two things: first, that the apostle’s teaching is the same universally, not varying from place to

place; second, that everywhere equals every church and that every church equals everywhere.

This Epistle was brought to the Corinthians by Timothy. Thus, Paul not only wrote an Epistle; he also sent a co-worker to visit the Corinthians with this Epistle. By this we see that Paul had intimate and personal contact with the believers at Corinth.

In verses 18 and 19 Paul tells the Corinthians, “Now some have been puffed up as though I were not coming to you; but I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills.” This was Paul’s answer to those Corinthians who were asking why Paul himself did not come to them. Some were puffed up, thinking that he would not visit them. But Paul says that if the Lord wills, he will come to Corinth shortly. If it were up to him, he would definitely come. But, according to the New Testament way of speaking, Paul inserted the words “if the Lord wills” to indicate that the Lord may not send him there. Thus, if the Lord wills, he will come. But if the Lord does not will that he visit the Corinthians, there is nothing Paul can do about it.

In verses 19 and 20 Paul says, “I will know not the speech of those who have been puffed up, but the power; for the kingdom of God is not in speech, but in power.” Paul’s word about the kingdom of God refers to the church life. This implies that in the sense of authority the church in this age is the kingdom of God. Paul knew that the kingdom of God is not in speech, but in power. For this reason, he wanted to know the power of those who were puffed up.

Verse 21 is the conclusion of this chapter: “What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of meekness?” This word is spoken to the Corinthian believers based upon the consideration that the apostle is their

spiritual father. As such, he has the position and responsibility to chastise his children.

A spirit of meekness here refers to the apostle's regenerated spirit indwelt by and mingled with the Holy Spirit. The spirit of meekness is one that is saturated with the meekness of Christ (2 Cor. 10:1) to express the virtue of Christ.

According to Paul's word in verse 21, was he happy or unhappy, angry or meek? I would say that in this chapter he is unhappy and happy as well, angry and meek as well. This definitely does not mean, however, that Paul is two-faced. Rather, it reveals that a genuinely spiritual person can be meek and then immediately become angry. In fact, a spiritual person can be meek even while he is angry.

If you are not truly walking in the spirit, it may take a few days for your anger to subside. But the anger of a person walking in the spirit can vanish instantly. Suppose someone offends you, and you become angry. If it takes a long time for your anger to go away, this proves that you are a person who has not mastered to see with eternal eyes. The faster your anger disappears, the more spiritual you are. Sisters, if you cannot be angry with your husband one minute and meek toward him the next, your spirituality is not matured. If you need several hours to turn from your anger and become happy with your husband, you have only a man-made spirituality, an immature walk with the Lord.

Paul was a person who could be angry one moment and happy the next. This shows that he was truly a spiritually mature person. Thus, it is correct to say that in this chapter he was both angry with the Corinthians and meek toward them.

Sisters, once you have become angry with your husband, how long does it take before your anger goes away? Will it be days before you speak to him again and are happy with him? Leaders, if you are offended by another leader, how long will it take for you to get over this offense? Will it take a week before you can have pleasant fellowship with the one who offended you?

In 1 Corinthians 4 we see that Paul was quite unhappy with the Greek believers at Corinth. However, his unhappiness could suddenly vanish. He could ask in verse 21 whether they wanted him to come to them with a rod, or in love and a spirit of meekness. Is this a word of anger or of meekness? It is rather difficult to say, for Paul was actually angry and meek at the same time.

Consider again what Paul says in verse 21. He asks, "What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of meekness?" Does this sound like a verse from the holy Scriptures? If this word were not in the Bible, none of us would accept such a statement as worthy of being in the Scriptures. It may appear scriptural for someone to ask whether we should come with a rod or in love and a spirit of meekness? Verse 21 sounds like the writing of someone who is angry. Nevertheless, these words are recorded in the Bible. Once again we see that the Bible is different from any other book.

We all need to learn from Paul to have a genuine spirituality. If we are truly spiritual, we shall not hide, we shall not pretend, and we shall not play politics. Rather, we shall have a genuine humanity and simply be what we are in Christ. This is the kind of life, which can dispense the unsearchable riches of Christ into the believers. Those who possess this kind of humanity are qualified to be stewards in God's family.

Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Studies

Jewish Wisdom: Living the Mystery – Yeshua

So then how do we live in this present darkness as children of light? How do we live Jesus so that we may be living as a spiritual being on a human journey? How do we become stewards of this mystery? All of these are questions have one elementary answer. **We fix our gaze on Jesus.** That is it, so let's see how we do this.

As children of the King, our life slowly becomes steadfast and faithful to something not seen by the world. To know we are focused on Truth we must **read His Word.** The scriptures are Jesus, and Jesus in flesh is the Word. John chapter one is exceptionally clear about this.

Our life becomes the resting place for the glory of God. Living is no longer concerned with comfort, no longer lured by reputation. Success, possibilities or dreams and ambition become focused only on the Father's will. Our direction is clearly marked and our self was defined before time began, so this journey calls us to live it. Our whole life is no longer split between secular and divine, or public and private. No our life is all spiritual life and we look at others, circumstances and creation until we find something to admire. We must quiet the heart to hear the whisper of God speak to our soul. We focus our mind on Jesus and no one else.

Deny sin's reality and **forsake the false living,** the joggling, the control, the pride, the selfish attitudes and empty words we speak and live. There is no room for these things in God's kingdom. Our life becomes a symphony focusing on what is holy, pure, and good for all. It rides in the wings of the wind to declare the Truth of God in all things. There is no room for ourselves only for God, no room for our will, only God's, no room for lies or houses built with cards, only Truth.

Now religion will sometimes rise like the dark smoke of burning tires to pollute our sight on God. Its call to search for sin is frantic, awkward and persistent. It is

like the sound of fire alarms in the dead of night – awakens us to burden the soul and tire the flesh. The fact is that being saved is not an exercise of perpetual weeding of the garden. Our journey is not for the purpose of taking all sin out, every day and every word like the pulling of weeds. Our journey is more than that, it is a divine race, a divine quest to find the precious treasure and then selling all we are to have it. Expressing something great about the God that we admire, this is the reason for the journey. We must admire the scenery, the task, and the people until we have found something to express about it all that is good. We must always seek to create instead of destroys, so we look for things to build up in others. We are to become a servant in the details, expressing the love we find in Him for all the people around us. We must express the love we find in someone else because God has placed them in our heart, when He weaved our lives together. So it is that we run best when we are focusing our eyes in Jesus. Weariness dies when we set our site on Jesus, when our motives are Him and our reason for speaking a word is for Him.

We must strive to find the momentum of the Spirit of God, because if not we will center our lives in sin. Sin can become like a blemish at the tip of our nose. No matter what we do, it is there, luring us to focus on ourselves. We begin to point sin out all the time, glaring at it, shaking a finger at it and shunning it. It is easy to start to identify ourselves by what we avoid and it sounds like this; “I don’t drink, I don’t dance, I don’t do . . .” and before you know it sin is the center of who we are. Much like pulling weeds, we begin to pull and pull until we are overwhelmed and soon there are just a lot more weeds. The garden becomes an overgrown mess and the flowers can no longer be seen. It is a chore to go out there and even look at the flowers. (*Our attention really is that small.*)

We must stop and see the billows of love that He pours into our life; we must let ourselves be raptured by Him. Inside all people, things and circumstances we can **find something to admire about God**. When we find the admirable – that is what we respond to, that is what we express.

If we have nothing to admire in God when praying it is an exercise on concentration. If we have nothing to express about God when our neighbor is telling us his car broke -- this silent plea is just another obligation instead of an

opportunity to express God’s generosity. If we have nothing to admire in God at church, we will probably be complaining about the music. What we find to admire about God is like the treasure hidden in the field and this is the spiritual reality that is His Kingdom come. We must search this treasure of God in all circumstances and people; it is the only thing worth expressing. And we focus again on Jesus and we can persevere.

When you fail, pick yourself up and try it again. Remember you are what you believe you are. **You are a child of the Lord Most High.**

Pray for your eyes to gain an eternal gaze, for your lips to speak only what is blessings and measure others by what is Jesus. Write down one thing, person or circumstance you want to find the admirable in.

I Corinthians 5

Margie Hart

Servants of a Holy God

Background

God has commanded a certain authority in our existence. This is why it is of utmost importance that we carefully observe the authority God has placed in our lives. There is a pre-determined order for all things. There is the law of action and reaction, the law of consequence and there is the law of gravity. These and more are how things happen in the physical realm as well as in the spiritual realm.

One of these concepts this one that Paul has in the forefront of all his teachings. It is concerning Authority. Paul tells us the importance of authority in Rom 13:1-7. Every soul is subject to the higher powers -- for there is no power but God. Paul learned this clearly from the Sh'ma in Dt. 6:4-9, where God tells us He is our Lord our God and He is one. Paul learned from Isaiah 14:12-21 and Ezekiel 28:13-17 about the rise and fall of Satan and his powers. The first passage stresses how Satan violated God's authority and the second passage emphasis how Satan (through man) trespassed against God's holiness. Violating God's authority is a matter of rebellion and offense to God's holiness is sin. The act of rebellion was the cause of Satan's fall; therefore rebellion is what God condemned. There is an important lesson for Paul and all of us who follow Yeshua the Messiah; that is, that God's authority is not one to be challenged.

It follows that we must examine how God has placed authorities in our lives; God, allowed them into our lives, He delegated these authorities. It is how the world

comes under a sovereign order before a holy God. Delegated authorities are husbands, your boss, parents, your community and church leaders, elders etc. All of these authorities are installed and allowed by a sovereign God.

Our new life in Christ must submit to the Father. Our soul (mind and self-will) must submit to our new spirit, indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. Our mind, self-will (soul) and flesh must come under the authority of our new spirit. Above all else Paul knows very well the Truth that his spirit is in complete union with God. Thus allowing him to be present with other believers even when he is not there in body.

Important Points: The Seen

(The things that are clear with little observation, at first glance, the outline.)

In this chapter we have a number of important points.

- First, the church must be pure, unleavened, and it must not tolerate a sinful person.
- Second, we must learn to exercise our spirit and to use our spirit in every situation.
- Third, we need to see that, as those who have experienced the Passover, we should now enjoy continually the feast of unleavened bread.
- Finally, if a person truly becomes an evil one and refuses to repent, he must be removed from the church life.
- However, if such a person eventually repents and brings forth the fruit of repentance, the church should forgive him and receive him back into the fellowship. If we consider all these matters, we shall have a clear understanding of how to deal with an evil person in the church life.

Understanding: The Hidden

(The concepts that are understood when we study the word of God and ask the spirit of God to teach us.)

DEALING WITH AN EVIL BROTHER

In 5:1-13 Paul turns to the matter of dealing with an evil brother. The first problem, dealt with in chapters one through four, is the matter of division, which is mainly related to the natural life of the mind and will. The second problem, dealt with in chapter five, the second section of the book, is the sin of fornication, which is related to the lust of the flesh. Morally speaking, this problem, involving incest between a brother and his stepmother, is more gross than the former. The former pertains to the strife that comes from pride. The latter is a gross sin that comes from lust.

Chapter five of 1 Corinthians has certain special characteristics. First, this chapter shows that even a genuine believer can commit a gross sin. Many who read the New Testament may think that, because of the grace of God, believers are not able to do evil things, especially certain evil things recorded in the Old Testament. But in this chapter we read of a brother in the church at Corinth who had committed the sin of incest with his stepmother. (Incest is an offense of rebellion, against the delegated authority and order of God, where as fornication is a sin against God’s holiness.) Paul’s intention, of course, was to help the church to deal with this evil brother. By reading this chapter we see that it is definitely possible for a truly saved one, a real brother in the Lord, to commit such a sin. If we did not have this record in the New Testament, it probably would be very difficult for us to believe that a saved person could commit this kind of sin. Instead, we may think that after a person has been saved he could never be this sinful.

This chapter also shows us that once a church is diverted from the central vision of God’s economy and gets into the mind/will, the door will be open for the lust of the flesh to come in. This will open the way not only for jealousy and strife, but even for gross sins. Therefore, it is extremely dangerous for us to remain in the

mind/will. In this Epistle Paul first deals with the mind/will and then with the lusts of the flesh. The dealing with the mind/will is primarily dealing with division. The first four chapters of this book deal with the problem of division, which comes from the mind and will of man. Division is mainly a matter of the mind. It is the result of opinion, and opinion issues from the mind. This is clearly indicated in the first four chapters. From reading these chapters we see that there were divisions among the Corinthians because they were very much in the natural mind. They turned from the spirit and exercised the mind and self will. They departed from the central vision, and this opened the gate for the lust of the flesh to come in.

In the church life the mind and self-will should not be prevailing. Instead, we all must learn to deny the mind and self-will and renounce it and to live in the spirit, our new creation. We should remain in our spirit and exercise our spirit in every situation. This will close the door to the lust of the flesh.

THE EVIL JUDGED

In 5:1 Paul says, “It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication which is not even among the nations, that someone has his father’s wife.” Here we see that a brother committed incest with his father’s wife, with his stepmother. No sin is worse or more damaging to humanity than incest. As we shall see, although this chapter deals with such a terrible sin, it also speaks of keeping the feast.

Paul was a person who was full of Christ. He knew Christ experientially and not merely in a doctrinal way. Even as he deals with a gross sin, he still has the enjoyment of Christ within him.

In verse 2 Paul says, “And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that the one who has done this deed might be removed from your midst.” Instead of mourning that such a gross sin was found among them, the Corinthians were

proud and puffed up. No doubt, verse 2 is a word of rebuke. In this verse Paul also indicates that the one who has committed this sinful deed should be removed from their midst; that is, he should be excommunicated from the fellowship of the church.

To remove someone from the fellowship of the church can be compared to removing a decayed or rotten piece of wood from a building. Suppose some wood in a house becomes rotten. This rotten part should be removed. Likewise, the evil brother mentioned in verse 1 should be removed from the fellowship of the church. The Corinthians, however, did not have this realization, for they were still proud and puffed up. For this reason, Paul lets them know that he was deeply concerned about the situation there.

In this chapter dealing with an evil brother there are two matters that are very positive and marvelous.

1. The first concerns Paul’s exercise of his spirit in union with God.
2. The second concerns the feast. In verses 3 through 5 Paul says, “For I, being absent in the body, but present in the spirit, have already judged as being present him who so did this, in the name of the Lord Jesus, when you and my spirit are assembled, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one to Satan for destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

In verse 3 Paul says that although he was absent in the body, he was present in the spirit. The apostle, as a spiritual person, behaved in his spirit, in contrast to the Corinthians, who behaved either in the mind and self-will or in the flesh. Although Paul was absent from them in the body, he was still present with them in the spirit and exercised his spirit to judge the evil person among them.

In verse 4 Paul even says that his spirit was assembled with them. The apostle’s spirit was so strong that it attended the Corinthian believers’ meeting. His spirit was assembled with them to carry out his judgment upon the evil person.

In verses 3 and 4 Paul seems to be saying, “You did not remove the evil person from among you. But through the exercise of my spirit I have already judged him. Although I am absent from you physically, I am present with you in my spirit. I even attend your meetings in my spirit. Thus, by my spirit I have already judged this one.”

In verse 4 Paul clearly says, “When you and my spirit are assembled.” By this we know that Paul’s spirit attended the meeting in Corinth. This does not mean, however, that his spirit actually traveled to Corinth. This has absolutely nothing in common with witchcraft, which claims that a person’s soul can leave his body and visit other people. According to this verse, Paul’s spirit was so strong that he could somehow attend the meeting in Corinth. This alludes to this fundamental Truth, which is of unity between a new believer and the spirit of the living God. When they were gathered together, his spirit was with them to deliver the evil one to Satan. This is altogether a spiritual matter, something wholly in the spirit.

In verse 4 Paul refers to the name of the Lord Jesus and the power of the Lord Jesus. Both in the name of the Lord and with the power of our Lord Jesus modify deliver in **verse 5**. The apostle, in his spirit, applied the mighty name of the Lord and exercised His power to deliver the evil person to Satan for destruction of the flesh. I definitely believe that this actually transpired and that the evil one was

delivered to Satan. **It was a matter of authority**, Paul as a servant of Christ, apostle for the church of Corinth had God’s delegated authority over the care of the church.

To deliver a sinful believer to Satan is for discipline and not destruction. The destruction mentioned in verse 5 mainly refers to the affliction with a certain disease (2 Cor. 12:7; Luke 13:11, 16). The flesh refers to the lustful body and mindset, which should be destroyed. Certain diseases come from Satan, by the spirit of infirmity. Such a disease could bring about the destruction of the flesh so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. This indicates that the sinful one among the Corinthian believers was a brother who had been saved once for eternity (John 10:28-29). He could never perish because of any sin. However, because of his sinfulness, he needed to be disciplined by the destruction of his sinful flesh so that he may be kept in the condition to be saved in the day of the Lord. Hence, the destruction of the flesh and mindset is a necessary preparation for the saving of the spirit.

[I can attest that in our medical clinic we care for our patients by ministering to their soul, which sometimes means dealing with the spirit of infirmity. Praying for them, counseling them and leading to Christ and teaching them how to grow in their new nature. We have found many to be healed thru this approach, proving to us that God does deliver our flesh of ailments and heals. We take authority for the healing of our patients, because God has allowed it. Conversely a pastor, or leader who has the authority over a believer can deliver him to Satan.]

As we consider these verses, we see that Paul dealt with the church not only by writing and by sending Timothy to them but also by exercising his spirit. This proves that he was a person who lived in the spirit. It also reveals how strong his spirit was. Paul’s spirit was so strong that it could even attend a church meeting

far away. He exercised his spirit to condemn the evil one and deliver him to Satan. This delivering was the removing of that one from God’s holy temple.

We all must learn from Paul to do everything with our spirit. Many things we do are not done with the spirit. Paul, however, dealt with the situation described in chapter five wholly with his spirit. By his spirit he condemned, and by his spirit he delivered the evil one to Satan.

KEEPING THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

In verse 6 Paul goes on to say, “Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?” The Corinthian believers, in spite of the confusions and such a gross sin as incest among them, were boasting and glorying. The apostle’s Epistle should humble them by pointing out the sinful things among them, thus making them realize that their boasting is not good.

In speaking of a little leaven, Paul’s thought here may be that there is no need to have such a gross sin as that which existed among them; just a little leaven, a little sin, leavens and corrupts the whole lump, the whole church.

In verse 7 Paul continues, “Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened. For indeed our Passover, Christ, has been sacrificed.” The word new in this verse literally means young, new in time. A new lump refers to the church, composed of the believers in their new nature.

To say that Christ is our Passover indicates that the apostle considers the believers God’s chosen people, who have had their Passover, as typified by the one in Exodus 12. In this Passover Christ is not only the Lamb, but also the entire Passover. To be our Passover, He was sacrificed on the cross for our redemption and reconciliation to God. Thus, we may enjoy Him as a feast before God. In this feast no leaven is allowed to be present. Sin and the redeeming Christ cannot go together.

In verse 7 Paul says that the believers at Corinth are unleavened. Is this not difficult to believe? How could the Corinthian believers have been unleavened? In the first four chapters of this Epistle they were rebuked by Paul for their divisions. Is divisiveness not leaven? Are not jealousy, strife, and pride sinful things? How, then, could Paul say that the believers there were unleavened? This seems to be a contradiction.

Actually, there is no contradiction here at all. The Bible always gives us a complete view of a matter, especially of our history as believers. This means that the Bible reveals both sides of a matter. On the one hand, we have the side of Christ; on the other hand, we have the side of what we are in our fallen nature. According to one side, the side of Christ, we are holy. We are saints in Christ. In 1:2 Paul pointed out that we are “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints.” Thus, in Christ we are unleavened. But according to the other side, the side of our natural being, we are full of leaven. The crucial question is whether we eat unleavened bread or leavened bread. In other words, do we live Christ or do we live ourselves? If we live Christ, then we eat unleavened bread. But if we live ourselves, then we eat leavened bread.

In verse 7 Paul charges us to purge out the old leaven that we may be a new lump, even as we are unleavened. We need to be a new lump according to Christ’s side. We are unleavened in Christ, and should live according to Him, not according to ourselves.

In verse 8 Paul says, “Let us therefore keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and evil, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

The feast here refers to the feast of unleavened bread as the continuation of the Passover (Exo. 12:15-20). It lasted for seven days, a period of completion, signifying the entire period of our Christian life, from the day of our conversion to the day of rapture. This is a long feast, which we must keep, not with the sin of our old nature, the old leaven, but with unleavened bread, which is the Christ of our new nature as our nourishment and enjoyment. Only He is the life supply of sincerity and truth, absolutely pure, without mixture, and full of reality. The feast is a time for the enjoyment of a banquet. The entire Christian life should be such a feast, such an enjoyment of Christ as our banquet, the rich supply of life.

From verses 7 and 8 we realize that here we have two feasts. When we were saved, we enjoyed the feast of the Passover. But now throughout our entire Christian life we should enjoy the feast of unleavened bread. In typology, the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread signify our whole Christian life. Without 1 Corinthians 5, we would not think of the Christian life as such a feast. But according to verse 8, we see that the Christian life is a feast of unleavened bread, a feast of the enjoyment of Christ as our life supply without any leaven.

In the book of 1 Corinthians Paul compares the believers at Corinth, and himself as well, to the children of Israel. He takes the history of the children of Israel as a background for this Epistle. This gives us the ground to say that the history of the children of Israel is a full type of our Christian life in the church.

In verse 7 Paul speaks of “our Passover, Christ.” If Christ was Paul’s Passover, then He must be the Passover for every believer. The children of Israel did not live individualistically; on the contrary, they lived, camped, traveled, and fought battles together. Their corporate life typifies our life in the church. Therefore, when we read the history of the children of Israel, we should realize that we are reading our own history.

What happened to them is a type of our experience today. They ate manna in the wilderness; we also eat manna. They drank of the living water; we also drink the living water. They had a rock which went with them; we also have a rock. They experienced the Passover; we also have a Passover, a Passover that is Christ Himself. Furthermore, after the Passover, they kept the feast of unleavened bread. This indicates that we also should keep this feast. The church life is a feast of unleavened bread. For this reason, any leaven must be purged out of the church.

Unleavened bread indicates a living that is without sin, without leaven. In ourselves we cannot possibly have this kind of living. However, in Christ it is possible to live a sinless life. We have been put into Christ, and now we must learn to live in Christ and by Christ. Then He will become our unleavened life supply. He will become the source, the fountain, of a sinless life and living. Because we have such a source and supply, it is possible for us to live a sinless life.

If we would live a life without sin, we must daily eat Christ as unleavened bread. Dietitians tell us that we are what we eat. If we eat unleavened bread, we shall eventually become constituted of unleavened bread. Then we shall live an unleavened life. Although in ourselves it is impossible ever to be sinless, in Christ we can become sinless by eating Him as the source and supply of a sinless life. Since Christ, our source, is unleavened, if we feast on Him daily, we can have an unleavened church life.

In writing this Epistle, Paul was endeavoring to bring the distracted Corinthians back to the central vision of God’s economy. He knew that once they were brought back, they would be all right. But if they remained away from this vision, they would still be sinful in their living. This principle applies both to the church corporately and to the believers individually.

We need to learn to bring others back to the central vision, not just to deal with their failures and sins. In the first two chapters of this book Paul lays a solid foundation for all the matters he later covers. Everything Paul deals with in this Epistle has the first two chapters as its basis.

This indicates that all our dealings with the church and the saints must be based on the need to come back to Christ and to the central vision. We must help others see that the reason they have been distracted is that they have turned from the central vision to something else. If they come back to Christ, they will come back to the feast of unleavened bread.

EXCOMMUNICATING THE EVIL ONE FROM THE CHURCH

In verses 9 through 13 we see that the evil one must be excommunicated from the church. **In verse 13** Paul says, “Remove the evil man from among yourselves.” This is to excommunicate him from the fellowship of the church, as typified by the separation of a leper from the people of God (Lev. 13:45-46). This is an extremely serious matter. Paul had already judged such an evil one, and he expected the believers at Corinth to do the same and to remove that one from their midst.

Verse 11 says, “But now I have written to you not to associate with anyone who is called a brother, if he is a fornicator or an avaricious man or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or a rapacious man; with such a one not even to eat.” Here Paul mentions not just one kind of evil person, but several different kinds.

Furthermore, Paul does not simply deal with a certain sin; he deals with the person who lives in that kind of sin. There is an important distinction here. For example, to commit fornication is different from being a fornicator, one who lives in that sin and remains in it. A fornicator is not merely one who commits fornication as David did in the Old Testament; he is a person who lives in that sin. That sin becomes his living. Thus, such a person becomes a fornicator. In this chapter Paul is dealing with the person, not merely with the sin. This means that he is not simply removing sin from the church; he is judging and removing a sinful person. Suppose, due to weakness, a brother commits a particular sin. We should help him to repent, to forsake that sin, and to return to the Lord. If he is willing to do this and if he brings forth the fruit of repentance, the church will certainly forgive him. However, if he remains in that particular sin and becomes a kind of person who lives in it, he must be removed from the fellowship of the church. Otherwise, the entire church will be leavened.

Jewish Wisdom: Union with the Living God

The Letter Aleph



Aleph is the first letter of the Jewish alphabet. It has no sound until it is mixed with other letters. It is traditionally believed that it is that breath we take before we speak. That moment of first breath is the time when we commend our speech to God. It is a fact that words, which do not give the light of Christ, increase the darkness. So it is when we speak to our Lord Most high.

In Jewish thought, God communicates with the part of the human that is often referred to as the “soul.” The parallel Hebrew term is nashamah, meaning breath. The soul is the part of each person that God will take at death, and perhaps return to a body in the afterlife. It is the part that possesses God’s divine energy.

While community is central to Jewish prayer, a personal relationship with God is important for spiritual health, and meditation practices help us to attain this private closeness to the Divine. Hitbodedut is the Hebrew word that comes closest to our term meditation. It literally translates to “aloneness,” and refers to those times when we remove ourselves from the distractions and rush of the world. Meditation prayer is not recited, and in this period of silence and stillness, the soul finds communion with God.

Meditate on:

Psalm 23

Psalm 103:8-18

Psalm 91:1-2

Psalm 139:1-12

Rom 8:31-39

Be still and know that He is God!

I Corinthians 6

More Disorders in the Church: Do You Not Know?

Donna Kakavecos

I Corinthians 1-4 state the divisions in the church at Corinth, and Chapters 5 and 6 describe specific disorders in the church. Chapter 5 details the disorder of failing to discipline a sinner for incest. Chapter 6 details two additional disorders of the Corinthian church.

1, **I Corinthians 6:1-8 – Disorder of Failing to Resolve Personal Disputes**

The Rebuke. The same laxity of dealing with an immoral brother who commits incest (Chapter 5) is found in the church as personal disputes arose between members and the church refused to resolve them. Again, it was a sign of a divisive church. Christians were taking other Christians to court to settle disputes between them – civil issues.

Paul was greatly troubled by the way the members were treating each other not only because it divided them, but because of its impact on the non-believers in Corinth and the hindrance to proclamation of the gospel (I Cor 10:31-11:1). Even unbelieving Jews took their civil cases to their own synagogue courts. To take disputes between Christians before unbelievers was to weaken the testimony of the gospel.

Matthew 5:38-48

38 You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’

39 But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.

41 And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two.

42 Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

43 You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.’

44 But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you

45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the

tax-gatherers do the same?

47 And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

48 Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

No doubt Paul was considering the teachings of Christ when he rebuked the church of Corinth for taking brothers in Christ to court to settle disputes. Jesus taught it was better to lose money or possessions than to lose a relationship with a brother or to lose one’s testimony to non believers.

The Reminder: Do you not know? Paul’s rebuke was given with a reminder of God’s plan for the believers. First, Paul reminded them that the saints will judge the world (Rev. 3:21; John 5:22). If the saints will judge the world, how competent they must be to judge the mundane disputes of one another. Paul had already spoken in previous chapters about Godly wisdom vs. worldly wisdom, and that the Spirit of God is the source of all wisdom. They had the tools to do what was right. Second, Paul reminded them that believers will judge angels (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6), and that how much more they could judge the matters of this life. Again, they had the tools of God’s Word and God’s Spirit to settle personal dispute among the believers.

2. **I Corinthians 6:9-20 – Disorder of Failing to Practice Sexual Purity**

The Rebuke. The same laxity that allowed for the disorders of failure to discipline the believer practicing incest and failure to resolve personal disputes between believers, also allowed for the failure to practice sexual purity. The culture of Corinth was a permissive society with flagrant sexual appetites and public displays of immorality. Even in some religious centers, prostitution was an accepted form of worship to their gods.

Paul compared the believers at Corinth to the wicked, the unrighteous. They were living like the wicked. He had already said the unrighteous would be judged by the saints and now is saying they have no future in God’s kingdom because they were not of Christ, the Heir (Mark 12:7). Yet the saints of Corinth are acting no differently than the unrighteous! Their future role as an heir with Christ should have radically changed their behavior, but it didn’t. They were deceived (Rev 21:7-8; 22:14-15). They were not focused on the spiritual goal of life eternal with God. They were totally focused on the present, its circumstances and all the world had to offer.

The immoral sins were listed by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. He did not want any of the believers to miss his point of purity. A similar list was noted in I Corinthians 5:10-11. Sensuality and satisfaction of desire were at the root of each sin, and the sins were harming the church body in Corinth and hindering the proclamation of the gospel to the Corinthian community.

The Reminder: Do you not know? Again, Paul’s rebuke was given with a reminder – four reminders. First, Paul reminded them that believers have a future in heaven with Christ, the Heir but unbelievers do not (v. 9). Therefore, live like a believer, an heir of Christ. Second, he

reminds them that their bodies are members of Christ (v. 15). They have a union with Christ, and immorality grieves Christ, the One to whom they are joined. The immorality affects Christ and the testimony of Christ to non-believers. Third, Paul reminds the believers that if they join themselves to a harlot they become one body with the harlot (v. 16). This indicates the gravity of the sin of sexual impurity (Eph 5:31-32). And, finally, Paul reminds the Corinthians that the physical body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, a Gift from God and they were to glorify God in and with their body.

Several times in this passage Paul reminds the Corinthians that they are not their own, but that they were bought with a price – the precious blood of Christ (1 Cor 7:23; I Pet 1:19). He reminds them that they were washed, sanctified and justified in the name of Jesus Christ, in the Spirit of God (v. 11). Therefore, their reasonable response is to glorify God in their bodies (v.20).

God is full of grace and mercy. Only He can change a sinner’s heart and life (2 Cor 5:17, 21). It is only through His Spirit that a believer can live as a “new creation” and be holy as He is holy (I Pet 1:16). He has promised to forgive our sins if we confess them to Him (I John 1:9). He is faithful to do what He promises.

APPLICATION

1. Do you struggle with disputes with other believers? Have you tried to resolve them on your own? Have you sought counsel with godly women or leaders? Do you need to “turn the cheek” and trust in God to work in the heart of the other person? Do you need to ask another believer or a church body to forgive you?
2. Do you practice an immoral sin? Are you living an impure life? Have you sought forgiveness from God? Do you need to seek the counsel of godly women or leaders? Do you need accountability partners?
3. Are you rejoicing in God’s grace, forgiveness and deliverance from the “old man?” Are you grateful for the price paid for your sin? Are you seeking wisdom from the Spirit of God for living as a new creation in Christ?

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I CORINTHIANS

Chapter 7

Marriage/Relationships

Linda Justice

Corinth was a city that openly engaged in adultery, homosexuality, polygamy, and concubinage.

The letters Paul received from the church of Corinth had specific questions concerning relationships, especially the marriage relationship.

Under Roman law and customs of the day there were four types of marriages:

<i>Contubernium</i>	“tent companionship”	Male and female Slaves would live together. The owner could separate them at any time by choosing other partners or selling one or the other.
<i>Usus</i>	“common law”	Man and woman would live together for one year.
<i>Coemptio in manum</i>	“arranged marriage”	A father would sell his daughter to her husband.

<i>Confarrectio</i>	“traditional marriage”	Much like modern ceremony of today. Both families arrange the wedding, exchange vows & rings.
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Many believers were slaves. Divorce was common. The feminist movement was influential and to be a stay at home mom was not always popular.

In the church, members were engaged in all four of these types of marriages. Some had multiple marriages and divorces while others believed being single made them more spiritual.

This subject was causing total confusion and division in the church. Paul discusses each situation. It is important to keep in mind the culture and look at the four types of marriages while going through this chapter.

In chapter 6 Paul teaches on sexual immorality. 6:20 “you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” This theme of what exactly is moral behavior shifts to the marriage relationship.

7:1 “Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry.”

When the leaders of the church of Corinth came to Paul while he was in Ephesus they brought not only troubling news of the state of the church but letters from church members with specific questions and problems. Paul once again, with great patience and love, points out the solutions.

Paul is not telling the believers not to marry he is simply saying it is a choice. Some believed by staying single and celibate made them more spiritual.

Another advantage of being single, especially for Paul, was the lack of responsibility and worry of a spouse and a family that might suffer persecution at any given time under Roman rule.

7:2 “But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.”

Because of the immorality that was rampant in the city and the church he suggests it is better for

them to be married with only one partner as God ordained it.

7:3 The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. 5Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

This should be obvious to the Corinthian believers but it wasn't. Some husbands as well as wives felt they must set themselves apart wholly for God and become spiritually superior by participating in total sexual abstinence with one another.

The apostle Paul made it clear this way of thinking was wrong and to respect the authority each partner had with the others bodies. To abstain was leading to great temptation and immorality.

Do you see where **pride** was the root of all their thinking?

7:6-7 I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from god; one has this gift, another has that.

Paul, again, is stating the advantages of being single but one can only honor God if he has been given the gift of abstinence so they are not tempted. Unfortunately this was not the case in Corinth.

7:8 Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. 9 But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

10 To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. 11 But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

12 To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13 And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. 16 How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

It is important to understand who Paul is speaking to here. Questions were sent to him from born-again believers who wanted to honor and serve God with their lives. Many times people want to use verses in the Bible to give them permission to do what they want to do so they will be happy but sometimes the Word tells us to do something that is very difficult and makes us unhappy! Even though the situation may seem really hard, God has a plan for each one of our lives.

Here we see four separate categories:

Verses 8-9	Now single-was married and either widowed or divorced (before coming to Christ)	Stay as Paul-unmarried or for lack of self-control or the gift of singleness they should remarry	
Verses 10-11	Addresses all four types of marriages (listed on page one)- both are believers	As believers they are to remain together as a married couple (In God’s eyes death breaks the union)	Gen.2:24 ..(two shall become one flesh) Matt.19:5-9 Matt. 5:31-32 Mal. 2:16
Verses 12-14	Those married to unbelievers that want to stay together	Stay together so the unbeliever and the children will be sanctified	Mal. 2:15
Verses 15-16	Those married to unbelievers who want to divorce	The unbelievers can leave if they desert the believer because of their faith and no peace in the home	Rom. 14:19 11:14 I Peter 3:1

What does verse 14 mean? **“For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children will be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.”**

“Sanctify” means to be set apart for God’s service. This is the opposite of being “defiled” or totally living by the world’s standards or “unclean.”

John MacArthur writes “Being unequally yoked, one flesh with an unbeliever, can be frustrating, discouraging, and even costly. But it need not be defiling because one believer can sanctify a home. ...In God’s eyes a home is set

apart for Himself when the husband, wife, or, by implication, any other family member, is a Christian. Such a home is not Christian in the full sense, but it is immeasurably superior to one that is totally unbelieving. Even if the Christian is ridiculed and persecuted, unbelievers in the family are blessed because of that believer. One Christian in a home graces the entire home. God’s indwelling that believer and all the blessings and graces that flow into the believer’s life from heaven will spill over to enrich all who are near.”

So if you live with an unbelieving spouse never underestimate the power of God that resides in you. Continue to pray for the unbeliever and be faithful in reading the Word and talking about Jesus as often as you can especially to your children.

In verses 17-24 Paul now answers questions about how the church is to respond to civil and social conditions in which they live. “The principle is this: Christians should willingly accept the situation into which God has placed them and be content to serve him there. It is a principle against which human nature rebels, and Paul states it three times in 8 verses, so that his readers could not miss the point. We should not be preoccupied with changing our outward circumstances.” *The MacArthur New testament commentary*

^{7:17}Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. ¹⁸Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. ¹⁹Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts.

Jesus made it very clear He did not come here for social reform. John 18:36 **“Jesus said: My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.”** As a church we are here to change people and not change society. When the church becomes so focused on social movements the gospel gets lost or becomes ineffective.

God gives every believer the opportunity to spread the gospel and be a kingdom worker no matter the circumstance. Every man, woman or child, married

or single can be a Christian. We can be in any country of the world with any type of government.

Paul then addresses the subject of circumcision. The Jewish Christian should not desire to become like a Gentile and become uncircumcised. According to the historian Josephus, many Jewish men actually had surgery to make themselves appear uncircumcised because the Romans and especially the Greeks found circumcision repulsive.

Also, Gentile believers should not be like Jews. In the church at Galatia it was taught that you must be circumcised to be saved. Either way there is no spiritual significance.

7:²⁰Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. ²¹Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you— although if you can gain your freedom, do so. ²²For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. ²³You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.

Paul now talks to a specific social group: slaves. He is not condoning slavery but that a person can still be a Christian even as a slave. Paul made the point that sin is what keeps us from obeying and serving the Lord and not circumstances.

As Christians we are paid for by the shed blood of Christ. We should focus on our spiritual freedom and our slavery in God and not our freedom or slavery among men.

God puts us where we are for a reason. No matter what marriage relationship you are in, or a single person, free or slave, or any other circumstance **“Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when he was called.”**

We are to stay where we are until god moves us!! Many times that means we will be very uncomfortable.

²⁵Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. ²⁶Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are. ²⁷Are you married? Do not

seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. ²⁸But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

Again Paul states that Jesus does not teach about this subject directly but Paul has been given authority to give trustworthy advice on the subject.

What is **“the present crisis”** in verse 26?

By now many Christians had been beaten, imprisoned and even killed and Paul knew the persecution was only going to get worse. In fact about 10 years after this letter was written, Nero began torturing Christians. Some were sewn up in animal skins and thrown to wild dogs to be torn apart. Others were clothed in wax, tied to trees, and set on fire to glow like human candles.

He goes on to say you are not sinning if you are single or if you get married as long as it is to another believer. (2 Cor. 6:14)

If you are married do not sin and seek a divorce .

You can only be released from the marriage bond by death, adultery, or divorce by an unbelieving spouse. If you are **“unmarried”** and have the gift of singleness consider it a blessing and **“do not look for a wife.”**

The **“many troubles”** married people will face has nothing to do with the relationship but the responsibility of a family during times of persecution.

²⁹What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; ³⁰those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; ³¹those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

Marriage, sadness, happiness and materialism are all earthly. **“This world in its present form is passing away.”** Obviously God honors marriage, there is nothing wrong with experiencing emotions and having possessions but none of them are to be used as an excuse from doing the Lord’s work and that which is eternal.

³²I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. ³³But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife— ³⁴and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. ³⁵I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

Paul gives a comparison once again of the concerns of the married and unmarried believer. One is not more spiritual than the other. The unmarried has less distractions and concerns about persecution than the married.

Unmarried	Married
Concerned about things of the Lord/How to please the Lord	Husband concerned about pleasing wife/wife about pleasing husband about pleasing God
Holy-being separated for God alone with body and spirit.	Holy for service to God but divided.
Singleness does not guarantee more devotion to god but simply makes it easier	A married Christian cannot be faithful to the Lord if he is unfaithful to his/her family.

³⁶If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. ³⁷But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. ³⁸So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better.

Some of the fathers in the Corinthian church had dedicated their young virgin daughters to the Lord to remain permanent virgins but when the daughters became of age to marry they wanted to do so. The fathers were asking Paul what to do? Is it a sin to change their minds even after they took a vow not to allow their daughters to marry? No!

Also, if a man is engaged to a virgin for a period of time and chooses to marry her or not is not a sin as long as she is of age, a believer and honors the marriage relationship.

³⁹A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. ⁴⁰In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

What is Paul saying? It seems very clear.

1. Once married you are bound for life as long as both partners are alive.
2. You are free to marry after your husband dies.
3. Your choice must be a believer.
4. You may be happier to remain single.

Both the celibate, single person (like Paul) and the married person are lead by the Holy Spirit.

Resource: *The MacArthur new testament Commentary*

I Corinthians

Chapter 7-Homework

It is believed Paul wrote I Corinthians while in Ephesus because church leaders from Corinth came to Paul for help. These leaders also brought with them

questions from believers in their church regarding specific questions concerning marriage and relationships.

This chapter was like a maze. I grouped the scriptures so it might be easier to answer the questions if you break it down that way.

7:1-2 Marry or not to marry? Why? Why not?

7:3-5 Why did Paul need to explain marital duty to married couples?

7:6-7 What is the gift from God?

7:8-16 Who is Paul talking to? Can you identify 4 specific groups in these passages?

7:17-19 To circumcise or not to circumcise that is the question?

7:20-24 Can slaves do God’s work, too?

7:25-28 Should they remain a virgin, marry or divorce?

7:29-31 What is passing away? How does this apply to us?

7:32-35 Compare how married/unmarried believers can serve God.

7:36-38 Should virgins marry or not?

7:39-40 List 4 things Paul explains in these verses.

Jewish Wisdom: Our Covenanting God

Marriage Covenant

The Hebrew word for marriage is **Kiddushin** and means sanctification or holiness. It comes from the root word **Kodesh** which means holy, to be set apart and **Kadash**, which means sanctified and separated from evil. God has elevated marriage to a holy state by introducing Himself to the relationship and thus, we have "Holy Matrimony." Just as God is holy, we are to be holy as it says in **Leviticus 11:44:**

“For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy.”

Most Christians think of holy as sinless, but Biblically it means that you have grown in spiritually maturity and that you have an intimate relationship with the Savior - you have been set apart for His service. We are reminded in **1 Peter 1:15-16** that what we say is directly related to our holiness:

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

In biblical times, a Israeli bridegroom propose to beloved by offering the Kiddush cup, which means cup of sanctification or holiness. If his chosen accepted his marriage proposal, she sipped from the cup and was now betrothed and promised in marriage to him.

Yeshua (Jesus) kept the same wedding custom after the Passover meal, offering the Kiddush cup to His disciples. Now, when believers take Holy Communion, they are entering into or renewing their wedding vow to Yeshua, our Bridegroom. However, as we can see in Revelation 18, Satan would entice all to drink from His cup of wine of wrath and commit fornication with her. For we are betrothed to our Savior now. We must remain faithful to Him by not partaking in the ways of the world and remain separate.

“For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.” **Revelation 18: 3**
KJV

In the ancient times, the Jewish Betrothal occurred one or two years before the actual wedding (or Nuptials) and involved making a covenant. The Hebrew word for covenant is **B'rit** and was actually quite more serious than an engagement today. In Biblical times a covenant was final, sealed in blood, and legally binding, as we can see in Scriptures in the relationship between Mary and Joseph.

Matthew 1:18-19 says:

“Now, the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately.”

While Mary and Joseph were espoused (or betrothed), He thought to put her away (divorce her) since he believed she had been unfaithful. Their covenant was so binding, that it would require a bill of divorce to break.

This same word "espoused" in Matthew 1:18-19 is used by Paul as he reminds the believers at the Corinthian church to remain faithful. It says in **2 Corinthians 11:2**:

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. "(NKJV)

Many believers today are unfaithful and there is a possibility the Lord will "put them away." This, of course, does not mean the loss of their salvation, but a loss of rewards when Yeshua returns as seen in **1 John 2:28, Titus 3:8 and 2 John 1:8**. To be part of the Bride of Christ is a great reward to those Christians who have lived a pure and holy life for the Messiah.

God hates divorce because marriage is picture of every one of the covenants He has initiated with mankind. **Mal 2:13-17**

*13 Another thing you do: You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. 14 You ask, "Why?" **It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.***

15 Has not the LORD made the two of you one? You belong to him in body and spirit. And why has he made you one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. [a] So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

16 "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate it when people clothe themselves with injustice," says the LORD Almighty.

So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.

I CORINTHIANS

Chapter 8

Linda Justice

Limits of Christian Freedom

How far does Christian liberty go in regard to behavior not specifically forbidden in scripture?

For generations many debates have taken place in churches that are centered around questionable practices. These practices are things that many believers think are wrong but are not specifically forbidden in Scripture. Some of these issues are drinking alcohol, smoking, dancing, playing cards, music, and going to movies.

The main reason Christians spend so much time arguing or discussing these issues is that the Bible does not specifically forbid them. In other words we have no authority to say what is right or wrong and these things become gray areas.

Every age or time period in history and culture deals with issues of this kind. In Acts 15 the council of the early church had to handle gray areas.

Jewish believers believed Gentiles must be circumcised. Vs. 1 Jews would not socialize with Gentiles especially at meal time because they might break dietary laws. The answer was they would (vs. 29) “do well” to abstain from eating foods that might offend their Jewish brothers.

Remember liberty is not a license to sin. I Peter 2:16 says **“Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bond-slaves of God.”**

(Legalism-Strict adherence to man-made rules of do’s and don’ts.)

We find two extremes in the church. The first is ***legalism***. What is it?

Every act, habit or type of behavior is black or white.	You live by your rules.	All things are good or bad whether stated in the Word or not.	You make long list of do’s and don’ts.	By doing things on the ‘good’ list and avoiding things on the ‘bad’ list you are more spiritual.	You are <i>controlled</i> by your laws and NOT the Spirit.
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What does ***legalism*** do to the life of the believer? ***Legalism stifles liberty, stifles conscience, stifles the Word, and stifles the Holy Spirit.***

The MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

Why would ***legalism*** stifle the Spirit within us?

The other extreme is ***license***. What is it?

Almost everything is white or acceptable unless strictly forbidden in Scripture.	You can do as you please as long as your conscience is free.	No restrictions are needed with this free conscience.
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The MacArthur New Testament Commentary

As we study chapter 8 be aware of how **legalism and license** affected the church of Corinth and also think about your own life and how your walk with God is being challenged.

Legalism and **license** are both man-made because man becomes the authority. Those who practice **legalism** believe they are more spiritual than others who do not follow their do's and don'ts. The reality is by following this list of things not specifically forbidden in scripture there is no significance in our relationship to God. It simply means you spend more time judging others and trying to figure out why they can't see things your way instead of talking about who God is and being in the Word and praying for one another.

License is a 'flesh-feeder'.

Vs. 8:

¹ Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that “We all possess knowledge.” But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. ² Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. ³ But whoever loves God is known by God.

“Idol sacrifices were food offerings, symbolically presented in worship to the god in whose temple they were given. The particular issue was that of eating food that had been offered in those sacrifices.

The Greeks and Romans were polytheistic, worshiping many gods. They had a god, or a group of gods, for every circumstance, every need, and every activity of any consequence. They had a god of war, a goddess of love, a god of travel, a goddess of justice, and on and on. They were also polydemonistic, believing in many evil spirits. They believed the air was filled with evil spirits of all sorts.

Giving food sacrifices, which were usually meat, was of great importance in regard to both of those beliefs. It was believed that the evil spirits were constantly

trying to invade human beings and that the easiest way to do that was to attach themselves to food before it was eaten. The only way the spirits could be removed from food was through its being sacrificed to a god. The sacrifice therefore served two purposes; it gained the favor of the god and cleansed the meat from demonic contamination.

Idol offerings were divided into three parts. One part was burned on an altar as the sacrifice proper. The second part was given as payment to the priests who served at the temple, and the remaining part was kept by the offerer. Because of the large number of offerings, the priests were not able to eat all of the portion, and they sold in the marketplace what they did not need. That meat was highly valued because it was cleansed of evil spirits, and was thus the meat served at feasts and to guests.

The eating of meat offered to idols therefore had the same two associations for Christians, especially for those who had grown up in that religious atmosphere. The meat was associated with pagan gods and goddesses, having been part of an offering to them, and it was associated with the superstition that it had once been contaminated by evil spirits.

It was almost impossible for a believer who had any personal contact with Gentiles to avoid facing the question of eating idol sacrifices. Most social occasions, including weddings, involved pagan worship of some sort, and a great many of the festivities were held in temples. Idol food was always served. If a relative was getting married, or a long-time friend was giving a banquet, a Christian either had to make excuses for not attending or he had to eat food that he knew had been part of an idol offering.

Some sensitive Gentile believers refused to buy such meat because it brought back memories of their previous pagan lives or because those who saw them buy it might think they had reverted to paganism. Also many believers, both Gentile and Jewish, were reluctant to eat at the homes of pagan Gentiles—even some of them Christian Gentiles—because they were afraid of being served that meat. Such food could only be doubly unclean according to Jewish dietary law-

from which many Jewish Christians found it hard to separate themselves.” The MacArthur New Testament Commentary

Paul then responds to the mature believers who were not bothered by the pagan food. To them meat was meat. These mature believers knew God’s truths. Paul is saying don’t focus on your liberty or freedom to eat what you want but limit your own ‘rights’ for the spiritual welfare and love of the immature brother or sister. In other words, if eating of this meat even though **you** know it is just meat affects the weaker believer, then don’t it eat!

To the mature believer it was easy to understand that idols were not real and the food had no spiritual significance. Some claimed that knowledge and became arrogant. They were insensitive and did not care who they offended. This caused more division in the church.

It is great to have the knowledge of truth but that in and of itself will not build up. Without love we cannot build up our brothers and sisters no matter how much truth we claim to know.

If we do not love God it is impossible to love others. When we truly love God we are in right relationship with him. This love reveals itself in our words, behavior and relationships with others.

Vs.8: So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.”⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”),⁶ yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.⁷ But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.

Are there imaginary ‘gods’? Yes! Are they deity? No!

Psalm 115:

- ⁴ But their idols are silver and gold,
made by human hands.**
- ⁵ They have mouths, but cannot speak,
eyes, but cannot see.**
- ⁶ They have ears, but cannot hear,
noses, but cannot smell.**
- ⁷ They have hands, but cannot feel,
feet, but cannot walk,
nor can they utter a sound with their throats.**

Why does Paul remind the believers who the one true God is? First of all we see the oneness of the Father and the Son and we are to be one with Him. We live for, because of and through Jesus Christ!

Who are the people that do not possess this knowledge?

Many believers in the Church at Corinth were baby Christians with pagan worship backgrounds. The ‘gods’ at one time had a stronghold on them. They may have placed their faith in Christ but have not fully understood or recognized the truth of the one true God yet. They were weak and needed love, understanding, and discipleship.

Vs.8: ⁸ But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. ⁹ Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol’s temple, won’t

that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. ¹² When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

Mark 7:15 “Nothing outside a man can make him ‘unclean’ by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him ‘unclean’.”

If we eat or don't eat a certain food we neither become closer to God or have His approval. All of the manmade do's and don'ts are spiritually neutral.

So what is the problem? As mature Christians in the church of Corinth it is our responsibility not to be a **“stumbling block to the weak”**. Because we love God and our weaker brothers and sisters we are to avoid **“eating in an idol's temple”** because we have the spiritual **“knowledge”**

that the food has no meaning. We must give up our 'right' to eat what we want where we want. We must never think our liberty is more important than the price Jesus paid.

How do we know this is very serious to God?

This weak brother or sister could be 'destroyed'! What does that mean? If this weak Christian sees a mature Christian eating in an idol temple it could lead him into a situation he not only doesn't understand but cannot handle and can cause him to sin.

If you cause a brother to be **'wounded'** in this way it is more than just an offense against him it is a **'sin against Christ.'** **This is a very strong warning!**

Vs.8:13 “Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall”

We can think of many examples in our culture today. We should always be willing to limit our liberty or ‘rights’ to show our love and support for a fellow believer. Paul takes this one step further and says he would stop doing this act completely!

“In deciding about whether or not to participate in any behavior that is doubtful, the following principles make a good checklist to follow.

Excess. *Is the activity or habit necessary, or is it merely an extra that is not really important? Is it perhaps only an encumbrance that we should willingly give up? (Heb. 12:1)*

Expediency. *“All things are lawful for me,” Paul says, “but not all things are profitable,” or expedient (I Cor. 6:12). Is what I want to do helpful and useful, or only desirable?*

Emulation. *“The one who abides in Him ought Himself to walk in the same manner as He walked” (I John 2:6). If we are doing what Christ would do, our action not only is permissible but good and right.*

Example. *Are we setting the right example for others, especially for weaker brothers and sisters? If we emulate Christ, others will be able to emulate us, to follow our example (I Timothy 4:12).*

Evangelism. *Is my testimony going to be helped or hindered? Will believers be drawn to Christ or turned away from Him by what I am doing? Will it help me conduct myself “with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity” (Col. 4:5).*

Edification. *Will I be built and matured in Christ; will I become spiritually stronger? “All things are lawful, but not all things edify” (I Cor. 10:23).*

Exaltation. *Will the Lord be lifted up and glorified in what I do? God’s glory and exaltation should be the supreme purpose behind everything we do. “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (I Cor. 10:31).*

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I CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER 8

HOMEWORK

1. What is legalism?
2. What is ‘license to sin’?
3. Do you have a list of do’s and don’ts that are not forbidden in scripture but are considered ‘gray areas’?
4. Do you spend more time thinking and talking about these ‘questionable practices’ than being in the Word or learning about who God is? Do you judge others because they have different opinions about these ‘areas’.
5. Do you grow spiritually when you practice your list of dos and don’ts?
6. Vs. 1-3 What kind of food is Paul talking about?
Why was this an issue? Why do we need love and not just knowledge?
7. Vs. 4-7 Why does Paul remind them who the one true God is?
How was the weak Christian defiled?

8. Vs. 8-12 How does a weak brother or sister become “destroyed by your knowledge”?

Why are you sinning against Christ in this verse?

Think of some ways we could cause a fellow believer to fall into sin because of our actions in today’s culture.

I CORINTHIANS 9

- *Donna Kakavec*

I Have Rights!

Chapter 9 is a continuation of the discussion in Chapter 8 regarding the Christian’s rights or liberties, and Paul makes it personal.

1. Paul contends that he is a “real” apostle – verses 1-2.

Some Christians at Corinth denied that Paul was a real apostle, and cited his not receiving pay for his work as evidence of it. Yet Paul states two reasons that he is a true apostle:

a. He had seen Jesus. Paul had a personal encounter on the road to Damascus with Jesus after the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:8).

b. The Christians at Corinth bore testimony that Paul was an apostle; they were his “seal.” (A seal was an official stamp on a legal record that showed the record was genuine.) Paul’s successful work in Corinth was proof of God’s powerful work in Paul’s life.

2. Paul defends his rights as an apostle – verses 3-23.

a. His defense of his rights was based on his real apostleship and past experience on the road to Damascus, yet it looked forward to opportunities to see God’s power at work in the lives of others as well as his own.

b. He compares himself with others in the ministry and choices they, too, have made: eating and drinking ordinary food (not the same as sacrificial meat); taking a wife; or accepting pay for work.

c. Paul gave six illustrations for receiving payment for his work:

1) Custom – (v. 7) - The soldier, farmer and shepherd are all supported by their work. There is an expectation of a payment for work performed.

2) Old Testament Validation – (vv. 8-10) - “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing” (Deut. 25:4). The ox would drag a wooden board with nails in it over grain, and the nails would separate the grain from the straw. The ox must not have anything over its mouth to prevent it from eating some of the grain as he worked. Again, there is an expectation of reward for work.

3) Community Reward – (v. 11) – Beneficial service should be rewarded.

4) Precedents of Other Christian Leaders – (v. 12) – If other leaders (Peter, Apollos) received payment, Paul, as their founding father, would be even more deserving of payment.

5) Practice of the Priesthood – (v. 13) – Old Testament priests were paid for their services (Num. 18-8-32).

6) Instruction of Jesus – (v. 14) – Jesus stated that those who give out the gospel should receive support from it (Luke 10:7).

3. Paul clearly understands his right to receive payment for his work, yet he refuses to exercise

this right (vv. 12, 15-17, 19).

He did not want to hinder the response of any one to the message of the gospel of Christ. He did not want to be a stumbling block (I Cor. 8:9). He ministered willingly and freely from his heart (2 Cor. 2:17; 2 Cor. 11:9-12).

4. Paul claims his reward by other means (vv. 15, 18).

a. He had his boast – v. 15 – he offered the gospel at no charge (2 Cor. 11:9-10).

b. He had the opportunity to see the power of the gospel at work among those to whom he preached (1 Cor. 9:19, 23). The believers were his reward (2 Cor. 7:3-4).

5. Paul stayed focus on his goal to proclaim the gospel of Christ (vv. 19-27).

a. Though he was free, he voluntarily became a slave (v. 19) for the good of others.

b. He never lost his concern for the salvation of his own people (v. 20).

c. He was willing to abandon his preferences and rights in order to reach the Gentiles (v. 21).

d. He continued to press the weak Christians at Corinth to mature in their faith (v. 22).

e. He focused on the gospel of Christ and sharing in its blessings (v. 23). He focused on eternal rewards.

f. He committed himself to this focus of ministry through much discipline (vv. 24-27).

Every move was calculated. He was not aimless.

6. **Application:**

a. What drives you? On what are you focused? What do you think about throughout the day? Do you sense Paul’s compulsion to preach the gospel of Christ with everyone around him? Do you have the same compulsion? When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone? How do you think God wants you to respond to Paul’s example?

b. What are your rights? Are you exercising them? Have you ever set aside your rights in order to be a witness to someone else? Is there something that you are doing now that is a stumbling block to unbelievers or believers? How do you think God wants you to respond to Paul’s example?

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Homework - 1 Cor. 10

Margie Hart

Answer questions and research bible verses listed.

Exo. 13:21-22; 14:19-20

Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13

1 Cor. 10

1. How do we enjoy Christ?
2. Compare Baptism in the new testament with that baptism into Moses?
3. What are the warnings Paul gives from Israel's history?

Background – I Cor. 10

Margie Hart

THE DEEP AND MYSTERIOUS CHRIST

Paul was not a shallow person, and in his writing he did not carry out the rescue of the believers at Corinth in a shallow way. On the contrary, Paul’s way of rescuing them involves matters that are deep and profound. As he wrote to the Corinthians with the aim of rescuing them from what was distracting them from Christ, Paul unveils the depths of God, the deeper things concerning Christ. If we did not have the first three chapters of 1 Corinthians, we would not know that Christ has become wisdom to us from God; neither would we know that this wisdom includes Christ as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Paul’s thought here is very deep. The problems he deals with in this Epistle may seem rather shallow, but the way he deals with these things is profound. In particular, the eating of idol sacrifices is a shallow matter. But Paul’s way of dealing with this problem is related to the deep, mysterious, all-inclusive Christ.

The depths of God are related to the mysterious Christ. Because what we are teaching and experiencing regarding Christ is mysterious, unbelievers cannot understand what we are talking about. To them Christ is simply a historical figure. But to us Christ is real, living, present, and precious; He is mysterious, deep, and all-inclusive. He is far beyond our comprehension, so deep that we cannot fathom Him.

In his Epistles, Paul did not have a vocabulary adequate to describe the all-inclusive Christ. In Ephesians 3:18 he speaks of apprehending with all the saints “what is the breadth and length and height and depth.” Here Paul refers to the dimensions of Christ. What is the breadth? And what are the length, the height, and the depth? These are the immeasurable dimensions of Christ. Christ Himself

is the breadth, length, height, and depth. His dimensions are more vast than the dimensions of the universe. Such a marvelous Christ is beyond our apprehension.

ENJOYING CHRIST

According to Paul’s word in 1 Corinthians, this wonderful Christ is ours. In 1:2 we are told that Christ is “theirs and ours.” In 1:9 Paul says that we have been called into the fellowship of Christ. This means that Christ is our portion for our enjoyment.

For us, as those who have been called into the fellowship of Christ, it is not sufficient only to believe in Him, trust in Him, and rely on Him, as Christians today are often taught to do. Of course, we must trust in the Lord and rely on Him. But we may do this and still miss the central matter of enjoying Christ and possessing Him as our portion. In the past, many of us were taught to believe in Christ, trust in Christ, rely on Christ, and pray to Christ. One very important matter, however, was neglected—the enjoyment of Christ. .

THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD’S SON

God has called us into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Do you have a proper understanding of the fellowship of God’s Son? As we have pointed out, fellowship involves participation. Now I wish to say that fellowship includes enjoyment. It is correct to interpret 1:9 in this way: “By Whom you have been called into the enjoyment of His Son.” To enter into the fellowship of the Son is to come into the enjoyment of Him.

In 10:16 Paul again refers to fellowship: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a fellowship of the body of Christ?” In 1:9 the fellowship is the fellowship of a Person. Here in 10:16 the fellowship is of that Person’s blood and body. When the

Lord Jesus ate with His disciples and established the table, He “took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body” (Matt. 26:26). Then taking the cup and giving thanks, “He gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you” (v. 27). Today the Lord invites us to His table and says of the bread and the cup, “This is My body; take and eat.... This is My blood; take and drink.” However, we may take these matters for granted, not realizing that by speaking in this way concerning His body and blood, the Lord is presenting Himself to us for our enjoyment. He gives Himself to us as our food supply so that we may enjoy Him. Oh, may the Lord open our eyes! He, the all-inclusive One, has given His body for us to eat and His blood for us to drink. He has given us Himself so that we may partake of Him and enjoy Him by eating and drinking Him.

As the all-inclusive One who presents Himself to us for our enjoyment, Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. He is the very God incarnate, the One who lived on earth as a man for thirty-three and a half years, who died on the cross to terminate the old creation, who was resurrected physically and spiritually, and who became through resurrection the life-giving Spirit. Today the One who presents His body and blood to us is Christ as the life-giving Spirit. This wonderful Christ is everything to us for our enjoyment. All that He is, is for our participation and enjoyment.

THE TYPE OF ISRAEL I Cor. 10:1-13 *Margie Hart*

First Corinthians 10:1-13 is a special section of the Word, a portion written with the history of the children of Israel as the background. Paul wrote this Epistle not only according to the situation at Corinth, but also with the history of the children of Israel as the background. Israel is a complete type of the history of the church. The Bible contains two histories—the history of Israel and the history of the church. The history of the children of Israel is a type, and the history of the church is the fulfillment of the type. Thus, the entire Bible gives us one revelation, the revelation of God’s economy. In the Old Testament we have a type, a picture, of God’s economy, whereas in the New Testament God’s economy is fulfilled.

In both 1 Corinthians and Hebrews Paul presents a clear view of the history of Israel as a type and portrait of the history of the church. We have seen that in 5:7 and 8 Paul refers to the Passover and to keeping the feast. The children of Israel experienced the Passover and kept the feast of unleavened bread. As Christians in the New Testament age, we also have our Passover and our feast of unleavened bread. In 10:1-13, part of the section which deals with the eating of sacrifices to idols, Paul again refers to the history of Israel, taking it as a type of the church.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF RUNNING THE RACECOURSE

At the end of chapter nine Paul charges us to run the Christian course, and in chapter ten he uses the children of Israel as an illustration of running this course. The running of the Christian course ordained by God is typified by the history of the children of Israel. The Israelites ran the course from Egypt, through the wilderness, and into the good land. It took forty years for them to complete this course.

After presenting himself as a positive pattern, Paul uses the children of Israel as a negative pattern. In doing this, he sounds a word of warning to the Corinthians and indicates that they should imitate him, the positive pattern, but not the children of Israel, who are a negative pattern.

BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES—CHRIST

In 10:1 and 2 Paul says, “For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” The words “to be ignorant” refer to the question “Do you not know?” in 9:24. The word all indicates that all the children of Israel who had enjoyed the Passover entered into the race and began running the race from the time they left the land of Rameses (Exo. 12:37).

Why did Paul say “our fathers” when most of the Corinthian believers were Greeks and not Jews? The reason may be that Paul considered God’s chosen people, both Jews and Greeks, one great family. Hence, the people of God in the Old Testament are our fathers.

Verse 1 says that all our fathers “were under the cloud.” The cloud that covered the children of Israel typifies the Spirit of God being with the New Testament believers. Immediately after the New Testament believers take Christ as their Passover (5:7), the Spirit of God comes to be with them and lead them to run the Christian race, just as the pillar of cloud came to be with the children of Israel and to lead them (Exo. 13:21-22; 14:19-20).

In **verse 2** Paul says that “all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” The children of Israel’s passing through the Red Sea (Exo. 14:21-30) typifies the baptism of the New Testament believers (Rom. 6:4).

The children of Israel were baptized unto Moses to begin the holy race for the fulfilling of God’s purpose, that is, to enter into the good land and build the temple so that God may have a kingdom with an expression of Himself on the earth. This typifies the New Testament believers being baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27) that God may have His kingdom with the church as His expression on the earth.

In the cloud signifies in the Spirit, and in the sea means in the water. The New Testament believers are baptized in the water and in the Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13).

According to Paul’s allegorization of the Bible, to cross the Red Sea is to be baptized. He even says that the children of Israel were baptized unto Moses. Moses, no doubt, should be regarded as a type of Christ. They were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and we are baptized unto Christ in the Spirit and in water. When we were baptized, both the Spirit and the water were around us. The cloud signifies the Spirit; this is related to life. The sea signifies the water of death. Hence, baptism is a matter of both life and death. It involves putting the old creation to death so that we may be generated in life.

EATING THE SAME SPIRITUAL FOOD

In **verse 3** Paul goes on to say, “And all ate the same spiritual food.” This refers to manna (Exo. 16:14-18), which typifies Christ as our daily life supply (John 6:31-35)

for the Christian journey. We believers should all eat the same spiritual food, not eating anything other than Christ.

DRINKING THE SAME SPIRITUAL DRINK

In **verse 4** Paul says, “And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.” The spiritual drink here refers to the living water that flowed out of the cleft rock (Exo. 17:6), which typifies the Spirit as our all-inclusive drink (John 7:37-39; 1 Cor. 12:13). For our race, we should all drink the same spiritual drink, not drinking anything other than the all-inclusive Spirit.

Literally, the Greek words rendered “a spiritual rock which followed” are “a spiritual following rock.” The rock that was smitten and cleft to flow out the living water for God’s chosen people (Exo. 17:6) was a physical rock. Yet the apostle calls it a spiritual rock because it typifies Christ smitten and cleft by God to flow out the water of life (John 19:34) to satisfy the thirst of His believers. Hence, the apostle says the rock was Christ. Because it was a spiritual rock signifying Christ, it was able to follow the children of Israel. This indicates that Christ as the real rock is following His believers.

MOST OF THEM STREWN ALONG IN THE WILDERNESS

God Not Well Pleased with Them

Verses 1 through 4 speak of the children of Israel in a positive way, but verses 5 through 11 picture them in a negative way. In verse 5, a strong word of warning, Paul says, “But with most of them God was not well pleased, for they were strewn along in the wilderness.” Literally, this means that they were strewn down along

the ground; that is, they were laid low on the ground by slaying. This refers to Numbers 14:16 and 29.

Of all the children of Israel who came out of Egypt, only two, Joshua and Caleb, entered the good land. This indicates that only a small number of the living Christians will be in the good land when the Lord Jesus comes back. Furthermore, the bodies of Joseph and Jacob were also brought into the land of Canaan. This indicates that a number of deceased Christians will be resurrected and as overcomers will enter into the coming kingdom.

In **verse 5** Paul tells us that with most of the children of Israel God was not well pleased. Because He was not well pleased with them, they were strewn along in the wilderness. Their dead bodies were scattered in the wilderness without a proper burial or funeral. In one day alone, more than twenty thousand were slain and strewn along the ground, their bodies scattered in the wilderness. This should warn us not to listen to the superficial and superstitious teaching that as long as a person believes in the Lord Jesus and is saved, everything will be all right. A life committed to the Lord that saves calls out obedience. There must be obedience for peace and joy in our lives. This is equal to saying that simply because the children of Israel had experienced the Passover, everything concerning them was all right. However, the very ones who struck the blood of the Passover lamb, who made their exodus from Egypt, who crossed the Red Sea, and who even received God’s revelation at Mount Sinai and ate the manna and drank of the living water were strewn along in the wilderness. We cannot deny the fact that the children of Israel were redeemed and saved. Nevertheless, most of them fell in the wilderness. They chose to disobey and live without the victory and freedom that God had already provided.

Lusters after Evil Things

In **verse 6** Paul continues, “Now these things occurred as types of us, that we should not be lusters after evil things, as they also lusted.” Here Paul says that these things happened as types of us. Thus, he includes himself with all believers in the matter of running the Christian race. These types indicate that we should not be lusters after evil things, as the children of Israel lusted. The word “also” in verse 6 indicates that the Corinthians were lusting after evil things. Therefore, Paul warns them not to be those who lust.

Paul’s use of the word types (examples) is very significant. The Greek word also means examples, figures of facts of spiritual truths. We have seen that 1 Corinthians takes the history of the children of Israel in the Old Testament as a type of the New Testament believers. In chapters five, seven, and eight they have experienced Christ as their Passover and have begun to keep the feast of unleavened bread. Here in this chapter they have been baptized unto their Moses (Christ), passing through their Red Sea (the death of Christ). They are now eating the spiritual food and drinking the spiritual drink that they may take their journey (the Christian race) toward their good land (the all-inclusive Christ). They are also warned here (v. 11) not to repeat the history of the children of Israel in doing evil against God, as illustrated in verses 6 through 11.

The goal of God’s calling the children of Israel was to enter into the promised land to enjoy its riches that they might establish God’s kingdom and be God’s expression on earth. However, although all had been redeemed through the Passover, delivered out of the Egyptian tyranny, and brought to the mountain of God to receive the revelation of God’s dwelling place, the tabernacle, nearly all fell and died in the wilderness, failing to reach this goal (Heb. 3:7-19) because of their evil doings and unbelief. Only Caleb and Joshua made it into the good land

(Num. 14:27-30). This signifies that although we have been redeemed through Christ, delivered out of Satan’s bondage, and brought into the revelation of God’s economy, we may yet fail to reach the goal of God’s calling, that is, to enter into the possession of our good land, Christ (Phil. 3:12-14), and enjoy His riches for the kingdom of God that we may be His expression in the present age and participate in the fullest enjoyment of Christ in the kingdom age (Matt. 25:21, 23). This should be a solemn warning to all New Testament believers, especially to the Corinthians, who were in danger of repeating the failure of the children of Israel in the wilderness.

Becoming Idolaters

Verse 7 says, “Neither become idolaters, as some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play.” The abusive eating of the children of Israel was related to their idolatry in worshipping the golden calf (Exo. 32:1-6). The apostle’s word here implies that the Corinthians’ eating of idol sacrifices without any consideration was also somewhat related to idolatry.

Committing Fornication

Verse 8 continues, “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication, and there fell in one day twenty-three thousand.” Fornication accompanies idolatry (Num. 25:1-2). Hence, these two things are referred to together, as also in Acts 15:20, 29. Undoubtedly, the implication here is that these two evils also existed among the Corinthian believers. Hence, these are the main things dealt with in chapters five through ten.

Tempting the Lord

In **verse 9** Paul goes on to say, “Neither let us tempt the Lord, as some of them tempted and were destroyed by the serpents.” Literally, the Greek word for tempt means to try to the uttermost, to “tempt out,” to tempt thoroughly. According to Numbers 21:6, those who tempted the Lord were destroyed by serpents.

Murmuring against the Lord

Verse 10 says, “Neither murmur, as some of them murmured and perished by the destroyer.” The murmuring of the children of Israel (Num. 16:41) typified the negative speaking of the Corinthian believers against the apostle (1 Cor. 4:3; 9:3). The children of Israel who murmured perished; they were destroyed in death, laid low on the ground. The destroyer mentioned in verse 10 is God’s executing angel (Exo. 12:23; 2 Sam. 24:16-17). No doubt, by referring to the murmuring of the children of Israel Paul implies that the Corinthian believers should be careful about murmuring against him.

Types for Our Admonition unto Whom the Ends of the Ages Have Come

In **verse 11** Paul explains, “Now these things happened to them as types, and were written for our admonition, unto whom the ends of the ages have come.” Again Paul says that the things that happened to the children of Israel in the wilderness are types. These types were written for our admonition. Admonition here implies a warning.

In this verse Paul seems to be saying, “This age, the age of grace, is the end of the ages. We are all in the age of grace. What happened to the children of Israel is still

a type as an admonition for you. If you do not heed the warning of this type and walk in the light of this warning, you will miss an opportunity.

Taking Heed Lest We Fall

In **verse 12** Paul says, “So then, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” Based upon the admonition in verses 5 through 11, the apostle warns the Corinthians not to think they are standing steadfast, with no danger of falling dead as the children of Israel did. The word “fall” here refers to the children of Israel who failed, those who fell and died in the wilderness. Some Corinthian believers did fall and die because of offending the Lord’s body (11:27-30).

Paul’s warning in these verses is a word of righteousness (Heb. 5:13).

No Temptation That Is Not Common to Man

In **verse 13** Paul goes on to say, “No temptation has taken you except that which is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not let you be tempted beyond what you are able, but will with the temptation make also the way out, that you may be able to endure it.” This verse is a continuation of the warning given in verse 12, indicating that, on the one hand, we should take heed not to be tempted lest we fall and lose opportunity to live in victory. On the other hand, God in His faithfulness will not allow any temptation to befall us beyond what we are able to endure, but will always make a way out for us. This word of encouragement follows the strong warning given in the foregoing verses.

Temptation refers to things around us which tempt us. Thus, we need to pray that the Lord would daily deliver us from troubles and not lead us into temptation. We realize that we are weak and cannot bear temptation. In 10:13 Paul is speaking of temptation, not troubles or trials.

THE LORD’S TABLE

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 10:14-22

In 10:14-22 Paul speaks about keeping the Lord’s table from idolatry. In verses 14 through 18 he speaks of the fellowship of the Lord’s blood and body, and in verses 19 through 22, the separation of the Lord’s table from the table of demons.

FLEEING IDOLATRY

In **verse 14** Paul says, “Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.” The word “wherefore” at the beginning of this verse indicates that the following section to verse 30 is a conclusion to the preceding section, from 8:1, concerning eating sacrifices to idols. Literally, the Greek words rendered idolatry are “the idolatry,” referring to the idolatry involved in eating sacrifices to idols.

In his understanding of the holy Word, Paul is able to see through the physical things and through the black and white letters and to see Christ. For example, in 10:4 he speaks of a physical rock as Christ. This indicates that in this rock he sees Christ. In the same principle, by the word idolatry Paul does not merely mean graven images, but something much broader and more inclusive. As we shall see, idolatry here implies a great deal.

In **verse 15** Paul continues, “I speak as to prudent men; you judge what I say.” Paul expected that the readers would not stop at the black and white letters, but dig into what he says and then investigate, discern, and judge it. He wanted them to carefully examine and judge what he was saying.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE BLOOD AND BODY

In **verse 16** Paul suddenly speaks of the cup of blessing: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a fellowship of the body of Christ?” Apparently there is no flow of proper continuation between verses 15 and 16. Without any transition, Paul begins to speak of the cup of blessing, indicating that it is a fellowship of the blood of Christ. He also speaks concerning the bread, indicating that it is a fellowship of the body of Christ. We should not take this verse for granted, assuming that we understand it when we actually understand very little, if anything. We need to investigate the meaning of the expressions “a fellowship of the blood of Christ” and “a fellowship of the body of Christ.”

The Greek word rendered fellowship also means joint participation. Fellowship here refers to the believer’s communion in the joint participation in the blood and body of Christ. This makes us, the participants of the Lord’s blood and body, not only one with one another, but also one with the Lord. We, the participants, make ourselves identified with the Lord in the fellowship of His blood and body. The apostle’s thought here is to illustrate how eating and drinking make the eaters and drinkers one with what they eat and drink. The Corinthians should realize that their abusive eating of idol sacrifices actually makes them one with the demons behind the sacrifices.

ONE BREAD, ONE BODY

In **verse 17** Paul speaks a strong word concerning the one bread and the one Body: “Seeing that we who are many are one bread, one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.” We are all one bread, one Body, because we all partake of the one bread. Our joint partaking of the one bread makes us all one. This indicates that our partaking of Christ makes us all His one Body. The very Christ of whom we all partake constitutes us into His one Body.

Partaking of the one bread, that is, eating of it (vv. 28-30), identifies us with it. This means that our partaking of Christ, our enjoyment of Christ, identifies us with Him, making us one with Him.

THE ALTAR AND THE TABLE

In **verse 18** Paul again refers to Israel: “Look at Israel according to the flesh; are not those who eat the sacrifices fellowshippers of the altar?” We have seen that in 10:1-13 Paul presents Israel as a type of the believers today. We should not think that the remainder of chapter ten has nothing to do with the type of Israel in verses 1 through 13. On the contrary, the second portion of this chapter is a continuation of the first portion; it is not separate from it.

The Greek word translated fellowshippers also means joint participants. Those who eat the sacrifices of the altar are not only fellowshippers with one another and with the altar, but also joint participants of what they eat. Their participation in what they eat makes them one with the sacrifices of the altar. Since the altar is the base of the sacrifices offered to God, eating the sacrifices of the altar makes the eaters its fellowshippers, its joint participants. This also illustrates the fact that eating makes the eater one with what he eats. Eating sacrifices to idols does the same: it identifies the eaters with the demons behind the sacrifices.

In verse 18 Paul surely means that the fellowship of the altar is a type of the fellowship of the blood and body of Christ. To put it simply, it is a type of the fellowship of the Lord’s table. Hence, the fellowshippers of the altar are types of the fellowshippers of the Lord’s table. Israel had an altar, but we have a table. On the altar there were the offerings; on the table there are the blood and the body.

The one is the type, and the other is the fulfillment. Whereas the children of Israel were fellowshiping around the altar, we are fellowshiping around the table.

IDOLS AND DEMONS

In **verses 19 and 20** Paul says, “What then am I saying? That what is sacrificed to an idol is anything? Or that an idol is anything? But that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become fellowshipers of demons.” Here Paul’s composition takes another leap, apparently without any transition.

In verses 19 and 20 Paul speaks of idols, sacrifices to idols, and demons. An idol and a sacrifice to an idol are nothing (8:4). But behind them are the demons, who are abominable and hateful to God. The believers who worship God should abstain from identifying themselves with demons and becoming fellowshipers of demons through eating sacrifices to idols. Since demons are the reality of idols, so the eating of sacrifices to idols makes the eaters their fellowshipers, their joint participants. The eaters of sacrifices to idols become not only fellowshipers with demons, but also joint participants of demons, making themselves one with demons.

TWO TABLES

In verse 16 Paul speaks of the fellowship of the blood and body of Christ; in verse 18, of fellowshipers of the altar; and in verse 20, of fellowshipers of demons. Then in verse 21 he goes on to say, “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.” Here we see that there are two tables: the table of the Lord and the table of demons. To partake of a table is to eat of it. To drink the cup of the Lord and partake of the table of the Lord is to identify ourselves with the Lord. To drink

the cup of demons and partake of the table of demons is to make ourselves one with demons.

In **verse 22** Paul concludes this portion of chapter ten by saying, “Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?” The Lord is the jealous God (Exo. 20:5). Idolatry is utterly abominable to God and hated by Him. If we participate in fellowship with demons, making ourselves one with them, we shall provoke the Lord to jealousy. Hence, we must flee from idolatry.

THE MEANING OF IDOLATRY

There is a difference between idol worship and idolatry. Idol worship involves bowing down before an idol and worshipping it. Idolatry is wider in scope, for it involves eating, drinking, and playing. In this country people may not worship idols, but they may practice idolatry. On the holidays or on weekends they may give themselves over to various forms of amusement and entertainment. They may eat and drink and rise up to play. This is idolatry. Putting anything or anyone in priority above God and your time with God – is idolatry.

ASKING NO QUESTIONS FOR CONSCIENCE’ SAKE

Verse 25 says, “Everything sold in a meat market eat, asking no question for conscience’ sake.” At the apostle’s time, usually only a part of the sacrifices to idols were consumed as an offering. The rest was given to the priests or to the poor, or sold again in the market. Buyers might unknowingly purchase meat that had been offered to idols. Thus, when someone went to the market to purchase meat, he might buy meat which had been used in sacrifice to idols. Regarding this, Paul tells the believers to ask no questions for the sake of conscience. This means that they should not ask questions about the meat, but simply buy it and eat it.

In **verse 26** Paul continues, “For the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness of it.” Fullness here means the riches and also the expression. All the riches of the earth are its fullness, its expression.

In **verse 27** Paul goes on to say, “If any of the unbelievers invites you, and you wish to go, eat everything that is set before you, asking no question for conscience’ sake.” On such an occasion, the believers should not investigate the situation. There is no need to ask questions. “But,” Paul continues, “if anyone should say to you, This has been offered in sacrifice, do not eat, for his sake that pointed it out and for conscience’ sake; conscience, I say, not your own, but the other’s” (vv. 28-29a). Should someone point out that the meat has been offered in sacrifice to idols, then the believers were to refrain from eating for the sake of the conscience of the one who has pointed out this fact.

In the second part of verse 29 and verse 30 Paul asks, “For why is my freedom judged by another’s conscience? If I partake with thanksgiving, why am I evil spoken of concerning that for which I give thanks?” The word partake in verse 30 denotes eating. This clearly indicates that eating is partaking (v. 17). Here “evil spoken of” means criticized with an evil purpose. If a believer is criticized in this way for eating meat sacrificed to idols, he should refrain from eating that meat.

In **verse 31** Paul concludes, “Whether therefore you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The word therefore in this verse indicates that 10:31 through 11:1 is a conclusion to this subsection, which began with verse 23.

I wish to say again that 6:12 and 10:23 and 31 give us four basic principles for regulating the conduct of the New Testament believers.

All things are lawful, but whatever we do must be, as to the thing itself,

- profitable; as to ourselves,
- not brought under the power of anything;
- as to others, building them up; and
- as to God, glorifying Him.

Otherwise, nothing is permissible or acceptable. If a certain matter does not pass the test of these four principles, we should not do it

GIVING NO OCCASION OF STUMBLING

Verse 32 says, “Give no occasion of stumbling both to Jews and to Greeks and to the church of God.” The Greek words rendered, “Give no occasion of stumbling,” may also be translated, “Do not become a stumbling block.” The Greek word *aproskopos* is derived from the same root as *proskomma* for stumbling block in 8:9. It is different from *skandalizo*, the Greek word for stumble in 8:13.

In verse 32 Paul speaks of Jews, Greeks, and the church of God. In New Testament times people were of three classes: the Jews—God’s chosen people; the Greeks—the unbelieving Gentiles; and the church—a composition of the believers in Christ.

We should not be an offense, a stumbling block, to any of these three, that they might be saved (v. 33).

PLEASING ALL MEN IN ALL THINGS

In **verse 33** Paul declares, “Even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own advantage, but that of the many, that they may be saved.” What a marvelous example the apostle has set for us!

It is possible to apply incorrectly Paul’s word about pleasing all men in all things and about seeking the advantage of the many that they may be saved. Some of those who misapply this verse say that in order to bring people to the Lord, we must come down to their level. This is to say that we must go back to the world in order to bring people to Christ. However, history has proved that this does not work. Rather, those who apply Paul’s words in this way are more likely to be brought back to the world themselves than they are to bring others to Christ. In preaching the gospel we should not lower our standard. Instead of coming down from the mountain, we should remain on the mountain and call others to come up to where we are. We must be very careful of misusing this verse and forming it into a principle contrary to Paul’s meaning.

I CORINTHIANS

Linda Justice

Chapter 11

SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

The first 16 verses of this chapter are about authority. At first glance we see the customs of the day in regards to head coverings and the submission of women but the big picture is the spiritual authority of Christ in the life of every believer. Last summer I read a book by an author named Watchman Nee. The book is *Spiritual Authority*. I usually do not endorse secular books but this book really gave me a clearer understanding of God’s authority in the universe, on earth and in my life as a believer especially when it comes to submission, obedience and service. This lack of understanding of authority in the church of Corinth and in our churches today is definitely one of the root causes of all divisions.

11:1-2

¹ Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

² I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you.

What are your thoughts on verse 1? Do you feel confident enough to tell someone to follow your example because you follow the example of Christ or does it have any thing to do with confidence?

What does it mean to **“follow the example of Christ?”** Christ was the supreme example of One who denied himself “rights” for the sake of others.

Philippians 2:

**⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature^[a] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!**

Paul lived his life in such a way that he was obedient unto death if necessary and encouraged others to live that way as well.

What does that mean in your Christian life today?

In verse 2 Paul starts by praising believers instead of focusing on their mistakes and weaknesses. The word **“traditions”** here means divine truths or teachings. The church at Corinth just like our churches today are for the most part willing to acknowledge truth but not willing to live godly lives or give up secular thinking and immoral behavior. Just like today they want to have one foot in the world and another foot with Christ. It does not work!!

11:³ But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man,^[a] and the head of Christ is God.

Just like today, the church of Corinth was confused about submission especially that of women. In the Greek culture of that time most women were considered worthless. The gospel changed all that and gave women dignity in God’s eyes. The church now turns to Paul with questions concerning God’s plan and the proper role of men and women.

We have established the order of submission God has ordained for us to follow now we must apply that to the culture and customs of the day in Corinth. If a man prayed or prophesied (taught or preached) without his head covered that meant he had authority over women. For a man to cover his head would be a disgrace because it would suggest the opposite.

The women on the other hand wore coverings to suggest submission and the authority of the man which was acceptable. Some women were adopting the Greek-Roman role for women and rebelling against that practice. Paul is saying if you remove the covering you might as well shave your head as a prostitute would.

How would you apply this to today's church? Should we be concerned about how we dress at church? What is acceptable and unacceptable to God? Should women cover themselves in parts of the world?

11:7 A man ought not to cover his head,^[a] since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; ⁹ neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. ¹⁰ It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own^[b] head, because of the angels.

Paul gets to the root of the authority/submission debate that rages on today. The head covering was only a custom of that time but the real issue here is man was made in **“the image and glory of God.”** In a sense God made man ruler like Himself. God gave man physical dominion over the earth. We see in verse 8 that in Gen. 2:7 **“the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”** God made man but woman was then made from the man already created. In Gen. 2:20 man needed a **“suitable helper”** so in Gen. 20:22 **“Then the Lord God made a women from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.”**

So in your mind what is the role of woman? Is her role to be a helper to her husband and be under his protection (the rib under Adam's arm), and his leadership or is she to do her own thing with little regard to God's original plan for man and woman?

I have heard it said that God’s way and how He reveals His plan in scripture is somehow “upside down”. It just does not fit in the world or make sense to the natural man. Here is a great example. How can a women find freedom in submission to man?

In a sense angels are like guardians of the order God created in Genesis. They are also protectors of the church. **“to have authority over her own head”** does not mean she can choose to wear or not wear the covering but it is just the opposite. The covering of submission gives her the authority to pray in church and not offend the angels who represent the most submissive creatures.

11:11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹² For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

In Greek and Roman cultures women were little more than slaves and treated badly. Paul reminds all that the authority men have over women is delegated by God to be used to fulfill His plan in His way.

The gospel was the greatest liberator for women. All believers, male and female are in the Lord. The fact that women was made from the rib of Adam and all man is born of woman shows the dependence we have on one another. Not only that but in the church we serve alongside one another. Our roles function differently under God’s authority but we are to work as a divine team in the Kingdom.

11: ¹³ Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, ¹⁵ but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. ¹⁶ If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

Paul then says to think about all this in a very practical way. Human anatomy puts the head in control of the entire body. The very physical nature of man and women make it clear the order of God’s plan. Woman naturally has more hair than man. More hair indicates a “head covering” or place of submission for woman.

If you still choose to be “**contentious**” Paul says there is nothing more to explain. He has already stated women are to be submissive to men because of:

1. (vs.3) Man’s relationship to God
2. (vs.7) Divine design of man and woman
3. (vs. 8) Divine order in creation
4. (vs. 9) Role of woman
5. (vs. 10) Role of angels
6. (vs. 13-15) Natural physical characteristics of male and female

THE LORD’S SUPPER

11:¹⁷ In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good.

Here Paul becomes very stern. In previous chapters he has addressed the believers in the church as brethren and fellow saints but here he admonishes them because of their lack of reverence for the Lord’s Supper. He goes on to explain how they have turned communion into something perverse. He also explains the reason for having communion and the preparation for it.

Unfortunately, we see other places in scripture where desecrating communion was a common practice in the church. **2 Peter 2:¹³ They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.**^[a]

Jude 12:¹² These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves.

11:¹⁸ In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. ¹⁹ No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval. ²⁰ So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat, ²¹ for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. ²² Don’t you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!

First of all here the word **“church”** does not mean a building but is anywhere believers gather together such as someone’s home. Paul also addresses the continuing bickering and fighting in the group. Paul has been addressing these divisions since chapter 1.

“No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval.” Why do there have to be differences? Because the church at Corinth was so immoral and worldly it was necessary for those who were true born-again believers to light the way and **“have God’s approval”** as an example. Every church has a group of believers that God spiritually equips to lead His church especially during times of trials and hardships. Unfortunately, then as today we have many pastors, leaders, and missionaries who leave their ministries because they were not fully equipped spiritually to do the job.

The custom of the church at this time was they would gather together for a meal and serve communion after the meal was over. This was commonly called “love feast.” As time went on in the church we have done away with the “love feasts” and separated the two.

The meal started with the wealthy bringing lots of food and wine to gorge and get drunk on while the poor were left hungry physically as well as spiritually. The group would then go through the motions of breaking bread and passing the cup but Christ was nowhere to be found.

Paul reprimands them by asking if all they want to do is indulge themselves in food and drink why not stay at home and do it privately. The so called “love feast” is a joke and humiliates the church, disrespects God, and completely destroys the sanctity of the Lord’s Supper.

11: ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Now we come to another section of scripture directly in the middle of a strong rebuke to the church. Paul again reminds his flock that these words are not

his but come from Jesus Himself and have been taught before. Many scholars believe the book of I Corinthians was actually written before the gospels and this is the first biblical record of the Lord’s Supper. In that case, what Paul **“received from the Lord”** was a revelation from Jesus and not the apostles. (Gal.1:10-12)

Let’s look in detail at the Lord’s Supper:

<p>“The Lord Jesus on the night He was betrayed...”</p>	<p>It is like we see the ultimate of good and evil all in one night. Like a sparkling diamond in a mud puddle.</p> <p>The very act of betrayal when Jesus is arrested verses the eternal sacrifice for redemption of the world.</p>
<p>“...took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,...”</p>	<p>“had given thanks” comes from the Greek word <i>eucharisteo</i> where we get the name Eucharist (another name for the Lord’s Supper).</p>
<p>“...This is my body,...”</p>	<p>The ‘bread’ that He is breaking that represented manna in Exodus now represents the “body”.</p>
<p>“which is for you;”</p>	<p>Jesus not only gave his entire physical body of man but His incarnate life being fully God. He became man, He is the Gospel, He suffered then died for all of mankind.</p>
<p>“do this in remembrance of me.”</p>	<p>This is a command from the very lips of Jesus. It is not an option for believers. We are called to remember and participate in the act of communion.</p>
<p>“the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”</p>	<p>This cup that represented the lamb’s blood smeared on the doorposts now represents the blood of the Lamb of God.</p>

	<p>The Old Covenant confirmed by the blood of animals offered by man but the New Covenant confirmed once and for all by the blood of Jesus offered by God.</p> <p>We break the bread and drink the cup not to remember the deliverance from Egypt to Canaan but a new deliverance from death to life!</p>
<p>“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death...”</p>	<p>Whenever we take the bread and the cup we celebrate Jesus. We are not given direct instruction on the number of times we are to do this. Each time we do this we testify to the world we belong to Him.</p>
<p>“...until He comes.”</p>	<p>Communion is also a reminder we are to look forward to Christ’s return!</p>

“There is much involved in that remembrance. When a believer comes to the Lord’s table, he remembers Christ’s work on the cross (11:25), he partakes of Christ’s spiritual presence in the fellowship, not in the elements themselves (10:16), he communes with the saints (10:17), he worships in holiness (10:20-22), he proclaims salvation in Christ (11:24-25), and he anticipates the return of the Lord (11:26) and the coming Kingdom (Matt.26:29). The MacArthur New Testament Commentary

11:²⁷ So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. ²⁹ For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. ³⁰ That is why many among you

are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.³¹ But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment.³² Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

³³ So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together.³⁴ Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

And when I come I will give further directions.

Instruction and preparation for The Lord’s Supper!

<p>²⁷ So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.</p>	<p>Examples of coming to the table in an unworthy manner:</p> <p>See it only as a ritual or ceremony.</p> <p>The act itself can save or keep one saved.</p> <p>Come with a spirit of unforgiveness, hatred or bitterness toward another believer.</p> <p>Come with a rebellious spirit refusing to confess a sin.</p> <p>The result of coming to the Table in an unworthy manner results in us being “guilty” of dishonoring and mocking the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross.</p>
<p>²⁸ Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.</p>	<p>How are we to examine ourselves?</p> <p>This is a great time to ask God to search our hearts and purify our</p>

	<p>thoughts.</p> <p>We must ask Him to filter through our motives, our attitudes toward others and Him.</p>
<p>²⁹ For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.</p>	<p>The word judgment (<i>krima</i>) means discipline of the saved. God will chasten us if we do not properly seek the holiness of the celebration of communion and treat it with indifference.</p>
<p>³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.</p>	<p>Abuse of the Lord’s Supper does not result in eternal damnation but punishment can result in serious illness and death.</p> <p>Perhaps this is God’s way of purifying a body of believers as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira when they lied to the Holy Spirit in Acts 5:1-11.</p>
<p>³¹ But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment.</p>	<p>We are to be more aware of what God wants us to be. When we confess our sins I John 1:9 says God “is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”</p>

<p>³² Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world</p>	<p>God’s disciplines our life with divine intervention so we do not fall away from His righteousness and begin living like the world.</p> <p>He does not condemn us eternally but does allow us to make mistakes with severe consequences.</p>
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<p>³³ So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. ³⁴ Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.</p>	<p>Many came together to simply eat and took communion any time they wanted instead of being “one”. Those who had lots of food came and ate in front of those with nothing which resulted in disgracing not only the communion time but were judged for being gluttons and selfish.</p> <p>Paul suggests that because of the lack of control it would be best to eat before you come rather than suffer judgment.</p>
<p>And when I come I will give further directions.</p>	<p>Paul has more to say on this issue in person.</p>

I Corinthians/Chapter 11

Homework

Pray God will open your heart and mind before reading Chapter 11.

1. What does the phrase ‘spiritual authority’ mean to you?
2. Verse 3 teaches an order of authority. Why is that important?

3. Verses 4-10 refers to submission of woman to man. How does Genesis 2:20-23 explain this was God’s plan from the very beginning? What does this mean to you in your every day life?
4. Verses 11-12 tells us man and woman are dependent on one another. What does that mean?
5. Verses 13-16 refer to hair as being natural to both man and woman but have a different meaning for each. Why is it natural and what do the coverings represent?
6. In verses 17-22 Paul is severely rebuking the church over what?
7. When you read 23-26 think about how you come before the Lord during communion.
8. Read verses 27-32 carefully. These verses give instruction, preparation and judgment concerning communion. Can you identify each group?
9. Verses 33-34 apply to restraint concerning eating food in front of one another before taking communion. Is there any self control we need to exercise during communion time?
10. How could we make communion a ceremony of holiness in our worship services?

I CORINTHIANS 12

- Donna Kakavec

I HAVE THE GIFT!

In Chapter 11, Paul begins addressing problems with the Corinthians’ public worship. Chapter 11 deals with the veiling of women and the Lord’s Supper. In Chapters 12-14, Paul discusses spiritual gifts – what they are, where they come from, who possesses them, and how they are to be used.

As we mature in Christ, there is a growing understanding and appreciation of the church, the body of Christ. In this Chapter, Paul uses the analogy of the body to teach about the church and the relationship of believers to Christ and with each other. In other passages of Scripture, Paul uses other analogies: a family, an army, a temple and a bride. However, in three of his letters to the New Testament churches, Paul uses the image of the church as the body, and in each he teaches the same important truths:

<u>SCRIPTURE</u>	<u>UNITY</u>	<u>DIVERSITY</u>	<u>MATURITY</u>
I Corinthians	12:1-13	12:14-31	13:1-13
Romans	12:1-5	12:6-8	13:1-13
Ephesians	4:1-6	4:7-12	4:13-16

It was the Spirit of God who gave birth to the body at Pentecost and who works in and through the body. In the Corinthian church, unfortunately, the members of the body were grieving the Holy Spirit by the carnal ways in which they were using their spiritual gifts.

A. Because of the division in the church over spiritual gifts, Paul begins Chapter 12 teaching the Corinthians about the unity of the church body (verses 1-13).

1. Verses 1-3 – The body confesses the same Lord.

Paul contrasts their current experience as Christians with their past idol worshipping. They once worshipped dead idols! Now, they belong and serve the living God! Their dead idols

never spoke to them, but God speaks to them through His Spirit and even through them with the gift of prophecy. When they worshipped idols, they were under the control of demons (I Corinthians 10:20) and were led astray, but know the Spirit of God lives in them and directs them.

It is only through the Spirit of God that a person can truly say that “Jesus is Lord.” The believer demonstrates self-control when the Holy Spirit is at work (I Corinthians 14:32) because Jesus Christ is the Lord and in charge. The fruit of the spirit is . . . self control (Galatians 5:22-23).

If Jesus Christ is truly Lord of our lives, then there should be unity in the church. Division and Dissension among God’s people weakens their united testimony to a lost world (John 17:20-21).

2. Verses 4-6 - We depend on the same God.

We may have different spiritual gifts, ministries, and methods, but “it is God who is at work in you both to will and to do His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). The source of the gift is God. The opportunities for service with the gift are from God. The power to use the gift is from God. There should be no competition with other believers – spiritual gifts are from God!

3. Verses 7-11 – We minister to the same body.

Spiritual gifts are given for the good of the whole body. They are not for individual enjoyment. The Corinthian church needed reminded of this because they were using their spiritual gifts selfishly to promote themselves and not for the good of the church body. They should be used to promote harmony which is a great testimony to the world around the church of the saving grace of God Almighty.

The various gifts are named in verses 8-10 and 28. Two other Scriptures that name the spiritual gifts are Ephesians 4:11 and Romans 12:6-8. A combination of all of these Scriptures gives a list of 19 different gifts. Some gifts are mentioned in one passage and not another. This would lead us to believe that God is not limited to these lists and that He may give these gifts or other gifts as He pleases. Some spiritual gifts include:

- a. **Apostles:** one sent under commission to lay the foundation of the church (I Corinthians 9:1-6; Ephesians 2:20); had a personal experience of seeing the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:21-22); given the ability to perform special signs and

wonders to attest to the message they preached (Hebrews 2:4); had the right to receive support from believers

- b. **Prophets:** New Testament spokesmen for God whose messages came immediately from God by the Spirit; their ministry was to edify, encourage and comfort (I Corinthians 14:3); worked together with apostles to lay the foundation of the church
- c. **Teachers (also Pastor-Teachers):** instructed believers in the doctrinal truths of the Christian life; they taught from the Word and from the teachings of the Apostles; they were helped in their teachings by the Spirit
- d. **Evangelist:** shared the Good News of salvation to the lost
- e. **Miracles, Healings and Tongues:** all part of the credentials of God’s servants; often referred to as “sign gifts”; many believe they belonged to the infancy of the church
- f. **Helps and Government:** serving of others and the guiding of the church; without spiritual leadership, the church is not effective. Ministry and ruling (Romans 12:7) belong to this same category.
- g. **Speaking Gifts - Tongues and the Interpretation of Tongues, Word of Wisdom and the Word of Knowledge, and Exhortation:** the ability to understand God’s Word and apply it to specific situations; encouragement; rebuke
- h. **Giving and Showing Mercy:** sharing material aid with those in need as well as supporting God’s servants in ministry
- i. **Faith:** believing God for what He wants to accomplish in the church’s ministry and that He will lead and provide
- j. **Discerning of Spirits:** especially important in the early church as Satan tried to counterfeit the work and Word of God; today, the Spirit of God uses the written

Word of God to aid in discernment (I John 2:18-24; 4:1-6); we must be aware of false teachers (2 Peter 2:1)

Paul lists these spiritual gifts to remind us that they unite us in our ministries to one body. The Holy Spirit gives the gifts as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:11). No Christian should complain about his gift(s) nor boast about his gift(s). We are many members in one body ministering to one another.

4. Verses 12-13 – We have experienced the same baptism.

God has spoken to us in Spirit-given words which we must not confuse. The baptism of the Spirit occurs at conversion when the Spirit enters the believer, gives him a new life, and makes his body the temple of God. All believers have experienced this once-for-all baptism. The evidence of the Spirit's baptism at conversion is the witness of the Spirit within a believer (Romans 8:14-16). Because of the gift of the Spirit, which is received at conversion, we are all members of the body of Christ.

B. Paul continues to teach the Corinthians about spiritual gifts by defining diversity in the body of Christ (verses 14-31).

Unity without diversity would produce uniformity – cookie-cutter believers. Uniformity often produces death. Diversity, however, must be kept under control or anarchy will ensue. Balance and control are evidences of maturity, and Paul will use Chapter 13 to teach about the mature believer's relationship to spiritual gifts.

In I Corinthians 12:14-31, Paul uses the human body to teach three important principles about diversity in the body of Christ:

1. Verses 14-20 – The body needs different functions if it is to live, grow and survive.

Each member is different and each member is important. No member should contrast or compare himself with another member. Diversity does not suggest inferiority. God, through His Spirit, gives spiritual gifts to believers. He does not make mistakes and He does not show

partiality. When the Spirit gives a believer a spiritual gift, He also enables the believer to use the spiritual gift and gives opportunities for him to use the gift.

2. Verses 21-26 – The members promote unity as they discover their dependence on one another.

Diversity in the body is evidence of the wisdom of God. Each member needs the other members in the body, and no member should become independent. In the human body, the various members cooperate with each other and even compensate for each other when a crisis occurs. Lack of cooperation and compensation can lead to sickness and even death.

God’s desire is that there be no division in the church. Diversity leads to disunity when the members of the body of Christ compete with one another. Diversity leads to unity when the members care for one another, when they function in the roles with the gifts the Spirit has given them, and when they help other members function with the gifts God has given them.

3. Verses 27-31 – Diversity of members fulfills the will of God in the body.

It is God who bestows the gifts and assigns the offices. He has a perfect plan, not only for the church as a whole but also for the local church and for its individual members. Some spiritual gifts have more significance than others, but each gift and each individual believer is important. The human body cannot survive without certain members (heart, lungs, etc.), and the body of Christ is no different. Some gifts to believers are vital to the life of the church. However, in the human body, there are some parts that we can do without, although we may live disabled and handicapped. The same is true of the church, the body of Christ.

Unity and diversity are critical in understanding the purpose and exercise of the spiritual gifts bestowed by the Spirit of God upon ourselves as well as other members of the body of Christ. These truths must also be balanced by maturity, which we will learn more about as we dive into Chapter 13.

APPLICATION:

- 1. Do you know what spiritual gifts have been given to you? List them below.**
- 2. Look for opportunities each day to use your spiritual gifts. Record the opportunities in a journal or on a calendar as a reminder of God's wisdom and faithfulness to you.**
- 3. Pray for those to whom you minister. Keep a journal of your requests and God's answers to your prayers. Use the journal as a reminder of God's word to keep His promises.**
- 4. Are you encouraging another believer to use his or her spiritual gifts? If not, ask God for opportunities to build up the body of Christ by encouraging others in their spiritual gifts.**

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1 Cor. 13 – *Margie Hart*

First Corinthians 13 is the direct continuation of chapter twelve. In the last verse of chapter twelve, verse 31, Paul says, “But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And yet I show to you a way of excellence.” The way of excellence is love. Thus, **chapter thirteen presents this excellent way.**

In chapter thirteen we have love. Speaking ushers us into the Spirit, the Spirit brings us into the Body, and the Body preserves us in the Spirit. Furthermore, the Body is for God’s administration. The matter of love, is the way to use the gifts, the way to be in the Body, and the way to be for the Body, The Church.

Is love only a way, or is it also a gift? According to Romans 12, there is ground to say that love is a gift. In Romans 12:6-8 Paul says that we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us and that we should exercise them accordingly. According to verse 8, even the showing of mercy is a gift. Then in verses 9 and 10 Paul goes on to say, “Let love be without hypocrisy....Love one another warmly in brotherly love, devoted with one another in showing honor.” Then in verses 12 and 13 he says, “Rejoicing in hope, enduring in tribulation, persevering in prayer, communicating to the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality.” All these, along with love, are spoken of in a chapter concerned with gifts.

Paul’s word in 1 Corinthians 13:8 may also indicate that **love is a gift** and not merely a way: “Love never falls away; but whether prophecies, they shall be done away; or tongues, they shall cease; or knowledge, it shall be done away.” Here Paul lists love along with the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge. There is no doubt that to prophesy, speak in tongues, and teach with the word of knowledge are gifts. Although prophecies will be done away, tongues will cease, and knowledge will be done away, love will never fall away.

For us, the Church, the Body, is a matter of love, and to care for the members of the Body requires love. If we do not have love, how can we care for others? Love is necessary to care for the members so that the Body may be built up. Thus, love is the greatest gift. Nothing edifies people as much as love does. Love is a spiritual antibiotic. If there is love in a local church, there will be no need to worry about spiritual diseases. Love is the best medicine to cure such diseases. Love is a gift, even the greatest gift.

It is not difficult to have the gift of love. There is no need to fast for love or pray to receive it. Furthermore, there is no need to imitate, pretend, or perform. Love is within us. As long as you have the divine life through deliverance of the Holy Spirit, you also have Godly love, for love is the expression of life, another form of life. Love is acting out the covenantal faithfulness to one another. Love fulfills the Torah (the revelation of God’s Character.)

A. The Need of Love

Love is a matter of life. Certain gifts are also related to life, for they are developed from the initial gifts: the Holy Spirit and the divine life. However, other gifts, especially miraculous gifts such as speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, works of power or miracles, and healings, are not developed out of life. For this reason, Paul opens chapter thirteen by saying, “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.” Sounding brass and clanging cymbals give sounds without life. In chapters twelve and fourteen Paul places tongues and interpretation of tongues last. But here he mentions tongue-speaking first, but in a negative way that indicates that it is not a matter of life.

I appreciate the gifts of life much more than the miraculous gifts. I have seen some believers who genuinely received certain miraculous gifts only to later turn from the Lord in unbelief. What we need is life and love, the best gift, which ministers’ life to others.

As those who love the Lord, who are absolute with Him, and who are seeking the building of His Body so that He may have the instrument to carry out God’s administration on earth for the accomplishment of God’s eternal purpose, we must pursue love.

As elders and co-workers, believers that make up the Body, all we need is love. Only love builds up the Body. Moreover, according to chapter thirteen, the gift of love is everlasting, for it is constituted of the divine life and is the expression of God, the expression of eternal life. Therefore, we all should pursue love.

In 13:2 and 3 Paul says, “And if I have prophecy and know all the mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I dole out all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may boast, but have not love, it profits me nothing.” To deliver up the

body in verse 3 is to die as a martyr. Instead of “that I may boast,” some manuscripts read “that I may be burned.”

B. The Definition of Love

In 13:4-7 Paul gives us the definition of love. This definition includes fifteen virtues of love: suffering long, being kind, not being jealous, not bragging, not puffed up, not behaving unbecomingly, not seeking its own things, not provoked, not taking account of evil, not rejoicing over unrighteousness, rejoicing with the truth, covering all things, believing all things, hoping all things, and enduring all things.

In verse 4 Paul says, “Love suffers long, and is kind.” Love is the expression of life, which is the element of God. Hence, God is love (1 John 4:16). God as life is expressed in love. All the fifteen virtues of love listed in verses 4 through 7 are the divine virtues of God’s life. Such a life differs from the outward gifts listed in chapter twelve. The Corinthians were after the outward gifts, but they neglected love, the expression of life. Thus, they were still fleshly, fleshly, or soulish (3:1, 3; 2:14). They needed to grow in life, expressed by love, by pursuing love, not the outward gifts, so that they might be spiritual (2:14).

In verse 4 Paul says that love does not brag. Bragging is somewhat different from boasting. To brag is to boast of one’s self in a way to damage others. It is a kind of boasting which depreciates others and puts them down. Love certainly does not brag.

In verse 5 Paul points out that love “does not take account of evil.” The Greek word here indicates that love does not keep a record like a bookkeeper. This means that if you love others, you will not keep a record of their mistakes.

Verse 6 says, “Does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.” The totality of unrighteousness is Satan, and the totality of truth is God. Love as the expression of the divine life does not rejoice over Satan’s unrighteousness, but rejoices with God’s truth. Love does not rejoice over anyone’s unrighteousness; instead, it rejoices with the truth.

- What are you watching on TV?
- What are your conversations about?
- What video games are you playing?
- What are you reading?

According to verse 7, love covers all things. The Greek word, also used in 9:12, can be rendered “bears.” Literally, it means to contain (as a vessel), to conceal; hence, to cover (as a roof). This word is used in the Gospels regarding the incident where some people broke up a roof in order to bring a certain sick man to the Lord Jesus. They made a hole in the roof and then lowered the man to the place where the Lord was (Mark 2:4). This Greek word means to make a hole in someone’s roof. We may do this by gossiping about others. As we talk about them, we make a hole in the roof over them; that is, we uncover them. However, love covers all things; it does not make a hole in anyone’s roof.

If we consider the fifteen virtues of love listed in these verses, we shall realize that love is nothing other than God Himself. Who other than God could have all these virtues? We cannot endure all things or believe all things. Neither can we truly have longsuffering. Only God has all these virtues. Hence, the love described here is God Himself. Furthermore, the Bible elsewhere says clearly that God is love (1 John 4:16). God is also life. Life is God’s essence, and love is God’s expression. In Himself God is life, but God expressed is love. The love which is God Himself with His divine essence as life has these fifteen virtues. This is the reason that in 1 Corinthians Paul charges the believers to grow in life. They were short of life, short of love. In other words, they were short of God and needed to grow in life.

C. The Excelling of Love

In 13:8-13 Paul speaks concerning the excelling of love. In verse 8 he declares, “Love never falls away; but whether prophecies, they shall be done away; or tongues, they shall cease; or knowledge, it shall be done away.” For love never to fall away means that it survives everything, holds its place forever. Love never fails, never fades out or comes to an end. It is like the eternal life of God. All the gifts, whether prophecies, or tongues, or knowledge, are means for God’s operation; they are not life to express God. Hence, they shall cease and be done away. They are all dispensational. **Only life, which love expresses**, is eternal. According to the following verses, all gifts are for the immature child in this age. They will all be done away in the next age. Only love is of a mature man and will last for eternity. When we live and act by love, we have a foretaste of the next age and of eternity.

Nothing can shake love or remove it. All the other gifts, including prophecy, will eventually be done away with, but love remains. It never falls away. In the coming age there will be love, but there will be no tongues, interpretation, or prophecy. Both tongues, the most childish of the gifts, and prophecy, a more mature gift, will be done away.

In verses 9 and 10 Paul continues, “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is complete comes, that which is in part shall be done away.” In this age we know and prophesy only in

part, not in full. The word “when” in verse 10 refers to the next age, the kingdom age. The word “complete” also means mature, in contrast with childish in the following verse. Furthermore, “that which is in part” refers to such things as prophecies and knowledge, as mentioned in verse 8.

Verse 11 says, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.” In this age the believers are children, having the childish gifts. The word “child” here means an immature one. To reason as a child is to take account of things as a child. In the next age the mature believers will become men, and all the childish gifts, especially the least ones, tongue-speaking and its interpretation, will be done away. However, we can have a foretaste of the next age by living a life of love in this age. Love matures us in life; gifts keep us in childhood.

In verse 12 Paul goes on to say, “For now we see by means of a mirror obscurely, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall fully know as also I was fully known.” The word “now” refers to this age. Concerning the expression “by means of a mirror obscurely,” J. N. Darby says in his New Translation, “That is, through some medium which, in degree, hinders vision. The word means also ‘a mirror,’ but it is used for window, made, not of clear transparent glass, as now, but of semi-transparent materials.”

The word “then” in verse 12 refers to the next age.

In verse 13 Paul concludes, “But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” The word “but” here indicates a contrast between verse 13 and the preceding verses.

Faith receives the divine things (John 1:12) and realizes the spiritual and unseen things (Heb. 11:1). Hope reaps and partakes of the things realized by faith (Rom. 8:24-25). Love enjoys the things received and realized by faith and partaken of by hope for nourishing ourselves, building up others (1 Cor. 8:1), and expressing God, thus fulfilling the entire law (Rom. 13:8-10). Such a love causes us to grow in life for the development and use of the spiritual gifts, and is the excellent way to have the greater gifts. Hence, it is the greatest of the three abiding virtues. So we must pursue it (1 Cor. 14:1).

Love cares for the Body of Christ and builds up the Body. First love unites the Body and then builds it up. Therefore, we focus our attention on the love, which builds up the Body. We should pursue love and remain in the Body to enjoy the Spirit.

Definition of Love – based on Scripture

Loved by God

1. Romans 1:7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:
Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. 1 Thessalonians 1:4 -- For we know, brothers and sisters[a] loved by God, that he has chosen you,

God loves you

1. 1. Deuteronomy 23:5 -- -- However, the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you

God loves

1. Deuteronomy 23:5 -- However, the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you
2. 2 Corinthians 9:7 -- Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Love God

1. 1 John 4:16 -- And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.
God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.
2. 1 John 4:20 -- Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.

Love is

1. Psalm 63:3 ... love is better than life,
2. Psalm 103:17 . . . the LORD’s love is with those who fear him,
3. Song of Solomon 1:2 . . . your love is more delightful than wine.
4. Song of Solomon 8:6 . . . for love is as strong as death,
5. Hosea 6:4 . . . Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears.
6. Romans 13:10 . . .Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.
7. 1 Corinthians 13:4 . . .Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
8. 1 John 3:16 . . .This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.
9. 1 John 4:12 . . . but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.
10. 1 John 4:17 . . .This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the Day of Judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.

Jewish Wisdom: Love with the Living God
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Love's Great Abiding – The Shema

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart (Deut. 6:5)

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO "command" someone to love you? Doesn't it seem absurd to even suggest such a thing? For instance, can you "order" your children to love you? What about your spouse? Your friend? Your pet? And yet the LORD commands this very thing, insisting that we make Him the primary passion of our lives, before all other competing loves or interests. Only God can rightfully make such a demand because He knows that loving other things more than Him leads to "disordered love," moral evil, and eventual madness. We were made for God's love, but substituting finite things for this infinite need will never suffice to bring lasting healing to our souls...

God doesn't need us to worship Him. He's not insecure or threatened if we do not love Him. No, it's the other way around. God "demands" our love because He knows how much we need Him. The essence of God is love itself (1 John 4:8) and therefore it is for our infinite good to join His celebration of life... Indeed, we were created – the very cosmos itself was created – for the sake of being in a love relationship with God. This is the reason for everything that exists. Living in denial of God's love is a form of spiritual insanity and despair.

Creation for Love

There is "no fear in love" (1 John 4:18), though God forewarns fearful things if we will disregard reality. Hell is therefore the rejection of love, the shock of discovering that reality is based on God's love. Jesus' life and sacrifice is the radiance of God's essence, the "exact imprint of His nature" (Heb. 1:3), and therefore rejecting Jesus is rejecting God. On the other hand, a saint, a tzaddik (a righteous), is one who genuinely responds to God's love by abiding in it.

Abide in Him

Jesus used the metaphor of a vine and branches to illustrate this union. If you look closely at a vine, it's difficult to see where the vine ends and the branches begin. The expression of our hope, the life we live "**entangled**" in God's love, bears fruit that draws sustenance from the life of the true Vine. This is the communion of love as it works itself out in our daily life.

I CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER 14

- *Linda Justice*

GIFTS OF PROPHECY AND TONGUES

“Speaking in tongues” was commonly used in the city of Corinth in temples while worshipping false gods and idols. Those devoted to false gods would drink and dance until they would be almost unconscious and then speak a ‘language of the gods’. They believed by doing this they could speak directly to the gods and it was the highest form of divine communion.

The ritual was emotionally charged with each person doing their own thing while in a frenzy. Many times sexual orgies and all types of perversion followed this experience. It was complete chaos, very little worship, and self-edification.

It is certain to say that in the church of Corinth most of the tongues-speaking was counterfeit. This was a church in poor spiritual condition. The congregation was very carnal and worldly. This church was divisive, selfish, immoral, gluttonous, and desecrated the Lord’s Supper among other things we could list. There is no way a church like this can walk in the spirit while exercising the flesh.

The question is where does today’s church fit in all of this? Does any of this sound familiar? When is it appropriate to speak in tongues?

Again, Paul is going to give step by step instruction on how and when to use the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues.

14:1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. ² For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. ³ But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. ⁴ Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵ I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified.

Paul reminds the church again that everything must be done in love because there was a lack of love for one another and way too much selfishness.

Paul starts out in the first five verses with a comparison of the gift of prophecy (preaching and teaching) verses the counterfeit gift of tongues. *
***Important-Notice that each time Paul uses the singular (tongue) he refers to the false gift of speaking in tongues in this entire chapter.**

PROPHECY	SPEAKING IN TONGUE (s)
Speaks to men	Speaks to God
Strengthens, encourages and comforts men	No one understands their speech
Edifies the church	Edifies themselves
To prophesy is superior	To speak in tongue is inferior
Person who prophesies is greater	Person who speaks in tongue is less important unless you interpret

In verse 5 when Paul says **“I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy.”** He simply means that he is not against anyone with the genuine gift of tongues and if they all had that gift it would be fine with him but to preach and teach is still more important.

14: ⁶ Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or

prophecy or word of instruction? ⁷ Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the pipe or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? ⁸ Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? ⁹ So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. ¹¹ If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. ¹² So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.

The second truth about the way the church was using the gift of tongues is no one can understand what was being said or they were unintelligible. Paul asks what good is this gift?

What does Paul compare these worthless words to?

Worthless words	Words with no revelation, knowledge or instruction
Worthless words	Lifeless things that make sounds like a flute or harp with no distinct notes.
Worthless words	A trumpet without a clear battle call
Worthless words	Words floating away in the air.

What is the purpose of tongues? It is the same purpose for all language simply to communicate! Just like at Pentecost (Acts 2:6) when those present from different countries heard the apostles “speak in his own language.” It was a means of communication.

The characteristics are the same. The ‘tongues’ spoken at Pentecost and the ‘gift of tongues’ are understandable either directly (Acts 2:6) or through an interpreter (I Cor. 14:27). The purpose of the gift of tongues has not changed.

^{14:13} For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing

with my understanding. ¹⁶ Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified.

¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

(vs.13-15) Again Paul is using the singular ‘tongue’ to further explain the false gift. The church at Corinth believed this wild unintelligible talk was used to commune with the gods spirit-to-spirit. It was not meant to bypass our minds, understanding or reasoning.

Some churches believe that ‘spirit’ means Holy Spirit. There is no way the Holy Spirit prays through a person and bypasses his mind or the mind could not produce fruit. Obviously, if the mind is not used for understanding the words are empty. Growing spiritually involves more than the mind but the mind can never be excluded from the process.

Scripture is very clear how the mind is used. The writings of Paul particularly emphasize this. **Romans 12:2 “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”** **Eph.4:23 “to be made new in the attitude of your minds;**

Jesus repeats the words of Deut. 6:5 (the Shem’a) **Mat. 22:37 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”**

(vs.16) Our mind processes what is being preached, prayed or sung. We could say “**amen**” to anything. Amen means to agree with. How would we know what to agree with if we had no understanding of what was said?

(vs.17) The person speaking in the tongue may very well be giving thanks but no one else is being encouraged because no one understands what is being said.

(vs.18) We can not be sure how Paul used his gift of speaking in tongues. Perhaps it was used as it was used at Pentecost as a supernatural gift to reach people God chose to hear His message. Because Paul gives no details here or in any other book he has written indicates how little he valued it.

(vs.19) Paul ends this section by making his point. Five words that make sense means more than ten thousand words of babbling.

14:²⁰ Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.²¹ In the Law it is written:

**“With other tongues
and through the lips of foreigners
I will speak to this people,
but even then they will not listen to me,
says the Lord.”**

²² Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. ²³ So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? ²⁴ But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, ²⁵ as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!”

(vs. 20) Thinking like selfish children was at the heart of the problem in the church at Corinth. Before they could start understanding what Paul was teaching them on counterfeit gifts they had to think with mature minds.

They certainly had plenty of mature thinking when it came to evil. They knew everything about what feeds the flesh and little about the fruit of the Spirit.

Now we get to the heart of this chapter. In vs. 21 Paul is quoting Isaiah. This verse and the first part of vs. 22 “**Tongues, then, are a sign not for believers for unbelievers;**” What does that mean? “**This people**” in vs. 21 and “**unbelievers**” in verse 22 refer to unbelieving Jews. *The gift of tongues was given as a “sign” to unbelieving Jews!*

<p style="text-align: center;">SIGN</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BLESSING</p>	<p>The second part of the sign is a result of the first. The gift of tongues was no longer needed to fulfill the purpose God intended which was for Israel.</p> <p>The blessing is that the church will now include the Gentiles and would no longer work through just one nation or one people.</p> <p>Paul assures the Jews of their open invitation to enter the Kingdom as individuals and as a nation. Romans 11:25 “...Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.”</p> <p>By building a new nation of both Jews and Gentiles, Israel would become jealous and someday repent.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SIGN</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AUTHORITY</p>	<p>The last part of this ‘sign’ is the validation of those who preached the coming judgments and blessings. 2Cor. “The things that mark an apostle-signs, wonders, and miracles-were done among you with great perseverance.”</p> <p>Since Paul acknowledged he had the authentic gift of tongues in vs. 18 this made him an authority.</p>

The rest of verse 22 through verse 25 confronts the improper use of tongues and the value of prophesying.

Answer these questions about this section:

1. Why would prophecy be for believers?
2. What would happen if everyone in the church came together and spoke in tongues all at once?
3. What would unbelievers think if they entered the church while everyone is speaking in tongues?
4. What could happen to an unbeliever if he enters the church while someone is prophesying?

14:26 What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

Paul reminds the church that all things in worship are to build up one another. The church at Corinth was so caught up in self they did not recognize the importance of serving God or one another.

14:27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. ²⁸ If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God.

These are the instructions for speaking in tongues in the church. Up until now Paul used the singular tongue to explain the false gift. He now refers to a single person using the genuine gift of tongues. He would not give instruction on how to use the false gift. Since God is a God of order Paul is very specific on how this is done.

1. Only 2 or 3 people should speak.
2. They should speak in turn.
3. What they say should be interpreted.
4. If no one is present to interpret, they should be quiet.

14:29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. ³⁰ And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. ³¹ For you can all prophesy in turn so that

everyone may be instructed and encouraged. ³² **The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.** ³³ **For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.**

When Paul wrote this epistle prophets were still being used at the church of Corinth. These were New Testament prophets that spoke for the Lord in two ways. Sometimes they would give new revelation from God to the church. Most of the time they would preach what had been taught from the apostles just like pastors do today from the Word. Paul now gives instruction to the prophets:

1. Only 2 or 3 prophets can speak at once.
2. The other prophets should judge what was said.
3. If someone else has a ‘revelation’ the first speaker should stop.
4. Every prophet is to speak in turn.

^{14:33} **For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.**

³⁴ **Women**^[a] **should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.** ³⁵ **If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.**^[b]

What is the role for women at this time?

³⁶ **Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?** ³⁷ **If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command.** ³⁸ **But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.**^[a]

Many Corinthians put themselves before Scripture so they could live their lives in a carnal and worldly way. Paul says if you ignore my teaching then you should be ignored!

³⁹ **Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.** ⁴⁰ **But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.**

He brings his point home in these last two verses. What does he say?

Resource: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary

The following are excerpts from a paper written by Pastor Ken Dalton in 1999 on the gift of tongues.

I CORINTHIANS 12, 13 & 14

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

“My first recommendation with respect to studying this topic is to start with and emphasize those things that we “know for sure” about speaking in tongues, and then place a secondary emphasis on those things that “we cannot know for sure” about speaking in tongues. It is my belief that most of the trouble related to this topic is a result of emphasizing the speculative and refusing to emphasize the “for sures”.

The following are some “for sures” related to speaking in tongues.

1. Many fine and very sincere Christians believe in and/or practice some form of speaking in tongues.
2. Tongues are mentioned in three New Testament books of the Bible: Mark (16:17), Acts (2,10,19) and I Corinthians (12-14).
3. Mark 16:17 mentions tongues as an apostolic sign.
4. Speaking in tongues is one of the primary characteristics of the pagan mystery religions. Mystery religions in and around Corinth in the first century made wide use of the ecstatic speech and trancelike experiences.
5. Current editions of the Encyclopedia Britannica include reports from East Africa telling of persons possessed by demons who speak fluently in Swahili or English, although under normal circumstances they would not understand their language. Among the Thonga people of Africa, when a demon is exorcised, a song is usually sung in Zulu even though the Thonga people of Africa do not know Zulu. Today ecstatic speech is found among Muslims, Eskimos, and Tibetan monks.
6. Speaking in tongues is not proof or evidence that some-one is demon possessed.
7. Paul wrote at least twelve epistles after I Corinthians and never mentioned tongues again. Peter never mentioned tongues; James never mentioned tongues; John never mentioned tongues; and neither did Jude. None of the later books of the New Testament mention tongues.

8. Probably the greatest reason speaking in tongues is emphasized today is the need for an alternative to the cold lifeless Christianity that permeates so many churches. Christians have a spiritual hunger. People are hungry to express themselves spiritually. The tongues-speaker feels like he or she is directly in touch with the supernatural. This is not dry and academic. It feels real and is welcomed especially when we want a real touch from the Lord due to fear over current challenges and problems in our lives.
9. There are many confusing questions that arise out of the three I Corinthians chapters (12, 13, 14). I personally stand with those who question whether Paul is talking about two different types of tongues. One type of speaking in tongues was that referred to in the Book of Acts and Mark 16, where people in other languages were able to understand the early believers in their own languages. And then the second type of speaking in tongues would be associated with prayer and in this case something that is personal. I believe that Romans 8:26-27 may speak of this type of praying when it says, “In the same way, the spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according with God’s will.”

Often a Christian in prayer knows not how to put into words their heartfelt requests and it is through sometimes crying, sometimes singing, sometimes praising, sometimes groaning, and sometimes just waiting that we believe the Holy Spirit living within us verbalizes appropriately our requests before the Lord.

10. Speaking in tongues is never emphasized in the Bible as being an important part of the Christian life. It is never emphasized as a part of Christian obedience or something strongly to be sought after.
11. No matter what other things we learn about speaking in tongues, it is important to remember that tongues can be very divisive and are very unimportant. Speaking in tongues should never become a major interest. One of the major principles Paul teaches in I Corinthians is the importance for Christians to refrain from any unnecessary activities that could confuse another Christian or in some way cause them to stumble. However we wish to treat speaking in tongues, we should be reminded of its potential pitfalls and make a commitment not ever to over-emphasize the concept, do something that may confuse another believer (especially a babe in Christ),

remember its built-in divisive quality and be mindful of its potential to make one feel superior or believe that it is some evidence of spiritual maturity.

If a Christian enjoys praying or speaking in tongues, it is just a healthy discipline to regularly ask the question, “Why am I doing this?” If by referring to speaking in tongues, we are speaking of something that is to be very personal and becomes confusing, disruptive and potentially showy if practiced with others.

12. If we do not speak in tongues ourselves, we should not be mean or judgmental of those who do. One’s personal motive is the issue of most importance. As Christians we do not and will not always be serving and worshipping the Lord in the exact same way.”

I Corinthians

Chapter 14

Homework

1. Look at verses 1-5 Paul compares the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues. What are the differences?
2. In verses 6-12 Paul compares the gift of tongues as worthless words. What does he compare these worthless words to?
3. Read verses 18-19. Do you think it is significant Paul has the gift of tongues but gives no examples of when he used them?
4. Read verses 20-22a. The ‘unbelievers’ mentioned here is the nation Israel. What is the quote from Isaiah referring to?

5. What do verses 22b-25 say about the use of tongues and prophecy in the church?
6. Verses 26-28 give step by step instruction on how to use the gift of tongues in the church. List them.
7. Prophets were still active in the church at Corinth. In verses 29-33 Paul teaches how they are to conduct themselves in the church. List the order of how they are to interact.
8. Read 33b-35. What are the rules women were to follow in the church?
9. Verses 36-38 Paul rebukes the church at Corinth. What is Paul telling them?
10. What is Paul's conclusion in 39&40?

CHRIST’S RESURRECTION, THE ENERGY OF THE GOSPEL

1 Cor 15 – *Margie Hart*

The resurrection of Christ is the energy of the gospel. There are many philosophies and religions on earth. But none of these philosophies or religions have life energy. On the contrary, every one of them is devoid of life. In a philosophy or religion there may be many teachings and doctrines, but there is no life. Religions are altogether devoid of life. None of them has any energy or vitality. But the Lord’s gospel contains life, even resurrection life.

The gospel of Christ not only has life; it also has the life power to subdue death, to conquer death, and to annul death. This life, the life that has subdued, conquered, and nullified death, is resurrection. Do you know what resurrection life is? Resurrection is a life that is victorious over death.

When Christ, the God-man, died on the cross, He was the Lamb of God (John 1:29). Through His death on the cross, He accomplished redemption. The significance of the crucifixion, however, includes more than redemption. Redemption certainly is a crucial part of the crucifixion. But Christ died not only to accomplish redemption for us; He died to terminate the entire old creation. Do you know what is the all-inclusive significance of Christ’s crucifixion? It is that the cross of Christ brings the entire old creation, including the angelic race, the restored and fallen heaven and earth, and the human race, to an end. When Christ was on the cross, He did not hang there alone. The old creation was on Him and was crucified with Him. On the cross, therefore, Christ terminated the angelic race, the heavens and the earth, the human race, and every item of the old creation. Although this is revealed in the Bible, no such word of righteousness is preached among Christians today. Nevertheless, this is the significance of the

death of Christ. This is the reason we speak of Christ’s death as the all-inclusive death.

In Hebrews 10 the veil in the temple is a type of the all-inclusive death of Christ. Hebrews 10:19 and 20 say that the veil typifies Christ’s flesh: “Having therefore, brothers, boldness for entering the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He dedicated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh.” On the veil in the temple, cherubim were embroidered. These cherubim signify God’s creatures. Thus, when the veil in the temple was rent, the creatures embroidered on the veil were also torn. This indicates that when Christ was crucified, we, along with the whole creation, were crucified also. Hallelujah for this all-inclusive death!

Resurrection means that Christ died, was buried, and rose up again. This resurrection is the life, the energy the vitality of the gospel. In this vital resurrection it is possible for God to have an administration in our lives.

Now we can understand why chapter fifteen covers the matter of resurrection. In chapters eleven through fourteen we have the Head, the Body, and all the gifts with the functions for the operations to carry out God’s administration. All this, however, must be in resurrection. In creation God does not have a way to carry out His administration, for both the angels and mankind rebelled against Him. But in resurrection God has a way to carry out His administration. As Christians we must be a resurrected people, and the church must be in resurrection. Only in resurrection can we realize God’s headship, discern the Body, and be members of the Body. Christ cannot have the Body except in resurrection. If there is no resurrection, there can be no church. The church is in resurrection, and we also are in resurrection.

In 15:1 and 2 The gospel here is the full gospel, including the teachings concerning Christ and the church, as fully disclosed in the book of Romans (1:1; 16:25).

In verse 2 After being justified in Christ and regenerated by the Spirit, we are in the process of being saved in the life of Christ (Rom. 5:10) until we are mature and conformed to Him in full (Rom. 8:29). On the one hand, we have been saved; on the other hand, we are being saved. We have been saved by Christ’s death, but we are still being saved in His resurrection.

In verses 3 and 4 Christ’s death for our sin, His burial for our termination, and His resurrection for our germination with life, according to the prophecies of the Old Testament (Isa. 53:5-8, 10-12; Psa. 22:14-18; Dan. 9:26; Isa. 53:9; Psa. 16:9-10; Hosea 6:2), are the basic items among the first things of the gospel. The last of these items is the most vital in the gospel, for it imparts life to us that we may live Christ.

In verses 5 through 11 Paul speaks concerning the witnesses of Christ’s resurrection. The Greek word rendered seen also means appeared to. The earlier apostles and disciples were eyewitnesses of Christ’s resurrection (Acts 1:22), and their preaching stressed their testimony to this (Acts 2:32; 4:33). They bore witness to the resurrected Christ not only by their teaching, but also by their living. They lived with Him by His living in resurrection (John 14:19).

In verse 10 - Grace, three times in this verse, is the resurrected Christ becoming the life-giving Spirit (v. 45) to bring the processed God in resurrection into us to

be our life and life supply that we may live in resurrection. Thus, grace is the Triune God becoming life and everything to us. It is by this grace that Saul of Tarsus, the foremost of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15-16), became the foremost apostle, laboring more abundantly than all the other apostles. His ministry and living by this grace are an undeniable testimony to Christ’s resurrection.

“Not I, but the grace of God” equals “not I, but Christ” in Galatians 2:20. The grace that motivates the apostle and operates in him is not some matter or some thing, but a living Person, the resurrected Christ, the embodiment of God the Father becoming the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, who dwells in him as his everything.

In verse 10 grace is the Christ who is in resurrection and who is resurrection. By this grace Paul could be what he was and labor more than all the other apostles. When we compare 1 Corinthians 15:10 with Galatians 2:20, we see that grace is not a thing, but a Person. All the disciples and apostles who saw the resurrected Christ not only saw Him objectively, but experienced Him subjectively. Through their seeing of Christ, He entered into them and became the subjective One in them. When the day of Pentecost came, this was the reason they were living, energetic, and operative. The resurrected Christ was in them. Not only was Christ Himself resurrected objectively, but in resurrection He lived in Peter, John, and all the other apostles and disciples.

Verse 12 -- In this chapter the apostle deals with the Corinthians’ heretical saying that there is no resurrection of the dead. They were like the Sadducees (Matt. 22:23; Acts 23:8). This is the tenth problem among them. It is the most damaging and destructive to God’s New Testament economy, worse than the heresy of Hymenaeus and Philetus concerning resurrection in 2 Timothy 2:17 and 18. Resurrection is the life pulse and lifeline of the divine economy. If there were no resurrection, God would be the God of the dead, not the God of the living (Matt. 22:32). If there were no resurrection, Christ would not have been raised from the

dead. He would be a dead Savior, not the One who lives forever (Rev. 1:18) and is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25). If there is no resurrection, there would be no living proof of justification by His death (Rom. 4:25), no imparting of life (John 12:24), no regeneration (John 3:5), no renewing (Titus 3:5), no transformation (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18), and no conformity to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). If there were no resurrection, there would be no members of Christ (Rom. 12:5), no Body of Christ as His fullness (Eph. 1:20-23), and no church as Christ’s bride (John 3:29) and the new man (Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10-11). If there were no resurrection, God’s New Testament economy would altogether collapse and God’s eternal purpose would be nullified.

In verse 12 Paul refers to the preaching that Christ has been raised from among the dead. This indicates clearly that the apostles preached the resurrection of Christ. According to the book of Acts, the preaching of the gospel was mainly the preaching of Christ’s resurrection. Although the apostles emphasized the resurrection of Christ, today’s Christian preaching stresses the crucifixion much more than the resurrection. We, however, must follow the apostles to emphasize resurrection as well as crucifixion.

Verse 13 -- This is the first point of Paul’s rebuttal. It is a fact that Christ has been raised from among the dead. How, then, could some say that there is no resurrection? If there were no resurrection, then Christ could not have been raised from among the dead.

In verse 14 -- The Greek word rendered vain means empty, void. Without the living Christ in resurrection, both the preaching of the gospel and our faith in it would be empty and void, having no reality. Preaching the death of Christ without preaching His resurrection would be vain. The resurrection of Christ is what causes our preaching to become vital and prevailing. Such a preaching would never be in vain. Furthermore, apart from Christ’s resurrection, our faith would

also be vain. Without the resurrection of Christ, both our preaching and our believing become vain. This is a very serious matter.

In verse 15 Paul goes on to say, “And we are found also false witnesses of God, because we witnessed concerning God that He raised Christ, Whom He did not raise if indeed the dead are not raised.” This is another strong point in Paul’s rebuttal.

In verse 16 & 17 The Greek word rendered futile means fruitless, worthless. Without Christ resurrected to live in us as our life and as everything to us, our faith in Him is fruitless, worthless, and without any issue like the impartation of life, freedom from sin, victory over Satan, and growth in life. The word futile used here is even stronger than the word vain found in verse 14. Something that is vain is empty. But the word futile indicates labor without result, work without any gain. If there is no resurrection, we may still believe, but eventually nothing results from our believing. Hence, our faith becomes futile.

Furthermore, according to verse 17, if Christ has not been raised, we are still in our sins. Christ’s death saves us from the condemnation of our sins, not from the power of sin. It is His resurrection life that delivers us from the power of sin (Rom. 8:2). If Christ were not resurrected, we would still remain in sins and under the power of sin.

Sins are one thing, and the power of sin is something else. Because sins brought in condemnation, we became sinners full of sins, and there was condemnation upon us. But through Christ’s death, that condemnation has been removed. Thus, the death of Christ has saved us from the condemnation of sins. But His death cannot save us from the power of sin. The condemnation of sins is objective, whereas the power of sin is subjective. Being saved from the condemnation of sins can be

accomplished once for all. But to be saved from the power of sin is a lifelong matter and a daily matter, even a moment-by-moment matter. The problem we all have with our temper illustrates our need to be saved daily from the power of sin. You have been saved from the condemnation of sins, but you still need to be saved from your temper.

According to Romans 8:2, the law of the Spirit of life frees us from the law of sin. The law of sin actually denotes the power of sin, just as the law of gravity actually refers to the power of gravity. Only resurrection life can deliver us from the power of sin and from the law of sin. Resurrection life contains a law that is more powerful than the law of sin. An airplane can fly because of the operation of a power that overcomes gravity. In like manner, we can overcome the power of sin by the operation of Christ’s powerful resurrection life.

In verse 17, Paul does not write in a philosophical way or in a theoretical manner. He appeals to the experience of those who argue against resurrection and then uses their experience to defeat them. In other words, Paul’s rebuttal is very practical. Should anyone say that there is no resurrection, then Christ has not been resurrected. Then what shall we do concerning the power of sin? For this, we need resurrection.

In verse 18 Paul continues his rebuttal. Those who have fallen asleep are dead (1 Thes. 4:13-16). Here the word perished means never to be resurrected, but to remain in death forever. If Christ has not been raised from among the dead, then those believers in Christ who have died have perished. They believed in Christ in order to be saved. But if Christ has not been raised, they will not be resurrected either. On the contrary, they will remain in death and perish. This is Paul’s argument. By this we see once again that he argued concerning resurrection in a practical way.

Verse 19 -- If there is no resurrection, we shall have no future and no hope for the future, such as Christ as our hope of glory (Col. 1:27), the lot of our eternal blessing (Dan. 12:13), the reign with Christ in the millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6), and the reward of the resurrection of the just (Luke 14:14). Once again, Paul’s argument is very practical.

In verse 20 -- This verse begins a parenthetical section that goes through verse 28.

This parenthetical word verifies the truth of resurrection by setting forth Christ as its firstfruit. Christ was the first One raised from among the dead as the firstfruit of resurrection. This was typified by the firstfruits (a sheaf of the firstfruits, including Christ with some of the Old Testament saints who had died, was raised at the Lord’s resurrection—Matt. 27:52-53) in Leviticus 23:10 and 11, offered to God on the day after the Sabbath, the day of resurrection (Matt. 28:1). Christ as the firstfruit of resurrection is the Firstborn from among the dead to be the Head of the Body (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:20-23). Since He, the Head of the Body, has been resurrected, we, the Body, shall also be resurrected.

Verse 21 --The man through whom death came was Adam, the first man (v. 45). The man through whom resurrection came is Christ, the second Man (v. 47). Adam brought in death through sin (Rom. 5:12); Christ brought in the life of resurrection through righteousness (Rom. 5:17-18). The death brought in by Adam works in us from our birth through our parents unto the death of our body. The life of resurrection brought in by Christ operates in us, as signified by baptism

(Rom. 6:4), from our regeneration by the Spirit of God (John 3:5) unto the transfiguration of our body (Phil. 3:21).

God created man, but man fell and became subject to death. God, however, would not give up on man. But there was the need of a remedy. The remedy includes both redemption and resurrection. Redemption deals with sin, but it does not deal with death. Thus, there is a need of a further step in addition to redemption, and this step is resurrection. This gives God a way to solve the problem caused by man's fall. However, if there were no resurrection, God would have been defeated by the fall of man. But God can never be defeated. Man fell into sin, and sin brought in death. But God came in to accomplish redemption, solving the problem of sin. In addition, resurrection swallows death. Therefore, instead of being defeated, God is victorious. God has overcome man's fall. He defeated sin by redemption and death by resurrection.

Verse 22 -- In Adam we were born in death and born to die; we are dead in him (Eph. 2:1, 5). As soon as a person is born, he begins to die. Do you realize that throughout the course of your life you have actually been dying? Each year you live is a year deducted from the span of your life. We were not born to grow and live; we were born to die, for in Adam we were born in death.

In verse 22 Paul does not just say that in Adam all die, but he goes on to declare that in Christ all shall be made alive. In Christ we have been reborn in life and resurrected to live; we have been enlivened, made alive, in Him (Eph. 2:5-6). On the one hand, we are dying; on the other hand, we are living. In Christ we all have been made alive; we have been resurrected to live.

In verse 23 -- Here Paul again refers to Christ as the firstfruit, the first One raised from among the dead as the firstfruit of resurrection. Those who are Christ's are

the believers in Christ, the just ones, who will be resurrected unto life at the Lord’s coming back before the millennium (John 5:29; Luke 14:14; 1 Thes. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52; Rev. 20:4-6). They will be the second group resurrected from among the dead.

In verse 24 -- The end denotes the end of all the ages and dispensations of the old creation. This is also the end of the millennium before the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1). Christ’s resurrection marked the beginning of the church age. The believers in Christ who have died will be resurrected at His coming, which will be at the end of the church age.

Here we see two resurrections: the first at the beginning of the church age, and the second at the consummation of the church age. The Greek word rendered “end” in verse 24 actually means completion. As we have pointed out, verse 24 refers to the end of all the ages and dispensations of the old creation. The end will not occur at the completion of the church age, but at the completion of the millennium. Then there will be eternity with the new heaven and the new earth. Paul’s word is very brief, but it implies a great deal, for it includes the millennium. After the millennium, the end to which Paul refers in verse 24 will come.

In verse 24 the word “whenever” is significant. It points to the time when Christ annuls satanic authority, subdues all His enemies (v. 25), abolishes death (v. 26), and delivers up the kingdom to God the Father; that is, when all the negative things are done away and the entire purpose of God is fulfilled, the old creation will come to its end.

After accomplishing redemption, Christ went to receive the kingdom from the Father (Luke 19:12-13, 15). Before the millennium He as the Son of Man will have received the kingdom from God, the Ancient of days, to rule all the nations for one thousand years (Dan. 7:13-14; Rev. 20:4, 6). At the end of the millennium,

after He has defeated Satan, the Devil, and his evil angels (as all rule, authority, and power), and even death and Hades, putting all His enemies under His feet (1 Cor. 15:25-26) and casting all of them, including death and Hades, into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:7-10, 14), He will deliver the kingdom back to God the Father.

In verse 25 -- In order for Christ to reign He must be in resurrection. If there were no resurrection, Christ would still be in the tomb, and it would not be possible for Him to reign. Christ began to reign from the time of His resurrection. In Matthew 28:18 the Lord Jesus said to the disciples, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” Then He charged them to go and disciple all nations. He has the authority to reign. Now under His reign we must disciple the nations, bringing the nations into His kingdom and making them His people. Today the real king, the real ruler, is the Lord Jesus. According to Revelation 1, He is the ruler of the kings of the earth. Every king, queen, president, and head of state is under His reign. Actually, this statement also is a strong part of Paul’s rebuttal to those who would say there is no resurrection.

In verse 25 Paul says that Christ must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet. The longer Christ reigns, the more enemies are put under His feet. Eventually, at the end of the millennium, the last age of the old creation, every enemy will have been put under the feet of Christ. The word “until” indicates this and points to the end of the thousand years. That will be the time when every enemy has been put under Christ’s feet.

In verse 26 -- Immediately after the fall of man, God began His work to abolish sin and death. This work has been progressing through the Old and New Testament ages and is still in process today. When sin is done away at the end of the old creation and when its source, Satan, is cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:7-10), death will be abolished. It also will be cast into the lake of fire with Hades, its power, after the last and final judgment at the white throne (Rev. 20:11-15).

In verse 27 -- The pronoun “He” in this verse refers to God, who has subjected all things under Christ’s feet. This is a quotation of Psalm 8:6 concerning Christ as the Man whom God made to have dominion over all things. This will have been fulfilled when all the things mentioned in verses 24 through 26 have taken place. “For” at the beginning of the verse indicates this.

In verse 27 the phrase “His feet” and the pronoun “Him” refer to Christ as the Man prophesied in Psalm 8:4-8. To Him—the resurrected, glorified, and exalted Man—God has subjected all things (Heb. 2:7-9; Eph. 1:20-22). God has subjected all things under Christ’s feet. However, it is evident that this does not include God Himself. God, the One who has subjected all things to Christ, is the only exception.

Verse 28 -- The first time the pronoun Him is used in verse 28, it refers to Christ, to whom God has subjected all things. The second time it is used, it refers to God, the One who has subjected all things to Christ. According to verse 28, eventually the Son Himself will be subjected to Him who has subjected all things to Him so that God may be all in all. Christ, as the Son of God to be the head of man in His humanity, is under the headship of God the Father (11:3). This is for God’s governmental administration. After God the Father has subjected all things under His feet as a resurrected Man in glory (Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:7-8), and after He as such a resurrected Man has put all enemies under His feet to execute God the Father’s subjection of all things to Him, He as the Son of God will also, along with His delivery of the kingdom back to God the Father (v. 24), subject Himself in His divinity to God the Father, who has subjected all things to Him the Son in His humanity. This indicates the Son’s absolute subjection and subordination to the Father, exalting the Father that God the Father may be all in all.

Resurrection is a fact which has much to do with our daily life as Christians. The daily life of a Christian actually depends on resurrection. Furthermore, our Christian hope depends on resurrection. If there were no resurrection, there would be no hope, and we would be the most miserable people on earth.

Christ's resurrection is also related to God's administration. The carrying out of the divine administration depends on our experience of Christ's resurrection. If we do not have Christ as the resurrection life within us, we cannot be living members of His Body for the carrying out of God's administration so that Christ may reign until He subdues all His enemies. In this message we shall consider the moral influence of resurrection (vv. 29-34) and the definition of resurrection (vv. 35-49).

In verse 29 -- The phrase “baptized for the dead” means to be baptized for others who are dead. This was not an official matter generally practiced by the early churches, but a personal activity of some individual believers for dead persons for whom they were concerned who may have believed in the Lord but were not baptized before they died. They did this in hope of their resurrection from among the dead at the Lord's coming back (1 Thes. 4:16), since in baptism resurrection is strongly signified (Col. 2:12). The apostle uses what they did to strengthen the truth of resurrection. This does not mean, however, that he sanctions baptism by some believers for the dead.

In verse 29 the word “for” actually means on behalf of. Some believers had relatives, neighbors, or friends who also believed in the Lord, but who died without being baptized. Out of love for them, certain believers were baptized on behalf of the ones who had died. This was not taught by the apostles, but we know from church history it was practiced by the believers, although the practice was not common. The fact that one believer would be baptized on behalf of another believer who had died signifies a strong belief in resurrection. Baptism

signifies death, burial, and resurrection. But if there is no resurrection and if Christians simply die and are buried, why would someone be baptized on behalf of the dead? The fact that someone would be baptized for the dead indicates a belief, an expectation, that the dead one would be resurrected. Paul refers to this practice as part of his rebuttal against the heresy which claimed that there was no resurrection. Here Paul seems to be saying, “If the dead are not raised, then why are others baptized for them to signify that they will be resurrected?” This is Paul’s meaning here.

In verse 30 Paul goes on to say, “Why also are we in danger every hour?” If there is no resurrection, then why would Paul allow himself to be in danger every hour? Why would he daily risk his life? Instead, if there is no resurrection, he should enjoy this present life.

In verse 31 -- Here the word die means to risk one’s life, to be in danger of death, to face death, and to die to self (2 Cor. 11:23; 4:11; 1:8-9; Rom. 8:36).

The Corinthian believers were the fruit of the apostle’s labor, a labor in which he risked his life and was in danger of death. In them the apostle can boast of this. By this boasting he protests that daily he dies. The apostle’s boasting in the Corinthians as the fruit of the risk of his life is in Christ, not in himself, because his labor is not by himself but by Christ.

Paul was like a soldier risking his life on the battlefield. He fought for God’s kingdom, and daily he died for the sake of the Corinthians. When he came to preach the gospel to them, he risked his life. While he was in Corinth, he died daily. It was not an easy thing for Paul to come to Corinth in the Gentile world. This world was opposed to anything Jewish and also opposed to anything Christian. Nevertheless, Paul daily risked his life in order to preach the gospel to

them. But because of his willingness to die daily, a number of those at Corinth were saved.

In verse 32 -- The phrase “wild beasts” used here is a figure of speech denoting evil persons or matters. The manner of men in fighting against any evil person or matter is to receive a temporal reward. But the apostle will be rewarded for his fighting with evil persons and matters for the gospel’s sake at the resurrection in the future (Luke 14:14; 2 Tim. 4:8).

We know from Acts 19 that Paul was fighting against “wild beasts.” Both the Jews and the Gentiles at Ephesus strongly opposed him. Thus, he had to fight against evil persons and evil things. But if there were no resurrection, what profit would it have been to Paul to fight in this way? As Paul says, “If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” This appears to be a quotation of a saying of that day, a maxim of the Epicureans. If there is no resurrection, we believers shall have no hope in the future and thus become the most miserable of all men (v. 19). If so, we should enjoy our life today, forgetting the future, like the Epicureans.

Verse 33 – warning to not be deceived. This appears to be a quotation of another saying of that day, a fragment of a Greek poem. By this word the apostle warns the Corinthian believers not to have any companionship with those heretics who say there is no resurrection. Such evil companionship will corrupt their faith and Christian virtues.

In verse 33 Paul charges the Corinthians not to pay attention to the deceitful and nonsensical heresy that there is no resurrection. Those who listen to this heresy will be deceived by it. Furthermore, if they become companions of heretics, that

companionship will corrupt good morals. This principle applies to us in the church life today.

If you take in negative thoughts and become a companion to those who oppose the church life, that companionship will corrupt your church life. The good morals mentioned in verse 33 include loving the Lord, living for the future, risking our lives for the gospel, and practicing the proper church life. It actually includes all the good things covered in the entire book of 1 Corinthians.

In verse 34 -- To become sober, righteously, is to awaken to soberness from a drunken stupor; it is to cease, righteously, to be drunken. The word “righteously” here means to be right with God and man. To say there is no resurrection offends God and man, and it is sin. Hence, the apostle advises the misled Corinthians to awake soberly from this sin to be right with God and man. They were drunken unrighteously in a stupor of the no-resurrection heresy. They needed to cease being in that stupor.

Literally, the words “are ignorant” are “have ignorance.” To be heretical in saying there is no resurrection is to be ignorant of God, not knowing God’s power or His economy (Matt. 22:29-32).

Knowing the situation among the Corinthians, Paul warned them not to accept the heresy which denies the resurrection. He knew this would involve an evil companionship that would corrupt their morals in the church life. By this we see that resurrection certainly has a positive influence on our morals. But to deny the resurrection will corrupt our morals. It will cause us to be shipwrecked.

Verses 35 and 36 -- The philosophical Greeks thought they were clever, but Paul addressed them as foolish, indicating that the questions they asked proved their foolishness. In his answer Paul refers to the plant life. The reality of resurrection is contained and concealed in nature, especially in the plant life. A seed sown into the earth dies and is made alive. This is resurrection. This answers the foolish Corinthians’ first question, “How are the dead raised?”

In verse 37 -- What is sown is not a sheaf of wheat, but a seed, bare grain. Then the seed grows and changes into “the body that shall be.” It may be very difficult to distinguish between certain seeds. But once these seeds have been sown into the soil and have grown up, eventually the differences will be manifest. The plants will differ in shape and color.

Continuing this illustration in verse 38, Paul goes on to say, “But God gives it a body even as He willed, and to each of the seeds its own body.” Paul applies the word body here not to the body sown to die, as in verse 37, but to the resurrected body given by God, in a different shape and on a higher level. This answers the Corinthians’ second foolish question, “With what kind of body do they come?”

Verse 39 says, “All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one of men and another flesh of cattle, and another of birds, and another of fishes.” From verse 39 through 41, the apostle proves to the foolish Corinthians that God is able to give a body to all resurrected lives, just as He gave to all created things—to men and animals on the earth, to birds in the air, and to fish in the water—the earthly bodies with their different glories; and to the sun, the moon, and the stars, heavenly bodies with heavenly glory in varying degrees. In verse 42 Paul draws the conclusion, “So also is the resurrection of the dead.” Then he points out that the body is sown in corruption, dishonor, and weakness, but raised in incorruption, glory, and power.

In verse 44 Paul declares, “It is sown a soulish body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a soulish body, there is also a spiritual body.” A soulish body is a natural body animated by the soul, a body in which the soul predominates. A spiritual body is a resurrected body saturated by the spirit, a body in which the spirit predominates. If we die, our natural body, having been soulish, will be sown, buried, in corruption, dishonor, and weakness. When it is resurrected, it will become spiritual in incorruption, glory, and power. Hallelujah, one day we shall be in resurrection! Then there will be no more corruption, dishonor, or weakness. Instead, we shall be in incorruption, glory, and power.

Verse 45 says, “So also it is written, The first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.” Adam became a living soul through creation with a soulish body. Christ became a life-giving Spirit through resurrection with a spiritual body. Adam as a living soul is natural; Christ as a life-giving Spirit is resurrected. First, in incarnation, He became flesh for redemption (John 1:14, 29). Then in resurrection He became a life-giving Spirit for imparting life (John 10:10). He had a soulish body like Adam through incarnation. He has a spiritual body through resurrection. His soulish body has become a spiritual one through resurrection. Now He is a life-giving Spirit in resurrection, with a spiritual body, ready to be received by His believers. When we believe into Him, He enters our spirit, and we are joined to Him as the life-giving Spirit. Hence, we become one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17). Our spirit is made alive and resurrected with Him. Eventually our present soulish body will also become a spiritual body in resurrection just as His body is (vv. 52-54; Phil. 3:21).

Verse 45 implies both creation and the new creation. Adam, the first man, was the head of the old creation. When God created him, Adam became a living soul. This means that he became a person, a human being. In Hebrew the word for

Adam means man. Because God created Adam a living soul, his main part was the soul, which is for the old creation. Today, in principle, if we live in our soul, by our soul, or for our soul, we are in the old creation. The soul is the center and lifeline of the old creation. A person may be moral, but if he lives in the soul, he still belongs to the old creation.

Christ being the last Adam implies a termination and conclusion of the old creation. The old creation ends with a man, the last Adam. This Man who terminated the old creation became in resurrection a life-giving Spirit. Now this Spirit is the center and lifeline of the new creation.

The old creation was created by God. The new creation, however, comes into being not by creation, but by resurrection. Therefore, verse 45 implies two creations: the old creation with man as a living soul to be the center and lifeline, and the new creation in resurrection with the life-giving Spirit as the center and lifeline.

Many of us today are short of revelation, of the proper spiritual vision, and oppose us when we say that Christ as the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. But to deny that Christ is the life-giving Spirit is equal to denying the reality of resurrection. The life-giving Spirit is the life pulse of Christ's resurrection. If Christ had merely been resurrected with a body and did not become a life-giving Spirit, His resurrection would not mean nearly as much to us. It would simply be an objective fact unrelated to life. It could then be compared to the resurrection of Lazarus. The resurrection of Lazarus was merely an act of resurrection; it did not produce, bring forth, anything related to life. But Christ's resurrection is absolutely a matter related to life, for in resurrection He became a life-giving Spirit.

Most Christians believe in resurrection simply in an objective way. To them the resurrection of Christ is nothing more than an objective act, an act which is not related to the members of the Body of Christ. Those who have this understanding of Christ’s resurrection also regard His ascension strictly in an objective way. They do not realize that the ascension has something to do with us subjectively. From the point of view of some Christians, both the resurrection and ascension of Christ have nothing to do with us as far as life is concerned. On the contrary, both are objective facts accomplished by Christ. They hold to these facts as part of their fundamental beliefs.

Resurrection was not merely an objective act accomplished by Christ. It is very much related to us subjectively. Through incarnation Christ became a man; He became us. Therefore, incarnation was much more than an objective fact. It was a process that brought God into humanity. The principle is the same with the process of resurrection. Resurrection was not merely an act in itself; it was a process to bring forth the life-giving Spirit. Through the process of resurrection, the Man who ended the old creation became the life-giving Spirit, the germinating element of the new creation.

In verse 46 - The spiritual here denotes Christ, the second Man; the soulish denotes Adam, the first man (v. 47). According to human understanding, tradition, and practice, we should follow the one who is first, not the one who is

second. This was the reason that Paul deliberately says in this verse that the soulish and not the spiritual is the first. The spiritual is the second. If we take the way of the Bible, we should follow the second and not the first. For example, should you follow Cain or Abel? We certainly should not follow Cain, the first; we should follow Abel, the second. Furthermore, at the time of the Passover, it was the firstborn who were slain. This indicates that God’s judgment is upon the firstborn. The same principle applies to the first creation and the new creation. God does not want what is first; He wants what is second.

In verse 47 -- Out of the earth denotes the first man Adam’s origin, and earthy denotes his nature. Christ is not only the last Adam, but also the second Man. The first Adam is the beginning of mankind; the last Adam is the ending. As the first man, Adam is the head of the old creation, representing it in creation. As the second Man, Christ is the Head of the new creation, representing it in resurrection. In the entire universe there are these two men: the first man Adam, including all his descendants, and the second Man, Christ, comprising all His believers. We believers were included in the first man by birth and became part of the second Man by regeneration. Our believing has transferred us out of the first man into the second. As a part of the first man, our origin is the earth and our nature is earthy. As part of the second Man, our origin is God and our nature is heavenly. Out of heaven denotes both the second Man Christ’s divine origin and His heavenly nature.

Verse 48 says, “As is the earthy, such also are they that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” The earthy refers to the first man Adam, who is earthy. “They that are earthy” denote all of Adam’s descendants, who, like Adam, are earthy. “The heavenly” denotes the second Man Christ, who is heavenly. Likewise, “they also that are heavenly” denote all the believers in Christ, who, like Christ, are also heavenly. Once we were earthy, but now we are heavenly.

In verse 49 -- As a part of Adam, we have borne the earthy man's image through birth. As a part of Christ, we shall bear the heavenly Man's image in resurrection. This indicates that just as we have been born in Adam as the earthy man, so we shall also be resurrected in Christ as the heavenly Man. Such a resurrection is our destiny. It is as sure as our birth and should never be questioned.

Today we are bearing two images, the image of the earthy and the image of the heavenly. We may take as an illustration of our situation a caterpillar that is in the process of becoming a beautiful butterfly. Sometimes the caterpillar in us can be seen; at other times the butterfly is somewhat evident. Eventually, by resurrection, we shall fully emerge from the cocoon as butterflies. No longer shall we be ugly caterpillars—we shall be beautiful butterflies bearing Christ's image. According to Philippians 3:21, the body of our humiliation will be transfigured into a body of glory and be like Christ's body. This will take place by resurrection and in resurrection.

In verse 50 Paul says that corruption does not inherit incorruption. The old creation is not only corrupt; it is corruption. The kingdom of God, however, is incorruption. Corruption cannot inherit this incorruption.

Verse 51 says, “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” The mystery here refers to the transfiguration, including resurrection, of our corruptible body into an incorruptible one (Phil. 3:21). This is mysterious and beyond human understanding.

The word sleep in verse 51 means die (1 Cor. 11:30; John 11:11-13; 1 Thes. 4:13-16). The word changed means transfigured from corruption, dishonor, and

weakness to incorruption, glory, and power (vv. 42-43); the body of our humiliation conformed to the body of Christ’s glory.

Verse 52 says, “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” The last trumpet is the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15), a trumpet of God (1 Thes. 4:16). This means that the last trumpet here is the same as the seventh trumpet in the book of Revelation. Certainly after the seven trumpets in Revelation there will not be any more trumpets. Therefore, it is correct to say that the seventh trumpet in Revelation is the last trumpet in verse 52.

At the last trumpet, the dead in Christ, the believers who have died, will be raised incorruptible (1 Thes. 4:16). We believers who are living at the time of the Lord’s return will be changed. The dead saints will be resurrected first; then the living ones will be changed, transfigured, in rapture (1 Thes. 4:15-17). In verse 53 Paul continues, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” The phrase “this corruptible” refers to our corruptible and mortal body, which must put on incorruption and immortality either through resurrection, in the case of the saints who have died, or through transfiguration, in the case of the living ones. Then this mortal body will put on immortality. No matter how healthy and strong we may be today, our body is corruptible and mortal. But in resurrection this body will put on something which the Bible speaks of as incorruption and immortality.

In verse 54 Paul goes on to say, “And when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word which is written, Death has been swallowed up in victory.” The word “when” refers to the time that our corrupted and mortal body will be resurrected or transfigured from corruption and death into glory and life. Then death will be swallowed up in the victory of resurrection life. This is the consummation of the

resurrection we share in God’s economy through redemption and salvation in Christ. This resurrection begins with the making alive of our dead spirit and is completed with the transfiguration of our corruptible body. In between is the process of the metabolic transformation of our fallen soul by the life-giving Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18), who is the reality of resurrection.

Literally, “in victory” is “into victory.” Death means defeat to man. Through Christ’s salvation in the resurrection life, it will be swallowed up into victory to us, the beneficiaries of Christ’s resurrection life. In this verse victory is a synonym of resurrection. Resurrection is the victory of life over death.

In verse 55 Paul asks, “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” This is the apostle’s triumphant exclamation concerning the victory of resurrection life over death.

Verse 56 -- Death is of the Devil (Heb. 2:14), and it stings us to death with sin (Rom. 5:12). In God’s redemption, Christ was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) in order to condemn sin through His death (Rom. 8:3), thus abolishing the sting of death. Then, through His resurrection, death is swallowed up by the resurrection life.

Sin brings curse and condemnation to us by the law, both in our conscience and before God (Rom. 4:15; 5:13, 20; 7:7-8). Hence, the law becomes the power of sin to kill us (Rom. 7:10-11). Since Christ’s death has fulfilled the requirements of the law upon us (1 Pet. 3:18; 2:24), the power of sin is annulled. Thus the death of Christ has condemned sin and annulled the law, and His resurrection has swallowed up death. Therefore, we must give thanks to God, who gives us such victory over sin and death through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 57).

In verse 57 -- This victory over sin and death by Christ's death and resurrection should not be just an accomplished fact for our acceptance. It must become our daily experience in life by the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit, who is one with our spirit (6:17). Hence, we should live by and walk according to this mingled spirit. Thus, thanks will be continuously given to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is resurrection power that frees us from the law of sin, the power of sin. And in the future it will be resurrection that will swallow up death.

In verse 58 To question the truth of resurrection is to be shaken. To be assured and remain in the reality of resurrection is to stand fast, to be immovable. This truth is the motive for the work of the Lord.

I Cor. 15 - HOMEWORK

What does the resurrection mean to you personally?

Why is it important?

Why is it in God’s plan to include the resurrection for us?

What effect does grace have on Paul? What effect does grace have on you?

v-10

How real is the resurrection to you? How do you prove you live in it?

Read and meditate over the following verses:

Romans 8:2

1 Thes. 4:13-16

Col. 1:27

Dan. 12:13

Rev. 20:4, 6

Luke 14:14

I CORINTHIANS 16

- Donna Kakavec

Resources – Use Them for the Kingdom!

Paul spent most of his first letter to the Corinthians addressing issues within the church and reminding them of basic doctrine. His tone changes toward the end of the book as he pens his final chapters. Chapter 16 is Paul’s reminder of the rich resources the body of Christ has: Money/Possessions, Opportunities/Service and People – all from the hand of God and to be used for the furtherance of the kingdom of God.

1. Resource: Money/Possessions – I Corinthians 16:1-4

An important ministry of Paul and of the churches was to collect a relief offering for the poor believers in Jerusalem. Many believers visited Jerusalem at Pentecost when they heard the Word and were saved. Because they were strangers in this community, they were without employment and the church had the responsibility to care for them. There had been a famine (Acts 11:27-30), and there were many Christian widows (Acts 6:1-6). The needs were great.

Paul had promised to remember the poor at the Jerusalem Conference several years before (Galatians 2:9-10), and he felt the Gentiles owed material help to the Jews in return for the spiritual blessings the Jews had given Gentile believers (Romans 15:25-27). What a way to unite Gentile and Jewish believers – sharing in their time of need!

“Even though this was a special missionary offering, from Paul’s instructions we may learn some basic principles that relate to Christian stewardship.

- ***Giving is an act of worship. Each member was to come to the Lord’s day gathering prepared to give his share for that week . . . Giving should be an act of worship to the resurrected and ascended Savior.” Phil 4:18***

- ***Giving should be systematic. Each believer was to set aside his offering at home and then bring it to the assembly on the first day . . . Paul wanted the contribution to be ready when he arrived in Corinth.***
- ***Giving was to be personal and individual. Paul expected each member to share in the offering, the rich and the poor alike. Anyone who had an income was privileged to share and to help those in need.***
- ***Giving is to be proportionate. Believers who have more should give more. As the Lord gives us more, we should plan to give more.***
- ***Money is to be handled honestly. The various churches involved in this special offering appointed delegates to help Paul manage it and take it safely to Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:16-24).***

Paul made it clear in 2 Corinthians 8-9 that Christian giving is a grace, the outflow of the grace of God in our lives and not the result of promotion or pressure. An open heart cannot maintain a closed hand. If we appreciate the grace of God extended to us, we will want to express that grace by sharing with others. Warren Wiersbe, THE BIBLE EXPOSITION COMMENTARY, Vol 1

2. Resource: Opportunities/Service – I Corinthians 16:5-9

Ephesians 5:15-16 says, “Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” Paul certainly understood this principal and wanted to be careful with his use of time and opportunity as he planned his journeys throughout the region. He informed the believers at the church of Corinth of his plans for a visit, but he used tentative words with the understanding that “if God wills.” See James 4:13-17. Due to various circumstances, Paul had to revise his plan to visit the church at Corinth two more times. He ended up not spending as much time at Corinth as he had hoped or as they had expected.

As Christians, we can learn several principles from Paul’s revision of plans to see the believers in Corinth:

- a. God gives each believer the resources of prayer and wisdom to determine His will in a situation (Prov 3:5-6). God’s gift of a mind enables a believer to think, study and discern His will for a situation. We must rely upon His Word and His Spirit as we are seeking wisdom for a decision.
- b. Decisions are subject to change based on the will of God. We must guard against being fearful that we’ll make the wrong decision or impulsively rushing ahead when making decisions.

“After we have done all we can to determine the leading of the Lord, we must decide and act, and leave the rest to the Lord.” Warren Wiersbe, THE BIBLE EXPOSITION COMMENTARY, Vol. 1.

The believer must constantly ask: What opportunities does God have for me today? Each new day brings new opportunities for every believer to respond to God’s leading and to impact the kingdom for eternity’s sake.

3. Resource: People – I Corinthians 16:10-24

Paul closed out his first letter to the Corinthians by naming several people who were part of his life and ministry. It was quite a tapestry of people who impacted the kingdom of God.

- a. Timothy – vv 10-11
Timothy, along with Titus, was one of Paul’s special assistants who was usually sent to the most difficult places. He was brought up in a godly home, but Paul led him to Christ and referred to him as “my own son in the faith” (2 Tim 1:5; 1 Tim 1:2). Paul instructed the Corinthians to show great encouragement to Timothy and to send him along in peace.
- b. Apollos – vv 12-14
He was an eloquent Jew who had come to a full knowledge of the gospel through Priscilla and Aquilla. He was a great leader at Corinth, and many in the church felt a special attachment to him. Paul encouraged Apollos to return to Corinth for further ministry, but Apollos did not feel he should go. Paul instructed the Corinthians to “Watch! Be Alert! Be Vigilant! for the enemy is always at hand. Stand firm in your faith. Do all things in love.”
- c. Stephanas and his household – vv 15-18
These were the first believers in Achaia, and Paul baptized them himself. They were important leaders in the church, and they “devoted themselves” to Christ’s service. When they saw a need, they went to work to meet the need – they didn’t wait to be asked. They labored with Paul – “toiled to the point of exhaustion.” Fortunatus and Achaicus were also mentioned, and they, too, were messengers sent by Paul who expressed their love for the church and compensated for Paul’s absence. They were known to refresh Paul’s spirit and to bring blessing.
- d. Aquila and Priscilla – vv 19-20
These were a dedicated husband and wife team whose lives and ministry to the church dove-tailed with Paul’s. They were devoted leaders and witnesses. When Paul moved from Corinth to Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla packed up and moved their business with him and assisted him in

founding the church (Acts 18). This couple even risked their lives to help save Paul (Acts 19:29-30; 20:19). They moved many times to assist Paul and other leaders in the churches that were being founded and developed.

4. Paul’s Closing – vv 21-24

Paul had been serious, stern and straight-forward with the Corinth believers in his first letter to them as he addressed the seriousness of divisions in the church and their immaturity as believers. He closed, however, with a declaration of his love and assurance of his continued concern for them because of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This chapter reminds us of the powerful resources in the Word and through the Spirit we have as believers. As we rely on principles from the Word and direction from the Spirit, we can impact the kingdom of God with our money/possessions, opportunities of service, and relationships with other people.

APPLICATION:

1. Money/Possessions: Are you using your money/possessions to further the kingdom of God? Are you meeting the needs of others less fortunate than you?
2. Opportunities: Are you aware of the many opportunities that come your way each day to impact the kingdom for God? What are you doing with your time? Where are you going each day? Do you hear the Spirit’s prompting?
3. People: Who are the people that God has placed in your life? Do you honor them as spiritual leaders in your life? Do you pray for them? Do you encourage them? Do you recognize those in your life who are not godly and who are not aiding you in your spiritual walk?

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