

- I) V17-22 INTRO: Now in giving these instructions **I do not praise** you since you Paul introduced his thoughts in V2 by giving them a **word of praise**
He praised them for remembering him and keeping the teachings he gave them
AS WE ENTER TO THIS SECTION
- II) As their spiritual father, he finds it necessary to bring a word of rebuke to them
Out of **love for them**, he found it necessary to bring a word of correction
- III) As their spiritual father and teacher, they would be wise to listen to him
Pr 12:1 Whoever **loves instruction** loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid (dull hearted; unreceptive).
- IV) V17 you come together not for the better **but for the worse**
He now has to approach what is happening in the **church meetings**
He gives them **a firm order** because their meetings do **more harm** than good
DEVELOP
- V) In Acts, Luke gives us the marks of the early church, its power and influence
We see this as the blueprint for the church
Ac 2:42-47 They devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching** and to **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and to **prayer**. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers **were together** and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to **meet together** in the temple courts. They **broke bread** in their homes and **ate together** with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord **added to their number** daily those who were being saved.
IMPORTANT
- VI) The early church was more than **an organization** made up of strangers
The people did not gather for **informative** and **entertaining** God-talks
- VII) They gathered together because they **desired God** and **loved one another**
- VIII) This was the result of a **single shared experience**: they all were **born again**
They had received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and had been saved
It was not just that they were in the **same location**, but were **in** the Body of Christ
- IX) They understood that they were **a community** of believers
They understood the need for **fellowship** with other believers in Jesus

- I) They were a **community of faith** and recognized a need for one another
They broke bread together, evidencing what made them a new community
- II) Ac 2:46 **they met daily** in the temple and breaking bread from **house to house**
Their experience in Jesus was not sporadic, but daily
With one heart their faith moved them to **worship Jesus** and **fellowship**
- III) Their entire lives revolved around serving and following Jesus
This became their daily way of life, their master passion
TESTIMONY
- IV) This was my earliest Christian experience
We would go to church, worship, get taught and then continue in a home
- V) This was my new life and it increased my walk with God (godly influences)
Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider one another in order to **stir up love** and **good works**, not forsaking **the assembling of ourselves together**, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
- VI) The early church spent time worshipping in the temple and from **house to house**
Their worship in their homes was the fruit of their fellowship in the Temple
The instruction **from the word** fostered a love that spilled out to **daily fellowship**
- VII) Luke tells us that they ate their food with **gladness** and **simplicity** of heart
They would enjoy **Agape feasts** together, and it fostered love and friendship
- VIII) This is one of the reasons why we enjoy having breakfasts and conferences
When we gather over a meal, we have a chance to get to know one another
- IX) Before I was saved I would visit a friend's home and saw how treated one another
I saw them sharing meals, praying, and fellowshiping around the table
It impressed me that they prayed before eating, like they actually knew God
- X) This was not invented in the **Jesus Movement**, it was from the beginning
The believers would meet together for what was called a love feast
- XI) The breaking of bread (sharing a meal) was a common practice in Israel
Passover, sabbath meals, wedding meals, feast days, community meals

I) The early church had agape feasts

According to various historians, the Early Church met in homes for a common meal. After the meal (or sometimes before), the baptized Christians would withdraw from the rest of the meal's attendees to celebrate the Lord's Supper in private.

PAUL'S CONCERN

II) The church had allowed **the table of the Lord** to be abused

The solemn remembrance of what Jesus did was lost in the party atmosphere
Paul now has to correct what has begun to occur

III) V17 In giving these instructions I do not praise you since you come together not
When you are together you are not edified because **there is leaven in your midst**

IV) Gathering in fellowship is intended to strengthen your faith, not pull you down
THIS IS A KEY

V) Fellowship with believers ought to result in improved Christian lives
Genuine fellowship results in building your walk with Jesus, not the opposite

VI) We need to remember that the church is not simply a building
In fact the church is the family of God

VII) As God's family we are to encourage one another in our walks with Jesus
Fellowship is to be an encouragement for all of us to live for the Lord

VIII) Instead of becoming worse when fellowshipping, we should be becoming better
We should be growing in Spiritual maturity, encouraging one another in Jesus
1 Co 10:24 No one should seek his own good, but **the good of others**
Ro 15:2 Each of us should please his neighbor **for his good**, to build him up

REMEMBER

IX) We are the Christian community, living out our faith **together**

Jn 15:17 This is my command: Love **each other**.

Ro 12:10 Be **devoted to one another** in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Ro 15:7 **Accept one another**, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Gal 5:13 **Serve one another** in love

Col 3:13 **Bear with each other** and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

I) Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and **admonish** (**warn; caution; reprove**) **one another** with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

1 Th 5:11 Therefore **encourage one another** and **build each other up**, just as in fact you are doing

THIS IS CALLED BODY LIFE

II) It is not automatic, but is something to be zealously pursued
In Corinth, in spite of so much good division and disunity had arisen

III) Their disunity was so evident it finally was brought to Paul's attention

IV) V18 When you come together as a church I hear that **there are divisions**
Paul had been told there were divisions in the church

1 Co 1:11 Some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are **quarrels among you**.

V) The divisions he first spoke of were divisions over **favorite teachers**
These divisions are not over personalities, but over **economic standing**

VI) We will see that some had food in abundance, while others had little, or none

VII) V18 I hear that there are divisions among you and **in part** I believe it
Without being there, it was hard to completely substantiate the accusation
This is why he **in part** believes it

VIII) He partially believes but is leaving himself open to the possibility of exaggeration
He needs to hear a more complete testimony
Pr 18:17 The first one to plead his cause seems right Until his neighbor comes and examines him

IX) V19 For there must also be **factions among you** that those who are approved may
He accepts the fact that there will always be differences, even among believers

THE FACT IS

X) Bad behavior often helps manifest what is good through simple contrast

APPLICATION

XI) In every fellowship God has chosen vessels that serve to manifest His goodness
A good example can be seen in 1 Co 16:15-18

- I) Factions are called heresies, which speaks of differences that cause disunity
It speaks of a group of men following their own teachings
They are dangerous if left unchallenged, they cause great trouble
- II) These are false opinions which lead to divisions
- III) Differing understandings are often **unavoidable**
In peripheral areas of doctrine, there is room for agreeable disagreement
Infant Vs adult baptism, Spiritual gifts, the timing of the rapture, the number of sacraments
- IV) **Division** is another thing because division is a destructive work **of the flesh**
Gal 5:19-21 The works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- V) **Division** can result from things that do not even have anything to do with doctrine
Perceived mistreatment
Pr 29:22 An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression
Pride
3 Jn 9-10 I wrote to the church, but **Diotrephes**, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.
Gossip
Pr 26:20 Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.
- VI) These are all bad, but the worst division occurs over doctrinal differences
Sometimes the differences are over biblical error
Ro 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them
- VII) In Corinth the unity of the Church was under assault
Opinions that destroy the unity of the Church needed to be dealt with
Eph 4:3 Make every effort to **keep the unity of the Spirit** through the bond of peace

- I) If someone insists on continuing sowing division, they are to be dealt with
Titus 3:10-11 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time.
After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.
- II) V20-22 Therefore when you come together in one place it is not to eat the Lord's
PAUL ADDRESSES THE PROBLEM
- III) The way you are gathering at the Agape Feast is counter to God's intent for unity
The agape feast and communion were to be a place for the love of God to shine
- IV) Paul is outraged
Instead of loving unity, you have made it into a selfish, even drunken, gathering
- V) This reminds me of when Jesus cleansed the temple
Mk 11:15-17 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"
AGAIN
- VI) In the early Church, the Agape feast and communion were held together
In Corinth, disruptive members had polluted the celebration: They ate only their own food that they had brought, and would not let the poor have any, nor would they eat anything the poor had brought
- VII) Some even were getting drunk
For some, the Lord's supper has become nothing more than a drunken party
They are treating communion like a pagan feast, where drinking is permitted
- VIII) The spirit of love was **conspicuous** only **by its absence**
PAUL'S THOUGHT
- IX) If you want to act in a carnal disruptive fashion, could you not stay home to do it?
Why pollute the Church, and shame your poorer brothers?
- X) 1 Co 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons!