

# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 1 Introduction, 1:1-9

### Historical Background

1. Author: Paul
2. Date / occasion: most likely when Paul was on his third missionary journey and ministering at Ephesus between 54-56AD
3. Purpose:
  - a. A call to unity in the spirit as a church. The Corinthian church was severely divided into sectarian cliques that glorified man and not God.
  - b. A call to moral purity among all members of the church, and discipline for those who were sinning worse than unbelievers.
  - c. A response to specific questions the church had written to Paul for clarification on.
4. Background of the church at Corinth
  - a. The capital city of Achaia, located on the southern tip of Greece
  - b. A significant amount of commercial traffic by land or sea came through Corinth
  - c. A populous city of about 500,000 people with a multicultural demographic: Greeks, Latins, Jews, Egyptians, Syrians and Asiatics.
  - d. Corinth was passionate about their sporting events, and they held the Isthmian Games, second only to the Olympics in the first century Roman empire.
  - e. The city of Corinth was morally corrupt with citizens and travelers regularly engaging in partying, drunkenness, sexual immorality. To “Corinthianize” was to engage in the lowest forms of sin and debauchery.
  - f. The local temple to Aphrodite, the goddess of love, housed 1,000 prostitutes.
  - g. Paul journeyed to Corinth initially after being expelled from Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, and may have been alone and at a low point when he entered the synagogue to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was forced out of the synagogue also but moved his ministry next door to a house owned by Justice.
  - h. Aquila and Priscilla joined with Paul at Corinth and become co-laborers with him.
  - i. Paul was at Corinth for eighteen months and he had a significant relationship with the Corinthian church as a result.
5. History of Paul’s contact with Corinth
  - a. Paul founded the church at Corinth
  - b. Paul wrote a letter (5:9) that is perhaps lost and not Scripture (or is included in 2 Corinthians)
  - c. Paul receives disturbing news of division and moral corruption within the church from the household of Chloe (1:11), and he has received a letter from another in Corinth asking for a response (7:1)
  - d. Paul responds to the above by writing 1 Corinthians

- e. Paul receives word that Corinth is in decline and he hurries to visit the church, and is disappointed in what he finds there (2 Cor. 12;14, 1:15)
- f. Paul writes his severe letter and sends it to Corinth by Titus (2 Cor. 2:4, 7:8).
- g. Paul is anxious to hear back on how his letter was received and he goes out to meet Titus in Macedonia. This seems to be when Paul writes 2 Corinthians.
- h. Pau makes his final visit to the church (Acts 20:1-4)

### Outline of 1 Corinthians

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| 1. Greeting and reminder of the facts            | 1:1-9      |
| 2. Responses to Chloe's letter on divisions      | 1:10-4:21  |
| 3. Incest and immorality occurring in the church | 5:1-6:20   |
| 4. Response to the questions on marriage         | 7:1-40     |
| 5. Response to Christian liberties and rights    | 8:1-11:1   |
| 6. Response to questions on public worship       | 11:2-34    |
| 7. Response to questions on Spiritual gifts      | 12:1-14:40 |
| 8. Response to questions on the resurrection     | 15:1-58    |
| 9. Final thoughts and concerns for the church    | 16:1-24    |

## Paul's Greeting (1:1-3)

1. Paul was known by the church at Corinth. He established the church there and he was writing a letter back to them at their request.
2. He was called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ
  - a. Through the will of God, Paul did not request to be called but rather it was God who initiated the call upon Paul.
  - b. Because Paul was altogether unlike the other apostles, Paul was frequently challenged by critics on his calling and his apostleship.
  - c. Many of Paul's letters offer a defense of his calling as an apostle, but his defense is more direct and thorough to the Corinthians than in his other epistles.
  - d. Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ. His doctrines and his authority to establish the proper functions of the church descend only from God. This is fact is vital to the message of the letter as a whole.
  - e. In terms of his salvation status, Paul considers himself equal to all other believers. In terms of his apostleship and his calling, Paul has been given a greater responsibility and burden than the believers in the churches he established, even if he is least among all the apostles.
  - f. Paul will not accept any challenges from men concerning his authority and calling.
3. Sosthenes our brother.
  - a. A fellow laborer in Christ with Paul, equal in relationship to Christ
  - b. Possibly the one who carried the letter from Corinth to Paul at Ephesus
  - c. Possibly the ruler of the synagogue who was beaten in Acts 18:12-17.
4. To the church of God which is at Corinth
  - a. First and foremost, this was a church of God.
  - b. As bad and as sinful as the Corinthian church had become, God had not disavowed them individually or as a called-out assembly of believers.
  - c. The church was located in Corinth, but they were a connected part of the church of God around the world. What happened in the church at Corinth impacted the church everywhere.
5. To those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints
  - a. Unlike Paul's pastoral epistles, this letter was written to every believer in Corinth
  - b. Sanctified means "set apart." Perhaps more than in any other city, the Corinthian church needed to demonstrate that they were set apart from their unsaved neighbors.
  - c. Sanctification is both a gift and a process.
    - i. Accepting Christ by faith means we are declared sanctified by God.
    - ii. Believers are also called to actively be sanctified as a process. That is to choose daily to live the life of Christlikeness where we reject sin and walk with God.

- iii. The final act for believers is when we will be sanctified after this mortal life has ceased and we meet God face to face.
- 6. Saints also set apart as holy, pure, and morally blameless. The fact that Paul is calling them saints, despite their multitude of problems and corruptions, means that God loves them as believers even though He is calling them to cease and desist from their sinful behaviors.
  - a. With all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.
  - b. Being sanctified and set apart means from the world, not from the broader church of God in Christ.
  - c. Other believers and other churches all call upon the same savior and Lord.
  - d. It should have been comforting to know that even though the Corinthian church was marred with sin and corruption, they were still positionally in the body of Christ.
- 7. Grace to you and peace from God our father
  - a. Grace, God's unmerited favor.
  - b. Grace always proceeds either peace or truth (John 1:14, 17; Rom. 1:7).
  - c. Grace is a central theme in all of Paul's letters.
    - i. Paul uses grace as his salutation
    - ii. He also uses grace as a benediction
    - iii. No other New Testament writer focuses on the doctrine of grace more than Paul.
  - d. The meaning of grace is that everything we receive from God is entirely unmerited. He owes us nothing, but by His grace He has given us everything according to His own pleasure and goodness:
    - i. Faith
    - ii. Salvation
    - iii. Forgiveness of sins
    - iv. Eternal life in His kingdom
    - v. Spiritual gifts
    - vi. Countless blessings in this life and in the one to come
  - e. Peace with God

- i. Contrary to many misperceptions, God desires to be at peace with us.
  - ii. Lack of peace results from our sinful conduct that attempts to push God away rather than allowing Him to draw us closer
  - iii. Peace, faith and trust all combine to demonstrate our view of God. The less trust and faith we have in the goodness and purposes of God, the less peace we will have in our own lives and in our relationship with God.
  - iv. The question is not, will God make a way for peace, but rather will believers accept His offer of peace, or will we reject it?
  - v. Paul, writing from a Roman prison cesspool, stated that he was content and at peace in Christ, refusing to focus on his external struggles in this life (Phil. 4:11).
- f. The Lord Jesus Christ
- i. The church must place its focus exclusively on Christ and His will.
  - ii. In unity with the Father, Jesus Christ is offering grace and peace to His church.
  - iii. Jesus has specifically commissioned Paul to write the words of this letter.
  - iv. The faithful at Corinth are to rejoice that the Lord has not abandoned or rejected the Corinthian church for their sinful conduct. Instead, the Lord intends to correct them in love and call them back to a place of continuing their sanctification process.

## Thanking God for Spiritual Gifts at Corinth

- g. Thanking God for His grace given to the Corinthian church
- i. Acknowledging again the reality of God's grace to the church
  - ii. Jesus Christ is specifically credited with offering them His grace
  - iii. The evidence of His grace is manifested in the gifts given to them:
    1. Enriched – made spiritually wealthy; uniquely furnished.
    2. All utterance/speech (logos) – speaking with divine words and power.
    3. All knowledge – understanding of divine truths.
    4. The gifts in operation in Corinth were intended as proof that God had confirmed and testified of their saving faith in Christ.
    5. Perhaps exclusive to Corinth at the time, they came short in no spiritual gift. All the gifts may have been present and operating (perhaps when Paul was last there).
    6. They were even eagerly waiting for the revelation (appearing/unveiling) of the Lord Jesus Christ. Other churches like Thessalonica were deeply confused about Christ's coming.
    7. Paul was confident, despite their shortcomings in holiness, that the Lord would confirm them as being blameless and fully eligible for eternal life when the Day of the Lord comes. This confidence comes from Paul's understanding of salvation by faith, through grace, and not of works that would be merited to them (Eph. 2:8-9).

- iv. God is faithful at all times.
  - 1. God called the Corinthians and He would remain faithful in spite of their sinful conduct (though He certainly does not approve of it and also calls them to repent and have a change of direction).
  - 2. The corrupt Corinthian church has been called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Lord.
  
- h. Paul's acknowledgement of the Spiritual gifts operating at Corinth helps to remind them that they are in fact a church of God (1:1)
  - i. By grace they were saved.
  - ii. By grace they were added to the greater body of Christ.
  - iii. By grace they were enriched with every Spiritual gift.
  - iv. By grace they understood sound doctrine.
  - v. By grace they were eagerly expecting Christ's return.
  
- i. Looking forward.
  - i. From the foundation of the truth of God's grace, Paul next addresses the corruptions that the church must address.
  - ii. Paul pleads with his brethren to hear the Lord speaking through him.
  - iii. He also warns them to purge out those who are grotesquely sinning in the church for the health of the church and to teach the sinners that there are consequences for their behaviors.
  - iv. Warnings or threats?
    - 1. Paul does not overtly threaten the Corinthians that their sins will separate them from God's love and grace.
    - 2. His focus is on correcting and restoring the church back to health.
    - 3. Paul's words are for those who need correction, not a return to salvation.
    - 4. While certainly worldly and sinful, the Corinthians have shown no evidence of having abandoned their faith in Jesus Christ.
    - 5. Nevertheless, there are three discrete warnings that the reader should observe:
      - a. God will destroy defiled temples that are unholy (3:16-17).
      - b. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God (6:9-10)
      - c. Take heed of your conduct lest you fall (10:6-12)

# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 2 (1:10-2:16)

### **Sin #1: Divisions in the Church (sectarianism) 1:10-18**

1. Paul pleads with his brethren in Corinth (1:10):
  - a. Paul relates to the church members as equals in their position with Christ with him.
  - b. By addressing them as brethren, Paul gives assurance that they are still in Christ.
  - c. Paul does not plea in his own name, but in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He does not demand submission to himself but appeals in the name of the Lord.
  - d. Jesus Christ is Lord. The church at Corinth should not just call Him Lord but must obey Him as Lord.
  - e. Paul's plea for correction:
    - i. Speak the same things; be in unity of speech.
    - ii. Take action to ensure there are no divisions in the church.
    - iii. Choose to be perfectly joined together to achieve unity of mind and judgment.
2. Reports from Cloe's household (1:11-13):
  - a. Contentions (conflict, rivalry, strife, discord).
  - b. Everyone has formed into at least three competing sects.
    - i. Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles, founder of the Corinthian church.
    - ii. Apollos: an eloquent orator and respected teacher of biblical truth.
    - iii. Cephas (Peter): An original disciple and close companion of Jesus. He was the first spokesman for Christ following His ascension. The divisions in Corinth were serious and may have led to a permanent split of the body.

### **Paul's Defense #1: Limited Baptisms 1:10-11**

1. Paul did not create the divisions by his own words or actions (1:14-18):
  - a. In hindsight, Paul is thankful that God called him to only baptize a few believers:
    - a. Crispus and Gaius
    - b. Household of Stephanas
  - b. Paul certainly did not baptize in his own name or seek a following for himself.
2. Paul was called on by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel and appoint others to baptize believers in the name of Jesus Christ:
  - a. Paul's [initial] preaching was not in the wisdom of words, but in the simple truths that Jesus died for our sins (15:1-4) and is Lord of all.
  - b. The cross (penal substitutionary atonement) was at the heart of Paul's message to unbelievers (this stands in direct contrast to the "seeker-sensitive" and "prosperity gospel" churches of our day).
    - i. The message of the cross is the only God-honoring separation or division the church should be focused on or tolerate.
    - ii. The cross is foolishness (nonsense) to those who are perishing.
    - iii. It is the power of God for salvation to those who are being saved.

## **Paul's Defense #2: He limited his teaching to God's Wisdom (1:19-2:16)**

1. God's wisdom is supreme; man's independent wisdom is folly by comparison (1:19-25).
  - a. Paul quotes Isaiah 29:14 to show that God has promised to destroy man's false wisdom and to bring to nothing faulty understanding of divine truth.
  - b. The cross shows how the foolish the very best of man's wisdom is to discern and understand theology or divine truths.
    - i. Where is the wise person who understood the prophecies detailing that God's Suffering Servant would die as a sacrifice for mankind's sins? There isn't one.
    - ii. Where is the wisdom of the scribes, caretakers of the very words Jesus perfectly fulfilled by going to the cross? The scribes' wisdom failed spectacularly in 32AD.
    - iii. Where is the disputer of this age? Why are they still denying truth by rejecting the cross, the empty tomb, and the power of the gospel to save from sins?
    - iv. God has made the wisdom of the world (mankind's collective wisdom and worldviews) completely foolish in light of the cross.
  - c. God is pleased to save the souls who will believe in His wisdom (the cross and the gospel) but they must utterly reject the wisdom of the world that denies Christ.
    - i. Accepting Christ as Lord means we also accept His wisdom (He has proven to be perfectly reliable in ways that are beyond our comprehension).
    - ii. The Jews, the ones specifically entrusted to protect and preserve God's Word, requested a sign rather than accepting and understanding the Word of God committed to them for centuries.
    - iii. The Greeks seek after wisdom in a fruitless effort because they exalt the wisdom of man and ignore the wisdom of God. The cross was not sophisticated enough for the self-proclaimed elite intellects of the world.
  - d. By contrast, followers of Christ believe and preach the "simple" message of Christ crucified (penal substitutionary atonement) as true wisdom that leads to salvation for all who believe.
    - i. Christ crucified is a stumbling block to the Jews who will not let go of the false belief that they are saved by their bloodline descendants of Abraham.
    - ii. Christ crucified is foolishness to Greeks. They prefer to have long philosophical debates about how the world works and what divine influences may be operating in the invisible world. Accepting the "simple" truth of God Himself becoming a man and dying for our sins is foolishness to them.
  - e. But those who are called and respond to the message will readily accept the message of the cross because it perfectly reveals the power and the wisdom of God. God's calling and offer of salvation is not based on race, nationality, economic status, or levels of education and intelligence. Rather it goes out to all who will respond to His call to repentance of sin and to accept Jesus Christ as Lord (Acts 2:38).
2. The evidence is clear; God does not conform to the world's way of thinking:
  - a. Look around the church at Corinth (or anywhere else) and see for yourself



- i. Not many wise according to the flesh (some, but not many).
      - ii. Not many mighty or those with powerful positions and influence (some, but not many).
      - iii. Not many noble who hold status because of family relations/bloodlines (some, but not many).
    - b. Note: the phrase “*are called*” in 1:26 is in italics indicating that this is not in the Greek text. In other words, not many of these groups are represented in the church, not that God only calls a few of them to salvation.
    - c. God has not cherry-picked the most respected and most prominent people from every corner of the world to bring His message of salvation. That might have been man’s approach, but God often selects the most unlikely people to lead under His authority (Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, David, Daniel, fishermen and tax collectors, and Paul the persecutor of the early church).
      - i. God chose the foolish (in the eyes of the world) to put their wisdom to shame
      - ii. God chose the weak/powerless to shame the mighty/powerful
      - iii. God chose the despised to represent who He has given honor
      - iv. God has revealed things that the world cannot see to bring to nothing the things that the world has put their confidence in (Secular Humanism)
      - v. These “foolish” choices were made so that no flesh will dare to bring false glory into His presence. The moment we think we have done something pleasing to God of our own wisdom and power is the moment we fail to acknowledge the true source of all wisdom, power, authority and glory – God Himself.
    - d. It’s all about God, and that’s the greatest news of all!
      - i. Because of God’s wisdom, believers are in Christ Jesus
      - ii. Because of God’s love, believers are in Christ Jesus
      - iii. Because of God’s mercy, believers are in Christ Jesus
      - iv. Because of God’s grace, believers are in Christ Jesus
      - v. Because of God’s sacrifice, believers are in Christ Jesus
      - vi. Do we hear the message? Are we ready to crucify our flesh, that is naturally drawn to the things of this world, and truly make Jesus Lord over every thought, desire, and purpose of our lives? Our life is for Him, not ourselves.
    - e. God is the creator and author of all, and to God goes all the glory:
      - i. All wisdom is from God
      - ii. All righteousness is from God
      - iii. Sanctification (being set apart for the Kingdom of God) is from God
      - iv. Redemption (being saved from the death penalty of sin) is from God
      - v. Therefore, anyone who desires to offer glory must do so only in the Lord
3. Paul is his own example of the above truths (2:1-5)
- a. Paul was not known for the excellence of his speech (speaking, preaching, teaching).
  - b. Paul may have been brilliant, but he did not bring a message that would have impressed a Greek audience that valued deep and weighty ideas out of the mind of man.
  - c. Instead, Paul declared the simple and plain truths about Christ, the cross and the resurrection. He purposely limited his messages to only Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

- d. Paul was not physically strong (perhaps due to suffering much bodily harm in his missionary efforts prior to Corinth). In fact, he says that he came to them in weakness, in fear and in much trembling.
  - e. Paul did not employ the use of persuasion to appeal to human wisdom and intellect. Instead, he demonstrated the power and work of the Holy Spirit to capture the minds and hearts of the Corinthians.
4. Paul is not denouncing the use of godly wisdom and intellectual messages for believers, but that was not how he came witnessed to the carnal Corinthians on his first visit. Paul certainly engaged in deep theological and intellectual writing in this and all other epistles he writes (2:6).
    - a. Declaring the wisdom of God only benefits those who are mature or are maturing in their walk with Christ.
    - b. An unsaved world will not often be persuaded by proclaiming God's wisdom.
    - c. God's wisdom is foreign to an ungodly world
  5. God's wisdom has been present and unchanged from before the beginning of creation (2:7-9)
    - a. God does not overtly display all of His wisdom to the world. He keeps it as a mystery to be discovered by those who are seeking Him.
    - b. None of the ungodly rulers of the age were seeking God and thus they could not discern divine wisdom and the truth about God and Christ.
    - c. If the rulers had known of God's wisdom, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. In His wisdom God used their wickedness and ignorance to accomplish the greatest event in all of history – the crucifixion of Jesus Christ to redeem all those who would trust in Him for eternal life.
    - d. Paul quotes from Isaiah 64:4 (LXX) to indicate that all of this has been planned by God from before the foundation of the world.
  6. God willingly and graciously shares His wisdom with those who trust in Him (2:10-12)
    - a. Wisdom is primarily communicated by the Holy Spirit, who confirms Scripture
    - b. The Spirit searches (references) all the deep truths of God in order to reveal them to believers who are able to receive them. The Holy Spirit knows the condition of our hearts and He will not offer these truths to those who are unwilling to receive them. It's not about intellectual ability; rather it is about receptivity in the heart.
    - c. Example of man
      - i. Only the spirit in a man knows what is in his heart (well, God also knows)
      - ii. No man can possibly know the things God knows, except God Himself as represented by the Holy Spirit, who is also God.
    - d. Therefore, as believers in Jesus Christ, we have the Holy Spirit sent to us so that we might know the blessings that God has freely given to us to know Him in true wisdom.
  7. Believers have the mind of Christ (2:13-16)
    - a. The Holy Spirit is the teacher of God's truths and He desires to impart wisdom.
    - b. Man can repeat what he has learned from the Holy Spirit who has opened up the truth of God's Word, but God's truths and wisdom can never be claimed to have come from the mind of man.
    - c. The natural man, carnal and unsaved, will not receive what the Holy Spirit teaches to believers because the wisdom of the world tells him they are foolish.
    - d. Spiritual Communication Facts:

- i. God's truth can only be discerned spiritually
- ii. Man's spirit is only able to understand God's truth if the Holy Spirit communicates them directly to his spirit.
- iii. The Holy Spirit will only communicate truth to man's spirit if the man has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and God.
- iv. The only exception is the ability of unbeliever's spirit to hear the Holy Spirit calling him to faith in the Son of God.
- v. Upon a profession of faith, the Holy Spirit enters the believer and begins the process of revealing God's truth to the believer in proportion to the amount of time spent in prayer, reading God's Word and hearing God's truth communicated through others who have already matured in their wisdom and can share it with others.

# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 3 (3:1-4:21)

### **Paul's Defense #3: Lack of Christian Maturity in Corinth (3:1-4)**

1. Comparing people groups
  - a. In the previous section, Paul drew a contrast between unbelievers who lacked the capacity to understand God's wisdom in the cross with those who have the Holy Spirit and the mind of Christ.
  - b. In this section, Paul draws a contrast between two kinds of Christians, mature and immature.
2. When Paul ministered at Corinth, he was not able to instruct them with more advanced doctrines beyond the cross and the power of salvation in Jesus' name because of their carnal or worldly way of thinking.
3. He describes this church as being babes in Christ who could only tolerate "milk" as a newborn baby can only take milk and not solid food (Heb. 5:12-14).
4. The solid food of sound biblical doctrines had to be held back by necessity until they had matured in their walk and understanding of Christ. Paul could have taught them, but they were not ready.
5. Unfortunately, the evidence shows that the Corinthians are still carnal in their behaviors and thus they are still immature babes in their faith. Paul then lists the proof of immaturity:
  - a. Envy (negative zeal born out of jealousy)
  - b. Strife (quarreling, wrangling, contending with others over a various of opinion)
  - c. Divisions (disunity, dissention, sedition [treason against those in authority])
  - d. Carnal and behaving no differently than the unsaved
    - i. "I'm of Paul" = being carnal, not spiritual minded
    - ii. "I'm of Apollos" = being carnal, not spiritual minded
6. Note on Christian maturity: believers are called to grow and mature in Christ all their lives.
  - a. This means moving well beyond the entry-level doctrine of salvation by faith
  - b. This means moving beyond knowing Sunday School Bible stories
  - c. This means purposely learning sound doctrine as a mature believer is called to do

### **Paul's Defense #4: God's work vs. man's work (3:5-4:5)**

1. Paul and Apollos (as well as Cephas) are ministers doing the work God has called them to.
  - a. God used them to reveal His gospel message to those who believed at Corinth.
  - b. The Lord gave a gift of faith to believers in Christ, human ministers cannot do that.
2. Seed example (3:5-8)
  - a. Paul planted the foundation seed of the gospel message in service to God
  - b. Apollos watered the seed by ministering to the body after Paul in service to God
  - c. The increase in believers only came by God who gave the increase. He should receive all credit and everyone in the church should be unified in following God only.
  - d. The planter (Paul) and the waterer (Apollos) are fully unified in Christ, and each will be rewarded for fulfilling the ministry God called them to individually.
    - i. Paul will not be rewarded for watering if he was called to plant

- ii. Apollos will not be rewarded for planting if he was called to water.
  - iii. Neither Paul or Apollos will receive a reward for the other's labors as they are both hired servants in the same field God has placed them in.
- 3. Construction example (3:9-17)
  - a. Paul is considered a master builder in God's house, but only by God's grace given to him.
  - b. In his role, Paul was only called to lay the foundation, not to build upon it. God had another servant in mind to build on the foundation.
  - c. All believers are cautioned as to how they build on the foundation (doctrinal truths) that Paul was blessed to be the master builder of. This is admonition to not change the foundational doctrines of the gospel as established by Paul.
  - d. Spiritually, there are only two categories of building materials for God's house
    - i. Category 1: Ordained spiritually to endure into eternity
      - 1. Gold
      - 2. Silver
      - 3. Precious stones
    - ii. Category 2: Carnal and presumptuous, to be burned up by judgment
      - 1. Wood
      - 2. Hay
      - 3. Straw
  - e. The spiritual and the carnal works will be clearly known in the Day of the Lord's judgment
    - i. Spiritual building materials will receive an eternal reward from God
    - ii. Carnal building materials will be consumed by the judgment fire and will prove to have no value to God whatsoever
    - iii. Believers who have their works burned will suffer a loss by way of having nothing to show for their work in the kingdom, but the believer will still be saved by faith.
    - iv. This analogy is consistent with Paul's foundational teaching of being saved by faith and not by works. Works have a purpose, but not for salvation.
  - f. Paul then moves from his analogies of seeds and construction to the reality believers need to properly understand: believers are the new temple of God where the Holy Spirit dwells in the church age. Collectively, believers in the church are a unified temple of God.
    - i. God does not dwell in temples made by human hands (Heb. 9:11), but the Holy Spirit does indwell believers and they become God's temple because of His presence. God desires to dwell in the church, the body of Christ in the community of fellowship.
    - ii. **Warning #1:** if anyone defiles the temple of God, he will be destroyed. This is a warning against letting sin leading to apostasy by denying Christ.
    - iii. **Warning #2:** if anyone destroys or corrupts the church of God, He will destroy them for defiling His temple that affects believer's personal walk with Him.
- 4. **Solution #1:** resolving the problem of sectarianism (3:18-23)
  - a. Do not deceive yourself by thinking you could ever be wiser than God.
  - b. If anyone seems to be wise by following man's wisdom instead of God's, let him determine to return to being a fool by man's definition so that he may then receive God's true wisdom.
  - c. Paul reaffirms that the wisdom of this world has already been declared foolish by God.

- d. Paul then does something I could never do without hearing from the Holy Spirit by quoting Eliphaz, one of Job's three friends.
    - i. God spoke to Eliphaz at the end of Job declaring that His anger was aroused against him for not speaking truth (Job 42:7)
    - ii. Still, somehow Eliphaz managed to offer an accurate quote that God traps the wise in their own craftiness, because of course their wisdom is foolishness with God.
  - e. Paul then reinforces the point by quoting Psalm 94:11
    - i. God knows all human thoughts and He is still not impressed with what He finds
    - ii. All the thoughts of man are futile and foolish compared to God's wisdom.
  - f. Conclusion: let no one boast in men; boast in God alone. He gives us all things and truth.
    - i. Paul, Apollos and Cephas all preach the same truth from God. There should be no divisions.
    - ii. Reject worldly wisdom and accept only God's wisdom to produce church unity.
    - iii. Matters of life and death do not alter God's superior wisdom to the world. Just because someone lives or dies, that does not change truth.
    - iv. The present condition and the future age do not alter God's wisdom. What God has purposed will come to pass and all of man's wisdom will never change that.
    - v. All that God has purposed for His church will be done and He will give us the rewards promised for works done in the Spirit.
    - vi. Our identity and unity of purpose is in Christ, and Christ is submitted to the Father.
5. **Solution #2: Stewards not competitors (4:1-5)**
- a. Let everyone consider Paul, Apollos and Cephas to be stewards (under rowers), not independent leaders in their service.
    - i. First and foremost, they are not in charge of the church. Jesus is in charge and they are His servants. Christ is not divided; they are not divided; the church must divide either.
    - ii. Second, they are all stewards of the mysteries of God that He desires to reveal to His church. These mysteries were established in the Old Testament, but the servants of God are revealing them to the church.
    - iii. Third, God requires stewards to be faithful, and faithful servants are not divided because of the roles assigned by the Master.
  - b. God is Paul's judge
    - i. Paul has no interest in how the church, or any human court, may judge him.
    - ii. Paul refuses to even judge himself in the role he serves. Paul knows of nothing in his role that would require judgment or correction, but he still will not assume the role of his own judge for that would not be a basis for his justification.
    - iii. The Lord is Paul's judge, and no other judgment can overrule His.
  - c. Conclusion: faithfully serve in the role God has placed you in and look only to Him for validation, judgement and purpose in the church.
    - i. His judgment will be revealed when He comes.
    - ii. He will bring to light the hidden works of darkness.
    - iii. He will reveal the true motives of the heart (faithfulness or disobedience).
    - iv. Each servant will receive their due praise from God.

## **Sanctified Sarcasm [Wiersbe] (4:6-13)**

1. Paul will now engage in “transferring” the Corinthians incorrect church doctrine to himself and Apollos as a teaching exercise.
  - a. **Lesson objective 1:** that the church would not think beyond what is written. That is, they should not invent their own doctrines and practices that have not been given by God.
  - b. **Lesson objective 2:** that the believers would not be puffed up or arrogant.
  - c. **Lesson objective 3:** acknowledging God as the One who provides differing gifts, roles, and functions in the church.
    - i. God is the gift giver, and He is sovereign to offer each one a different gift.
    - ii. If a believer has a spiritual gift, then it came from God
    - iii. Believers should not boast about the gift received as if it had anything to do with themselves and not God.
2. You are already full! – satisfied or even gluttonous with their own self-appointed positions as judges.
3. You are already rich! – having all the earthly treasures (but lack spiritual perspective).
4. You reigned as kings without church leadership. If they were ruling themselves well, then Paul would like to join them in their rousing success!
5. Unlike the full and rich Corinthian “royalty,” the apostles are obviously not as blessed as they are.
  - a. They are last in God’s calling
  - b. They are condemned to die for their service to Him
  - c. They are to be made a spectacle to the world (last stadium entertainment where weak humans were brought in to fight with powerful beasts and their defeat would merely entertain a crowd).
6. Obviously the apostles are “fools” because of their suffering, but the Corinthians are so wise on every human measure (sarcasm).
  - a. Apostles: weak; Corinthians: strong!
  - b. Apostles: dishonored; Corinthians: distinguished!
  - c. Apostles: hunger and thirst; Corinthians: full!
  - d. Apostles: poorly clothed beaten and homeless; Corinthians: rich and reigning!
  - e. Apostles: manual labor; Corinthians: life of luxury!
  - f. Apostles: bless when reviled; Corinthians do not endure being reviled!
  - g. Apostles endure persecutions; Corinthians never experience persecution!
  - h. Apostles encourage those who defame them; Corinthians defame others for pleasure!
  - i. Apostles are considered pure filth and offscouring to be cast aside; Corinthians are accepted by the unbelieving world who are not offended by their behaviors.

## **Final instructions to correct the sin of sectarianism: Imitate Paul (4:14-21)**

1. Paul has not written, even in his sarcasm, to shame believers in any way. Rather, he considers the church at Corinth his beloved children and he must warn them of the dangers of this sin because all sin leads people away from God.
2. There may be many leaders and teachers who come and go in the church, but the Gentile church all have one spiritual father (Apostle) – Paul.
3. As their spiritual father, Paul urges (pleads, exhorts) the believers to imitate him.

- a. Paul is not trying to create sectarianism; he is trying to eliminate it.
  - b. Paul is not trying to bring down Apollos or Cephas by having people unite under him.
  - c. Rather, Paul is a perfect example of one who submits only to Christ and he knows that the body of Christ cannot remain divided by having any form of favoritism or human allegiances.
4. It is for this reason that Paul sent Timothy, a faithful and beloved son, to remind the Corinthians how Paul conducts himself as a believer and a leader in the church.
5. Paul is consistent in all of his teachings in all of the churches he founded. Therefore, if they would all only follow his example of following Christ, there would never again be a sectarian problem in the church.
6. Believers should never follow those who are puffed up with pride and spread lies.
7. Lord willing, Paul plans to return to Corinth and reestablish fellowship with them.
  - a. When Paul does come, it will not be in pride or in a self-seeking manner.
  - b. Instead he will come with the same power the Holy Spirit has been working in Paul since the beginning of his ministry, including when he came to Corinth.
  - c. For God's kingdom is not established by the words of any man, but rather God established His kingdom and His church with divine and undeniable power.
8. Finally, Paul asks the Corinthians to consider a choice:
  - a. Should he come with a rod of correction in discipline for their sin?
  - b. Or should he come in love and a spirit of gentleness?
  - c. If they receive this correction readily and change their behaviors, Paul will be able to come with love and gentleness.
  - d. If they remain hardened and unrepentant in their sin, he will certainly not hesitate to bring the rod of correction. Piecing together the overall interactions with Paul and Corinth, it seems that they chose the rod over gentleness. Paul seems to confirm this by making reference to a sorrowful visit (2 Cor. 2:1) which would be his second visit before writing 2 Corinthians (12:14, 13:1).



# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 4 (5:1-6:20)

### **Sin #2: Sexual sins, including incest (5:1-13)**

1. Reports of sexual immorality in the church (5:1-8).
  - a. The sin reported to Paul is shameful, shocking and disgusting.
  - b. Specifically, a man is reported as having relations with his father's wife (stepmother?).
  - c. The church and the community at large likely all knew about this but took no action.
  - d. Even the pagan Gentiles consider this to be morally abhorrent.
2. The Corinthians are proud, puffed up with pride in their church oversight roles (5:6-8).
  - a. Rather than being proud, they ought to have been in mourning over this sin.
  - b. Leadership should have taken action to remove the sinner or the shameful conduct from their assembly. The shocking truth is that Paul had to call them out for their inaction.
3. Upon hearing the report, presumably with evidence to support the claims, Paul already judged the man as guilty, and that church discipline was absolutely necessary to deal with the sinner.
4. Paul's remedy:
  - a. Holy action must be done in the name and power of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - b. Deliver the man to Satan:
    - i. For the destruction of his flesh (carnal behaviors).
    - ii. The ultimate objective is to save his spirit in the Lord's Day of judgment.
    - iii. Excommunication from church is, by definition, putting him into Satan's domain.
    - iv. This callous and unrepentant behavior may be an indication that he has already committed apostasy and walked away from his faith in Christ.
    - v. Conversely, if the man is still a believer at heart, he will learn that his sin carries consequences in both the physical and spiritual realms.
5. The whole church is affected by this one sin. Corruption of the church by a single sin is a reality.
  - a. Glorifying in any sin is not good. It is a failure of leadership and spiritual maturity.
  - b. The principle that a little leaven (sin) leavens (corrupts) the whole lump (church) applies.
  - c. The church must decisively purge out the sinful leaven (sin) and make a fresh start.
  - d. God's desire and requirement is for the church to be truly unleavened (purging sin) in grace and truth.
6. We must take sin seriously as believers and as the church.
  - a. Christ, our Passover Lamb was sacrificed for our sins. We need to honor His sacrifice by living for Him and purging sin from among us (sanctification is the objective, even if not fully obtainable in this life).
  - b. We must keep the Passover Feast, that is communion with Christ and within the church.
    - i. Not with old leaven (sins, sexual in this case).
    - ii. Not with leaven of malice (acts of evil and depravity).
    - iii. Not in wickedness (in our nature or in submission to spiritual powers).
    - iv. Rather, the church is to partake of the Passover with the pure unleavened bread (sin free) in sincerity and in truth. Partaking of communion without first dealing with known and continuing sin is to do so in an unworthy manner (11:17-34).

7. Paul's clarification on keeping company with immoral people as it relates to this issue (5:9-11).
  - a. Paul had already written to the Corinthians (lost letter?) about church oversight.
  - b. It seems clear that he previously instructed them not to keep company with immoral believers in the church. Known sin must result in either repentance and restoration or excommunicating the sinner from the fellowship.
  - c. Paul now clarifies that the church must make a distinction between the unbelievers in the world who will of course sin by being:
    - i. Covetous
    - ii. Extortioners
    - iii. Idolaters
  - d. The truth is that as long as believers are in the world they will encounter these people and are called to witness the truth of God and His gift of salvation to them. However, believers must now become engaged in their sins. There is no calling for believers to isolate from the world as they desperately need the message of hope in Christ.
  - e. Believers must choose to live for Christ and to daily reject the sins the rest of the world regularly engages in.
    - i. The group Paul instructed separation from is those who claim to be believers and join the church, but refuse to acknowledge and repent from their sins.
    - ii. Ascribing the term brother to fellow believers must be reserved for those with a lifestyle that is consistent with Christian morality.
    - iii. Committing any of the following should result in Christians separating themselves from those who practice (regularly engage in):
      1. Sexually immorality
      2. Covetousness
      3. Idolatry
      4. Reviling (slandering)
      5. Drunkenness
      6. Extortion
    - iv. The command from Paul is to not even eat with such a person (communion first and foremost) but really all fellowship that does not result in faithful restoration.
8. Judging instructions (5:12-13).
  - a. Believers do not and cannot judge unbelievers. Judging unbelievers is reserved for God.
  - b. The church, however, is unquestionably called upon to judge believers inside the church.
  - c. Because God has entrusted judging believers to the church, we must put away the evil person from the fellowship (sin, leaven, corruption of the whole).

### **Sin 3: Improper handling of legal disputes (6:1-11)**

1. Believers are not permitted to take other believers to a secular court to settle a dispute.
  - a. Courts, judges and civil laws are not inherently Christian and cannot be trusted to provide godly discernment that lines up with God's word.
  - b. Believers (saints) will ultimately judge the world in the eternal state to come.
  - c. If God will entrust believers to judge the world, then they should have no problem providing godly judgment now in small, local disputes.

- d. Believers will even judge angels who are currently superior to humans in wisdom, strength, and authority.
  - e. Believers who run to secular courts are knowingly using worldly systems that are less esteemed and less capable to settle disputes that will honor God first and foremost.
  - f. The church should be ashamed of not having a godly perspective on their personal disputes.
2. In disputes between believers, Christians are held to higher standards than the world requires.
- a. Faithful Christians should always accept the consequences of their wrongdoing. Failure to do so brings serious doubts about the true spiritual condition of the heart.
  - b. If given a choice between being cheated by a fellow believer and going to civil courts, the believer should always accept being cheated by another believer.
    - i. It is a mark of Christian maturity
    - ii. It demonstrates a strong degree of trust in God to work all things out according to His will
    - iii. It demonstrates a proper perspective on the things of this world (wood hay, straw) versus the eternal blessings of God (gold, silver, precious stones).
3. The Corinthians are guilty on both ends of these disputed matters:
- a. The do wrong (but act as if they are righteous).
  - b. The cheat (and claim to be cheated).
  - c. And they do these things to their Christian brethren!
  - d. Reality check: the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God/salvation (Gal. 5:19-21).
    - i. Fornicators
    - ii. Idolaters
    - iii. Adulterers
    - iv. Homosexuals (feminine)
    - v. Sodomites (masculine)
    - vi. Thieves
    - vii. Covetous
    - viii. Drunkards
    - ix. Revilers
    - x. Extortioners
  - e. "And such were some of you," until they put on the righteousness of Christ by faith.
    - i. But now by faith they are washed
    - ii. But now by faith they are sanctified
    - iii. But now by faith they are justified in Jesus and by the Holy Spirit.

### **Principles for Christian Living and avoiding sexual immorality (6:12-20)**

1. Lawful vs. helpful distinctions (6:12-17).
- a. Believers are not under the law, so technically all things are lawful for them.
  - b. However, not all things are helpful for believers.
  - c. Believers should not be brought under the power of anything or anyone other than God.
    - i. Food is for the stomach, but believers are not to be brought under the power of food or to satisfy an unhealthy appetite.
    - ii. When the Day of the Lord comes, both food and the stomach will be destroyed (wood, hay, straw), so satisfying all demands of the stomach is not helpful.

- iii. Likewise, God did not give us bodies to give into sexual immorality and temptation.
  - 1. Sex in the marriage relationship is intended to be satisfying and good for the body, but the body must never be ruled by a sexual appetite (Chap. 7).
  - 2. Our bodies are members of Christ; we are one with Him and He is the head.
  - 3. Coming together sexually with a harlot results in bringing Christ into our sin, and believers should certainly not want to do that to the Lord.
  - 4. Marriage and sexuality principles from Genesis 2 still apply today; copulation always results in a one-flesh spiritual engagement even if it is with a harlot. Believers must not do such, or any other sexual sin.
- 2. Flee sexual immorality (6:18-20)
  - a. Sexual sins are against the person's own body (and any other person who is involved).
  - b. Paul again reminds the church that believers are the temple of the Holy Spirit; we must take this truth seriously and righteously to be a place He inhabits in holiness.
    - i. Believers have the Holy Spirit as a gift from God.
    - ii. The Holy Spirit is in each believer.
    - iii. The presence of the Holy Spirit testifies that our bodies are no longer ours to have authority over. Faith in Christ transfers ownership of our bodies to Him.
    - iv. Believers were purchased at the greatest price imaginable – the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. That fact should be present in our minds when we consider willful sins.
  - c. Conclusion: glorify God in and with your body and with your spirit. Both were purchased on the cross and they belong to God.

# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 5 (7:1-40)

### Question #1 for Paul: Instructions on Marriage (7:1-9)

1. It is “good” for a man not to touch a woman.
  - a. This is considered a positive moral quality; even praiseworthy for any who can accept it.
  - b. The meaning of “touch” ranges from any physical contact, to emotional attachment, or even to intercourse.
  - c. Many heterosexual sins would be avoided if a man refused to “touch” a woman.
    - i. Even without touch, lustful thoughts and fantasies would still be sinful for a man to have or use with anyone/anything that is not his wife (Matt. 27-28).
    - ii. Pornography (photos, videos, artistic or computer-generated images) would also be considered a sin, even if the man is not physically touching a woman in person.
  - d. The objective is to live a pure and holy life in service to God. If that means refraining from all such contact or interactions, then God will honor that choice as moral and praiseworthy.
2. Marriage and celibacy are the two ordained gifts to prevent sexual immorality.
  - a. God created sex and all of the physical pleasures, emotional attachments, and endorphin releases that couples experience with intercourse.
  - b. Within the ordained commitment of marriage between a husband and a wife, sexual intercourse is intended for the couple to uniquely enjoy with one another as a blessing.
  - c. Marriage allows for moral procreation and the population of the world in honor to God.
3. Husbands and wives are not objects to be used *merely* for the sexual desires of one partner.
  - a. The husband is to render the proper **affection** due to her as his wife.
    - i. The husband should have zeal in the form of desire to be for his wife exclusively.
    - ii. The husband should be eager to show his wife kindness and affections physically that meet her needs (of course the wife must be willing to communicate her needs).
    - iii. The husband must demonstrate wholehearted love for her to the exclusion of all others in terms of a romantic, sexual relationship (loving the Lord and others is appropriate, but the wife is to have the exclusive affection due only to her).
  - b. The wife likewise has the same command to render affection due to her husband.
4. Physical affection and sexual union frequency in marriage (God does care about what goes on in the bedroom between two people, contrary to popular false claims made by some).
  - a. The wife does not have authority over her own body to deny intimacy. Rather, the husband has authority over his wife’s body in submission to the Lord.
  - b. The wife, likewise, has authority over her husband’s body. The husband cannot deny his wife intimacy in marriage, even as the head of the household.
  - c. The husband and wife mutually exchanged control over the intimacy they share when they were married. A person who is unwilling to surrender intimacy with their partner throughout their marriage is denying a fundamental purpose and command in God’s design for a one-flesh relationship.
  - d. Anyone who is unwilling to trust God and their spouse by surrendering control over their own bodies, should not marry at all, but only if they have the gift of celibacy.

- e. Anyone who is married already but struggling in this area should seek to honor God's word and seek professional help if needed to accept his or her role as a marriage partner.
  - f. To further clarify, Paul specifically instructs the couple not to deprive their spouse of sexual intimacy unless there is mutual consent for a set period of time.
    - i. This should only be done for spiritual purposes of a time of fasting and prayer.
    - ii. Once the period of fasting and prayer has concluded, sexual intimacy should resume for the couple.
  - g. The reason Paul (and God) care about giving sexual frequency instructions to couples is to prevent Satan from tempting one or both marriage partners and preying upon their lack of self-control to meet their sexual needs.
5. Marriage may not be for every believer and God has not commanded all to marry.
- a. Paul's instructions here are specifically for those who are, or will be, married.
  - b. Black and white literalists should not interpret these statements as a command to marry.
  - c. At this time Paul appears to not be married, and he sees many benefits of being single.
    - i. Scholars believe Paul was previously married as a member of the Sanhedrin.
    - ii. It is unknown what became of Paul's marriage/wife (death or divorce?).
  - d. Being single and celibate is a divine gift. Only those who have this gift can live it out.
  - e. Marrying is also a divine gift and anyone who is unwilling to fulfil their duties to their spouse should not be married.
6. Making the choice of marriage or celibacy.
- a. It is good (a positive moral quality; praiseworthy) for the unmarried and widows to remain single, but only if they are able to maintain celibacy until death (God's gift to some).
  - b. Anyone who is currently single but lacks sexual self-control, should not consider celibacy. It is better for the unmarried to marry (equally yoked of course) because having no God-approved outlet for sexual desires will lead to burning with passion and most likely sin. Marriage may be the way of escape (1 Cor. 10:12-13) God has provided against fornication.
  - c. Paul doesn't say so here but burning with passion is not an excuse to marry anyone who is willing. Marriage has always been intended as a lifetime commitment that has many God-ordained duties and responsibilities. Both parties must be willing to surrender and submit to these duties for life or the couple is opening themselves up to sinning in some way.

## **Question #2: Honoring the Marriage Vows (7:10-16)**

1. Instructions to believers who are currently married (problems notwithstanding).
- a. Paul is merely reminding believers about God's moral commands in the Old Testament.
  - b. A wife is not to depart from her husband
    - i. Gentile women who wanted a divorce simply departed and never came back.
    - ii. Jewish women did not have a right to depart and they could not initiate a divorce.
    - iii. From the beginning God commanded marriage to be a lifetime commitment as His moral standard (but even God/Jesus gave limited exceptions).
  - c. A husband is not to divorce his wife
    - i. The husband has the civil right to divorce, but not a blanket moral right.

- ii. The Law (Moses) in the Old Testament permitted men to divorce because of Israel's hardened hearts in sin. The term used is that the husband has found some "uncleanness" in her (Deut. 24:1-4; Matt. 19:8-9).
  - iii. Still, God's moral standard is for marriage to be a lifetime commitment until death.
  - iv. Moral standards/laws are actually more stringent in the New Testament because believers have the Holy Spirit to give them the power and will to live a moral life.
- 2. Paul then moves to the more general principles of marriage related to being unequally yoked to an unbelieving spouse.
  - a. A believing husband is not to divorce his unbelieving wife simply because they are not equally yoked (7:39 applies to those getting married, not those who already are).
  - b. If the unbelieving wife is willing to live with him, they should remain married, and the husband should not seek a divorce for this reason.
  - c. A believing wife who is married to an unbeliever should not depart/divorce her husband.
  - d. The unbelieving spouse in such a marriage is "sanctified" by the believing spouse.
    - i. Sanctified does not mean saved, but rather the unbeliever is blessed by being in relationship with a faithful believer.
    - ii. The household is also sanctified by the presence of the believing spouse so that the children are raised in an intact family and are not considered outcasts by the world.
    - iii. The children are holy by living in a two-parent household where one is a believer.
      - 1. Holy means set apart for God's purposes.
      - 2. Age of accountability question aside, it is best for children to be raised by at least one faithful believer who will teach them about God and Jesus Christ.
- 3. Divorce or abandonment by the unbelieving spouse
  - a. The believer is not instructed to resist departure or divorce to "save" the marriage in a moral obligation given by God.
  - b. If the unbeliever desires to depart, the Christian response is to allow them to break the bonds of marriage. Obviously, there may be many steps involved before the situation reaches this point, but once it does the instruction is to let the unbeliever depart.
  - c. The innocent believing spouse is not and will not be under continued bondage or marriage obligations in this case.
- 4. The overriding principle and objective in the unequally yoked marriage is to seek peace without compromising faith in God.
  - a. The believer is to seek to live in peace with their unbelieving spouse but must never violate God's moral standards.
  - b. The believer should not escalate tensions in the marriage as much as it depends on them.
  - c. Even in the darkest of situations, the believer cannot know if their faithful obedience to God will eventually lead their spouse to a saving faith.

### **Question #3: How Christians are to live (7:17-40)**

- 1. Believers are to live and walk in the state in which they were called into the kingdom of God.
  - a. God has provided gifts of the Holy Spirit specifically designed for each believer at this stage of their life.

- b. Jews who are already circumcised should not seek to become uncircumcised. If they were already living for the God of the Old Testament, then let them live for God and accept Christ as a New Testament believer, but without the Law (Gal. 2:14-16).
  - c. Likewise, Gentiles or anyone who is uncircumcised should not seek to become circumcised as a part of their faith and walk with Christ. This is another direct refutation by Paul of the Judaizer claims that believers in Christ must first become a Jew and commit to following the Law of Moses. Paul never teaches such doctrine and calls it false.
2. Instructions for those who are single when they come to Christ (never married or widowed).
- a. Paul is offering personal and trustworthy wisdom here (mostly) as there is no command from the Lord that he can refer to regarding those who are unmarried.
  - b. In this time of distress (persecutions from an ungodly world), it seems best to Paul that the unmarried might be best served to remain as they are.
  - c. Certainly, those who are married should not seek to be divorced.
  - d. Likewise, the unmarried should strongly consider if they if marriage is right for them with all the trouble that may come upon the church and believers in tribulations.
  - e. Of course, the decision to marry is not up to Paul, or even to God! God has ordained and permitted marriage between one man and one woman. It is never sin if our choices meet with God's standards for marriage or celibacy.
  - f. In Paul's experience (previously married we presume), marriage will unavoidably cause trouble in the flesh as two people will never be in perfect agreement and harmony through their married lives. Paul's solution for single believers is to not marry as this will eliminate any chance of having trouble in the flesh that comes with marriage.
3. Troubling times demand our full attention to the Lord's will and His calling
- a. The time is short. We know Jesus is coming and we must be ready for Him to appear.
  - b. When tribulation and persecution come, the married *may* have to live as though he is unmarried. Jesus promised we would have persecution (John 16:33) and if we do not have a proper perspective (because we are so focused on our spouse and family), we may fall victim to the snares of the enemy. In this sense, being single would be easier.
  - c. In the worst of persecutions, nothing is what it seems to be
    - i. The married may act and feel unmarried.
    - ii. Those who weep as though they are not weeping.
    - iii. Those who rejoice as though they cannot rejoice.
    - iv. Those who buy, as though they possess nothing.
    - v. Those who use the world as though they are not misusing it.
  - d. The reality we must all face is that the current world and all that is in it (marriage included) is all passing away.
4. Logically, serving the Lord is easier for the unmarried than it can ever be for the married.
- a. An unmarried person is morally free to simply pour his life into the Lord's service.
  - b. All married people must split their thoughts, time and energy between their spouse/children and their service to the Lord. This is unavoidable and those seeking marriage must consider the impact of their decision as it relates to serving the Lord.



- c. This unassailable logic is not offered to restrain anyone from seeking marriage, Paul is merely explaining the reality that any married believer must know before they make a lifetime commitment.
  - d. Even in arranged marriages, the unmarried and betrothed parties still have a choice.
    - i. Just because parents have decided that their children will be married does not force them to choose marriage.
    - ii. If the man desires to be in a physical relationship with his betrothed virgin, they should honor God's moral standards and hold off on a physical relationship until they are married.
    - iii. Again, it is not a sin for two eligible people to get married so that they can have a lifelong, intimate and physical relationship as God ordained.
    - iv. There is no shame in remaining unmarried either and remaining unmarried is the best choice if God has gifted them with celibacy.
    - v. Paul's personal preferences are on full display here – stay unmarried if you can.
5. Marriage is intended as a lifetime commitment to be honored
- a. Unmarried believers should only marry other believers in the Lord.
  - b. A woman should carefully consider her choice to marry.
    - i. She is bound by "law" as long as her husband lives.
    - ii. She is surrendering her freedom to God first and then to her husband who is the head of the marriage and family.
    - iii. Her marriage commitment is until her husband dies. In most cases it is only upon his death that she is then free to be single or to marry again.
    - iv. Therefore, in Paul's judgement, with the Holy Spirit guiding his thoughts, an unmarried woman will be happier if she remains as she is (celibacy gift assumed).

### **Concluding thoughts**

1. Paul is responding to questions given to him. This chapter is not an exhaustive teaching on all principles of marriage, sexual relations, and divorce.
2. For anyone who is totally devoted to serving the Lord for their whole life, and has the gift of celibacy, marriage is not the best option for them.
3. In many or most situations, God's words in Genesis still applies: "It is not good for a man to be alone." (Gen. 2:18)
4. Marriage has profound responsibilities for both partners to fulfil for the other.
5. God has established marriage as a lifelong commitment for our own best interests and because marriage demonstrates a model of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:32-33)
6. God is not without care for His people. Certain situations do allow for divorce such as abandonment, a divorce executed solely by one party without the other's consent, adultery, and perhaps violence and abuse. Paul's words are most helpful here – "they are not under bondage in these situations."
7. The kingdom of God would be well served by having millions or billions of sold-out unmarried believers who spend all their waking hours preaching the gospel and ministering to those in the body of Christ.

8. However, Christianity may have died off in a single generation if all Christian believers abandoned marriage and procreation for a life of devoted celibacy.
9. No one should attempt a single, celibate life if they are not gifted by the Holy Spirit to resist sexual temptation (no burning with passion permitted as there are no viable sexual outlets for the unmarried).
10. Anyone seeking to be married needs to review this passage carefully to be sure they are willing to live under these stringent requirements before saying "I do."
11. All married believers should review and recommit as needed to genuinely fulfill their roles and duties as a husband or a wife as God just has called them to live in obedience to Him.

# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 6 (8:1-9:27)

### Question #4 for Paul: Meat sacrificed to idols (8:1-13)

1. Background
  - a. There were two types of consumer markets/vendors in ancient cities:
    - i. Vendors who sold items previously sacrificed to idols at a reduced price.
    - ii. Vendors who advertised unsacrificed meat, perhaps so the purchaser could make the sacrifice personally.
  - b. Much like today, food was a part of regular social functions, and its source of origin might not be knowable to the one eating it.
    - i. Weddings
    - ii. Business functions
    - iii. Casual social functions
  - c. Most Gentile/pagan families would have household idols and may invite Christians over for meals. One might assume that an offer to idols would be made while attending.
2. Love edifies and is the governing principle of how Christians are to conduct themselves (8:1-3).
  - a. Knowledge alone puffs up and cannot be the determining factor of how Christians conduct themselves in the world that needs to hear and respond to the gospel.
  - b. Christians should demonstrate love to those who believe in idols. They should not take rash actions such as completely separating ourselves from them (refer to chapter 5).
  - c. Loving God should change all our natural tendencies and behaviors towards others.
  - d. Conclusion: we should not make decisions based on knowledge alone but must also manifest the love of God to others in all circumstances.
3. Proper use of knowledge concerning things offered to idols (8:4-6).
  - a. We know that idols are nothing.
  - b. We know that God has no equal; there is no other God or being like Him.
  - c. People and spiritual forces of darkness may claim that an idol has some divine power, but this is simply not the case.
  - d. The reality is that the Father created all things, and they are all under His divine power.
    - i. Heaven
    - ii. Earth
    - iii. Spiritual beings
    - iv. Mankind
    - v. The source materials used to make idols (precious metals or wood).
  - e. Of course, Jesus Christ, the Son, is also God and He also is rightly credited as the creator of all things which exist and are sustained by and through Him.
4. Concerning those believers who currently lack knowledge about God and idols (8:7):
  - a. Not everyone (weak, untrained Christians) will have sufficient knowledge about God and faith to make a proper decision concerning things like idols and liberties with food.
  - b. Poor knowledge, weak faith, and a weak conscience all result in defilement in their hearts when they knowingly eat meat sacrificed to idols.

- c. Conversely, a knowledgeable, strong in faith, and strong in conscience believer would not be defiled by eating meat sacrificed to idols because they know with certainty that the idol is nothing but a figment in someone's imagination.
- 5. Food of any variety does not commend us to God or condemn us before Him (8:8).
  - a. If we eat, we are not better or worse off in our faithfulness to God.
  - b. If we do not eat, we are not better or worse off in our faithfulness to God.
  - c. The issue is what the heart and mind do in response to our food choices.
- 6. Christian liberties must never be a stumbling block to those weak in faith (8:9-13).
  - a. Stronger believers are cautioned to consider their actions before weaker brothers.
  - b. While it is not a sin to eat in an idol's temple (it is nothing after all), it is a sin to offend the conscience of the weaker brother who does not understand your actions.
  - c. If a weaker brother sees another eating in an idol's temple, he might become emboldened to eat meat against his conscience believing He is sinning against God but justifies it because he witnessed another believer doing it also.
  - d. The careless actions of the stronger brother may even lead the weaker brother to perish (have his faith destroyed leading possibly to his eternal destruction).
  - e. Those who Christ died for should never be led to destruction by another brother.
  - f. Those who are stronger in the faith must take responsibility for their actions and for helping weaker brothers in Christ to grow in their faith and knowledge.
  - g. All believers must be willing to sacrifice their liberties in exchange for the soul of their weaker brothers, even permanently if necessary.

**Question #5 for Paul: Financial support for those in vocational ministry (9:1-18)**

- 1. Paul is qualified as a true apostle with all the rights, authority, and privileges due to him.
  - a. "Am I not an apostle?" Rhetorical and the only response to be offered is, "yes."
  - b. "Am I not free?" Rhetorical and the only response to be offered is, "yes."
  - c. "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" A fundamental qualification of a true apostle.
  - d. "Are you not my work in the Lord? The Corinthians know Paul and cannot deny his calling. The church at Corinth exists because of Paul's faithful service as an apostle.
  - e. In fact, the Corinthians are the seal of his apostleship. Believers across the empire likely know about the church at Corinth and that Paul founded it as an apostle.
- 2. Paul offers a defense for those believers who charge him with "wrongdoing," such as:
  - a. Unjustly profiting from the church and his ministry.
  - b. Eating and drinking (wine) from the collective church resources.
  - c. Taking along a believing wife as the other apostles do (who would consume church resources as a dependent).
  - d. Failing to have a source of income outside of ministry. With Paul this was not even a valid complaint because he did not take from church resources for his own personal needs and had a vocation that funded his ministry (tentmaking).
- 3. Wisdom, logic and the Law of Moses are all on Paul's side of the issue of ministerial support:
  - a. Kings and rulers go to war using public, not private funds.
  - b. Landowners plant vineyards with an expectation of eating of the fruit (Deu. 20:5-7).
  - c. Shepherds who tend to the flock will also drink the milk of the flock.
  - d. Even the Law of Moses affirms Paul's claims (he does not speak as a mere man).

- i. “You shall not muzzle the ox while it treads out the grain (Deu. 25:4).
    - ii. This principle certainly allows for the care of the ox, which is important, but God is most concerned about establishing a principle that the laborer is worthy of (has earned) the wages he is due.
  - e. Those who plow should do so in hope of seeing a reward or benefit for their labor.
  - f. Those who thresh should do so in hope of seeing a reward or benefit for their labor.
- 4. Applying this principle (laboring in hope) to the church and to Paul.
  - a. Those whose work and field of ministry is in spiritual things (converting souls to Christ), should have their material needs met by those they minister to by God’s will.
  - b. If anyone would be eligible to benefit from the resources of the church, certainly supporting the full-time ministry should be considered first.
- 5. Paul’s voluntary denial of receiving church funds for his personal needs:
  - a. Paul has the absolute right to partake, but he has not used this right for himself.
  - b. Paul did not want his personal actions to hinder the health and growth of the church.
- 6. Justification of Paul’s principles from Israel and the priesthood.
  - a. The Old Testament priests were entirely supported by those they ministered to.
    - i. They received no land to farm or to raise livestock on, for the Lord was their inheritance and tithes were their source of provision (Num. 18:8-24).
    - ii. They were continually dedicated to the service of the temple; they didn’t even have chairs to sit in (Heb. 10:11).
    - iii. Even when the rest of the tribes took a Sabbath rest or holy day, the priests continued working.
  - b. Offerings made to God at the temple were, in most cases, consumed by the priests according to God’s law and His provision for the priests.
- 7. The Lord has commanded this principle to His disciples (Matt. 10:10): Those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel (other sources of income should not be necessary, but that is a local and personal decision for the minister).
- 8. Paul’s motivation in teaching this doctrine is for the benefit of others, not himself personally.
  - a. His teaching and his letters were never done out of selfish ambition or personal gain.
  - b. Paul would prefer death over having an ineffective witness for the gospel because people falsely accused him of ulterior motives.
  - c. Paul preaches, not to fill his belly or his pockets, but to build the kingdom of God.
  - d. Paul, like all people, has needs and necessities in life, but that has never been his motivation.
  - e. Paul’s calling is to preach, and woe to him if he does not preach the gospel!
  - f. Paul preaches willingly and his reward is in heaven.
  - g. Paul would have no reward if he preached against his will and only did so by compulsion of his Master.
- 9. Paul has chosen not to abuse his apostolic authority and to not profit from his ministry. His ministry was always free of charge so that it would have the broadest possible acceptance by all mankind.
- 10. Paul is making this sacrifice, in part, to help those who will follow him as vocational ministers.
  - a. Paul offers instructions to the church so that future ministers can quote Paul, who preached free of charge, so that they don’t have to defend their own need for support.

- b. Paul's message about supporting all ministers of the gospel should be readily received and acted upon by the church; the apostle who taught the commandment did not personally benefit from declaring it thereby giving more objectivity to the command.
11. Summary and Commentary on the rights of a vocational minister:
- a. Has the right to be accepted by the flock (9:1-3)
    - i. His messages, sermons, and teachings.
    - ii. His style of deliver and communication.
    - iii. His lifestyle and how he lives in service to God.
    - iv. His doctrines supported by Scripture.
    - v. Authority and respect of the flock.
  - b. Has the right to be financially supported by the church (9:4-11).
    - i. Feed himself and his family.
    - ii. Fund his ministry calling and responsibilities.
    - iii. To make ministry hi full-time occupation.
  - c. Has the right to be considered first by the flock, not last in line for support (9:12-14).
    - i. Salvation and redemption in Christ are of unparalleled importance.
    - ii. Ensuring that the church is bearing fruit is a top priority for all.
    - iii. Sharing the gospel and spiritual truths are vital and these activities should be rewarded by those who benefit from them.
    - iv. The church should not abuse the minister or treat him harshly for His is God's servant.
    - v. It would be a failure of the church if their minister suffered from:
      - 1. Lack of food
      - 2. Lack of clothing
      - 3. Lack of adequate housing.
    - vi. The church should make it possible that if their minster is called, he is fully able to respond and go preach the gospel.
  - d. He has the right to determine if he will receive wages or not (9:15-18).
    - i. The minister should make this call
    - ii. The church should do all they can to support the minister's decision.

**Paul's motivations and purpose as an apostle and as a minister of the gospel.**

- 1. Paul is completely free from all men but has voluntarily made himself a servant of all.
- 2. Paul desires to win as many souls for Christ as he can bring the message to.
  - a. He will offer the gospel to Jews as a Jew himself.
  - b. Paul voluntarily places himself under the law to witness to those under the law.
  - c. For those who are not under the law, Paul does not come to them as one who is under the law, but he does show himself to be under the law of Christ.
  - d. Paul shows his own weaknesses when ministering to those who are weak.
  - e. Ultimately Paul will adopt whatever means are available to him to share the gospel.
  - f. This strategy is used so that Paul can be a partaker with as many believers in heaven as he can possibly join in with. He desires to have heaven as filled to the fullest; he does not selfishly hope to be among an elite and limited few who partake of salvation.

3. Unlike athletes in a sporting competition, believers are all called to cooperatively run a race where all who run will receive a personal crown for their faithful service to the Lord.
  - a. However, believers encouraged to run the race of faith as though there is only one prize and only one victor (the victory is really Christ's anyway).
  - b. Believers are to be temperate in all things as they run the race. That is, they must be in complete control over their own desires and actions to be in full submission to God.
  - c. Athletes run for a perishable crown (3:12: wood, hay, straw).
  - d. But believers are running for an imperishable crown (3:12: gold, silver, precious stones).
  - e. The race Paul is running is not with uncertainty or fighting against the air, but rather he constantly disciplines his body to bring it into subjection of the Holy Spirit.
  - f. Perhaps Paul's worst fear is that his actions will be in the flesh rather than in the Spirit, perhaps leading to his own disqualification. That is, if Paul is doing ministry for his own personal gain (pride, wealth, power), then he might find that all his work was in vain regarding the life to come (wood, hay, straw) – all of which will be consumed in the fires of judgment of deeds done in the flesh.

# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 7 (10:1-13)

### Paul's apostolic instruction #1: Learning from Israel in the Old Testament

1. At this point in the letter, Paul appears to mostly move beyond responding to reports he received (chapters 1-6) and specific questions he was asked to clarify (chapters 7-9).
2. Paul declares that he doesn't want the Corinthians to be "unaware" or "ignorant," which he covers in chapters 10-16.
3. All our fathers:
  - a. Referring to the generation that came out of bondage in Egypt under Moses.
  - b. These ancient people from Israel were not the Corinthian's bloodline heritage for the most part, but rather they represent a forerunner of those God calls, delivers and seeks an abiding relationship with just as He does for New Testament believers.
4. They were all under the cloud of God's manifested glory
  - a. Exodus 13:20-22
  - b. Psalm 105:39
5. They all passed through the [Red] sea.
  - a. Exodus 14:19-31
  - b. Psalm 66:6
6. They were all baptized into the faith by the cloud and by the crossing in the sea by dry land.
  - a. God uses clouds to demonstrate His power and Glory, and to reveal Jesus Christ as Lord.
    - i. Ezekiel 1:27-28; 10:3-4
    - ii. Daniel 7:13-14
    - iii. Matthew 17:5
    - iv. Luke 21:27
    - v. Revelation 1:7; 14:14
  - b. God baptized Israel by having them enter the sea and uses this as a model for believers
    - i. Entering the sea was being baptized in the Lord.
    - ii. As shown by the Egyptian army, the sea represented death and burial
    - iii. By faith, Israel passed through rather than being drowned by the sea.
    - iv. Emerging on the other side of their watery baptism, they entered into a new life and relationship with God.
7. They all ate the same spiritual food – bread from heaven (manna).
  - a. Exodus 16
  - b. Deuteronomy 8:1-5
  - c. John 6:22-40
8. They all drank the same spiritual drink, drinking from the Rock that followed them.
  - a. Exodus 17:1-7
  - b. That Rock that gave Israel water was Jesus Christ
  - c. Numbers 20:1-21
9. CAUTION TO ALL "BELIEVERS!"
  - a. "But with most of them, God was not well pleased!



- b. Their bodies were scattered in the wilderness by God’s judgment!
  - c. Numbers 13:26-14:38
  - d. Despite all God had done for them...
    - i. Witnessed His presence in the cloud
    - ii. Were delivered to a new life, free from bondage, passing through the sea.
    - iii. Daily ate of food from heaven provided by God.
    - iv. Drank water flowing out of a rock.
  - e. They lacked faith in God and perished in the wilderness
    - i. Jude 5
    - ii. Hebrews 3:7-19
  - f. God would not allow them to enter into His rest (eternal life) because they did not have faith even after seeing all His miracles and being baptized by God Himself!
    - i. 2 of 12 spies were spared judgment by their faith.
    - ii. 2 of 600,000+ who came out of Egypt were spared judgment by their faith.
10. New Testament believers are admonished to learn from their bad example and not fall into the same condition and anger of the Lord.
- a. Paul instructs believers not to lust after evil things (like the Israelites did).
  - b. Do not become idolators like they did with the golden calf (Exodus 32).
  - c. Do not commit sexual immorality as they did (Numbers 25:1-9).
  - d. Let us not tempt God as Israel did when they were destroyed by serpents (Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:1-21).
  - e. Denying God (lack of faith) leads us to the destroyer for our own destruction.
11. Learn the lessons of unfaithful Israel.
- a. God allowed and recorded these things to occur to serve as examples to us.
  - b. God Himself is admonishing us to heed this warning.
  - c. We are living in the final era of human history. God has already sent His Deliverer, Jesus Christ, and there is no other who will be sent to reconcile us to God.
12. Therefore (perhaps the most impacting “therefore” Paul has ever used):
- a. Let him who thinks he stands take heed of these cautionary examples, lest he fall.
  - b. Pride is always a dangerous attitude to have.
    - i. God breaks our pride (Lev. 26:19).
    - ii. The proud do not seek God (Psalm 10:3-4)
    - iii. The Lord preserves the faithful but repays the prideful (Psalm 31:23-24).
    - iv. Pride brings disgrace, but there is wisdom with the humble (Proverbs 11:2)
    - v. Pride goes before destruction (Proverbs 16:18)
    - vi. The Lord will destroy the world for their pride (Isaiah 13:11-13)
13. God’s promise to us when we are tempted in any way:
- a. There is no temptation that can overtake you if you submit to the Lord.
  - b. God is faithful to those who trust in Him; He promises to not let us be tempted beyond our ability to successfully endure it without falling victim to the temptation.
  - c. God always offers the tempted believer a way of escape and complete victory over every temptation that attempts to lead us into sin.

# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 8 (10:14-11:34)

### Paul's apostolic instruction #2: Communion with God, not with demons (10:14-11:1).

1. Therefore (because we can learn from Israel's failures in the wilderness), we must flee from idolatry.
  - a. Israel did not flee idolatry and they perished in the wilderness.
  - b. Believers can and must flee from every form of idolatry lest they suffer the same fate as those in Israel, namely total rebellion against God post-baptism.
2. Wise believers, who have good understanding of sound doctrine, know that communion with Christ is a special event that should be treated with honor and reverence.
  - a. The communion cup of blessing is intended to represent the blood of Christ that He shed for us on the cross.
  - b. The bread broken at communion is intended to represent the body of Christ that suffered for us in His torture and crucifixion.
  - c. Communion is a sacred event to draw all believers into a single, unified body of believers. Though we are all many individuals, God calls us to function as a single and unified organism in Him (further developed in chapter 12).
3. Israel's positive example (at least in theory).
  - a. Those who serve and eat the elements of communion are to do so in obedience to the Lord's command given on the night He was betrayed just as Israel did on the first Passover.
  - b. The priests and worshippers in Israel exemplified communion with God by partaking in the prescribed offerings made to the Lord that they then shared with the worshippers.
4. Paul circles back to the question of idols and things sacrificed to them (chapter 8).
  - a. An idol, such as a molded or engraved image, is nothing. It has no spiritual substance.
  - b. Nevertheless, when Gentiles make a sacrifice to their idols, they are actually sacrificing to demons who, while not divine, are still enemies of God.
  - c. Whatever action is taken regarding sacrificed meat, believers should never participate in any activity that involves fellowship with demons.
    - i. Believers must not mix anything with their true worship of God.
    - ii. If demons are permitted, it is certain that God will not offer His fellowship.
  - d. Believers can, but must never, provoke God to jealousy. We are not stronger than God, so we must conform to His will; it is certain He will never conform to ours.
5. Paul's decision matrix on eating, drinking, and keeping company with unbelievers.
  - a. In Christ all things are lawful, but lawful does not mean beneficial or approved by God.
  - b. Certainly not all things we do or choices we make will *edify* us or others.
    - i. Edify - strengthen, or a process of gaining in strength.
    - ii. Edify - equip us or make us more able to do the Lord's calling.
    - iii. Edify - build up in spirit and in faith.
  - c. Instead of seeking our own best interests or enjoying our liberties with no boundaries, Paul instructs believers to seek the well-being of others before our own.

- d. Liberties must never violate our conscience.
    - i. Believers can eat whatever they buy in a market so long as they have a clean conscience before the Lord in their actions.
    - ii. Believers are free to eat at an unbeliever's house if they can have a clear conscience, and if they do not inquire about the origin of what they are eating.
    - iii. If someone declares that anything served was sacrificed to an idol, the believer must then not partake of the meal for the sake of the other person's conscience even though the truth has not changed that the earth is the Lord's and all the fullness it contains (Psalm 24:1).
    - iv. In all things, if we partake while giving thanks to God and glorify God/Christ in truth and submission to Him, the Lord will accept this attitude of heart.
  - e. Whatever choice is made, make it by giving glory to God.
    - i. Offending the conscience of another will not glorify God.
    - ii. The ultimate aim for the believer is to bring unbelieving Jews and Greeks into the kingdom.
    - iii. Paul's "profit" is not personal gain in anything, but in seeing many unbelievers become saved in Jesus Christ.
6. Paul's ultimate response to every situation the Corinthian church is facing: **"Imitate me as I also imitate Christ!"**
- a. The Corinthian church was struggling with nearly every aspect of faith and church life.
  - b. In every circumstance and in every question, the best answer would be to imitate Paul who has spent his whole born-again life imitating Christ in complete submission to the will of God the Father.

### **Paul's apostolic instruction #3: Authority, head coverings and hair (11:2-16)**

1. Because the Corinthians are still practicing many customs that Paul taught them originally, he can offer them true praise for continuing in them.
  - a. They have been remembering and doing certain things that Paul taught them.
  - b. They are keeping the traditions (communion?) just as Paul established with them.
2. After a short offer of praise, Paul returns to instructing them in areas where they are not in alignment with God's will.
3. Gender roles and God's established order in the church is just like it is in the home/marriage.
  - a. The head of every man is Jesus Christ. Every Christian man must fully submit to Christ as the true head and authority over his life. If we call Him "Lord" we must obey Him as Lord (Luke 6:46). This submission to Christ's authority glorifies God.
  - b. The head of every woman is man.
    - i. Wives yes, but all women in the church are to be under the authority of a man.
    - ii. It is improper to place a woman in an authoritative role over a man (1 Tim. 2:12).
    - iii. Women would do well to remember that submitting to the order and authority which God established is an act of obedience and giving honor to God.
    - iv. This is not just an issue in our modern era. Maintaining the proper roles of men and women has been a struggle since the fall in Genesis 3.
  - c. God the Father is the head of Christ.

- i. Christ voluntarily submitted his divine will to that of the Father.
    - ii. In the same way as the Father is head of Christ, Christ is the head of the man.
    - iii. In the same way as Christ is the head of man, man is the appointed head of the woman.
  - d. The implications are very clear on the topic of submission.
    - i. If Christ, who is Himself God, is willing to voluntarily submit Himself to the full authority of the Father, then men must also voluntarily submit themselves to the full authority of Christ.
    - ii. If Christ, who is Himself God, can voluntarily submit Himself to the full authority of the Father, then women can voluntarily submit themselves to the full authority of men, but only in the proper order of men fully submitted to Christ.
- 4. God has ordained symbols demonstrating when a person is properly under His authority:
  - a. Men, unlike women, are to pray or prophesy with uncovered heads.
    - i. Jews and various pagan cultures used head coverings for prayer.
    - ii. The apostles, submitted to God's command, as believers appear to have moved away from their own historical custom to pray with head coverings.
    - iii. From this command we can conclude that all official church functions where a man would engage in spiritual activities should be done with uncovered heads.
    - iv. God has an expressed will to maintain order in church activities and to ensure proper distinctions between genders roles are maintained.
    - v. Violating head covering instructions dishonors God as it violates His established order and His timeless principles. We observe from Scripture God demands men and women to have discernable differences in their appearance and dress.
  - b. Women are permitted to pray, prophesy or do other spiritual functions in church, but only if they are properly displaying submission by covering their heads.
    - i. If a woman fails to wear a proper covering, she dishonors both God and the man who is her appointed head.
    - ii. By dishonoring God she is declaring that she is not in agreement with His established order and commandments and is not submitted to Him.
    - iii. It was common for women in the eastern cultures to wear veils and head coverings that men did not wear.
      - 1. This was a sign that she accepted her role of a woman.
      - 2. It indicated that she was under her husband's (or father's) authority.
      - 3. Failing to wear proper attire communicated that she might be an immoral woman or a prostitute available for fornication.
      - 4. It was also common for immoral women and prostitutes to have short hair and to go about in public unveiled and with her head uncovered.
  - c. Paul instructs that if a woman refuses to obey God by properly being covered, she should be shorn or shaved to match her rebellious heart to an observable rebellious appearance in the world.
- 5. Paul looks back to Adam and draws from the truth of the creation account in Genesis.
  - a. Men should not cover their heads because Adam was the first human being God created (formed from the dust of the ground) and given to be an earthly representation of image and glory of God.

- b. Though it was a brief time, it is typologically and spiritually significant that God formed the man before he brought forth the woman from the man.
  - c. Adam's source was God himself and he did not come from any prior existing created being (the source material was dust). In other words, Adam did not come from or through a woman by birth for Eve did not exist when he came to be a living being.
  - d. Conversely, Eve, the first woman, was brought into existence by God who removed a part of Adam to form her (she was not from the dust of the ground, but from the man).
  - e. Furthermore, Adam was not created to fill the needs of Eve, for she didn't even exist when God identified Adam's need for a helper who was comparable to him.
  - f. By God's declaration Adam needed a helper who was of his own kind and was of equal worth by also being made in God's own image.
  - g. Because of the Genesis account, women ought to demonstrate their submission to God by voluntary submission to their husband. They should also obey God's commandment concerning head coverings, which is their personal symbol of being under authority.
  - h. Extending the argument from creation, Paul even adds that women are instructed to do this because of the angels.
    - i. Angels are also subjected to authority and fully submit to God.
    - ii. It is unclear the impact a woman would have on angels by showing herself to be uncovered, but it is clear that impact on the angelic realm would occur.
    - iii. This is also a possible, but not certain, reference to the strange events that took place in Genesis 6 where the "sons of God took wives from the "daughters of men."
6. Men and women have different spiritual and biological roles, but all have the same value, worth and importance in the eyes of the Lord.
- a. Man is not able to exist independent from women (egg, womb, pregnancy, milk).
  - b. Likewise, women are not able to exist without men (sperm, Adam was first).
  - c. God is the author of all things, including all human life. Every man and every woman owe their existence and their humble submission to Him.
7. Even the untrained and uninitiated have enough information from nature to figure out proper gender roles and the proper attire each should wear.
- a. God has used nature to demonstrate notable differences between men and women.
  - b. It is unnatural for a woman to have an appearance as a man, and thus must also show proper submission in her gender role.
  - c. For example, does not nature teach that it is a dishonor for men to have long, feminine hair. Men should not look like women. Furthermore, God gave most women the ability to grow long and glorious hair that men cannot naturally replicate.
  - d. So glorious is a woman's hair for her that it can actually be used as a proper covering to pray and to prophecy without the need to a manufactured material to cover her head.
8. Paul knows that this issue is likely to be contentious for some. Nevertheless, the apostles and the churches have no alternate custom to which an appeal can be made. Both nature and the apostles teach that men must demonstrate their submission to Christ without a covering and women must show their submission to both their husband and Christ by their head coverings.

**Paul's apostolic instruction #4: Proper conduct in communion (11:17-34)**

1. Paul next addresses a topic that he is clearly displeased with the Corinthians over, perhaps more than all of the rest of their issues, namely communion or the Lord's supper.
2. He states that their improper conduct with this divine ordinance is so bad that they are doing more damage to God's church than if they just didn't meet together at all!
  - a. There are harmful divisions (large breaks) and factions (splinter groups) in the church (chapters 1-4).
  - b. Believers are not coming together as a church in fellowship to celebrate the remembrance of Lord's death and resurrection.
  - c. The Corinthians have segmented the church into "approved" and "disapproved" groups so that those in charge receive some form of ungodly recognition for themselves.
  - d. The "approved" appear to be eating a full meal as they gather while others who are "unapproved" are left hungry and wanting.
  - e. Still others are coming together and getting drunk in the Lord's Supper.
  - f. What?! Paul questions how the situation could have gotten this bad and how anyone in charge would continue to claim that they are submitted to Christ's authority.
  - g. If all they are doing is gathering together in various factions, eating like gluttons and getting drunk, they should really just stay home and not defile the church with their sinful actions.
  - h. Paul questions if the Corinthians despise the church and enjoy shaming those who need the basic necessities of life.
  - i. Paul has nothing in these reports by which he can praise them in their conduct in their church gatherings.
3. The proper observance of communion in the church.
  - a. The instructions and example of the Last Supper came to Paul directly from the Lord. Paul was not with Jesus and the disciples, so he needed details and guidance from the Lord to write this commandment to them.
    - i. The institution of the Lord's Supper came on the night Jesus was betrayed.
    - ii. Jesus took bread, gave thanks to the Father, and told His disciples:
      1. This is My body which is broken for you.
      2. Do this in remembrance of Me.
    - iii. In the same manner He took the cup after supper had ended and said:
      1. This cup is the new covenant in My blood.
      2. This do as often as you drink in remembrance of Me.
  - b. We take part in communion for one reason only – to proclaim the Lord's death and all He accomplished on the cross until He returns at the end of the age.
4. Anyone who eats the bread or drinks the wine of communion in an unworthy manner (such as Paul described above) is guilty of violating the body and blood of Jesus.
  - a. The one violating the meaning and purpose of the sacred communion ordinance brings judgment on himself as an act of unbelief in all the Lord did.
  - b. Taking communion in an unworthy manner shows no reverence for the precious body and blood of the Lord who died for the sins of the world.
  - c. Every believer is required to examine their own hearts and actions before taking communion. If repentance and confession is required, it should be done before partaking of the sacred observance of communion.

- d. Failure to properly honor the Lord in taking communion is to bring judgement rather than the grace and forgiveness that communion represents.
  - e. Taking in an unworthy manner is a failure to discern what the Lord's bodily sacrifice truly means.
  - f. Because the Corinthians have failed to properly administer or partake of communion in honor of the Lord, many in the church are sick while others have died as a result.
  - g. If we will judge ourselves, confess, repent and seek God's forgiveness in Christ, then God will have no basis by which to judge us for unconfessed sins.
  - h. When God initiates the judgement of our sins, He chastens us as a way of exposing our sins and drawing us back into correct relationship with Him.
  - i. If God did not chasten us for unrepentant sins, then we run the risk of being condemned along with the world of unbelievers.
5. Final instructions for the Lord's supper.
- a. Should be observed as a unified gathering in the church.
  - b. Wait for all who will attend to be present.
  - c. Share in communion with all who are present.
  - d. It is not intended to be a meal service; rather it is an act of remembering and honoring Christ through the representative elements of bread and drink.
  - e. Those who are hungry should eat at home and not expect to be filled by communion.
  - f. In celebrating the observance, remember it is all about the Lord. Anything else brings judgment on the church.

# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 9 (12:1-13:13)

### **Paul's apostolic instruction #5: Unity from Jesus and the Holy Spirit (12:1-6)**

1. Paul begins a new topical instruction and again declares that he does not want the church to be ignorant or unaware of the truth.
2. Instruction #5 concerns "spirituals," or the empowering work of the Holy Spirit.
3. Like all pagans, the Corinthians were previously carried away from the truth by their worship of dumb (silent and powerless) idols.
4. Even though they were once carried away and followed lies, they should have confidence in their salvation in Christ now.
  - a. No one who has the Holy Spirit and who is submitted to God would ever call Jesus accursed or "anathema."
  - b. The Godhead is not divided. A person cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit and also call Jesus cursed or to be against the truth of God.
  - c. Anyone who does call Jesus accursed clearly does not have the Holy Spirit and is certainly not in the will of the Father.
5. No one can make a true confession of faith and have eternal life without declaring that Jesus is Lord. Calling Jesus "Lord" in truth evidence of the Holy Spirit's active presence in the believer. In practice, I submit that this a validation for the individual, not a valid test of the spiritual condition of others.
6. The types of Holy Spirit empowerments for believers, and each has diversities.
  - a. Gifts
  - b. Ministries
  - c. Activities

### **Paul's apostolic instruction #6: Manifestations of the Holy Spirit (12:7-11)**

1. There is only one Holy Spirit and there is only one universal church in Christ.
2. The same Holy Spirit, who indwells all believers and all church, gives many and diverse gifts to individual believers.
3. Every believer will have a different function, but all believers serve the same Lord.
4. There are many functions and activities required for the church to operate and to fulfill the ministry calling, but it is God the Father who works all things in all believers for His own will.
5. Together, Paul is showing the reality of the Trinity
  - a. Same Spirit
  - b. Same Lord (Jesus)
  - c. Same God (Father)
6. The Spiritual gifts, the Spiritual equipping of the ministry and Spirit-ordained functions of the church all combine to manifest the divine will of God in the church for the profit of all.
  - a. One believer may be given a word of wisdom through the Spirit (understanding to make wise choices).
  - b. Another believer may be given a word of knowledge from God through the same Spirit.



- c. Another may be given a supernatural degree of faith by the same Spirit.
  - d. Another may be able to heal others of sickness or other maladies by the same Spirit.
  - e. Another may be able to “work” God-glorifying miracles.
  - f. Another may be called to give a prophecy: speaking directly and authoritatively for the Lord.
  - g. Another may be able to discern spiritual activity in the invisible realms.
  - h. Another may be able to speak in different tongues or languages which have not been learned prior to speaking (Acts 2).
  - i. Another may be able to properly interpret an unknown tongue or language.
7. These differing manifestations are based entirely on the Holy Spirit who then distributes the gifts as He wills and for whatever purpose He wills to accomplish through them.
- a. The word “gift” (Gk. *charisma*) is different from a present or the transferring of possession (*doron* in Greek).
    - i. *Doron* conveys a transfer, even permanently, of something to another.
    - ii. *Charisma* conveys a granted use of something, especially by the Holy Spirit.
  - b. The recipient will never have independent control over its use apart from the Holy Spirit.
    - i. Someone who receives wisdom in a matter should not claim that he now has superior wisdom in all matters.
    - ii. Someone who receives a word of prophecy on one occasion should not claim that all their words forevermore are a direct message from God.
    - iii. Someone who has been used to bring physical healing to another should not presume that they can cure all people of all medical conditions wherever they go.
  - c. The manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit, including when or how they are used, is not transferred to the receiver. The Holy Spirit always remains in full control of the use of His power.
  - d. Believers should never presume their own power or take pride in being used as a vessel to manifest the Holy Spirit’s power and will. All glory is reserved for God alone.
  - e. The will of the Holy Spirit is central to this issue. He gives no indication that any use of the gift is merited or that it is a reward. God is sovereign and His will is likely beyond all human reasoning and logic (chapters 1-3 God’s wisdom vs. man’s).

**Paul’s apostolic instruction #7: The church is the Body of Christ in unity and diversity (12:12-31)**

- 1. Paul uses the human body as a representative example of the church.
  - a. Each human being has one body.
  - b. Each human body has many diversified members or functional parts that make up the whole.
  - c. As it is with the human body, so it is with Christ and His church – one body with many members.
    - i. Every believer, regardless of time, place, circumstance and independent of the one performing the baptism, was baptized by the Holy Spirit into the one body of Christ.

- ii. Jews and Greeks are all in the same unified body (unthinkable apart from Christ).
      - iii. Slaves and freemen are also all members of one unified body.
      - iv. All believers have celebrated the communion cup together by the Holy Spirit.
    - d. Paul's conclusion: in Christ and in the Holy Spirit all believers are unified and members of a single functioning unit just as it is with the parts of a human being.
- 2. Members of the church must bring the diversities of functions into true unity. The church is a single living organism that serves God and together accomplishes His will.
  - a. Members cannot separate from the whole – the foot is a necessary function for a healthy body even if it does not serve the same function as the hand.
  - b. The ear is a necessary function for a healthy body even if it is not an eye.
  - c. What good would an eye be without all other functions like the brain, the mouth, the stomach, the hands, the feet...?
  - d. An eye seeing but without the ear hearing is not as healthy as both organs working together as God designed them.
  - e. Likewise, the nose and smelling should not be an isolated function disconnected from the whole body.
  - f. God has set each member and each function of the body to work in perfect unity according to His will.
    - i. Is it possible that God Himself directs human cell divisions to allow for specialization into each organ and system in the human body?
    - ii. Do liver cells complain because they are not brain cells?
    - iii. Because God is able to make every living system function as a single, unified whole, shouldn't believers trust Him to properly place them into the Body of Christ according to His wisdom and His will?
  - g. Without God's handiwork there would be no human body and there would also be no church.
    - i. The eye and the hand will have to get along to be part of the body.
    - ii. The head and the feet will also have to get along to be part of the body.
- 3. In the church, as with the human body, certain parts will appear to be weaker and others less honorable.
  - a. Weaker members of the body are still necessary and required for full functionality.
  - b. Less honorable parts of the body actually receive greater honor in the Lord just as humans modestly cover over unpresentable parts and thereby show them greater honor.
  - c. Publicly presentable parts have no need for this extra level of modest care.
- 4. God has orchestrated all members and functions so that there will be no schism in the body,
  - a. Bestowing honor where it belongs.
  - b. Providing diverse functions where there is a need to be filled.
  - c. Using "nature" to show powerful unity in the midst of great diversity.
- 5. All members of the church should care for the needs of one another.
  - a. If even one member of the church suffers, the whole church suffers.
  - b. When one member is honored, all members are to rejoice and celebrate God's purpose and will being carried out by the whole church.

6. Direct application in the church
  - a. All individual believers are collectively the Body of Christ.
  - b. God is the only one who appoints the roles and functions of the church.
    - i. The Apostles came first and built the foundation of the church.
    - ii. Second came the prophets who proclaimed the truth in the New Testament age.
    - iii. Third came teachers who demonstrate and proclaim established truths from the authority of Scripture.
    - iv. Then God filled in the rest of the functions of church ministry.
      1. Miracles
      2. Healings
      3. Helps
      4. Administrations
      5. Various tongues
  - c. God does not need or want all members to have the same functions.
    - i. Are all Apostles? No!
    - ii. Are all prophets? No!
    - iii. Are all teachers? No!
    - iv. Are all workers of miracles? No!
    - v. Do all perform healings? No!
    - vi. Do all speak with tongues? No!
    - vii. Do all interpret tongues? No!
  - d. Since everyone will not have all or most "gifts," believers should desire to have the best or greater gifts, but only in the most excellent way (love).

**Paul's apostolic instruction #8: Love is the undisputed greatest gift of all (13:1-13).**

1. Paul's approach to explaining love:
  - a. Love is of the greatest importance (13:1-3)
  - b. Love involves intentional action (13:4-7)
  - c. Love is permanent and will not fail (13:8-12)
  - d. Love is supreme over all gifts, values, traits and actions (13:13)
2. Without love, what would be the point of any spiritual gift or church function?
  - a. Speaking in tongues without love is just making worthless noise.
  - b. Speaking the words of God Himself without love gains nothing.
  - c. Understanding all mysteries of the universe without love is pointless.
  - d. Having faith to move a mountain without love amounts to nothing.
  - e. Giving personal wealth to the poor to provide food without love profits nothing.
  - f. Surrendering life to persecutions and being burned in the fire without love has no value.
3. Agape love:
  - a. Defined by an undefeatable passion to seek the best interests of the beloved without any need or expectation of reciprocation.
  - b. Is a choice in favor of the beloved, not a felling or emotion.
  - c. Is the love that God has for the world and is described in detail here (more than marriage vows).
  - d. Has a connotation of being totally given over to that which is loved.

4. Agape love is not:
  - a. *Eros*: a passionate, physical or sexual expression based on desires or emotions.
  - b. *Storge*: an affectionate love without the level of eros such as a parent for a child.
  - c. *Phileo*: a cherishing love by will or choice for a brother or dear friend.
5. What true agape love actually is (personified):
  - a. Patient and suffering long without resentment, anger, or revenge. It maintains control to continue to seek the best outcome for the beloved.
  - b. Kind, courteous, good, helpful, self-sacrificing. It does not dwell on wounds and neglect. It reaches out to the beloved even against rational reasons not to do so.
  - c. Does not envy, is not jealous or begrudging because of what the beloved may have:
    - i. Position
    - ii. Companionship
    - iii. Possessions
    - iv. Popularity
    - v. Talents or abilities
  - d. Does not parade or vaunt itself to drag the beloved down in honor or self-worth. It seeks to give recognition, praise, and honor rather than seeking it.
  - e. It is not puffed up in pride, arrogance, or conceit. It does not rank or rate the beloved into a lower status for selfish gain. Rather it is modest, humble and seeks recognition for others rather than self.
  - f. It is not rude, indecent, or disgraceful toward the beloved. It is orderly, controlled and deliberate in seeking the best for the beloved.
  - g. It does not seek its own benefits or profit; it does not insist on having its rights recognized. It seeks to serve rather than to be served.
  - h. It is not able to be provoked into anger or into harming the beloved. It is not easily aroused to anger or malice and does not easily become exasperated. It controls emotions in the best interest of the beloved.
  - i. It thinks no evil against the beloved. It forgives and holds no account of harms done by the beloved.
  - j. It refuses to rejoice in iniquity, unrighteousness, and wrongdoing by the beloved. It finds no pleasure in sins committed and does not seek harm to the beloved for transgressions.
  - k. It rejoices in truth and seeks to have truth prevail to the benefit of the beloved. It does not hide truth but rather courageously faces the truth with the best interest of the beloved in mind.
  - l. It bears all things no matter the weight or burden. It takes no pleasure in exposing the sins and weaknesses of the beloved. It endures even in neglect, ridicule or any attack that may come from the beloved.
  - m. It believes the very best of and for the beloved. It demonstrates complete trust and manifests true hope that the best is still possible for the beloved.
  - n. It hopes, without ceasing, that the beloved will triumph in goodness and righteousness in spite of current circumstances.
  - o. It endures all things by standing firm in love and in commitment to the beloved. It will not be pushed aside or away from enduring by anything that comes against it. It is full of

fortitude and ready for any battle that may come. It will not buckle under pressure or enemy assault. It is a commitment to total victory on behalf of the beloved.

- p. Quite simply, agape love will never, ever fail!
6. By contrast, all other activities and functions will fail or cease.
- a. Prophecies will fail. They will not endure past God's need to use them.
  - b. Tongues will cease. Tongues have their purpose, but they will not endure forever.
  - c. Man's collective knowledge will vanish away when God puts an end to all things (compare with Daniel 12:4)
  - d. Reasons why all things other than love will fail:
    - i. We can only know truth in part but will always lack full knowledge of divine truth.
    - ii. We can prophecy (speak God's words provided by the Holy Spirit), but only in part. No person is capable of speaking all divine words, truth and knowledge.
    - iii. There is a time in the future when Jesus Christ, the One who is perfect, will return. When He comes, all the imperfect works of man will be done away.
    - iv. Before Christ comes, we are like children learning and struggling towards full maturity. Likewise, believers are learning and struggling to reach our full sanctification that can only be realized when we are in His full presence permanently.
    - v. Also, just as when a person looks into a dim mirror (the technology available in the ancient world), we can only get a limited perspective of our true self and appearance. When Christ comes, all the dimness will yield to the divine truth of all things.
    - vi. Even Paul himself, the great Apostle, only knows a limited portion of all God will ultimately reveal at Christ's coming. It is only then that Paul and the rest of us will have access to the full knowledge and plan of God.
7. Until Christ does return, we have three imperatives to live by:
- a. Faith in God and all He has revealed to us.
  - b. Hope in all of God's promises to deliver us and to have eternal life with Him.
  - c. Love, the greatest of all. It is the one part of eternity that we can practice, without limits now, even before Christ's return. Love is so great that it is the one certain thing that will ensure past this life and into eternity itself.

# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 10 (14:1-40)

### **Paul's apostolic instruction #9: Pursue love first and then earnestly desire to be used by the Holy Spirit for the profit of the body of Christ (14:1-12)**

1. Having concluded the extended explanation of love and its priority in all things, Paul returns to the topic of the proper use and function of the works of the Holy Spirit in the church.
  - a. Christian love is non-optional. All believers must actively pursue love in the church.
    - i. Requires intense and intentional effort.
    - ii. It has a definite purpose and goal in mind – demonstrating love to all.
  - b. Believers must daily choose the pursuit of love before they can be of any practical use to the Holy Spirit working in and through them.
2. Having established a foundation of love for those in the church, believers are now instructed to desire Holy Spirit's power to be manifested in them for His purposes.
  - a. Set your heart on receiving what the Holy Spirit has for you personally.
  - b. Paul is calling believers to action rather than being content to be passive in the church.
3. During official church functions, it is proper to desire to be used by the Holy Spirit to communicate His message to the church.
  - a. He will certainly choose someone to speak through, so all believers should be open.
  - b. Being open to being used is not a license to force something to happen or to falsely claim Holy Spirit authority.
4. Prophesying is more valuable for the church than speaking in tongues.
  - a. Tongues is mostly private and a personal exchange between the believer and God.
    - i. Others in the church will not understand what is spoken.
    - ii. Even for the one speaking in tongues, there are mysteries that require interpretation by the Holy Spirit.
    - iii. Speaking in tongues is self-edifying only (unless interpreted and intended for the church).
  - b. Conversely, prophesying by the power of the Holy Spirit benefits the whole church.
    - i. Prophesying edifies others – strengthens, builds up, equips the hearer.
    - ii. Prophesying exhorts others – encourages and brings consolation to the hearer.
    - iii. Prophesying comforts others in and by the will of the Lord.
    - iv. Prophesying in the church is a communication from God to the church.
5. Paul does not wish to deprive any believer from speaking in tongues, but his greater desire is that all believers would be able to prophesy to build up the church in the Lord.
6. Objectively, prophecy has a greater value and worth to the church than tongues for it can touch all lives at once compared to tongues where it only benefits one person and wastes others' time if it does not come with an interpretation.
  - a. There is no profit for the church in tongues unless they are accompanied by:
    - i. Revelation
    - ii. Knowledge
    - iii. Prophecy

- iv. Teaching
  - b. Musical instruments are shown as an analogy for tongues.
    - i. A flute or harp has no practical value unless they make distinguishable sound.
    - ii. Instruments that make indistinguishable sounds will not profit the hearer.
  - c. Speaking in tongues without conveying meaning is just speaking into the air. This brings confusion, not clarity, and it does not demonstrate love and concern for the church.
  - d. There are a multitude of languages spoken by man; the known language spoken in that society is significant for that group because it allows for meaningful communication.
  - e. However, speaking in an unknown tongue not commonly spoken by the local people causes the hearer to feel like a foreigner and unaccepted in his own church.
7. Paul calls upon the Corinthians to switch from having an unhealthy desire and focus on tongues, which appears to have been abused in Corinth, to the greater and more valuable desire to have the greater manifestation of the Holy Spirit operating among them: prophetic words given for the edification for all.
  8. The church that edifies and exhorts others in the will of God will excel and prosper in their service to the Lord.
  9. The church that only seeks self-edification will likely splinter and divide, just as the Corinthians had done in the time since Paul was last there.

**Paul's apostolic instruction #10: The proper use of tongues in church (14:13-25)**

1. Speaking in a foreign tongue in church must be done responsibly.
  - a. Pray for interpretation before speaking.
  - b. Private tongues are a form of prayer in the spirit to God. Without interpretation even the one speaking has an unfruitful understanding of what was prayed.
  - c. Whenever possible, pray with the spirit and with understanding.
  - d. Whenever possible, sing with the spirit and sing with understanding.
  - e. Without interpretation and understanding, the listener cannot rightfully say amen along with you; they are therefore not edified by the prayer or song in their own spirit.
2. Paul spoke with tongues often and he does not forbid their proper use.
  - a. Privately, Paul is confident that he speaks in tongues more than anyone.
  - b. However, when Paul is in church, he would rather speak five plain and understandable words than to speak ten thousand words in a tongue which no one will understand.
3. God uses unknown tongues as a sign of His power and truth to unbelievers.
  - a. Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11-12 to show that God has said He will speak to foreign people groups who do not know Him, but even with this miraculous sign they will not hear Him.
  - b. The intended audience of the manifestation of tongues is unbelievers who will hear God speaking but they will unfortunately not respond to His loving call to them.
  - c. In the church, the unbeliever or the unformed person who comes in expecting to hear a message in their own language spoken in their own region. If someone in the church is speaking in language that is unknown to them, they will claim that Christians are out of their minds.
4. When prophesying is properly used in the church, an unbeliever will hear the message and may be convicted to accept the truth. If he responds to the convictions of his heart, he will fall down on his face, worship God and declare that He is truly at work in the church gathering.

## Paul's apostolic instruction #11: Order in church gatherings (14:26-40)

1. It is not possible that in a single gathering of believers that the Holy Spirit will give every attendee something that must be publicly offered for the whole body to hear, including:
  - a. Psalms (singing)
  - b. Teaching
  - c. Use of tongues
  - d. Revelation
  - e. Interpretation of a tongue
2. If the Holy Spirit is the one bringing the manifestation, then the purpose will be edification of the church. It will always be in order and would not engulf the gathering in any form of chaos, such as everyone vying to speak at the same time over one another.
3. Tongues is permitted to be spoken in church under these specific conditions:
  - a. Only two or three will speak in tongues at any single gathering.
  - b. Each will speak in turn, not at the same time or in competition with the other.
  - c. One who is able to interpret must be present and must provide interpretation so that all will know the meaning of what was spoken.
  - d. If there is no interpreter, then speaking in tongues at a church gathering is inappropriate. The one with a tongue must speak to himself and to God only, but he is to remain silent in terms public speaking.
4. The greater manifestation of prophesying is also permitted in church gatherings under these specific conditions:
  - a. Only two or three prophets should be permitted to speak at a single gathering.
  - b. All others are to judge/test what is spoken against the truth of Scripture.
  - c. If two people have the same message to speak from God, then only one needs to speak publicly and the other is to remain silent.
  - d. If another truly has a timely prophesy while the first is speaking, then the first should yield and permit the other to speak.
  - e. Those two or three who prophesy are to maintain order by speaking one by one so that all who attend may learn and be encouraged by what the Lord has spoken through the prophets without distraction that may come from a speaker not maintaining order.
5. The spirit of the prophet is still subject to the control and authority of the prophet.
  - a. No one should claim that the Holy Spirit compelled them to be out of order.
  - b. A person used by God is still able to maintain self-control over what they do or say.
  - c. Disorder and confusion is the result of weak human flesh, not the Spirit of God.
6. God is not the author of confusion in any church. He brings peace and truth to church gatherings through the work of the Holy Spirit.
7. Paul places additional limits on women to be in order during church gatherings.
  - a. Women are to keep silent, not permitted to speak.
    - i. Context here is essential to our understanding of Paul's meaning.
    - ii. Chapter 14 deals with public speaking in the context of order versus disorder; it offers instructions to leaders on how to maintain order in gatherings.
    - iii. We already know that Paul acknowledged and gave instructions for the role of women in prayer and prophesying publicly in the church (11:1-16).



- iv. Therefore, this instruction in chapter 14 cannot negate the prior instruction concerning women having speaking roles in the church.
  - v. Women demonstrating proper submission to authority is central to maintaining proper roles and order in church gatherings.
  - vi. From 1 Tim. 2:11-12 we understand the narrow limitations placed on women in church gatherings:
    - 1. Women are to learn in silence with all submission.
    - 2. Paul, Himself speaking by the Holy Spirit, does not allow a woman to teach or have authority over men.
- b. Building a biblical theology of women's roles in church 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy:
- i. Women are of equal value as men, made in the image of God. Men cannot exist without women and women without men. Both genders have roles and functions assigned to them by God.
  - ii. Women are called to be submitted to God's authority, which includes being submitted to the authority of her husband or leader, who is in submission to Christ.
  - iii. A woman, under godly authority, is permitted to pray and prophesy in church.
  - iv. A woman is not permitted to teach or have authority over men (1 Tim. 2:11-12) but is permitted to teach and have authority in roles that do not involve men.
  - v. A woman/wife attending a church gathering is not to cause disorder or disruptions by asking questions that could be answered by her husband/head at home (culturally the one with more education and training).
    - 1. A woman asking her husband questions shows honor, respect and submission to him. It also honors the Lord to do so.
    - 2. Limiting questions that do not need to be asked in a church gathering ensures proper godly order and respects inherent time constraints.
    - 3. Unbelievers who may attend church service will not be offended by seeing a woman speaking outside of the cultural roles observed in the first century.
    - 4. It is possible that men and women were not gathering in the same area of the church; therefore, asking any question of a man would require an undesirable disruption and disorder given any physical distances.
  - vi. Because Paul has addressed women's roles twice in the letter to Corinth, both responses seem to reflect that the women in Corinth needed to be corrected for their disorderly behaviors. Paul's instructions are intended as a solution to return proper order to the church which must conduct itself in the will of God.
- c. My personal response to Paul's theology.
- i. I submit to the authority of Scripture and teach unbiased truth regardless of my personal opinions. My teaching is not intended to convey any person choice or preference on this topic.
  - ii. Both men and women are required to submit to proper authority just as Christ also submitted to the Father's authority.
  - iii. Men and women have been given different roles in the family and in the church. Differences in roles does not mean different values or worth to God.

- iv. As with the human body analogy from chapter 12, those functions that appear to have less honor actually receive greater honor in God's system. Perhaps senior pastors have more of their reward on earth and a nursery worker has a greater reward in heaven where it counts for all eternity.
  - v. Women can have many functions and roles in the church including, prayer, prophecy, communicating messages to the church (e.g., announcements), but in doing so they are not permitted to teach or have authority over a man.
  - vi. A woman may be invited to speak on a topic for which she is a trusted expert, but in doing so she must demonstrate that she is under proper submission.
  - vii. Women are free to ask questions in my Bible studies because it is expected, not disruptive, and not out of order to do so. Likewise, women are also invited and welcomed to ask questions or give input at staff meetings, leadership meetings and the like where there is no violation of the command for order in services.
  - viii. I do not support the role of women pastors or other positions of authority where a woman would have direct and unilateral authority over a man. This provision would not include, for example, our Board of Directors because the authority of this is shared among equals as members of the board.
  - ix. Women should have a welcomed voice in the home and the church. Their communication should be heard and treated with love and respect. However, God has determined that the man has the final authority in all decisions.
8. The words of Paul to Corinth have universal church application. Corinth is not being singled out and burdened with extra rules and regulations that other churches are not constrained by.
9. If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or called to be used by the Holy Spirit, then he must agree with Paul's commandments offered here and elsewhere (tongues, order in gatherings, women). The source of the commandments given is the Lord, not Paul.
10. If anyone is ignorant of the things the Lord commands, his ignorance should be noted and he certainly is not to be given a role of authority or a voice in church leadership.
11. Conclusion on Paul's instructions on spiritual power and church order:
- a. Believers are to desire earnestly to prophesy; it is a great value to the church.
  - b. Leaders are not to forbid anyone to speak with tongues if they are done within the commands offered by Paul.
  - c. Above all, everything in the church must be done in order, for the Lord is a God of order. His church should reflect His character and His authority over the church.

# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 11 (15:1-58)

### Paul's apostolic instruction #12: The physical resurrection of Jesus Christ proves the physical resurrection of all believers (15:1-58)

1. The reality of the simple gospel (15:1-11)
  - a. Paul declares again the same gospel he has already preached to the church.
  - b. The believers in Corinth have already received the truth of the gospel.
  - c. Believers are only able to maintain their standing in Christ by trusting the gospel.
  - d. Faith requires active and continuous profession of the foundational truth.
  - e. Failure to maintain an active, abiding faith results in having believed in vain.
    - i. Prior faith and confession have no present value if they are abandoned.
    - ii. Holding fast (active and continued belief) is essential for salvation.
  - f. Three fundamental truths of the Christian faith that Paul received and delivered:
    - i. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (Old Testament prophecies)
      1. Isaiah 53
      2. Psalm 22
      3. Genesis 3
      4. Numbers 21
      5. Exodus 12 (Passover)
    - ii. He was buried (confirmed dead and in the tomb)
    - iii. He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures
      1. Genesis 1
      2. Jonah 2:17
      3. Leviticus 23:9-14
      4. Psalm 16:8-11
      5. Genesis 40:1-23
  - g. The resurrected Christ was seen bodily by many witnesses
    - i. Cephas and the "twelve"
    - ii. Over 500 brethren at the same time (most were still alive when Paul wrote).
    - iii. James and the by all the "apostles"
    - iv. Paul, as one who was born into the faith out of due time.
      1. Paul views himself as the least of all the apostles
      2. He is not worthy to be called an apostle because he persecuted the church.
      3. Only by God's grace is he able to perform the duties God has called him to do.
      4. Paul is making certain by his constant obedience that the Lord's labor to bring Paul into the faith would never be in vain.
      5. Paul labors more in the faith than all others, yet even in that all the credit and glory will go to the Lord who is with him.
      6. Ultimately it does not matter who preaches the truth of the gospel so long as it is preached and believed.
2. All hope in God and eternal life is lost without the truth of the resurrection/gospel (15:12-19).
  - a. Why would any believer claim that there is no resurrection of the dead since this is exactly what Paul and the other apostles have always taught? Sound biblical doctrine is not invented by man, and it is not subject to the whims of popular opinion.

- b. If there is no resurrection of the dead, as many were claiming, then Christ has not risen either.
  - c. If Christ has not risen from the dead, then that “fact” invalidates both what has been preached as well as any claim for a possible eternal life with God.
  - d. If Christ has not risen, then all faith is futile and God’s wrath on all sin is still a certainty.
  - e. Those who have died since becoming believers have perished and will suffer eternal separation from God in hell.
  - f. If the preaching of Christ results in hope only in this present life, then believers should be the most pitied among all men since their faith and hope would all be for nothing.
3. Reality: Jesus Christ has risen from the dead as a matter of absolute fact (15:20-28).
- a. By His resurrection Christ has become the firstfruits of the promised harvest of souls who fall asleep (die) as believers in Christ.
  - b. The firstfruits is a promise of a great and bountiful harvest yet to come.
  - c. By man (Adam) came death to all mankind (and creation).
  - d. Of necessity then, by the one Man Jesus Christ, has come resurrection from death.
  - e. Undeniable reality:
    - i. In Adam all die because through him sin entered the world.
    - ii. In Christ, all believers shall be made alive and live forever with God as they also will be resurrected from the dead just as Christ was.
    - iii. There is a specific order for resurrection to eternal life:
      - 1. Christ the firstfruits
      - 2. Believers at Christ’s return (rapture)
      - 3. Then the end [of this age] comes when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father and He puts an end to all [satanic, human] rule, authority and power.
      - 4. Afterwards, there is a time coming when Christ will reign on the earth until He has put all enemies under His feet (millennium).
      - 5. Finally, after all these things have happened the last enemy of man to be destroyed is death.
  - f. When the end comes, God the Father will place all things of creation under the Son’s feet. Of course, the Father is excepted by the phrase “all things.”
  - g. As it was in Jesus’ first coming, the Son will remain voluntarily submitted to the Father so that the Father will show Himself to all powerful over the new heavens and earth.
4. True believers accept Christ and the truth of the resurrection. False believers do not (15:29-34).
- a. If the resurrection is not a fact, why would anyone be baptized into the name of Christ? Without the resurrection Christ would still be dead and in the grave as a mortal.
  - b. Why would Paul and all believers ever place themselves in continual jeopardy if the resurrection of Christ was not a certain and verifiable fact?
  - c. In Paul’s travels he regularly boasts of the Corinthian faith in Christ Jesus our Lord (they are a light of God shining in one of the darkest cities in the empire).
  - d. In bringing this testimony of Christ to a hostile world. Paul’s life is in constant danger, and he expects his demise may come any day (he certainly had many near death or actual death experiences in his service to the Lord).
  - e. There is no explanation given anywhere in Scripture of what Paul means by stating that he has fought with beasts at Ephesus.
    - i. Most commentators believe he is referring to human struggles and even physical attacks from those opposed to the gospel.

- ii. Regardless of Paul's intended use of the phrase, his point is clear: why would he put himself through these trials that bring physical harm if he knew what he preached was anything other than the truth?
  - iii. Paul sees no advantage of proclaiming Christ in the face of great harm to himself if he were not certain of the reality of both Christ's resurrection and also the resurrection of all believers.
  - iv. If Paul's teaching was uncertain or based on a false claim, he would be better off living by the carnal adage of, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." In other words, we should all get the maximum pleasure out of this life in the here and now if nothing awaits us on the other side of death.
- f. Paul again wants the church to not be deceived (not ignorant or unaware as used in other parts of the letter).
  - i. Evil company always corrupts good habits and behaviors.
  - ii. True believers must choose a life of righteousness by putting away their sins.
  - iii. Unfortunately, not all who attend church have a saving faith in God and Christ.
  - iv. Those without Christ and those who deny the resurrection are in for a shock when they die and come face to face with their creator and the One who will judge their sins in righteousness but without the cleansing blood of Christ.
  - v. All in the Corinthian church should be ashamed that they are not more boldly proclaiming and teaching the truth; failure to do so has life and death consequences in eternity.
- 5. Paul answers the technical questions concerning the resurrection (15:35-50).
  - a. Paul knows the objections some will raise (or ask for clarification on) how it will physically happen.
    - i. How will the body we have be raised up to heaven?
    - ii. Is it the same body or will it be a different body when it is raised?
  - b. Paul calls those who ask such questions "foolish." God has given us multiple examples in creation of how the resurrection of the body will work.
    - i. Agriculture
      - 1. First you bury a seed causing the "death" of seed itself.
      - 2. Then the dead seed brings forth new life from being buried in the ground.
      - 3. What is sown, such as a grain of wheat, is not the same form as what will break through the soil and provide value to the farmer.
      - 4. It is God who gives the dead grain a new body life as He pleases. The one planting the seed has no control over what happens under the soil.
        - a. Good dirt helps, but it doesn't form the new life form.
        - b. Water helps, but it doesn't form the new life form.
      - 5. God gives each seed its own body as it sprouts for into new life.
    - ii. Comparing different aspects of God's creation.
      - 1. Man is of a different kind (Gen. 1) than land animals.
      - 2. Man is also of a different kind than that of fish (who likewise are kinds different from land animals).
      - 3. Again, birds are of a different kind than man, land animals and fish.
    - iii. Celestial bodies are also of a different kind than that all terrestrial bodies and testify of God's glory.
      - 1. We are to glorify God by looking at the stars, planets and other features in the heavens/space.
      - 2. We are to glorify God in all we see on earth – plants, animals, rocks, clouds and atmospheric conditions for life.

3. The earth is unique and different from all celestial bodies (no need to look for other earth-like planets per Paul).
  4. God gave the sun its own unique glory.
  5. God gave the moon its own unique glory.
  6. God gave the other stars their own unique glory. Even with countless trillions of stars, each one differs from all others in some way, and this also glorifies God.
- c. All of these visible aspects of creation speak to God's plan for the resurrection of the dead.
- i. Every human body is corrupted by sin, and it must die (not including those in the rapture) and then are to be sown in the ground by burial (spiritual model).
  - ii. Like a grain, the dead and corrupted body will be raised to new life that is without corruption.
    1. Sown in man's dishonor, raised in God's glory.
    2. Sown in man's weakness, raised in God's power
    3. Sown as a natural body as a descendent of Adam, raised as a spiritual body in Christ (Last Adam).
      - a. God made Adam a living being.
      - b. Christ, the last Adam, died, was buried, and was raised again to become an eternal life-giving spirit.
- d. Again, the order of events is important for our understanding.
- i. The natural man comes first.
  - ii. Then the natural man dies, is buried, and, based on faith, is eligible to be raised to a new spiritual life.
  - iii. This was true of the first man, Adam, who was formed into a man by God from the dust of the ground (Paul affirms the Genesis account). Every human born of Adam carries the same dust origin heritage as did Adam.
  - iv. Christ, the second man, was not formed by the dust of the ground but came down out of heaven as the eternal God.
  - v. Both Adam and Christ play a significant role in our existence and our eternity.
    1. Being born of dust through Adam means we are mortal, will die and return to dust in hope of a new life again in Christ.
    2. If we believe in Christ, He will raise us up to new spiritual life in the same way as He is spirit and inhabits eternity. We shall also bear the image of Christ in our new bodies far more perfectly than we can in our mortal and corrupted bodies.
- e. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. No descendant of Adam is eligible to enter heaven without Christ. Heaven and eternity exist, but man cannot enter based on his own merits.
- f. Corruption cannot inherit incorruption.
6. Eternal victory in Christ alone (15:51-58)
- a. The process of death, burial and resurrection for believers is true for most humans who have ever lived (Enoch and Elijah are notable exceptions).
  - b. Nevertheless, God has entrusted Paul to reveal a mystery about a special group of believers who will not experience death and burial as most of human history has.
    - i. Not all who believe in Jesus Christ will sleep (die).
    - ii. This is referring to the catching away (rapture) of the church (1 Thes. 4:13-18).
    - iii. Those who are caught up will be changed directly without having to die and be buried in the dust of the ground.
    - iv. This will occur in an instant, the twinkling of an eye (speed of light?).
    - v. The catching away of believers will occur at the last trumpet (there is much speculation as to what is the last trumpet and when it will occur).

- vi. Those who are dead (sleep), will be raised incorruptible and all believers alive when the trumpet sounds will be changed from corruption to incorruption.
  - c. Regardless of the which group we may be in, the results are the same: the believer's mortal life will be transformed into immortality.
7. The final victory for believers occurs when God destroys death at the end of the last age.
- a. Death will be swallowed up in God's total victory (Hosea 13:14).
  - b. Death will never sting anyone again – believers will never fear death in eternity.
  - c. Hades, the temporary place of the dead, will be defeated and emptied of all who once dwelt there after death.
  - d. Sin brings the sting of death (Rom 6:23).
  - e. The law reveals sin and only leads to death.
  - f. We should all give thanks to God who gives us victory over death and Hades in the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - i. Without Him we would still be in our sins and would suffering the second death.
    - ii. Christ accomplished a total victory over sin, death and the grave as proven by His resurrection.
  - g. Therefore, believers are to be steadfast in their faith in Jesus Christ.
    - i. Be immovable on any and all truths of Scripture against enemy attack.
    - ii. Seek to always abound in the work of the Lord, through the Holy Spirit.
    - iii. Believers are called to have absolute confidence that serving the Lord faithfully with a heart of belief and submission is never in vain.

# 1 Corinthians Bible Study

## Section 12 (1:1-24)

### **Paul's apostolic instruction #13: Collections for the saints (16:1-4)**

1. Paul gives all churches and all believers orders to support the ministry financially.
2. This should be a regular practice
  - a. On the first day of the week (Sunday)
  - b. Believers should lay down their offerings that have been stored during the week.
  - c. Intentionally store up offerings during the week to bring on Sunday.
  - d. Each person should give something, but as personal prosperity increases, so should their future offerings to the ministry.
3. Paul prefers not to have to mention this topic in person; therefore, they are to give and collect offerings to be used each week as an ongoing practice.
4. The collections in this case are intended for Jerusalem.
  - a. Gentiles supporting Jews in need was certainly a novel practice, but Paul's efforts helped to bring unity between these two groups which has a historical cultural of mutual hatred.
  - b. Paul welcomes a representative Corinthian believer to accompany him if possible.
  - c. The representative would then present the offerings personally.
  - d. In making this offer Paul was able to show his integrity over the handling of collections. Also, the representative would see firsthand the various needs being met by the offerings.
  - e. There are many speculations as to why the church in Jerusalem was apparently in need:
    - i. Severe persecutions by Jews (1 Th. 2:14-16)
    - ii. Failure in the practice of selling everything and sharing in all things (Act. 4:32-37)
    - iii. Famine (Act. 11:27-30)

### **Paul's care and concern for the church and those who serve in ministry (16:5-12)**

1. Despite Paul's calling to carry the gospel throughout the world, his heart remained with every church and every believer he had previously ministered to.
2. Paul was unable to confirm his travel plans, not fully knowing the will of the Lord in every detail, but he wanted the Corinthians to know he personally longed to return and see them again.
3. Paul was writing from Ephesus and was planning to travel through Macedonia.
4. Since winter restricted travel options, one option would be for Paul to spend a winter with them while waiting to resume his journey in the spring when travel was again possible.
5. Paul indicated that he did not just want to pass through for a short visit, but his heart was to come and stay for a while if the Lord permitted him to do so.
6. Paul's current appointment was to minister in Ephesus where the soil was rich to win souls for Christ, but there were also many adversaries who opposed him there (he continued in ministry when others may have left under the same level of persecution).
7. Paul's son in the faith, Timothy, may come in advance of Paul's return to Corinth.
  - a. Paul is concerned for Timothy and requested that he be received and treated well by them.
  - b. While Timothy was not a substitute for Paul, the Corinthians can be assured that when he does come, he would do the faithful work of the Lord as Paul also does.



- c. Paul instructs the Corinthians not to despise Timothy. He ought to be permitted to come and do the work of the Lord in peace, at least in the church.
  - d. Paul desires to be reunited with Timothy and will be waiting for his return (therefore he expects Timothy to be able to bring a good report about how he was treated).
8. Paul also mentions Apollos (who had many devoted followers in Corinth – 1:12).
- a. Apollos was also not in Corinth at this time, but Paul requested that he return. However, Apollos was not willing to go at this time, and Paul had no authority to demand otherwise.
  - b. Apollos was not opposed to returning to Corinth, he just deemed it to not be an appropriate time to do so.

#### **Paul's apostolic instruction #14: Living properly for Christ now (16:13-24)**

1. Watch! Be on guard against outside attacks and internal corruption in the church.
2. Stand fast in the faith (perseverance in and through every trial and tribulation).
3. Be brave. Christ and the Holy Spirit are always with us, therefore what can man do to us (Heb. 13:6)?
4. Be strong in holding firm to the truth of God no matter the opposition.
5. Let all things be done with love (chapter 13).
6. Submit to those in authority so long as they are devoted to God and to ministering to all the saints.
  - a. The household of Stephanas are known as strong and reliable leaders.
  - b. Many others have worked and labored with Paul, and they can also be trusted.
7. While Paul doesn't know his own travel plans with certainty, he knows who will be carrying this message back to Corinth:
  - a. Stephanas
  - b. Fortunatus
  - c. Acaicus
8. These men are able to supply sound doctrine and teaching which the Corinthians clearly lacked.
9. These same will have refreshed Paul's spirit and are well able to refresh the Corinthians.
10. Final greetings and Paul's farewell
  - a. The churches from Asia send their greetings
  - b. Aquila and Priscilla greet them heartily in the Lord with all the church in their house.
  - c. All of Paul's companions send their greetings and well wishes.
11. Paul is not one to write his own letters, but he did add the closing remarks personally.
12. If anyone does not actively love the Lord, he will be accursed.
13. As in the "Lord's Prayer," Paul concludes with a prayer that the Lord will return as soon as He wills.
14. Paul's signature closing is repeated in every one of his letters, including Hebrews
  - a. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
  - b. Paul sends his love in Jesus Christ personally to every believer in Corinth.