

# I CORINTHIANS

1 & 2 Corinthians 9-12.doc

Rev. Louis Ruales compiled the original outline for this class, but I am unaware of his sources and therefore they are not documented. I added the introduction to his outline. Some information in the introduction was quoted from “**Willmington’s Guide to the Bible from the Quick Verse Library**” indicated by (WG) at the beginning of the quoted material. This material is used by permission.

The material from 2 Corinthians was compiled by Rev. Ruales from the “**Preacher’s Outline Sermon Bible Commentary**” by NavPress, and is used by permission of Leadership Ministries Worldwide. There is more material in this presentation than can be taught in the time allowed for this course. Therefore, I suggest that the instructors familiarize themselves with the material and teach it by paraphrasing rather than sharing the entire outline.

Some additional comments were added to this outline in the section covering 1 Corinthians chapters 12-13 in January of 2004 by RevC.

In February of 2007 the outline numbering was modified to bring consistency to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, but no text was changed. The numbering was also modified in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, but again no text was changed.

**In May of 2010 two examinations were added to the end of the material. Nothing else was changed.**

**In June scripture text was added to aid teachers teaching from the complete volume of teaching notes.**

In April of 2012 the sample test was removed and incorporated into the sample test file for all subjects. In September some corrections were made to the outline, but no material was changed.

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Author**

The author was Paul the apostle (1:1, 16:21)

### **B. Date written:**

Written about 56 A.D. near the close of Paul's third year of residence at Ephesus, **Acts 20:31**

**C. Importance:**

Of all his church letters, Romans is no doubt the most important, but **I Corinthians** is probably second in importance. This is so because of its great section on the resurrection of Christ and the believer (**I Cor. 15**), and if for no other reason, because of its sheer bulk, for it is by far the longest of Paul's writings.

**D. The theme:**

The theme was to correct disorders that had arisen in the church, and to set forth a standard for Christian conduct in relation to the church, home, and the world.

**E. The purpose:**

The purpose was to correct certain doctrinal views, and irregularity of Christian living. (**WG**) There is almost no modern-day local church problem that is not covered in I Corinthians. The church was filled with theological and personal problems:

1. They were divided concerning spiritual leaders and had perverted the doctrine of baptism – chapt. 1
2. They were quarreling among themselves lacking love for one another – chapt. 1
3. They were carnal to the core having deceived themselves and defiling their bodies– 3:1, 17-18
4. They were puffed up with pride – 4:18
5. They were tolerating horrible immorality – 5:1
6. They were suing each other in heathen courts – 6:1
7. They were confused about marriage – 7:1
8. They had abused the doctrine of Christian liberty – 8:9
9. They attacked Paul's ministry and were not properly supporting those who ministered to them chapt. 9
10. The women were not submitting male leadership in the public worship service – 11:4-16
11. They had made a mockery of the Lord's supper – 11:30
12. They had corrupted the gifts of the Spirit, especially tongues – chapt. 14

13. They were confused on the subject of the resurrection – chapt. 15
14. They weren't giving as they had – chapt. 16

**F. Key Verse: 1 Cor 14:40** Let all things be done decently and in order.

**G. Background of I Corinthians (WG)**

1. It is believed that on Paul's visit to Corinth during his 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey (Acts 18) he establishes the work there
2. During the summer of A.D. 53, Paul starts on his third missionary journey, apparently alone (Acts 18:23)
3. He arrives at Ephesus and spends three years there (Acts 18:10)
4. While in Ephesus he is visited by a delegation from Corinth (perhaps from Chloe's family) with news concerning the tragic situation in their local church
5. With a heavy heart, Paul sits down and writes I Corinthians.

**H. It is believed that Paul wrote 4 letters to Corinth** and visited the Corinthians three times. Two of the letters have been lost.

**I. Paul speaks Jesus Christ** no less than ten times in the first ten verses.

This was not going to be an easy letter for Paul to write he had to bring correction. Paul is trying to soften the rebuke by reminding us that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the center of all things.

**"WHO IS THE CHURCH?"**

**1 Corinthians 1:1-3**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** The church is the people of God who receive his special blessings.

**I. CHAPTER 1 - THE IMPACT OF THE CHURCH - 1:1**

**1 Cor. 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,**

## A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IT'S INFLUENCE

1. The Church in Corinth was a especially oppressed church, constantly surrounded within a city that was renown for its debauchery and pagan practices.
2. The believers in the church there knew the depths of sin as each had been saved from a pagan lifestyle - cp. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**
3. Even though Paul was instrumental in the founding of the church, there were those who questioned his right or authority to instruct them on various issues - the most serious of which was their refusal to detach themselves from the indulgences of the world around them.
4. Hence, Paul declares that his authority resulted not by the will of man, but that he was **"called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God"**
  - a. **"called"** - illustrates how that he did not appoint himself to this role, but he was "called" by God.
  - b. **"an apostle of Jesus Christ"** - demonstrates that he is able to speak for the Lord inasmuch as he was "sent forth" by Him.
  - c. **"by the will of God"** - God the Father was behind the message that he was delivering - Hence, it bears the authority of God.

## B. THE EXTENT OF IT'S INFLUENCE

1. The church is influential because God has initiated His plan using the people He has chosen to lead -- just like Paul.
2. However, notice the extent of the church's impact -- in that **"Sosthenes"** is described as **"our brother"**. Sosthenes was the chief ruler of the synagogue who succeeded Crispus as chief ruler. Crispus, according to Acts 18:8 was converted to Christ and Sosthenes became chief ruler.
3. This **"Sosthenes"** is the man who is mentioned in Acts 18:17 - the "leader of the synagogue" in Corinth who was beaten by the Greek's. The passage does not give the reason for his beating. Perhaps it was because of his conversion to Christ. How this must have provoked the Jews as two of their chief rulers of the synagogue were converted to Christ one after another.
4. He is now serving as Paul's secretary.

5. This demonstrates that there is nobody who is outside the power of the Gospel - "it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes" - **Romans 1:16**

## **II. THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH - 1:2**

**1 Cor. 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:**

### **A. IT EXISTS THROUGH PEOPLE**

1. Far too often, people consider the church to be a place they go or a building they enter.
2. Such people believe that they are part of the church only when they are physically present inside the building called the "church"
3. When people who have this perception leave the church building, they are prone to fail to take their sense of responsibility for ministry with them.
4. Clearly, we are told that the church is a reference to **"those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling"**
5. Notice the work done to make an individual part of the church was done by Christ.
6. Also, we who are part of the church have been "called" to be the church according to the grace and mercy of God.

### **B. IT ENCOMPASSES ALL BELIEVERS**

1. Notice also that Paul addresses the church as also including **"all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"**
2. This is typically identified as the **"universal church"** - meaning that it includes everybody who trusts Christ wherever they are.
3. No true believer exists outside the church of Jesus Christ - for we have all be placed into one body - cp. **1 Corinthians 12:13-14**

## C. IT IS EXPRESSED LOCALLY

1. God has designed the universal, invisible church to be manifested in various communities through local churches - **"to the church of God which is at Corinth ..."**
2. This is often what is called the organized church which exists as members of the universal, invisible church gather in their local communities and organize themselves for the expressed purpose of fulfilling God's design for the church - cp. **Acts 2:42** - devoting themselves to the:
  - a. ... Apostles' doctrine: God's Word
  - b. ... fellowship:
  - c. ... breaking of bread
  - d. ... prayer

## III. THE INHERITANCE OF THE CHURCH - 1:3

**1 Cor. 1:3** **Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.**

### A. THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR INHERITANCE

1. **"Grace to you ..."** - referring to the favor of God
2. There is saving grace and there is another provision of grace that is called the enabling grace of God that gives the believer the strength to endure whatever God permits him to face,- cp. **2 Corinthians 12:9-10; 1 Corinthians 10:13**
3. Here Paul acknowledges that the place where such enabling originates is God himself
4. The result of knowing the grace of God (both the saving grace & enabling grace) is **"peace"** - that which only Christians can have because only Christ can give it - cp. **John 14:27**

## B. THE SOURCE OF OUR INHERITANCE

1. "... from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" - again demonstrating that this peace can only come through a personal relationship with God as "father"
2. This relationship is secured only through one way - "the Lord Jesus Christ"

### THE BLESSING OF FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST"

#### 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

#### Strong's Concordance

**Theme:** The cross of Christ brings all men to level ground where unity can exist.

## IV. THE PAST BLESSINGS OF GRACE - 1:4-6

**1 Cor. 1:4-6** I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; [5] That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; [6] Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:

### A. THE ENRICHMENT BY GRACE - VV. 4-5a

1. Before Paul engages in the issues confronting the church in Corinth, he directs our attention to the glory of God for what He has done in the lives of "all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" - v. 2.
2. He begins by stating: "**I thank my God ... for the grace of God which was given you**"
3. The reference is not to the same grace that he had invoked on their behalf in verse 3 -- the enabling grace that believers need each day; this "grace" is referred to as a past accomplishment and **therefore refers to the saving grace**
  - a. This is the undeserved and unrepayable kindness given to sinners.
  - b. God's saving grace is free and unearned; it is not a loan that we must repay ... nor could we.
4. When this "**grace**" was received, it resulted ("**that**") in their being "**enriched in Him**" - **2 Corinthians 8:9**

## **B. THE EVIDENCE OF THE GOSPEL - V. 5b-6**

1. Paul then expresses how this grace was evidenced in their experiences ... **"in all speech and all knowledge"**

a. **"Speech"** or "utterance" (KJV) - refers to the spiritual gifts imparted to the church that involve speaking: tongues, prophecy, interpretation of tongues, teaching, exhortation, etc...

b. **"Knowledge"** refers to the appropriation of truth that drives our devotion to the Lord -- our personal grasp of the truths of God's Word.

2. Then he states that the **"testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you"** -- referring to the Gospel that was attested to by means of its impact in their lives.

3. They themselves were living proof of the legitimacy and power of the message (**"testimony"**) **"concerning Christ"**

## **V. THE PRESENT BLESSINGS OF GRACE - 1:7**

**1 Cor. 1:7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:**

### **A. THE RESOURCES FOR SERVICE**

1. This "enrichment" that gives evidence to the power of the Gospel results in a desire to be of service in the life of the Church.

2. We are told that those who are the recipients of saving grace also **"are not lacking in any gift"**

3. The word "gift" is **carismata** from where we get the word Charismatic

4. These are spiritual gifts that are bestowed upon believers for the purpose of building up the Body of Christ.

5. Paul says that believers are provided with all the resources in God's Spirit (Who bestows spiritual gifts) that they need in order to serve Christ properly.

6. This was an especially relevant point as we will discover in chapters 12-14.



## **B. THE REMOVAL OF FEAR OF CONDEMNATION**

1. In addition to the ability to occupy ourselves in service to our great God and King, the other major issue that Paul indicates is a blessing for the believer is that he no longer fears condemnation.
2. He says: **"awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ"**
3. This demonstrates the reality of how grace removes the guilt that dominates the minds of those who are unforgiven and creates in us an eagerness to see the Lord - cp. **Romans 8:1; Titus 2:11-13**

## **VI. THE PENDING BLESSINGS OF GRACE - 1:8-9**

**1 Cor. 1:8-9    Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**

### **A. THE IMPACT OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS - V. 8**

1. The reason the believer is eager to see Christ Jesus is that **"[He} will also confirm you to the end ..."**
  - a. **"Confirm"** has the idea of guarantee, thus or attest to the reality of matters = Christ Himself will secure us through to the end
  - b. This is the issue of the fact that the believer will persevere and be delivered, not because he tried so hard and did a good job, but because Jesus Christ Himself is making a difference in his life. **Philippians 1:6**
2. Not only will we make it through, but we are guaranteed that we will be **"blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ"**
3. This is all possible because **"God is faithful"** - v. 9

### **B. THE INTENTION OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS - V. 9**

1. The reason God has performed these works of grace and has guaranteed our destinies is because He desires us to **"fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."**
2. It is for this purpose of relationship that **"you were called"**

**"THE UNITY FACTOR"**

**1 Corinthians 1:10-17**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** The cross of Christ brings all men to level ground where unity can exist.

**VII. THE CALL FOR UNITY - vv. 10**

**1 Cor. 1:10** Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

**A. THE NEED FOR UNITY**

1. Paul transitions from a tone of praise and thanksgiving for the blessings of fellowship with Christ to a series of confrontations that arise due to various violations of that fellowship. He does this with the pivotal word **"Now I exhort you brethren ..."**
2. He then provides the basis for the **"exhortation"** - **"by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ..."**
3. When we are characterized by **"divisions"** we are actually profaning **"the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"**
4. In reality, everything connected to Christ is negatively impacted by the presence of factions and divisions within the body, the church:
  - a. The Father is dishonored by disunity among Christians
  - b. The Son is disgraced by quarreling and jealousy among Christians
  - c. The Believers are demoralized and Discredited by factions
  - d. The Unbelievers are distracted from the issues of their own sin by quarreling Christians.
5. Hence, Paul **"exhorts ... [the] brethren ... that there be no divisions among you"**

## B. THE STANDARD FOR OUR UNITY

1. In this regard, Paul exhorts them to **"be made complete"** (KJV - **"perfectly joined together"**) - a reference to the repair of divisions that existed among them.
2. There are three characteristics that ought to exist within a local church - all modified by the adjective "same" -- things that Paul says that we need to work toward for biblical unity to exist
3. They are:
  - a. **"That you all agree"** [lit. "say the same thing"] - this refers primarily to doctrinal unity: There is little more damaging to a church than to have a diversity of doctrinal beliefs - most essential is the issues of the fundamentals of the faith including:
    - (1) The Inspiration & Inerrancy of Scripture
    - (2) The Deity & Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ
    - (3) The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
    - (4) Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ Alone
    - (5) The Imminent Second Coming of Jesus Christ
  - b. **"That you be made complete in the same mind"** - the term **"mind"** refers to the intellectual appreciation for principles. Primarily this refers to the convictions we possess as a people of God.
  - c. **"That you be made complete ... in the same judgment"** - refers to the rendering of an opinion or to the application of convictions.
4. Hence, Paul in this verse states the standard for our unity is to share a common doctrine, a common commitment to those doctrines as our convictions, and then allow those convictions to result in common practical applications to our lives.

## VIII. THE COMPROMISE OF UNITY - vv. 11-16

**1 Cor. 1:11-16 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. [12] Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and**

**I of Christ. [13] Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? [14] I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; [15] Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. [16] And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.**

#### **A. THE PRIDE OF MEN'S HEARTS - v. 11**

1. What is it that keeps this unity from being able to exist?
2. "Quarrels are a part of life. We grow up in them and around them. **Infants** are quick to express displeasure when they are not given something they want or when something they like is taken away. **Little children** cry, fight, and throw tantrums because they cannot have their own ways. We argue and fight over a rattle, then a toy, then a football, then a position on the football team or in the cheerleading squad, then in business, the PTA, or politics. **Friends fight, husbands and wives fight, businesses fight, cities fight, even nations fight....** And the source of all the fighting is the same: man's depraved, egoistic, selfish nature."
3. Paul says "**I have been informed concerning you ... that there are quarrels among you.**"
4. The source of quarrels and fighting is the selfishness of the heart - **James 4:1-2.**

#### **B. THE PARTISANSHIP OF MEN'S PRIDE - vv. 12-13**

1. When this kind of selfish pride exists, then people who have the same lusts or cravings begin to band together to form a faction or develop partisanships.
2. "**that each one of you is saying ...**" - In the church at Corinth, these partisanships found their expression in terms of loyalties to various spiritual leaders that people favored:
  - a. "**... I am of Paul, ...**" - Paul had planted the church and there were apparently some who felt that it was more noble to stay loyal to him as the primary spiritual authority.

- b. **"... I am of Apollos ..."** - He was the second pastor, appointed by Paul - a man who was a very polished speaker (**Acts 18:24**) and some apparently preferred his style.
- c. **"... I am of Cephas ..."** - He never pastored at Corinth, but was one of the original twelve who had walked with Christ and therefore had more authority.
- d. **"... I am of Christ."** - Some apparently felt that it was inappropriate to be led by men and declared that they only answered to Christ, subverting divinely established authority in the church.

3. These factions developed not because of the competitiveness of the men cited here, but because of the partisanships that naturally arise when people are self-willed and proud.

### **C. THE PRIVILEGES OF MEN'S PARTISANSHIPS - vv. 14-16**

1. When pride results in schism and divisions, then those within the factions begin to qualify themselves and being the possessors of some great distinctive that makes them better than others.
2. Here the issue seemed to be the spiritual privileges that existed because of who was responsible for their salvation and subsequent baptism.
3. Paul offers some rhetorical questions that demand the answer "NO!" -- **"Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"**
4. Paul then gets to the issue that he was not flattered by those who were taking pride in the fact that some were claiming special allegiance to him.
5. He essentially says: "How could you think of showing allegiance to me? That belongs only to Jesus Christ"
6. He took no pride in who he baptized there in Corinth and states that he was thankful that he **"baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius"**
7. He goes so far as to say after mentioning **"the household of Stephanas,"** that he **"did not know whether [he] baptized any other"**

## IX. THE CATALYST FOR UNITY - v. 17

**1 Cor. 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.**

### A. REAFFIRM THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISSEMINATE THE TRUTH

1. He then declares that the issue of baptism was not a central focus by saying: **"For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel."**
2. In other words, he said it is imperative that we not allow our attentions and energies to be diverted from the true issue that binds us together -- **"... the Gospel"**
3. When believers have their eyes lifted unto the fields that are white unto harvest, engaged in taking the name of Jesus out to those lost in darkness, they have no interest whatsoever in the quibbling that produces quarrels.

### B. RESIST THE OBSCURITIES WHICH DISTRACT FROM TRUTH

1. Paul then adds that his preaching of the Gospel was not characterized by a **"cleverness of speech"**
2. **"Cleverness"** literally refers to human wisdom - referring to all the slick teachings that would win men to himself. Paul simply presented the simplicity of the gospel message which in itself contained the power to salvation.

### C. REALIZE THE OBSTRUCTIONS THAT DEFILE THE TRUTH

1. When believers are willing to foster partisanships and resort to defining themselves with worldly wisdom instead of the power of the Gospel, then the **"cross of Christ ... [is] made void."** In the same manner, disunity among believers makes the cross of Christ void, of no effect, to the unbeliever. This is because the unbeliever sees no change in the professing believer from that of other non-believers who behave in like manner.
2. The **"cross of Christ"** is the one thing that makes the difference and enables men to know true unity.
3. Its been said that the ground is level at the foot of the cross.

## **"THE WISDOM OF FOOLISHNESS"**

**1 Corinthians 1:18-25**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Man's best efforts to "figure out" a way to God will always fail, they can only come by faith.

### **X. THE SUPERIORITY OF GOD'S WISDOM - 1:18-20**

**1 Cor. 1:18-20** For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. [19] For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. [20] Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

#### **A. THE UNDERESTIMATION OF GOD'S WISDOM - V. 18**

1. It is clear that Paul is continuing his discussion of factions in the church, dealing here with those who were saved out of a life devoted to philosophy and attempted to remain indoctrinated by various unbiblical philosophies.
2. The same situation exists today as many Christians look everywhere but to the Bible for values, meaning, purpose, and direction.
3. It is almost as if -- where the Bible agrees with the philosophies, sciences, and psychology of our day, people are willing to order their lives, by it . . . . But, if Scripture conflicts with the "conventional wisdom" of the day, it's relevancy is dismissed.
4. Perhaps the greatest affront to the wisdom of man is "that one man ... could die on a piece of wood on a nondescript hill in a nondescript part of the world and thereby determine the destiny of every person who has ever lived, seems stupid. It allows no place for man's merit, man's attainment, man's understanding, or man's pride."
5. This is what Paul addresses when he says "**the word of the cross is foolishness**"
6. Those who refuse to believe severely underestimate the wisdom of God by deflating its credibility and replacing it with their own - cp. **Romans 1:21-23**

7. The consequence is that the word of the cross is foolishness **"to those who are perishing"** -- under the wrath of God.

8. In reality, **"the word of the cross"** is **"to us who are saved ... the power of God"**

9. One's response to the **"word of the cross"** is determined by whether one is currently in the process of **"perishing"** or being **"saved!"**

## **B. THE USELESSNESS OF MAN'S WISDOM - V. 19-20**

1. Paul continues by providing some evidence that God's wisdom is superior to man's wisdom.

2. First, it is superior because God says that He will destroy the wisdom of man - **"For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.'"**

a. He says that the reasoning skills (**"cleverness"**) will be discarded and made void.

b. This is a quote (Isaiah 29:14) from the occasion when Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem were delivered from Assyria through the confusion brought on by a single angel --driving the Assyrians away (cp. 2 Kings 17).

3. Second, Paul asks where are all the people who have come up with real solutions to our problems? **"Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age?"**

a. How much closer are we to peace than a century ago?

b. How much closer are we to eliminating racism, poverty, crime, teenage pregnancy, divorce, alcoholism & drug addiction?

c. We are more educated than our forefathers, but we are not closer to solving the continuing issues of society.

(1) We have greater means of helping each other, but we are not less selfish

(2) We have more means of communication, but we do not understand each other any better.



(3) We have more psychology and education, and more crime and war!

(4) In light of these things, Paul asks: **"Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"**

## **XI. THE PROBLEM OF MAN'S WISDOM - 1:21-22**

**1 Cor. 1:21-22 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. [22] For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:**

### **A. THE FAILURE OF MAN'S WISDOM - V. 21**

1. With all the improvements and applications of the wisdom of man, they have still not come any closer to solving their innate, and essential problems.
2. God designed men **"in the wisdom of God"** to be incapable of coming **"to know God"** through their own wisdom.
3. They reject the wisdom of God and therefore are groping about with one idea after another that serves up nothing but frustration and busy programs doomed to failure.
4. God, however, has provided a way -- albeit the world considers it **"foolishness"** - the **"message preached"** concerning the work of Christ.
5. To **"those who believe"** comes salvation from their hopelessness.
6. But apart from this, the world cannot **"come to know God"** through its own wisdom.

### **B. THE FOCUS OF MAN'S WISDOM - V. 22**

1. **"The Jews ask for signs"** - before they will believe, they want God to prove Himself through supernatural signs - an evasion or an excuse for not believing.
2. **"The Greeks search for wisdom"** - before they will believe, they want proof that squares with their presuppositions and wisdom -- ideas they could ponder and debate.

In verse 25 it speaks about the foolishness and weakness of God? What is this referring to? [there is neither, this is simply to say that if there were either He would still be wiser and stronger than any man]

## **XII. THE POWER OF GOD'S WISDOM - 1:23-25**

**1 Cor. 1:23-25 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; [24] But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. [25] Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.**

### **A. THE IMPACT OF GOD'S WISDOM - VV. 23-24**

1. When the message is "**preach[ed concerning] Christ crucified**" the wisdom of God invariably has some impact on the lives of those who hear.
2. First, it is "**to the Jews a stumbling block**" -- because of their unwillingness to accept the idea of a crucified Messiah - **Romans 9:30-31**
3. Second, it is "**to Gentiles foolishness**" -- because of their preconceived ideas, they reject what does not square with their fanciful ideas.
4. However, "**to those who are the called**" (those who have been chosen by God) the message of the cross is "**the power of God and the wisdom of God**"

### **B. THE INTENSITY OF GOD'S WISDOM - V. 25**

1. Even if God possessed any sort of "**foolishness**" (and He doesn't) it "**Is wiser than men**"
2. If God possessed any sort of "**weakness**" (and He doesn't) it "**is stronger than men**"

#### **"THE BOASTING OF THE CHRISTIAN"**

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Man's best efforts to "figure out" a way to God will always fail, they can only come by faith.

### **XIII. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE CHOSEN BY GOD - 1:26**

**1 Cor. 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:**

#### **A. THEY WERE THE OBJECTS OF GOD'S SUMMONS**

1. **"For consider your calling, brethren, ..."** demonstrates where the initiative comes from in our redemption.
2. **"Consider"** - (lit. "For you are seeing ...") -- signifies that it is somewhat obvious to the person who will pause long enough to look into the situation -- that we are mere responders to the "call" of God to come to Him.
3. This **"calling"** is a reference to the effectual call of God that resulted in our salvation
4. In other words, Paul is emphasizing that those who are in Christ are the blessed recipients of the grace of God poured out on them regardless of their "merit."

#### **B. THEY WERE THE OPPOSITE OF THE WORLD'S STANDARDS**

1. Paul explains what they are on the basis of what they are not -- choosing three standards that the world normally uses to determine success.
2. He says: **"there were not many wise [chosen] according to the flesh"** - God was not interested in choosing for Himself men who had ascended to some great height of natural and human abilities.
3. **"... not many mighty ..."** - or powerful - people who had gained control over others through their physical or mental strength -- He didn't call them.
4. **"... not many noble"** - or of those born into a well to do state; the upper crust of the social pecking order.
5. Those chose by God were the ones who were incapable of claiming a definitive logic in why they were chosen. To those chosen by God, the "why" of His choice remains an enigma.

#### **XIV. THE CHOICES OF GOD - 1:27-28**

**1 Cor. 1:27-28 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; [28] And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:**

##### **A. THE DISDAIN FOR MAN'S IDEALS - vv. 27-28a**

1. God has always expressed a disdain for the attitude among men that communicates that it was only "natural" that God would choose them - for whatever the reason -
2. Here He clarifies that the choices He makes has nothing to do with the normal standards of man -- rather, it shames the vaunted pride man has of himself - cp. **Deuteronomy 7:7**
3. **"God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise"** - God contrasts the recipients of His grace with those the world would laud as worthy -- the supposed wise are found to be shamed by the simplicity of the Gospel message.
4. **"God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong."** - Those who trust in their own abilities are brought to shame because of their inability to do anything about their sin.
5. **"And the base things [those not of noble birth] of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not"** - Those who are considered less than existing - the rejected ones shame the nobility because of their willingness to trust God.

##### **B. THE DEBILITATION OF MAN'S BOASTING - vv. 28b**

1. God chooses all these things **"so that He may nullify the things that are"** - that is literally. "to put out of action"
2. All the things that the world considers contributes to the stature of a man (intellect, power, prestige or position), God says he relegates to irrelevancy or

inactivity -- it matters nothing at all.

## **XV. THE TESTIMONY OF THOSE CHOSEN BY GOD - 1:29-31**

**1 Cor. 1:29-31** That no flesh should glory in his presence. [30] But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: [31] That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

### **A. A LACK OF BOASTING AND PRIDE-vs. 29**

Consequently, the pride that is based on these things - or on any sense of human achievement - loses its foundation **"so that no man may boast before God."**

### **B. DEPENDENCY ON THE LORD - v. 30**

1. Instead of basing one's sense of value on one's own accomplishment, the believer understands his utter dependency upon the Lord Jesus Christ - He becomes the one in Whom we hide for significance.
2. In a parallel statement in **Ephesians 2:8-10**, we find it clearly stated that we are who we are because of "His workmanship" - cp. with **1 Corinthians 15:10**
3. Hence, **"by His doing you are in Christ Jesus"** - it the accomplishment of God
4. **"Who became unto us ...."** - in that we are in Christ, the following benefits are ours to thoroughly enjoy:
  - a. **"Wisdom from God"** -- by His life and teaching - providing us the truth "which is from above."
  - b. **"... and righteousness"** - by His death and resurrection, He brought us into a "rightness" in our living.
  - c. **"... and sanctification"** - by His ascension into glory, He sent to us His Spirit who transforms us into the image of Christ.
  - d. **"... and redemption"** -- by His future return He will perfect us and give us the fullness of the inheritance that awaits us.

5. Hence, we are utterly dependent upon Him and His accomplishments; needing to be found **"in Christ Jesus"** by faith.

### **C. DELIGHT IN THE LORD - v. 31**

1. **"So that, ..."** - the result of all this is that believers in no way boast in himself, but in the Lord.
2. **"Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord"** -- in what He has accomplished that has brought us such powerful benefit.
3. This is the testimony of the believer:

**My hope is in the Lord  
Who gave His life for me  
and paid the price of all my sin  
At Calvary.  
No merit of my own  
His anger to suppress,  
My only hope is found  
in Jesus' righteousness.  
And now for me He stands  
Before the Father's throne,  
He shows His wounded hands,  
and names me as His own.  
His grace has planned it all,  
'Tis mine but to believe,  
And recognize His work of love  
and Christ receive.  
For me He died,  
For me he lives,  
And everlasting life and light  
He freely gives.**

#### **THE POWER OF SIMPLICITY**

**1 Corinthians 2:1-5**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** It is the power of God that brings men to faith, not the persuasiveness of men.

## **I. CHAPTER 2 - THE DECISION TO FOREGO CONSTRAINTS - 2:1-2**

**1 Cor. 2:1-2    And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. [2] For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.**

### **A. THE PRUDENCE NECESSARY IN BROADCASTING THE FAITH vs. 1**

1. Paul has just completed a discussion that demonstrates that the standards that the world uses for determining the value of a person is inconsistent with the wisdom of God that puts to shame the wisdom of the world.
2. He now broadens his application of these principles by clarifying that God does not use the world's standards in choosing men for redemption, neither are the world's standards involved in the presentation of the "foolishness" of the Gospel.
3. He says: **"I did not come [to Corinth] with superiority of speech or of wisdom"**
4. **"Superiority of speech"** - refers to the eloquence that characterized many orators who could mesmerize men by the rational and logical presentations
5. **"... or of wisdom"** - refers to the cleverness of man's knowledge; appealing to the various philosophies that would convince them of how this is naturally acceptable.

### **B. THE PRIORITY THAT BELONGS TO THE CROSS - v. 2**

Instead of attempting to convince them through logical argument, before Paul ever even arrived in Corinth he **"determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."**

1. Knowing that to convince men based on human argument and wisdom, they are converted to a system of religion; but, to introduce them to the Person of Christ Jesus, brings to them eternal life.
2. Hence, Paul, in a town dominated by philosophers and public speakers, centers the essence of his preaching on one simple, yet profound message: **"Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"**
3. This is the most offensive message to these people - **1:23**

4. This is matter of greatest importance to those unsaved -- all other doctrinal matters are irrelevant until one first grasps the significance of Christ's atonement for your personal sin and a response of faith to His sacrifice.
5. Only then is it important to understand the rest of what Scripture has to say.

## **II. PAUL'S INSUFFICIENCY - 2:3**

**1 Cor. 2:3    And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.**

### **A. THE APPRECIATION OF PERSONAL INSUFFICIENCY**

1. In keeping what he's just said, Paul demonstrates how he was not at all trusting in the arm of the flesh to "convince" the Corinthians of the truth of the Gospel message.
2. He did not come to them confident in his ability to convert them, seeking to render his preaching brilliant in matter or form.
3. Rather, he had an awareness of his own unworthiness and insufficiency in these matters -- a characteristic that all of us would do well to emulate.
4. Often, people tell me they don't feel qualified to give testimony of their faith in God; they are unworthy.
5. My response is often: "You're right. None of us are truly worthy or adequate to share the powerful message of salvation by grace through faith. However, this is the method whereby God has seen fit to proclaim His gospel.

### **B. THE APPREHENSION IN PREACHING THE TRUTH**

1. Notice the description Paul gives of himself: **"I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling"**



2. Here he is showing his awareness that if all this is up to Paul, failure is the prognosis.
3. He had placed himself in context and clearly senses the utter dependency on the Lord for effectiveness in sharing the Gospel.

### III. THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT - 2:4-5

**1 Cor. 2:4-5    And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: [5] That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.**

#### A. THE AGENCY OF GOD'S SPIRIT - v. 4

1. Paul reiterates that his **"message and ... preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom"** - he says that he realizes that he is not the key to the Gospel being conveyed to lost men
2. In other words, Paul did not sense that the Gospel needed his embellishment for it to magnificently impact the lives of the Corinthians.
3. Rather, Paul indicates that the key is to simply present the truth and then rely upon the **"demonstration of the Spirit and of power"** that comes from God alone.
4. The Gospel message is most powerful when the conversion of a man's soul is the result of the agency of God's Spirit, not the salesmanship of the evangelist.

#### B. THE ACTIVITY OF GOD'S POWER - v. 5

1. The gospel is not a wisdom, but a power - it is not a system, but a person.
2. To convert a person to being religious or moral or Christian, you've converted a mind, not a soul
3. However, to present the Gospel in its simplicity, depending on the power of God's Spirit who converts a man to faith in Jesus

Christ has not converted the mind alone, but the soul.

4. To be solid, salvation must be the work of the power of God. In order to be that, it must proceed from a conviction of sin and a personal appropriation of the gift of Christ's salvation offered through the cross, which the Spirit of God alone can produce in the human soul.

### **DECODING THE MYSTERIES OF THE FAITH"**

#### **1 Corinthians 2:6-16**

#### **Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** The truth of God's Word must be known through the enlightenment that comes from the Holy Spirit of God.

### **IV. THE WISDOM OF GOD - 2:6-9**

**1 Cor. 2:6-9    Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: [7] But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: [8] Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. [9] But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.**

### **A. THE OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL - vv. 6-7**

1. Paul's statements in the previous section related to the fact that the pure Gospel message is the power of God that leads men to salvation -- not the slick, persuasive arguments that we put together according to human wisdom.
2. However, he transitions here to indicate that once people are born again, then they are capable of handling theological and doctrinal truth beyond the simple message of salvation.
3. **"We do speak wisdom among those who are mature ..."** - referring to the believers who have been made complete through faith in Christ - cp. **2 Peter 1:3**

4. However, the **"wisdom"** referred to here by Paul is **"not of this age nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away"**

5. The wisdom Paul is **"speaking"** of is **"God's wisdom in a mystery"**

a. **"Mystery"** -- refers in Scripture to that which is unknowable apart from revelation - a **"hidden wisdom"** - unavailable to man independent of God's revelation

b. This wisdom is now made available with a view to bringing men into glory -- through knowledge of Christ Jesus - **"which God predestined before the ages to our glory"**

## **B. THE OBSTACLE TO UNDERSTANDING THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL - vv. 8-9**

1. **"None of the rulers of this age has understood"** - they were unaware of the truth concerning the mystery of reconciliation to God through His Son, the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

2. The proof of their ignorance was that **"if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"**

3. This "wisdom" that is God's wisdom cannot be attained through natural means. Notice the ineptitude of the natural means of discovery of **"what God has prepared 'before the ages' for those who love Him"**:

Isa. 64:4

a. **SIGHT**: **"Things which eye has not seen ..."** - referring to the immediate experience -- by seeing it yourself without the scales being lifted from the eyes.

b. **SOUND**: **"... and ear has not heard ..."** - probably referring to the knowledge gained through hearing the traditions repeated of other's experience.

c. **SURMISINGS**: **"... and which have not entered the heart of man"**

## **V. THE COMMUNICATION OF THE WISDOM OF GOD - 2:10-13**

**1 Cor. 2:10-13 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. [11] For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God**

**knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. [12] Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. [13] Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**

#### **A. THE DISCLOSURE OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD - vv. 10-11**

1. Although man cannot naturally comprehend what **"God has prepared for those who love Him,"** He was pleased to **"reveal them through the Spirit"**
2. What was once a **"mystery"**, has been unveiled through revelation of truth **"to us"** that is, through the inspired authors of Scripture (Apostles).
3. It has already been established that on our own, men could never find a way to discover the mystery of the Gospel -- cp. **1:21**
4. It had to be revealed to us **"through the Spirit"** of God -- initially through the process of revelation and inspiration, and now through the process of illumination as we are oriented to the truths of God's Word.
5. The **"Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God."** - that is closed to anyone independent of God, unknowable, and outside the sphere of fallen, worldly, human comprehension.
6. He illustrates what he means by referring to the "private world" that exists within every man **"the thoughts of a man"**, that world that others cannot enter unless the man himself reveals it to you.
7. Similarly, **"the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God"** who reveals them to us.

#### **B. THE DISCERNMENT FROM THE SPIRIT OF GOD - vv. 12-13**

1. We who are in Christ **"have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God"** -- we are not merely connected to the natural environment, but we have connection to Heaven through God's Spirit.
2. Hence, we **"my know the things freely given to us by God."**

3. The Spirit's activity is not to merely heighten man's ability to reason and exercise his own wisdom ... **"not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit"**

4. Hence, God's Spirit **revealed** the truth about Christ to the Apostles, **inspired** them as they wrote them down, and **illuminates** our understanding as we read and study them.

## **VI. THE COMPREHENSION OF THE WISDOM OF GOD - 2:14-16**

**1 Cor. 2:14-16 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. [15] But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. [16] For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.**

### **A. THE DEBILITATION OF THE NATURAL MAN - v. 14**

1. However, **"a natural man"** - a man who is "soulish" only; possessing no quickened spirit -- without the benefit of the ministry of God's Spirit;
2. These people do **"not accept the things of the Spirit of God"** -- literally this means that they do not as a regular habit receive truth; not that they cannot occasionally see the reality of what is true, but their lives are not characterized by a yieldedness to the teaching of God's Spirit.
3. Truth is **"foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised"** - since he is spiritually dead, he cannot appraise spiritually.

### **B. THE DISCERNMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL MAN - vv. 15-16**

1. However, a man who possesses the Spirit and therefore **"is spiritual appraises all things"**
2. This man can know "all that God has prepared for those who love Him" because the Spirit who "searches all things" enables him to understand it.
3. Men who cannot understand spiritual things cannot understand spiritual men either; hence, God indicates that the spiritual man **"is appraised by no one"** outside the faith.

4. "Unbelievers frequently want to correct believers, to argue about the truths we believe and follow. But when they contradict scriptural teaching, they are not arguing with us but with God, whose thoughts they do not understand."

5. **"For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him?"** -- We have the advantage because **"we have the mind of Christ."**

**"WHO SHOULD GET THE CREDIT?"**

**1 Corinthians 3:1-9**  
**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** The truth of God's Word must be known through the enlightenment that comes from the Holy Spirit of God.

**I. CHAPTER 3 - SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY - 3:1-3**

**1 Cor. 3:1-3** **And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. [2] I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. [3] For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?**

**A. THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF IMMATURITY - vv. 1-2**

1. It is interesting to notice how "grown-up" and self-sufficient the average adolescent believes himself to be -- not aware of their great dependency on the ones from whom are seeking independence.

2. Paul addresses these people in Corinth and sounds an alarm that probably brought them up short -- that he **"could not speak to [them] as to spiritual men, but as men of flesh ..."**

3. He then clarifies and indicates that their spiritual condition could best be compared to **"infants in Christ"**

4. Most people don't realize when spiritual immaturity is their condition -- since many people often think of worldliness only in terms of dancing, alcoholic drinking and other "nasty" things.

5. However, worldliness is much deeper a problem than bad habits; it is an orientation, a way of thinking and believing.

6. Perhaps the best way to realize spiritual immaturity is the presence of "selfishness" - one of the prevailing characteristics of **"infants"**

7. To clarify this immaturity, Paul continues and declares that he **"gave ... milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it."** -- referring of course, to when he was with them and "knowing nothing except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"

8. However, these many years later, they should have progressed beyond simple milk, and yet he says: **"Indeed, even now you are not yet able."**

## **B. THE SPIRITUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IMMATURITY - v. 3**

1. Paul once again describes their spiritual condition - **"for you are still fleshly"**

2. Although they are saved, their orientation is immature -- as though they were oriented to the same things they were before they were saved.

3. He then gives them specifics as to how their spiritual immaturity affects their lives practically: **"there is jealousy and strife among you"**

4. Because self-centeredness is at the heart of fleshly behavior, these characteristics are able to flourish

a. **"Jealousy"** is the attitude

b. **"Strife"** is the action that results from it.

5. These church members were, again, choosing sides as to which of the former spiritual leaders were the most important -- and Paul declares that by so doing, **"are you not walking like mere men?"**

## **II. THE OBSESSION OF THE SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE - 3:4-7**

**1 Cor. 3:4-7 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? [5] Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? [6] I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. [7] So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.**

## A. THE HAGGLING OVER THE APPLAUSE OF MEN - v. 4

1. These people were gaining some sense of personal significance by attaching themselves to one or the other of their former spiritual leaders.
2. **"... one says 'I am of Paul'"** - feeling as though loyalty to the man who planted the church - evangelizing them with the simple message of Christ.
3. **"... and another, 'I am of Apollos'"** - looking at the man who taught them from the Word, the eloquent expositor -- as the one who should receive the greater prestige.
4. Paul states that by so haggling over the prestige that either man should possess, they were behaving as **"mere men"** without a spiritual orientation.

## B. THE HESITATION TO ACKNOWLEDGE GOD - vv. 5-7

1. Men -- either Paul or Apollos -- could accomplish nothing without the power of God performing the miraculous work through the agency of the Holy Spirit.
2. He therefore asks: **"What then is Apollos? And what is Paul?"** -- what is there about either of these men that makes them special?
3. They are nothing but **"servants through whom you believed"** -- "busboys" who carried the plate of the gospel to your table, enabling you to partake through faith.
4. In reality, the Lord **"gave opportunity to each one"** -- both Paul and Apollos -- to serve Him by preaching to them in Corinth
5. Paul says **"I [only] planted, Apollos [only] watered, but God was causing the growth"**
6. Hence, the one who **"is anything"** is not **"the one who plants nor the one who waters ... but God who causes the growth"**

## III. THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPIRITUAL MATURITY - 3:8-9



**1 Cor. 3:8-9 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. [9] For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.**

#### **A. THE COOPERATION WITH OTHER BELIEVERS - v. 8a**

1. Paul says that instead of being in some sense of competition with each other, **"he who plants and he who waters are one"** -- that is they are in harmony with each other in the work.
2. There is no appropriate thing in men competing with one another as to who should get the credit when God is producing the fruit. (ILLUST: quarterback throwing a pass to receiver -- who gets the credit?)
3. Thus, believers are provided the privilege of working together with one another to the glory of God.

#### **B. THE COMMENDATION BY THE LORD - v. 8b**

1. Paul then says that it is up to the Lord to sort out who is worthy of reward and praise.
2. He indicates that **"each will receive his own reward according to his own labor"**
3. Notice that it is not the result that brings reward, but only what labor you put forth toward the harvest that the Lord causes through you and a bunch of others working with you.

#### **C. THE CULTIVATION BY THE LORD - v. 9**

1. It is interesting that we are both team-mates with God as **"God's fellow workers"** as well as simultaneously being projects of God.
2. We are said to be **"God's field, God's building"** -- as God forms for Himself His masterpiece -- His "workmanship" as tributes to His grace.

|   |
|---|
| <p>3. He uses us as to bring others into the "shop" of God's grace before we are even finished being worked on. <b>"THE BUILDING INSPECTOR"</b></p> |
|---|

**1 Corinthians 3:10-17**

### Strong's Concordance

**Theme:** The quality of our works will one day be evaluated by Christ and rewards will be given on the basis of what He finds.

## IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOUNDATION - 3:10-11

**1 Cor. 3:10-11** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. [11] For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

### A. THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE FOUNDATION FOR CHRISTIANITY - v. 10

1. As Paul continues to deal with the problem of the spiritual immaturity of the Christians in Corinth, he transitions from talking about the Church as a field that produces crops to the analogy of it being a building - cp. v. 9
2. He then talks about the role of the servants of God in helping to construct this "building" -- that it all begins with the foundation.
3. In His plan, God gave Paul the privilege to be involved in this declaration of the truth concerning the Church -- that it is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ -- cp. **Matthew 16:15-18**
4. In recalling this great privilege, Paul states that: **"According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation ..."**
5. Maintaining the same thought as the "planting," "watering," and God giving the "increase," Paul carries this over to the building analogy by saying: **"and another is building on it ..."**
6. However, it is extremely important to realize that sloppy construction on top of the pure and holy foundation of Jesus Christ is unacceptable. He warns: **"But each man must be careful how he builds on it."**
  - a. This primarily refers to the way people contribute to the "building up of the body of Christ" as referred to in **Ephesians 4:11-13**

- b. However, it places an emphasis here on the reality that each person individually participates in this process of construction of the whole body through the contribution of his own growth.
- c. Therefore, there is a current, modern day stewardship referred to here that identifies with the role that the Apostles fulfilled in the past when they laid the foundation = the present tense reference of: **"is building on it"** and **"builds on it"**

## **B. THE SOLE FOUNDATION FOR CHRISTIANITY - v. 11**

1. His warning to **"be careful"** in v. 10 is further explained here: that **"no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid [already], which is Jesus Christ."**
2. Some people have attempted to make the basis of their faith the morals of the Bible, or the traditions of the church. Others have looked to the ethical humanism that raises "goodness" of man and calls men to conform to it. Still others have appealed to sentimentalism and love as the foundation for Christianity.
3. Paul clearly says here that the **only** foundation for Christianity is Jesus Christ.
4. As long as believers are alive, they are building -- building some sort of life, some sort of church, some sort of "Christian" influence.
5. If a person's life is spent serving rival "foundations" to Jesus Christ, and the edifice constructed is upon those foundations, the resulting building is sloppy and of poor quality at best.

## **V. THE INSPECTION OF THE STRUCTURE - 3:12-15**

**1 Cor. 3:12-15** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; [13] Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. [14] If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. [15] If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

### **A. THE QUALITY OF OUR WORKS - vv. 12-13**

1. As Paul continues in this discussion, he hones in on the work of individuals within the Church indicating that each man's work will be inspected for its quality.
2. He starts by giving a shopping list of materials available for the building of your own life [which is your primary contribution to the building up of the entire Body of Christ]. He lists them:
  - a. **"gold"**
  - b. **"silver"**
  - c. **"precious stones"**
  - d. **"wood"**
  - e. **"hay"**
  - f. **"straw"**
3. These materials do not represent wealth or opportunity, but how believers respond to what the Lord has given them.
4. The quality of construction is based upon what goes into the life ...  
 ("gold") - great faithfulness and careful living to the glory of God or  
 ("straw") - the haphazard left overs that are given with no concern for pleasing Christ.
5. Which is typical of your "building" or life? This then would be how you are **"building on the foundation"** of the holy and righteous, Jesus Christ.

## **B. THE QUESTION OF OUR REWARDS - vv. 14-15**

1. With this instruction in mind, consider the stakes involved in the way we live. Someday **"each man's work will become evident"** - v. 14
2. Paul indicates that **every** individual believer's work will be tested for its quality.
3. **"The day"** of Christ's return **"will show it"** as each believer is brought before the "Judgment Seat [bema]" and our works are **"revealed with fire"** and **"the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work"** - cp. **2 Corinthians 5:10**
4. This "fire" could be a reference to the penetrating gaze of the Judge of all men -- Jesus Christ - cp. **Revelation 2:18-19**

5. The consequence of this judgment will be one of two possibilities:

a. **"If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward"** - elsewhere called "crowns":

- (1) "Crown of Righteousness" - **2 Timothy 4:7-8**: for persevering faithfully until Jesus returns
- (2) "Crown of Rejoicing" - **1 Thessalonians 2:19-20**: for being faithful soul-winners
- (3) "Crown of Glory" - **1 Peter 5:4**: for being an example of Christ-likeness to the Church
- (4) "Crown of Life" - **James 1:12**: for all who truly love the Lord.

b. **"If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss [of reward]; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire"**

- (1) If your life has been unconcerned about "pleasing the Lord" (**2 Corinthians 5:9**) -- then you **"work is burned up"** and no reward will be offered.
- (2) However, this does not translate into condemnation -- good works are not the basis of one's salvation, only the signs of it.
- (3) However, the person who lives independently from Christ is **"saved, yet so as through fire"** -- portraying the thought of a person who runs through a fire without being burned, but who has the smell of smoke on him.

## **VI. THE INSURANCE OF THE STRUCTURE - 3:16-17**

**1 Cor. 3:16-17    Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? [17] If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.**

### **A. THE APPRAISAL OF THE STRUCTURE'S VALUE - v. 16**

- 1. In an effort to motivate the believer to live for Christ, and build upon the foundation of Christ with a worthy life, he points to the fact that the building under construction is **"the temple of God"**
- 2. Of what materials is such a building worthy?

3. In addition, we ought not simply be concerned about the future evaluation by the penetrating eyes of Christ in judgment, **"Do you not know that the Spirit of God dwells in you [right now]?"**

4. In light of this value, what materials are appropriate?

## **B. THE AFTERMATH OF THE STRUCTURE'S DAMAGE - v. 17**

1. He then shifts gears to a slightly different focus - from building up the building by believers to the destruction of the Church by outsiders.

2. **"If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him"** - a promise of the wrath of God upon those who would harm the church from either inside or out -- unbelievers who are natural in their understanding.

3. Such one's fail to realize that **"the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are"**

4. This destruction can occur in a variety of ways:

- a. Destruction through persecution -- physical
- b. Destruction through false teaching or denying the fundamentals of the faith
- c. Destruction through hypocrisy, legalism, and sensuality
- d. Destruction through spoiling philosophies that vaunt themselves against the knowledge of Christ

### **WHEN THINKING DOESN'T HELP"**

**1 Corinthians 3:18-23**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Disunity exists when men become enamored with the opinions of men.

## **VII. THE PERCEPTIONS OF MEN MUST BE SUBJECTED TO SCRIPTURE - 3:18-20**

**1 Cor. 3:18-20 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. [19] For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. [20] And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.**

## **A. THE DECEPTIVENESS OF CONTEMPORARY HUMAN WISDOM - v. 18**

1. Much division in the church exists because individuals become impressed with their own wisdom.
2. But, God warns of the deceptiveness of contemporary human wisdom by saying: **"Let no man deceive himself."**
3. Anyone so deceived **"in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise."**
4. Men often become impressed by their own thoughts concerning a host of matters about which God has conflicting viewpoints. In such cases, men must not allow themselves to be deceived; caught up in the spirit of the age which rejects God.

## **B. THE DERISION OF CONTEMPORARY HUMAN WISDOM - vv. 19-20**

1. **"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God"** - When a natural man attempts to invent things spiritual, he falls far short of what he needs.
2. **"Foolish"** comes from the word moros which is where "moron" comes from -- that is, the professed wisdom of men which contradicts God's Word, is viewed as moronic
3. The tragedy is that when the truth of Scripture is not the sole authority, men's varied opinions become the authority
4. The truth is that even Christians do not have the right to their own opinions about the things God has revealed -- if it conflicts with the Bible, it must be considered **"foolishness for before God."**
5. Thus, the "wisdom" of men is totally unreliable and useless. Consider God's derisive prognostications for it:
  - a. **"For it is written, 'HE IS THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS.'"** - God will "trip up" those who oppose His Word.

b. Also, God provides an assessment of human wisdom: **"THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS of the wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS"**

6. Thus, those who trust in the wisdom of men are deceived and are destined for ruin.

## **VIII. THE GLORY OF MEN MUST BE SUBJECTED TO THE SAVIOR- 3:21a**

**1 Cor. 3:21    Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;**

- A. **"So then ..."** - since the wisdom of men is disdained by God, **"... let no one boast in men."**
- B. The men around whom various people in the church had gathered: Paul, Apollos, Peter -- possessed nothing in and of themselves that merited the pursuit in which the Corinthians were engaged.
- C. Although they were great sources of great help and blessing, they were not to be specially elevated or revered one against the other.
- D. Divisions developed around these men because the Corinthians were attracted to their individual styles and personalities. Various believers began to **"boast"** in their choice of favorite and the church became divided.
- E. God says here that believers ought not ever **"boast in men"** but only in Christ - cp. **Jeremiah 9:23-24; 1 Corinthians 1:31-2:5**

## **IX. THE POSSESSIONS OF MEN MUST BE SUBJECTED TO THE SAVIOR - 3:21b-23**

**1 Cor. 3:22-23    Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; [23] And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.**

**A. THE INTENTION OF GOD FOR THE POSSESSIONS OF MEN - vv. 21b-22**



1. God clarifies why it is not appropriate to give oneself over to following a man ... it is because God gave him to you to serve you, not visa versa.
2. **"For all things belong to you, ..."** - a reference to the fact that God has given to the believer all things and no one thing is to be favored above others, else other things given by God will be neglected.
3. He then illustrates this:
  - a. **"... whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas ..."** - God gave each of these men to the Corinthians to provide them some unique and special element of their faith. Their contribution is to be cumulatively appreciated - not appreciated in contrast to each other.
  - b. **"... or world ..."** - God gave the world to us to inhabit, but it is not to be over-valued since we have a better "world" awaiting us.
  - c. **"... or life or death ..."** - We've been given eternal life - it is ours despite death which Christ has overcome; proof of our eternal life.
  - d. **"... or things present or things to come ..."** - encompasses everything we have or experience in this life; as well as all we have to look forward to in heaven --
  - e. God says: **"all things belong to you"** and must not snatch our affection to the exclusion of all else. What ought to be appreciated is the God who has granted all things to us.

## **B. THE INTENTION OF GOD IN HIS POSSESSION OF MEN - v. 23**

1. **"All things belong to you, and you belong to Christ"** - In fact, not only should we not think it appropriate to embrace one thing to the exclusion of other gifts from God, we ought not believe that all these things belong finally to us ... but ultimately to Christ.
2. **"... and Christ belongs to God."** - we are tied together in an eternal oneness with God and therefore to one another.
3. The intention for this unity is to demonstrate the intervention of God in redeeming men, **"that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me"** - John 17:23
4. How can men who are so much loved and united in God, be divided? -- except because they have allowed their appreciation for the opinions of men to supersede the truth of God's Word - from whence comes division?

**"To Own and Be Owned"**

**I Corinthians 4:1-2**

**Theme:** There are only three criteria for evaluating the servants of Christ.

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**I. CHAPTER 4 - "MINISTERS" MUST BE REGARDED AS SERVANTS - 4:1a**

**1 Cor. 4:1-2    Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. [2] Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.**

**A. CONVENTIONAL THINKING**

1. In this section of Scripture, Paul addresses the issue of what guidelines are supposed to be used in the evaluation of the ministers of the Gospel. Modern Christianity has seemed to lose touch with these guidelines, often replacing them with arbitrary standards of their own making.
2. Among liberals, the guidelines that are used to evaluate good ministers include: tolerance, love, flexibility, education, positive attitude, affirming, comforting, and entertaining.
3. Some use a criterion that asserts that a minister ought to be evaluated on the bases of the size of the crowd who will listen to him or the amount of the offering received in his meetings.
4. Paul addresses these issues in this section, saying that what people think about me is of little consequence. There is only One that needs to believe that a pastor is doing well ... and that is Christ.

**B. THE COMMON IDENTITY OF THE SERVANTS OF CHRIST**

1. Paul begins by saying **"Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ ...."**
2. The term **"servant"** in this passage comes from a word that referred to a slave who was under the direct authority of another person, and responsible for tasks of menial labor. Originally, the word described an

"under rower" -- a slave who was at the belly of a ship, often chained together with other slaves, rowing the oars of a large ship.

3. This reference indicates that one preacher of the gospel ought not be esteemed higher than another because of some standard independent of what God declares to be important.

4. They are to be **"servants of Christ"** - being completely subordinate and subjected to Him. Far too often, pastors become confused in their responsibilities and begin to believe that they are to be subject to the sheep, this causes them to develop the sense that they must above all else seek to keep the sheep happy and content. This must not be allowed to persist - **Galatians 1:10**

## **II. "MINISTERS" MUST BE REGARDED AS STEWARDS - 4:1b**

### **A. THE CONFIDENCE IN THE STEWARD**

1. **"... and stewards"** - lit. "house managers," a person placed in complete control of a house.

2. This described a slave who was given the responsibility of managing what belongs to someone else- **Genesis 39:4-6**

3. This demonstrates the confidence and trust that the master places in His servants.

### **B. THE CHARGE OF THE STEWARDSHIP**

1. But what exactly is the minister entrusted with? -- **"... and stewards of the mysteries of God"**

2. A "mystery" is something that cannot be known or understood until it is revealed to you -- namely the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ.

3. Hence, the responsibility of a steward of the **"mysteries of God"** is to take the revealed Word of God and bring it to the people of God's household.

### III. MINISTERS "MUST BE REGARDED AS FAITHFUL" - 4:2

#### A. THE REQUIREMENT OF THE STEWARDS

1. It is essential that when handling the "**mysteries of God**" a man so entrusted must be "**trustworthy**" to deliver it completely and honestly.
2. He is to dispense all of God's truth, holding nothing back - cp. Acts 20:20-21, 27
3. All Scripture is profitable to make us conformable to the image of Christ - cp. 2 Timothy 3:16

#### B. THE REPROACH OF THE STEWARDS

1. One reason that so many Christians are spiritually malnourished is because so many preachers dispense such an unbalanced diet of biblical truth. Some will declare the love of God, but refuse to discuss the judgment of God; they'll preach the forgiveness of sin, but not the condemnation of it; they'll talk about heaven, but not hell; and so on.
2. The preacher or teacher who disregards certain Scripture texts, or twists them to support his own ideas or programs, adulterates the Word of God and is not "**trustworthy**"

#### **The Acquittal of Faithfulness"** **I Corinthians 4:3-5**

**Theme:** The only commendation needed by the Christian is the one received from Christ.

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### IV. ARE WE TO SEEK THE PRAISE OF MAN? - 4:3-5

**1 Cor. 4:3-5** But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. [4] For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. [5] Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

## **A. The Foundation for Public Praise-vs. 3**

1. With reference to the servants of Christ who are the stewards of the "mysteries of God," Paul just indicated that "trustworthiness" is the requirement for the approval of God regarding their ministries.
2. He then addresses directly the issue of the appropriate basis for the approval of the servants of Christ by an implied question: "In whose eyes must trustworthiness be assessed?"
3. He answers this question by stating: **"But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court."**
4. By this he indicates that he is not concerned about whether his approval rating is high or low with respect to man's opinion **Galatians 1:10**
5. One of the reasons that the public appraisal is **"a very small thing,"** whether it is praise or criticism, is because it is usually based on the wisdom of the world -- discussed earlier - **3:18**
6. This is not to suggest that a servant of Christ ought to be arrogant; rather, in humility and love, God's servants must not allow people to evaluate their motives or value of their contribution.
7. The reason this is true is because no one can know the heart of a man. Rather, all they can view is what is external -- the "outward appearance" -- cp. **1 Samuel 16:7**
8. Outward appearances do not give enough data for a genuine appraisal to be offered; and therefore, because the Lord is interested in the heart of man (something we cannot see), it is inappropriate to allow outward impressions serve as any kind of basis for praise.
9. Paul even states: **"in fact, I do not even examine myself"** with a view to praising myself.

## **B. PERSONAL PRAISE IS DECEPTIVE - 4:4**

### **1. The Deceptiveness of the Sinner's Heart**

- a. Paul provides an explanation concerning why he does not accept his own examination of himself as an acceptable standard for praise either.
- b. Paul is aware that the heart of men always tends to provide oneself the "benefit of doubt" and often deceives oneself - cp. **Jeremiah 17:9**
- c. Thus, he says **"For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted."**
- d. A conscience can be clear for several reasons:
  - (I) Ignorance or naivete
  - (II) A hardened heart or quenched Spirit of God
  - (III) Rationalism
  - (IV) Denial

## 2. The Savior's Evaluation

- a. However, eventually even the faulty conscience and the deceptiveness of one's excusing heart will be corrected because **"the one who examines me is the Lord."**
- b. Under the scrutiny of the eyes of God, every work which we perform will be evaluated and judged.
- c. This evaluation, regardless of how affirmed we are, or assailed by criticism, the only examination that matters is the one performed by the Lord Jesus Christ - cp. **Galatians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:4**

## C. PERFECT PRAISE IS DELAYED - 4:5

### 1. The Timing of Perfect Praise 5a

- a. Ultimate judgment of every kind, including the evaluation of His servant's ministries, will be by Him and in His time. Paul therefore states: **"do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes."**
- b. We only see the outside, the visible, and cannot know what is hidden in the recesses of the soul. Therefore, the believer is

cautioned about the pre-maturity of lifting men up as the focus of worthiness of praise -- and allow both the commendation and reward to be given by Christ in His own time.

- c. This is not to suggest that appreciation cannot be expressed when a servant of God ministers to you well. Nor is it meant to suggest that when gross sin is evidenced, it should not be confronted.
- d. However, his point is that "verdicts" concerning faithfulness are not to be determined until "all the evidence is in" -- when **"the Lord comes."**

## 2. The Tribute of Perfect Praise **5b**

- a. When Christ, the Judge, does come, what will be the basis of His evaluation? What will prompt Him to commend His servants with praise?
- b. The basis for the praise from God will focus on things that men cannot even observe fully -- hidden matters.
  - (I) **"Who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness"** -- referring to things presently unknown to us
  - (II) Once the wood, hay, and straw are burned away (3:12-13) what remains will receive the reward of faithfulness.
  - (III) Every believer will receive some reward inasmuch as they are found in Jesus Christ, possessing His righteousness.
- c. **"... and disclose the motives of men's hearts"** -- referring to the secret thoughts and drives that produced our works.
  - (I) These rewards will not be based on what degrees we have, how many sermons we've preached, how many souls we've won to Christ, but on one thing alone -- our motives for doing it all.
  - (II) Since this is true, the singular purpose in life that determines all of what we think and do must be "whether, [we] eat or drink or whatever [we] do, do all to the glory of God" - **1 Corinthians 10:31**
- d. "Then each man's praise will come to him from God." - the "well-done" that every servant of Christ yearns to hear - cp. **Matthew 25:23**

**"The Scum of the World"**

**I Corinthians 4:6-13**

**Theme:** Devotion to God will preclude pride and produce scorn by men.

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**V. THE ATTITUDE WHICH PRODUCES SPIRITUAL ARROGANCE - 4:6-8**

**1 Cor. 4:6-8** And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. [7] For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? [8] Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

**A. The Application of the Principles - v. 6**

1. Paul introduces his conclusion to his statements concerning the division in the church by once again going directly at the issue which causes division -- pride.
2. He declares that **"these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes ..."** Indicating that he has used his own and the name of Apollos instead of exposing those who are truly responsible.
3. He then points out why he has taken the time for such a lengthy discussion -- **"so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written"** -- specifically regarding the place that man has in the work of God -
4. The desired result of it all was **"that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other."**
5. **"Become arrogant"** - lit. "puff up, to inflate, to blow up"

**B. THE AFFECT OF CONCEIT - vv. 7-8**

1. The impact of failing to learn the lessons Paul has been attempting to teach them through the previous discussion was that they will forget that the blessings that they've had have come from God and that they had nothing



to do with it - cp. 3:21-23

2. He therefore asks the question: **"who regards you as superior?"** -- meaning "What makes you think that your group is above any other in the church?"
3. **"What do you have that you did not receive?"** -- Since all things belong to God (3:23), therefore, anything we possess in skill or talent, intellect or wisdom, it all comes from God - cp. James 1:16-18
4. **"And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"** -- The whole basis for their arrogance was nothing more than a fabrication of their pride.
5. He then uses sarcasm to drive home the affect of the very faulty view that some in the church are better than others because of the person they follow, their gifts or abilities, etc...
6. **"You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us"** - as though Paul and the other apostles were of no assistance or help.
7. Paul then switches gears and allows himself an expression of longing for the day when we will all be with Christ, and rewards are received: **"And indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you."**

### C. THE APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE - 4:9-10

**1 Cor. 4:9-10 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. [10] We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.**

#### 1. Humble Faith - v. 9

- a. In contrast to their haughty and arrogant view of themselves, Paul indicates that **"God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as men condemned to death."**

- b. Even as God allowed His Son to be made a spectacle and put to death, He now allows the world to view the apostles as worthless teachers of vain ideas.
- c. **"Exhibit"** - is a technical word used to describe bringing a person out into the arena to be killed by gladiators or wild beasts.
- d. Instead to claiming themselves to be great spiritual kings worthy of rule and reign, the godly apostles viewed themselves as conquered ones, used by God for whatever He wished -- even as **"a spectacle to the world, both to angels and men."**
- e. Hence, they were ridiculed, spit upon, stoned, beaten, mocked, scourged, run out of town, mocked, and generally abused; a great contrast to the puffed up arrogance of the Corinthian believers.

## 2. The Scorn for an Honorable Faith - v. 10

- a. Once again using irony or sarcasm, Paul places himself and the other apostles in contrast to what the Corinthians thought of themselves.
- b. **"We are fools [in the eyes of the world] for Christ's sake, but you are prudent [smart or sensible] in Christ."** -- wanting balance and the respect of those outside of Christ.
- c. **"We are weak, but you are strong"** -- Paul clarifies that the apostles possessed no claim to self-dependency, but were dependent on the power of God; while, the Corinthians thought their own ideas and wisdom were valuable.
- d. **"You are distinguished, but we are without honor"** -- there is nothing that we have devised that would cause us to be hailed as original in our thinking or innovative in our contribution to society.

## D. THE APOSTOLIC CONDITION - 4:11-13

**1 Cor. 4:11-13 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; [12] And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:**

**[13] Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.**

**1. One of Sacrifice - v. 11**

- a. Here Paul begins to explain the condition of the Apostles as servant of Christ. They were going through tremendous sacrifice and deprivation for the cause of Christ, living at the lowest levels of society.
- b. **"To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless."**

**2. One of Suffering - v. 12**

- a. He continues and demonstrates that his willingness to suffer also provides evidence of his devotion to Christ.
- b. **"... and we toil [teeter on the brink of exhaustion], working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure."**
- c. They genuinely considered themselves as galley slaves and unworthy of a better lot than whatever God determined them to receive -- bringing Him glory in whatever condition they are in.

**3. One of being the object of Slander - v. 13a**

Paul demonstrates that he was not party to schism or resentment, nor would he become embittered by malicious talk of his reputation..

**4. One of Scorn - v. 13b**

Finally, Paul contrasts himself with the spiritually arrogant, who proudly thought themselves to be on top and praiseworthy.

- a. He declares: **"we have become the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now."**

- b. **"Scum"** and **"Dregs"** refer to the scrapings cleaned from a dirty dish or pot -- to be thrown away.
- c. It was often used of the worst sort of criminal that was to be executed, the "throw away" portion of society.
- d. This is what the world thought of the apostles -- that they were to be treated with contempt and disdain -- a contrasting view from what the Corinthians had of themselves as they claimed supremacy for themselves against others on the basis of which of the apostles were favored.

**"Overcoming Spiritual Arrogance"**

**I Corinthians 4:14-21**

**Theme:** Every believer must yield himself to the power of the Spirit of God.

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## **VI. PAUL'S PURPOSE - 4:14**

**1 Cor. 4:14** **I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.**

### **A. His goal was not to embarrass them.**

1. Paul declares that embarrassment and humiliation were not his goal-- he says: **"I do not write these things to shame you ..."**
2. **"Shame"** has the idea of "turning ones back to oneself" - or to turn you against yourself.
3. The purpose of God's Word is not to cause a focus on oneself at all, but rather, to turn you toward Christ Jesus and exhort you to through faith, be conformed to Him.

### **B. His goal was exhortation**

1. Hence, Paul states: that He wrote **"these things to ... admonish you as my beloved children"**
2. Although Paul has confronted their arrogance, pride, and divisiveness as he has treated the issues of division in the church, he wants them to

understand that the reason for being so direct is his love for them and a desire for them to be safe in their faith.

3. Since he loved them "**as [his] beloved children**" he could not bear to see them straying from God's Word and the blessings that are possessed by those who obey it - cp **1 Thessalonians 2:10-12**
4. Hence, the goal of Scripture is not to make people feel humiliated (although there are times when this happens), but rather, to bring them to a place of blessing and spiritual growth.

## **VII. PAUL WAS THEIR FATHER - 4:15-17**

**1 Cor. 4:15-17 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. [16] Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. [17] For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.**

### **A. They needed to recognize proper Spiritual Authority - vv. 15-16**

1. He indicates that in the midst of their arrogance, they have lost all sense of reverence for the spiritual authorities that God had given them.
2. First, "**For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers**" - indicating that they are willing to listen to the opinions of people who were not viewed as authoritative, but they were not interested in being accountable to those who possessed true spiritual authority. Namely, Paul who was one of their spiritual Fathers.
3. Paul states: "**for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.**" In essence, he is saying that there is a responsibility on the part of the believers to respond to the authority of spiritual fathers as children would in their homes.
4. Hence, he says: "**Therefore, I exhort you, be imitators of me.**" -- something that every genuine spiritual leader should be able to say to his people.

## **B. The Evaluation of Proper Authority - v. 17**

1. Paul then indicates that his example is able to be followed only because it "squares" with the person of Christ Jesus who is our only appropriate standard.
2. In an effort to validate his own example, says **"I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ."**
3. Paul here indicates that he is not the only authority to be followed, but that others as well who conform to that **"which [is] in Christ"** serve as good role models -- example: **"Timothy"**
4. It doesn't matter who the person is, the only ones worthy of esteem and emulation are those who portray godliness **"just as [is taught] everywhere in every church"** that is faithful to the Scriptures.

## **VIII. IT'S TIME TO GET WITH THE PROGRAM- 4:18-21**

**1 Cor. 4:18-21 Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. [19] But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. [20] For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. [21] What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?**

### **A. The arrogant doubt he will come - vv. 18-20**

1. Instead of humbly yielding to the authority of God's Word and the example of the Apostles, **"some had become arrogant, as though I(Paul) were not coming to you"**
2. They were acting as though Paul and the Scripture that he taught were not authoritative at all. Paul indicates that the important issue in Christianity is not what we assert or boast about, but whether or not the power of God is evidenced through our lives.
3. He states: **"I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power"**

4. The self-advancing utterances of the spiritually arrogant mean nothing - only what the power of God's Word is producing in their lives is important. The lack of power will prove their condition.
5. **"For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power"** -- and, of course, this refers to the power of God's Spirit using the Word to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ.

#### **B. The choice is yours - v. 21**

1. Paul brings us back to the beginning of this section in v. 14 -- although he doesn't desire to bring shame, if this is where the arrogant of Corinth defiantly plant their feet, he will **"come to you with a rod"**
2. However, he'd much prefer to come **"with love and a spirit of gentleness"** designed to encourage and build up.
3. He asks **"What do you desire?"** -- this same question needs to be posed to us today, are we arrogant spiritually, unwilling to allow the truth of God's Word to exhort us to greater spiritual growth?
4. Or, are we willing to submit the control of our lives over to the power of God's Spirit as He uses the Scriptures and God's servants to exhort us toward maturity. Paul says that his approach will fulfill his commitment to them - whichever way he must approach them.

### **"Dealing With Immorality in the Church"**

#### **I Corinthians 5:1-13**

**Theme:** Genuine love causes a church to remove unrepentant believers from fellowship.

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#### **I. CHAPTER 5 - DEALING WITH IMMORALITY - 5:1-2**

**1 Cor. 5:1-2** It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. [2] And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

## A. The Awareness of Sin - v. 1

1. Paul begins the practical part of the epistle, where he demonstrates how the Corinthians' arrogance, unteachable spirit, and high regard for human wisdom has negatively impacted the spiritual welfare of the church.
2. He begins by saying: **"It is actually reported that there is immorality among you"**
3. This **"immorality [is] such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife"**
  - a. **"Immorality"** is the word that we get "pornography" from - and is a common term in the Jewish mind to refer to incestuous relationships -
  - b. "Incest" is a sin that was not even condoned among the Roman pagans, who had restrictive laws forbidding it.
  - c. Apparently, a believer in the church was in a continuous sexual relationship with his **"father's wife"** ("step-mother") - perhaps having continued to live with her after his father died (since he is not mentioned) and is claiming to be providing Christian comfort to her through their physical relationship.
4. Paul is astonished that they didn't have the discernment to recognize this as a severely immoral problem, not something to be tolerated or endured.

## B. The Attitude of Sorrow - v. 2

1. Instead of condemning this incestuous perversion, the people of the church had **"become arrogant"** - prideful and boastful - claiming that this is perfectly acceptable as an expression of Christian love.
2. Instead of such "arrogance," they should **"have mourned instead"** - grieving in heart at the estrangement from God that the person so sinning was enduring; regardless of their assertions of spirituality.
3. In addition, the "mourning" would be an expression of shock and horror at the indulgence in immoral conduct.



4. When we cease to be shocked by sin we lose a strong defense against it. However, never should there exist an attitude of eagerness or satisfaction at the prospect of having to confront people because of their sin; rather a sorrow ought to exist that would cause one to **"mourn"**
5. The reason for the sorrow is the understanding that the sinful brother's fellowship with God has been damaged, which causes disruption in fellowship within the church.
6. A believer who is part of the church, but engages in blatant sin, should be dealt with, the church must act **"so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst."**

### C. THE PRIORITIES OF DEALING WITH IMMORALITY - 5:3-8

**1 Cor. 5:3-8 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, [4] In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, [5] To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. [6] Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? [7] Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: [8] Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**

#### 1. The Importance of Delivering the Sinner - vv. 3-5

- a. The first of the two clear priorities provided in this passage is the deliverance of the sinful brother from the power & guilt of his sin.
- b. In his apostolic role, Paul provides the church down through the centuries the divinely proscribed response to sin in the church -- **"For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this ..."**
- c. The decision regarding what is to be done must occur within certain constraints:
  - (I) It must be done **"in the name of our Lord Jesus ..."** - that is, it must properly square with the revealed will of God and not because of some personality clash or preferences.

- (II) It must be done **"when you are assembled ..."** - that is, it is not something that should be done privately or in the presence of a "select few"
- (III) It must be done **"with the power of our Lord Jesus"** - that is, not with the persuasive techniques of man's wisdom
- d. The basic priority is to insure the ultimate salvation of the sinning brother -- **"so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"** - v. 5b
- e. Now, the basic tension that exists here is that most people believe that the best way to do this is to be patient, tolerant, and understanding, showing the errant person great amounts of love.
- f. Although this is important for a time, when a person rejects the compassion and patience of the church by continuing to embrace their sin, then tolerance begins to become affirmation of sin and no longer loving - cp. **Matthew 18:15-17**
- g. Paul delineates for us what must be done when we possess a sinful brother in the church who refuses to repent of his/her sin -- **"deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh"**
  - (I) Satan is the ruler of this world, and turning a believer over to Satan thrusts the believer back into the world on his own, apart from the care and support of Christian fellowship.
  - (II) **"deliver"** is a judicial term that indicates the judicial act of sentencing and handing over for punishment.
  - (III) **"destruction of his flesh"** means giving him over to Satan to carry out the consequences of sin, the act of ruination and certainly involves the divinely appointed affects of sinful choices that God uses Satan to execute.
  - (IV) Such **"destruction"** is what Satan is seeking to do to every believer, but needs latitude from God to accomplish - **Matthew 10:28**
- h. Thus, when a believer is delivered over to Satan, the Devil, who is "prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" is ready to destroy the flesh as an unwitting agent of God's chastisement.

- i. To human wisdom, we say: "That's unloving, judgmental, harsh." But, are we too going to be arrogant and say that "our" way is better than God's? Would that not be succumbing to the temptation to elevate the wisdom of man over the foolishness of God?
- j. The motivation through all of this is to insure that the sinner be **"saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"**

## 2. The Importance of Defending the Saints - vv. 6-8

- a. There is a second priority beyond delivering the sinner, and that is defending the purity of the Church.
- b. Paul says that in light of the danger posed by the malignant nature of sin, **"Your boasting is not good"** -- not only will tolerance of sin cause uncertainty concerning the sinners spiritual destiny, it also endangers the rest of the body.
- c. He then informs us that sin is a malignancy that will spread throughout the body if not removed -- he uses the analogy of leaven: **"Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?"**
- d. **"Leaven"** in Paul's illustration represents influence, and here a sinful influence. Just as yeast spreads, permeates, and ferments throughout a lump of dough, sin's nature is to ferment, corrupt, and spread.
- e. His exhortation is to **"clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened."**
- f. Leaven symbolized sin. Here Paul admonishes them to clean out every immoral practice from their midst just as it was custom to clean their homes of all leaven before Passover.
- g. **"For Christ our Passover also has been sanctified"** - a picture of Him who died and shed His blood to atone for our sins, causing the wrath of God to "Passover" us even as in the account of the first Passover.

- h. **"Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."**
- i. Hence, in order to protect the church from the spread of sin and the wrath of God, it is necessary to remove the **"leaven"** of unrepentant sin from ourselves through the discipline of rebellious and hard-hearted believers.

#### **D. Dealing with Immorality- 5:9-13**

**1 Cor. 5:9-13 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: [10] Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. [11] But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. [12] For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? [13] But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.**

##### **1. The Attention of the Believers - vv. 9-11**

- a. Apparently, the Corinthians had received some of these admonitions in a non-biblical letter that Paul had sent earlier. They took them and applied them to the issue of separation from the world.
- b. As a result, Paul says **"I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world ...."**
- c. In other words, the Church is not to completely separate itself from people who are guilty of sin who are of this world else, **"you would have to go out of the world"** and become hermits.
- d. His point is that such discipline as he described earlier is only part of God's wisdom for the believers -- **"I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person ...."**

- e. The greatest attention of the church needs be on the integrity of the church -- the confrontation of people who profess to be **"called"** by the name of Christ while continuing in open immorality.
- f. Association is to cease with **"so-called brothers if he ..."**
  - (I) **"... is an immoral person"**
  - (II) **"... or covetous"**
  - (III) **"... or an idolater"**
  - (IV) **"... or a reviler"**
  - (V) **"... or a drunkard"**
  - (VI) **"... or a swindler"**
- g. Understand that although these are listed as illustrating the kinds of sins that ought to prompt disassociation and discipline, they are not exhaustive -- no list in the Bible is designed to be.
- h. If a sinner repents of any one of these sins, disassociation is wrong - hence, the real cause for disassociation is rebellion against repentance on top of indulgence in the sin itself - cp. **2 Corinthians 2:5-9**
- i. However, when a person is rebellious disassociation must occur to the extent that we **"not even eat with such an one"**

## 2. The Accountability of Unbelievers - vv. 12-13

- a. Paul then returns to how to handle the situation when there is sin present in those outside the faith, those who are of the world.
- b. He says that we were not, as Christians or the Church, to disassociate from people who are **"of the world"** for who then would reach them?
- c. He states: **"For what have I to do with judging outsiders?"** -- ultimately, we know that we will be involved in judging the world - cp.; 6:2; but, right now, our desire focus is to primarily be on **"those who are within the church"**
- d. **"But those who are outside, God judges"** - Since chapter 6:2 discusses that we will be involved in the judgment of the world on

judgment day, the judgment here is referring to judgment on earth - the infliction of consequences on the wicked to be done by God through men on earth.

- e. We are told in **Romans 13:1-4** that those who are sinful outside the church are to be chastised by the various authorities established by God to serve as "ministers of God" to avenge righteousness on those who are errant.
- f. The point being made by Paul here is that the church ought not hold people outside the church accountable to themselves as they would believers -- that is the job of local, state, and federal authorities.
- g. Although the church as salt and light ought to exhort and appeal to the civil authorities to fulfill their purpose by properly representing God's holiness and standards (**Luke 18:1-5**), the church must actively concentrate on disciplining the believers who err by **"remov[ing] the wicked man from among yourselves."**

**"Lawsuits and the Christian"**

**I Corinthians 6:1-8**

**Theme:** Christians ought to settle their differences within the spiritual resources of the Church - not the world.

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**I. CHAPTER 6 - WHO SHALL JUDGE BETWEEN BROTHERS - 6:1-3**

**1 Cor. 6:1-3 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? [2] Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? [3] Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?**

**A. Disregard for the God given authority of the Church - v. 1**

- 1. Having just concluded his exhortation to the church to deal with the sins of its members, Paul now turns to the members and challenges them to allow the church to exercise its God-given role as judges.

2. Paul expresses his astonishment that believers were preferring the secular judges over the spiritual insights of the leadership of the church.
3. **"Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to the law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?"**
4. Paul is highlighting here the complete disregard for the wisdom and discernment of those spiritually mature in the church. Public litigation, or the bringing of legal complaints, against one another within the body of Christ is a manifestation of a fleshly attitude since it seeks revenge or gain over the unity of the Body and the preservation of the reputation of the church.

#### **B. The Problem of Ignoring the Destiny of the Church - vv. 2-3**

1. Paul immediately calls them to an awareness to what he had taught them previously when with them through the phrase **"Or do you not know ..."**
2. He then reviews the destiny of the church; that **"the saints will judge the world"** - cp. Matthew 19:28; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 20:4.
3. He then poses the question to them that **"if the world is to be judged by you, are you not competent to judge the matters between yourselves?"** -- that is, how would judging these little individual matters compare with what we will be responsible to do when we **"judge the world"**?
4. In addition, our credentials take us even a step higher -- **"Do you not know that we will judge angels?"** -- thus, we are even more qualified to the **"matters of this life"**
5. Thus, when believers turn on each other and go before the secular courts to settle their squabbles, they make a spectacle of themselves before the unbelievers, "airing their pride, carnality, greed, and bitterness before the whole world. This is the same world that one day they would be called on by the Lord to help judge and rule in righteousness."
6. Certainly, under the guidance of the Scriptures with the Holy Spirit, any matter of disagreement can be settled within the Body of Christ.

## II. IT'S WRONG TO AIR OUR DIRTY LAUNDRY BEFORE THE SECULAR WORLD - 6:4-6

**1 Cor. 6:4-6** If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. [5] I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? [6] But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

### A. The Inferiority of the Secular Judges - v. 4

1. Since the church will ultimately rule the world, why would a believer willingly place themselves under the judgment of those destined to be judged by them?
2. **"So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church?"**
3. His emphasis is that the poorest equipped believer, who seeks the counsel of God's Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit is much more competent to settle disagreements between fellow believers than is the most highly trained and experienced unbelieving judge who is devoid of divine truth.

### B. The Lack of the Quality of Godliness - vv. 5-6

1. Because the Corinthian believers had so indulged in embarrassing the body of Christ through their pursuit of secular litigation to settle issues between themselves, Paul states **"I say this to your shame."**
2. He then shares how their decisions indicates that **"there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren"** in other words, there are no spiritually minded men who can handle Scripture?
3. In addition, he indicates that the litigants are involved in shameful activity as **"brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers"**



### III. THE IMPACT OF AIRING OUR DIRTY LAUNDRY BEFORE THE WORLD - 6:7-8

**1 Cor. 6:7-8** Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? [8] Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

#### A. Better to suffer wrong - v. 7

1. The above indictment indicates that they are defeated spiritually, without discernment - **"Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another."**
2. Any believer who takes a fellow believer to court for any reason always loses the case in God's sight.
3. Paul suggests an alternative to perpetuating the defeat of their behavior - **"Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?"**
  - a. It is far better to be deprived what you believe you deserve than to lose spiritually by discrediting the power, wisdom, and work of God.
  - b. By preferring to **"be wronged"** or **"be defrauded"** we demonstrate that our lives are truly dedicated to the confidence in the sovereign power of God

#### B. Is God not able to deal with wrong doers? - v. 8

1. Paul finally indicts the Corinthians by saying that instead of trusting God to sovereignty work His will, **"on the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud"** - practicing the old adage: **"Do unto others before they can do unto you."**
2. This is applicable primarily between believers **"You do this even to your brethren"**; but can be generalized to apply to our treatment of anyone - that we must be careful not to portray Christ as vindictive or greedy.

**"The Power of the Blood"**

**I Corinthians 6:9-11**

**Theme:** One of the great truths of Christianity is that no sinner has sinned too deeply or too long to be saved.

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**IV. NO INHERITANCE FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS - 6:9a**

**1 Cor. 6:9-11** **Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, [10] Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. [11] And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.**

**A. We are not to live like the unrighteousness**

1. Paul has been addressing the issue of allowing the church to deal with immorality in the lives of the members of the church of Jesus Christ. He addressed the issue of greed in attempting to get vengeance on other brothers by taking them to court and indicated that this was not consistent with the new life in Christ, but with what we were prior to coming to Christ.
2. Now that we are in Christ, we must beware lest we allow our lives to slip back into patterns that once characterized us prior to the impact of Christ Jesus and His blood.
3. Paul states here **"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?"**
4. There is a great need to understand that those who are genuinely born again are not characterized by conduct that is devoted to **"unrighteousness"** - cp. **1 John 2:3-4; 3:9**
5. Notice the statement **"the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God"**

6. Those whose lives are able to be classified as practicing "**unrighteous**" have no hope of gaining entrance into heaven outside of Christ-- cp. [Revelation 21:25-27](#)
7. Again it bears repeating, that no matter what a person may say with their lips, it is the impact that Christ has had in one's life that tells the real tale of the genuineness of salvation - cp. [1 John 2:3](#)
8. When a person "practices lawlessness" as a consistent lifestyle or unrighteousness characterizes their life, they will not "**inherit the kingdom of God**". **No one outside of Christ will inherit eternal life.** - cp. [Matthew 7:22-23](#)

## V. THE INDICATIONS OF UNRIGHTEOUS LIVING - 6:9b-10

### A. The Unrighteous Morally Defile Themselves - v. 9b

1. The catalog of sin in verses 9-10 is not exhaustive, but are representative of the major types of moral sins.
2. "**Do not be deceived ...**" - indicates that there will be some who attempt to claim that they have a stake in the "**kingdom of God**" but deceive themselves in so thinking.
3. The sins listed first are those that deal in the defilement of oneself - the corruption that occurs in any consensual activity between persons that defile them. The fact that people may consensually participate does not make it any more acceptable.
4. "**Neither fornicators ...**" - the sin of sexual immorality in general, and to sexual activity of unmarried persons in general.
5. "**... nor idolaters ...**" - the sin of giving honor to any false god or false religious systems; could also indicate behavior that places anything before God
6. "**... nor adulterers ...**" - the sin of married persons who indulge in sexual acts outside the marriage partnership;

7. **"... nor effeminate ..."** - the word literally means "soft" and is a reference to those that allow themselves to be involved homosexually - possibly including male prostitutes;
8. **"... nor homosexuals ..."** - the sin of exchanging and corrupting normal male-female sexual roles and relations. It is described as the ultimate defiance against the creator - cp. **Romans 1:21-27**

#### **B. The Unrighteous Morally Abuse Others - v. 10**

1. In addition to those sins which are typically committed with the compliance of others, there are some that are committed in abuse of unwilling victims.
2. **"... nor thieves ..."** - the sin that results from greed whereby one takes for oneself what belongs to others;
3. **"... nor covetous ..."** - the sin of attaching great importance to things and longing to have it in satisfaction to your lust;
4. **"... nor drunkards ..."** - the sin of yielding control of oneself to an intoxicant -- including the sin of drug addiction;
5. **"... nor revilers ..."** - the sin of destroying with one's tongue or wounding with words;
6. **"... nor swindlers ..."** - the sin of those who steal indirectly by taking unfair advantage of others to promote their own financial gain.
7. All of these **"will not inherit the kingdom of God."**

### **VI. THE DELIVERANCE FROM UNRIGHTEOUSNESS - 6:11**

#### **A. But for the grace of God –there go I**

1. **"Such were some of you ..."** - illustrates the hope that exists in the midst of enslavement to the above-mentioned sins.
2. All of us were at one time in bondage to sin prior to coming to Christ for salvation - cp. **Romans 6:6**

3. Regardless of how serious one's sinful bondage is, regardless of how enslaved one is to their particular vice, there is power available through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **B. Clean by the blood of the Lamb**

1. Something had happened to the Corinthian believers that made living like they used to live a thing of the past.
2. Paul explains by stating: **"but you were washed, ..."** - a reference to the work of God's Spirit whereby we are regenerated - cp. **Titus 3:5**
  - a. This indicates that new life has been given to us as we are born again - cp. **2 Corinthians 5:17**
  - b. This is a work of God of creating a new creature who is not the same person they were before coming to Christ.
3. **"... but you were sanctified, ..."** - a reference to the work of God in making us holy and empowering us to live a genuinely righteous life in our practical daily living.
4. **"... but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."** - a reference to the new standing that we enjoy in the sight of God; clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ which is applied through the Holy Spirit.
5. This cleansing from what we were to making us pure in the righteousness of Jesus Christ comes through the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on Calvary's Cross - cp. **Ephesians 1:7**

### **"The Christian & Sexual Sin"**

#### **I Corinthians 6:12-20**

**Theme:** Indulgence in sexual sin never provides the fulfillment anticipated -- it always costs more than its worth.

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## **VII. THE DANGERS OF SEXUAL SIN - 6:12**

**1 Cor. 6:12    All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.**

## A. Sexual Sin Exacts a Cost

1. God's grace alone saves (as is clearly demonstrated in vv. 9-11) and His grace alone keeps salvation - **Galatians 3:1-6**
2. We come now to how this is applied practically to our daily living and the Corinthians were using this truth as a theological excuse for their sin.
3. A philosophical teaching in this era was that anything physical was of no consequence, including the body. Hence, "what was done with the body did not matter. Food was food, the stomach was the stomach, and sex was sex. Sex was just a biological function like eating, to be used just as food was used, to satisfy their appetites"
4. Paul confronts this perversion head-on in this section of Scripture agreeing that **"All things are lawful for me ..."** meaning that every sin I commit as a Christian is forgiven in Jesus Christ, but I cannot sin presumptuously as if there were no negative consequences involved.
5. Hence he states: **"... but not all things are profitable."** -- [lit. "To be to advantage"] -- He is stating that the price for doing some things is terribly high.
  - a. Sexual sins never bring profit, but always brings loss -- loss of purity, marriage, homes, children, innocence and the ability to serve.
  - b. Scripture teaches that although sexual indulgence may seem pleasant, it exacts great cost - cp. **Proverbs 5:3-6**
  - c. Essentially then, realize that it never delivers what is promised - sexual indulgence outside the parameters of God's holy intention of marriage is cheap, defiling, and self-gratifying in its final result.

## B. Sexual Sin Exerts a Control

1. Again, **"although all things are lawful ... I will not be mastered by anything."**
2. No sin is more enslaving than sexual sin. The more it is indulged, the more it controls the one indulging.

3. Often it begins with small indiscretions, which lead to greater promiscuity, which ultimately brings flagrant indulgence.
4. Instead of being controlled by sexual appetite, the believer is to control the appetite -- cp. **1 Corinthians 9:27**

## VIII. THE DEFILEMENT OF SEXUAL SIN - 6:13-17

**1 Cor. 6:13-17 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. [14] And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. [15] Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. [16] What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. [17] But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.**

### A. It Defiles the Purpose for the Body - vv. 13-14

1. Again, there were those who were claiming that sexual indulgence was no different than any other physical appetite that God gave you and therefore ought not be denied.
2. These ones were saying that **"food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food"** - meaning that there is a purely biological nature to physical cravings that we possess; the satisfaction of our hunger is not an evil thing, but a natural instinctive thing. (**This is the philosophy behind liberal's "safe sex" campaign**).
3. They were attempting to equate sexual appetite with innocent instinctive desires and Paul confronts them on the issue by saying that **"God will do away with both of them"** -- indicating that there is no eternal consequence in the relationship of food to the stomach.
4. However, there are eternal consequences in the moral issue of indulgence in sexuality -- **"Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body."** -- that is, our bodies are designed by God to be instruments of the Lord, for His use and glory.
5. These bodies are not only to be used to serve and glorify Him now, but also in the life to come - **"Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power."**

6. The point that Paul is making, in refuting the view that sexual indulgence is nothing more than an activity as natural and inevitable as eating, is that "The stomach and food have only a horizontal, temporal relationship. At death the relationship ceases. But our bodies are far more than biological. For believers they also have a spiritual, vertical relationship."

## **B. It Defiles the Purity of the Lord - vv. 15-17**

1. Paul then challenges us to recognize the significance of this relationship between the believer and Christ -- **"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?"**
2. As Christians, we are part of the body of Christ, therefore he asks the question: **"Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!"**
3. When a believer commits sexual sin, he is using part of the body of Christ in a perverted way -- a thought that is incomprehensible to the Apostle and ought to be to us as well.
4. Sexual relations involve a union - **"Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her?"**
5. This is the issue that **"the two shall become one flesh."** -- This signals the seriousness with which God views sexual sins -- that every time a man and a woman enter into a sexual relationship a spiritual bond is established between them
6. To join yourself immorally with someone is a choice that does not belong to you because **"the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him."**
7. Therefore, a Christian who commits sexual immorality necessarily involves his Lord. All sex outside of marriage is sin, but when it is committed by believers it is especially abhorrent, because it profanes Jesus Christ, with whom the believer is one.

## **IX. HOW TO COMBAT SEXUAL SIN - 6:18-20**



**1 Cor. 6:18-20 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. [19] What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? [20] For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**

**A. The Instruction to Flee - v. 18**

1. On the basis of the impact that sexual sin has in the life of the believer, especially with reference to the profaning of our Lord, Paul provides the instruction: **"Flee immorality."**
2. This is basically the solution to overcoming sexual temptation - cp. **1 Corinthians 10:13** When we are being tempted, we should not argue or debate whether something is appropriate or not -- since this almost inevitably leads to rationalizing.
3. Some people are foolish enough to consider sexual temptation as spiritual challenges -- but instead ought to see it as spiritual traps to be escaped and therefore, get away as fast as we can. This is the only true method by which we are able to escape temptation -- cp. **Genesis 39:11-13 FLEE FROM IT!**
4. We ought not only flee from it after we encounter it, we are to flee from it in a pro-active, meaning a preventative way - cp. **Romans 13:14** in other words don't go near the problem.

**B. The Inspiration to Flee - vv. 19-20**

1. Once again Paul brings our attention back to how we defile that which is holy when we use our bodies as vehicles for sinful sexual indulgence.
2. **"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?"** - that is, every act of immorality committed in the body is committed in God's sanctuary, our own bodies!
3. Paul then calls for sexual purity not only because of the way sexual sin affects the body, but because the body it affects is not even the believer's own - **"For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."**

## **"MORAL PURITY & MARRIAGE"**

### **1 Corinthians 7:1-9**

#### **Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Marriage is to be held in honor, but not viewed as God's will for everyone.

## **I. CHAPTER 8 - THE OBLIGATION TO MARRY - 7:1**

**1 Cor. 7:1**    **Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.**

### **A. RECOGNITION OF THE STANDARD SITUATION**

1. **"Now concerning the things about which you wrote . . ."** - illustrates that there was quite a problem with the Corinthian Church grasping the various righteous standards of God concerning marriage.
2. We are not exactly sure what prompted the comments by Paul in this section on marriage and celibacy. However, it seems best to understand that there were those in Corinth who were teaching that if a person did not get married, that they were not fulfilling God's Will for their lives -- cp. Genesis 2:18
3. Marriage was [and still is] viewed as the normal course for a person's life; but, ought never be perceived as the sole means of fulfillment or of compliance with the will of God.
4. Hence, Paul states here that it is "good" for a person to remain "single"

### **B. RESPECT FOR THE SUMMONS TO SINGLENESS**

Hence, marriage is not to be viewed as a more "spiritual" state than "singleness" -  
- as though it were more acceptable to God.

## II. THE OBJECTIVES OF MARRIAGE - 7:2-5

**1 Cor. 7:2-5** Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. [3] Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. [4] The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. [5] Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

### A. TO OVERCOME THE DANGERS OF CELIBACY - V. 2

1. Marriage must never be relegated to being some kind of escape valve for the various lusts of the flesh that consume people. However, Paul does teach us that "because of immoralities . . ." - people should marry - cp. v. 9
2. Corinth was much like America in that immorality was not only rampant, it was celebrated.

### B. THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLETE YOUR COMPANION - vv. 3-5

1. When marriage is your calling, you must not fall into the trap of believing that the statement that **"it is good for a man not to touch a woman"** affects married couples.
2. Rather, God has planned for the "act of marriage" to be freely enjoyed as the expression and experience of love in the most intimate sense; creating a powerful bond that is symbolized in the procreation of children.
3. Hence, **"the husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband."** -- it is not merely a pleasure to be enjoyed, but a responsibility as well to be fulfilled.
4. **In verse 4**, Paul reinforces the mutuality of the obligation by declaring that the "authority over [the] body" belongs to the spouse of each individual.
5. Apparently, whether for spiritual reasons or not, spouses were "depriving one another"

- a. Paul calls on such irresponsibility to the marital roles to "stop"
- b. He then provides some regulations governing sexual deprivation within marriage

- (1) It must be "by agreement for a time"
- (2) It must be for the purpose of "devoting yourselves to prayer"
- (3) It must be terminated by "coming together again" - so that no person attempts to extend the lack of intimacy.

6. Because temptations will increase during a time of suspension of the act in marriage, it should not be prolonged **"so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control"**.

7. Thus, abstinence must never be used as a pretense to spiritual superiority or as a means of intimidating or manipulating one's spouse.

8. Physical love making is to be a normal and regular experience shared by both marriage partners alike, as a gift from God.

### III. THE OPTIONS CONCERNING MARRIAGE - 7:6-9

**1 Cor. 7:6-9 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. [7] For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. [8] I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. [9] But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.**

#### A. THE AWARENESS OF INDIVIDUAL GIFTEDNESS - vv. 6-7

1. "Concession" (permission KJV) in v. 6 literally means awareness -- signifying that what Paul is stating "this I say by way of awareness [of the benefits of both celibacy and marriage], not of command [dictating one over the other]."
2. Paul comments that **"each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that."** However, for various reasons relating to the spread of the Gospel, Paul states: **"Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am."**
3. Because of the freedom & independence that a single person has to serve Christ, Paul was clarifying that it is not a "secondary status" within the church.

Yet, he also indicates that it is not expected that everyone see it as a better life either.

4. "For a person who does not have the gift of celibacy, trying to practice it brings moral and spiritual frustration."

## **B. THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF INDIVIDUAL WEAKNESS - vv. 8-9**

1. He then clarifies that it is not necessary to get married to be happy; however he understands the pressure that people are under in a sensual society, especially when they've been married before.

2. **"But I say to the unmarried and to the widows . . ."** - he is addressing those who have known the companionship and completion of a previous marriage.

a. **"Unmarried"** - literally means wifeless, but not classified as "virgins" - hence, most likely a reference to those whose unions with their former spouses have been irreparably severed by the remarriage of their spouse - cp. vv. 25, 16

b. **"Widows"** - obviously a reference to those whose spouses have died.

3. **"that it is good for them if they remain even as I"** - Paul was widowed and never remarried so was able to devote himself fully to the service of Jesus Christ.

4. However, the weaknesses of life are real and some may struggle with the issue of self-control - **"But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."**

a. It appears that those who are divorced beyond the ability to be reconciled to their spouses, a state not established merely by divorce but the remarriage of one's spouse to someone else, are no longer "bound" to that person - cp. v. 15

b. The same is true of the widow or widower - cp. v. 39

### **"THE PERMANENCE OF MARRIAGE"**

#### **1 Corinthians 7:10-16**

#### **[Strong's Concordance](#)**

**Theme:** The believer is to always remain committed to their marriage partner.

#### IV. THE STANDARD FOR THOSE CHRISTIANS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN A MARRIAGE THAT IS NOT GOING WELL - 7:10-11

**1 Cor. 7:10-11** And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: [11] But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

##### A. THE OUTLAWING OF DIVORCE AMONG BELIEVERS - v. 10

1. Marriage in the first century existed in four different forms within the pagan and morally corrupt society from which the believers in Corinth had not fully separated.
2. These four forms of marriage are as follows:
  - a. The "**CONTUBERNIUM**" [tent companionship] – was the lot of slaves who were at the whim of their masters to move about freely, to arrange for other partners, or to sell to another master.
  - b. The "**USUS**" [common law marriage] - recognized a couple to be married after they had lived together for a year.
  - c. The "**COEMPTIO IN MANUM**" - in which a father would sell his daughter to a prospective husband.
  - d. The "**CONFARREATIO**" - is the basis of our modern Christian marriage ceremony.
3. Paul addresses the issues concerning a variety of marital situations beginning with the permanence of marriage among two believers.
4. He states: "**But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord**" - indicating that Paul recognized that he was reiterating a teaching that Jesus Christ also taught when He was on earth.
5. This teaching was that "**the wife should not leave her husband.**" -- later, he reiterates this by stating "**that the husband should not divorce his wife**" -- both meaning essentially the same thing.
6. This indicates that divorce between believers is strictly and explicitly forbidden since it is contrary to God's plan for mankind - cp.

**Matthew 19:3-10**

## **B. THE OUTCOME OF DIVORCE BETWEEN BELIEVERS - v. 11**

1. Understanding that divorce had been occurring in Corinth, Paul then underscores the importance of marriage by stating that a person who divorces his/her spouse has one of two options:

- a. **"... but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried"**
- b. **"... or else be reconciled to her husband"**

2. Notice, that these options hold out as the ultimate responsibility to see the potential for reconciliation - which is clearly the will of God - preserved at all costs.

3. The potential for a remarriage is completely eliminated when a person divorces their spouse - if you are not willing to be married to this one, you may not be married to anyone.

4. The priority of **"being reconciled"** governs both parties of the marriage -- a person who is divorced by their spouse must maintain their commitment to reconciling as long as it is possible.

5. Never should there be an occasion when a believer initiates a relationship with another person as long as your spouse remains in an unmarried state.

## **V. THE SITUATION OF THOSE CHRISTIANS WHO ARE ABIDING IN A PARTIALLY CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE - 7:12-14**

**1 Cor. 7:12-14 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. [13] And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. [14] For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.**

### **A. THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRESERVE THE MARRIAGE - vv. 12-13**

1. **"But to the rest I say, not the Lord, ..."** - this does not lessen the authority of what is being stated, only indicates that Christ didn't specifically address this

condition when He was here. But, because of inspiration, it is just as important as if He had.

2. What was a person to do if they found themselves married to an unbeliever? Were they supposed to divorce them so as to not be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers?" -- **"If any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her"** (and repeated for a wife)

3. Marriage transcends religion and from the believer's perspective ought to be preserved, if at all possible.

4. You must recognize that in all of the references to divorce, at no time is a believer told that they may initiate a divorce from their spouse - even when married to an unbeliever who is presumably immoral and idolatrous.

## **B. THE ADVANTAGES OF PRESERVING THE MARRIAGE - v. 14**

1. Christians married to unbelievers are not to worry that they themselves, their marriage, or their children would be defiled by the unbelieving spouse and then use that as justification for divorce.

2. In actuality, the opposite is true = your presence in the home has a positive impact on it.

3. Paul indicates that the home is sanctified when the marriage is preserved:  
**"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy."**

a. This is not referring to members of the family being saved independently of personal faith -- just because they have a parent who is saved.

b. "Although the believer's faith cannot suffice for the salvation of anyone but himself, he is often the means of other family members coming to the Lord by the power of his testimony"

Compare **Genesis 18:26** and **Genesis 39:5**

4. **"otherwise (else KJV) your children are unclean, but now they are holy,"** this statement can be very confusing in light of our understanding that no one is



saved outside of a personal decision for Christ. During the time of this writing children born of non-Jewish parents were considered as unholy whereas children born of Jewish parents were considered holy. Thus for non-Jewish parents they would involve themselves and their children in heathen ceremonies to idols consecrating their children to the goddess Statina to render them holy. Children born to a Christian did not participate in such rites and therefore were consecrated (dedicated) to God by the parents and thus considered holy. This did not mean they were saved but rather were living in the presence of at least one believing parent and thus under the influence of a Christian witness.

## **VI. THE STANDING OF THOSE CHRISTIANS WHO ARE ABANDONED BY UNBELIEVING PARTNERS - 7:15-16**

**1 Cor. 7:15-16 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. [16] For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?**

### **A. THE DISCONTINUING ROLE OF SANCTIFIER - v. 15**

1. Having just imposed a spiritual responsibility upon the saved spouse in a spiritually mixed marriage, Paul now terminates the responsibility from a believer when the unbeliever completely rejects them.

2 "**Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave ...**" demonstrates that the pursuit of divorce is only characteristic of the unbeliever, but must be accepted by the believer, because "**God has called us to peace**".

3. However, the admonition to remain committed to reconciliation as long as possible is still the will of God.

4. However, when the unbelieving spouse eliminates the possibility of reconciliation, his "leaving" is consummated and has an affect on the believers standing.

5. When this occurs, "**the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases**" -- there are several issues raised by this instruction:

- a. The word "**bondage**" literally means "under obligation" or "enslaved"
- b. Immediately, the context suggests that the obligation is to serve as the sanctifying influence in the marriage.

- c. However, it is possible that it extends to more than just that portion of the marital responsibility and applies to the marriage itself.
- d. This would suggest that when an unbeliever divorces his spouse and remarries, all possibility of reconciliation is destroyed, and the believer is free to remarry as though widowed - cp. v. 39

## **B. THE MOTIVE OF THE RIGHTEOUS SPOUSE - v. 16**

1. However, at no time must the believer yearn to be freed from the marital commitments, attempt to provoke the unbeliever to desertion, or exercise any resentment toward their lack of faith - 1 Peter 3:1-5
2. In light of these things, Paul reminds the believers who are in "mixed" marriages that they might be the vehicle through which God works to save their spouses: **"For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?"**
3. The deep desire and prayer both during the marriage and after a divorce, is that your spouse be saved and you be reconciled. This remains the primary purpose.

### **ACCEPTING OUR ASSIGNMENTS**

**1 Corinthians 7:17-24**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Conversion to faith in Christ is not the signal for a person to leave his social condition, marriage or other circumstances.

## **VII. THE PRIORITY OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE - 7:17-19**

**1 Cor. 7:17-19 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. [18] Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. [19] Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.**

### **A. THE APPRECIATION OF OUR CONDITION - vv. 17-18**

1. Having just provided direction concerning the permanence of marriage, even when it means living with an unbelieving partner, he provides the principle upon which this is based - that: **"as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk."**
2. By this, we are taught that believers are to willingly accept the situation into which God has placed them and be content to serve Him there.
3. The **"call"** here refers to the effectual call of salvation -- not to a vocation.
4. Several areas of discontent were prevalent in the Corinthian church - some wanted to change their marital status, some wanted to change their identification with Judaism, others wanted to revolt against their masters
5. In essence, God is telling us that we are not to become preoccupied with changing our outward circumstances - but to seek ways to honor Him in whatever the circumstance.
6. He illustrates through the issue of circumcision: **"Was any man called when he was already circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised."** - a surgical procedure called "epispatics" performed to keep Jews from embarrassment in the Romans world.
7. **"Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised"**

## **B. THE ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD'S COMMANDMENTS - v. 19**

1. He brings us to the point of the matter -- the outward circumstances of our lives are not the most important matter of our existence.
2. So often, we focus on what we are experiencing -- the difficulties, demands, embarrassments -- and figure that settling any discomforts or hardships are the most important matters.
3. Paul here declares: **"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing..."**
4. So what really matters in every possible circumstance we might find ourselves? **"... what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God."**

5. Marital difficulty doesn't supersede our accountabilities to God, nor do vocation, peers, or other circumstances of life. Obedience is the only mark of faithfulness that the Lord recognizes.

## **VIII. PERSEVERANCE THROUGH THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE - 7:20-22**

**1 Cor. 7:20-22** **Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. [21] Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. [22] For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.**

### **A. THE RECOGNITION OF THE DIFFICULTY OF CONDITIONS – vv. 20-21**

1. **"Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called"** - an indication that believers were to "abide or persevere" in their social or racial situations upon coming to Christ.
2. However, Paul acknowledges that certain situations were indeed very difficult - using the situation of slavery as illustration: **"Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that."**
3. His point is not that we are doomed to remain forever in our misery, but that changing our situation ought not be primary to our mind -- obedience to God must be.

### **B. THE REMOVAL OF THE EXCUSE TO DISOBEY - v. 22**

1. Here we find that he is attempting to get believers to understand that they are not able to say they cannot be godly unless they change their situation --
2. He states that in the eyes of the Lord, your situation only provides you the opportunities to exercise righteousness in whatever you face
3. **"For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave."**
4. Only sin can keep us from obeying and serving the Lord; circumstances cannot.

5. Whether freedmen or slaves, we are to do the will of God **Romans 6:22**

## **IX. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE 7:23-24**

**1 Cor. 7:23-24    Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. [24]  
Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.**

### **A. THE PAYMENT BY CHRIST - v. 23**

1. He declares that "**you were bought with a price**" - a clear reference to the redeeming power of the blood of the Lord Jesus - cp. **1 Peter 1:19**
2. He is clearly speaking here of the moral & spiritual priority over the physical or circumstantial -- that we are indeed freed from the penalty and power of sin - able to serve God in whatever we do **1 Corinthians 10:31**
3. Consequently, we must not "**become the slaves of men**" - living by their standards and seeking to please them. Instead, because of the application of the blood of Jesus Christ purchasing us from sin, we are able to be the servants of God in whatever difficult, uncomfortable, restricting, and demanding situation we face.

### **B. THE PRESENCE OF GOD - v. 24**

1. In addition to what God has done to deliver us from sin, He is also with us in the midst of the situation.
2. Paul explains, "**Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that condition in which he was called.**"
3. This provides the parameters of what is appropriate - when something is immoral, the believer must remember that God is with him and must avoid defilement.
4. Otherwise, "**remain ... in that condition**" to the glory of God.

## REASONS TO BE 'SINGLE'-MINDED

1 Corinthians 7:25-40

Strong's Concordance

Theme: Whether married or single, devoted service to the Lord is urged.

### X. THE DISTRESS OF THE FAITH - 7:25-28

**1 Cor. 7:25-28** Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. [26] I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. [27] Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. [28] But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

#### A. THE SITUATION FACING THE CHRISTIAN - vv. 25-26

1. He begins by addressing the issue of those who have never been married before, and therefore primarily focuses on youth - both men and women - "**Now concerning virgins ...**"
2. He then states that "**in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.**"
3. This is the reference to the increasing hostility that awaited [and current awaits] the church of Jesus Christ. - cp. **John 16:1-3** Because we face days of uncertain safety, a person ought not to believe it to be necessary, or even prudent, to run out and get married.

#### B. THE SENSIBILITY OF CONTENTMENT - vv. 27-28

1. Instead, one ought to "**remain just as he is**" and be content in whatever ways God provides the opportunity to serve Him.
2. He admonishes the believer to remain in a marriage and not to take flight from his/her vows - "**Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released.**"
3. He then encourages the virgin to remain celibate - "**Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife.**"

4. However, he is not commanding that people stay single, that is he does not fall into the trap of "forbidding marriage" - **"But if you marry, you have not sinned . . . Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you."**

5. Persecution is difficult enough for a single person, but the problems and pain ("**trouble**") is multiplied for a married person.

## **XI. THE DEMANDS OF THE HOUR - 7:29-31**

**1 Cor. 7:29-31** **But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; [30] And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; [31] And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.**

### **A. THE IMMINENCE OF CHRIST'S RETURN - v. 29a**

1. **"But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened ..."** - that is, the day of the Lord's return is soon!

2. His point is that there is less time to do the work of the Lord than before - the opportunities are fewer - **Romans 13:11-14**

3. Consequently, we cannot become so wrapped up in the affairs of this world that we fail to keep in perspective and priority the matters of the next - foremost is winning the lost.

### **B. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BELIEVER'S FOCUS - vv. 29b-31**

1. In light of the immanence of Christ's return, every believer must keep as his ultimate priority the calling of God to serve Him - cp. **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**

2. **"So that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none"** - we cannot allow marriage and family to become an excuse for failure to serve the Lord.

3. **"... and those who weep, as though they did not weep"** - we cannot allow various heartaches to become an excuse for failure to serve the Lord.

4. **"... and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice"** - we cannot allow various causes of joy to deter us from serving the Lord.

5. **"... and those who buy, as though they did not possess"** - we cannot allow concerns re: finances and possessions to become an excuse for failure to serve the Lord. (Bank accounts, houses, cars, etc....)

6. **"... and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away."** - we cannot allow desires for pleasures to keep us from serving the Lord. Pleasures that are not immoral or extravagant may still be worldly, when such things so occupy our interests and time that the things of the Spirit are neglected.

## **XII. THE DISTRACTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES - 7:32-38**

**1 Cor. 7:32-38 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: [33] But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. [34] There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. [35] And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. [36] But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. [37] Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. [38] So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.**

### **A. THE DIVISION OF DUTY - vv. 32-35**

1. Paul then addresses the obvious matter of the contrasting duties of single people and married because he **"wants you to be free from concern"** - or anything that would cause distraction from full service to Christ.

2. The **"unmarried is [free to be] concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord."**

3. **"But, one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife and his interests are divided . . ."**



4. He is not reminding us of these things to create a longing for singleness, but to **"promote what is seemly and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord."**
5. One must keep in mind that marriage does not prevent great devotion to the Lord and more than singleness guarantees it.
6. He is merely reminding us of the issue of opportunity.

## **B. RETHINKING THE VOW - vv. 36-38**

1. He then provides an opportunity to observe one of the problems that the debate concerning marriage and celibacy was causing in the church.
2. Some of the fathers had rashly vowed that their daughters would remain virgins to provide them opportunity to serve the Lord whole-heartedly.
3. However, since their daughters were not called to celibacy and desired to marry, and since Paul indicated that it was not sin for them to marry, the fathers are now reconsidering their vow.
4. Paul indicates: **"if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter . . . let her marry."**
5. However, if his daughter agrees that his vow was appropriate, a man ought to fulfill his vow. Paul says that there is no sin involved in marriage, just a matter of opportunity to serve the Lord and **"both [fathers] do well."**

## **XIII. THE DURATION OF THE COMMITMENT - 7:39-40**

**1 Cor. 7:39-40    The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. [40] But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.**

### **A. THE PERMANENCE OF MARRIAGE - v. 39a**

1. He then provides some food for thought - marriage lasts a long time, and you cannot change your mind once you are on the other side of the altar - so thinks about it carefully.
2. **"A wife is bound as long as her husband lives"** - its a lifelong commitment.

## B. THE PERMISSION TO REMARRY - vv. 39b-40

1. However, "if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord."
2. However, Paul adds that in light of all that he has indicated, "she is happier if she remains as she is" - cp. **1 Timothy 5:14**

### "ALLOWING LOVE TO GOVERN LIBERTY"

#### 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

#### Strong's Concordance

**Theme:** Mature believers do not prioritize their liberties, but the spiritual welfare of those who are less mature.

### LEGALISM VS. LICENSE

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**LEGALISM:** believing that spirituality consists of doing things on "the good list" and avoiding things on the "bad list" regardless of what the inner person is like.

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**LICENSE:** believing that as long as something is not strictly forbidden in Scripture and your conscience is free, you can do as you please and be a spiritual person.

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## I. CHAPTER 8 - THE CONFLICT WITHIN CHRISTIAN LIBERTY - 8:1-3

**1 Cor. 8:1-3** Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. [2] And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. [3] But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

### A. THE LIABILITY OF KNOWLEDGE - v. 1

1. The occasion that Paul addresses deals with "**things sacrificed to idols**" - that is, eating meat that had been involved in the temple worship of idols.
2. Some believers, who had recently been saved, or who had vivid memories of their previous pagan practices, possessed convictions that eating meat that had been so dedicated was sin.

3. Other believers in Corinth were not bothered by it at all, knowing that pagan deities didn't really exist and the food was perfectly edible.
4. Paul addresses this second group and states: **"we know that we all have knowledge."**
5. These believers were aware that idols were just lumps of stone or wood, and that there is only one God - the Triune Creator to whom they had been reconciled through their faith in Jesus Christ.
6. However, Paul states that they were not to focus merely on what they know and their liberty, but on the spiritual welfare of newer believers.
7. Because this had not been their priority, he condemns their self-centeredness by stating: **"Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies."**
8. Paul is not against the realities of liberty or knowledge, but un-tempered by compassion and love, knowledge causes pride.

## **B. THE LIMITS OF LOVE - vv. 2-3**

1. Since **"love edifies"** it seeks to build up others, not pridefully seeking its own - cp. **1 Corinthians 13:4-5**
2. When a person **"supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know"** - that is, when a person has knowledge without love, he may be knowledgeable, but he lacks understanding.
3. Someone has said that "knowledge is the process of passing from the unconscious state of ignorance to the conscious state of ignorance" - that is, ignorance doesn't know that it doesn't know. True knowledge does not know, and knows it.

## **II. THE CONSIDERATION OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY - 8:4-7**

**1 Cor. 8:4-7 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. [5] For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) [6] But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. [7] Howbeit there is not in every man**

**that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.**

#### **A. WHERE'S THE BEEF? - vv. 4-6**

1. Having rebuked the self-centeredness of those who were demanding the right to exercise liberty, Paul now indicates that the problem is not one of spiritual wrong doing, but one of compassion.
2. He agrees that **"there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one . . . ."**
3. In essence, he is saying "you're right in what you believe about this - this meat inherently is not able to defile you"
4. He repeats that fact that there is only **"one God"** who has come to us in the person of the Son, **"Jesus Christ,"** and we are brought to the Father through Him, not because of what we eat or don't eat.

#### **B. FOR THE SAKE OF A BROTHER - v. 7**

1. However, Paul urges them to consider the plight of the brothers and sisters who may fear "being contaminated again by the evil influences that for so long had governed everything they did or thought."
2. These brothers are still **"accustomed to the idol until now ..."** and if they **"eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled."**
3. A **"defiled"** conscience is one that has been ignored and violated and results in sin - cp. **Romans 14:23**
4. Anyone who helps a brother into sin by this kind of insistence on liberty has grossly abused the love of God.

### **III. THE MISUSE OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY - 8:8-13**

**1 Cor. 8:8-13 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. [9] But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. [10] For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the**

conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; [11] And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? [12] But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. [13] Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

#### A. CONFRONTING THE ERROR OF LEGALISM - v. 8

1. Paul carefully clarifies what he is saying lest people become legalistic - **"but food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat."**
2. Neither eating or not eating food will bring us closer to God or make us approved by Him.

#### B. CONSIDERING THE WEAKNESS OF OTHERS - vv. 9-12

1. The issue of love causes liberty to be limited in order to keep from **"becoming a stumbling block to the weak."**
2. He then describes a likely scenario wherein a weak Christian seeing his brother eating meat that was offered to idols might be so encouraged to do likewise even though it would violate his conscience. Thus the weaker brother defiles his conscience.
3. He says that when this occurs, - that is, his purity is defiled, **that "through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined"**
4. Since it is a **"brother for whose sake Christ died,"** the high cost of Jesus' sacrifice is counted as trivial.
5. This then results in a **"sin against Christ"** on the part of the stronger brother as he caused a weaker brother to stumble. - cp. **v. 6**

#### C. GIVE IT UP FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST - v. 13

1. Because the abuse of liberty becomes such a serious offense when it drags a weaker brother into violating his conscience, Paul states that he would go so far as to declare that he **"will never eat meat again"** if it is going to **"cause my brother to stumble."**

2. "In regard to doubtful things, a Christian's first concern should not be to exercise his liberty to the limit but to care about the welfare of his brother in Christ."

**"CARING FOR THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL"**

**1 Corinthians 9:1-14**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** The Lord has directed believers to diligently care for those who faithfully proclaim the Word to them.

**I. CHAPTER 9 - THE EXAMPLE OF HIS APOSTLESHIP - 9:1-6**

**1 Cor. 9:1-6** **Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? [2] If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. [3] Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, [4] Have we not power to eat and to drink? [5] Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? [6] Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?**

**A. GIVING IT UP TO SERVE GOD - vv. 1-2**

1. Having carefully examined reasons why believers need to voluntarily limit what they believe are their rights for the sake of weaker brothers (**v.9**), Paul embarks on a brilliant illustration of this principle -- his voluntary limitation of his right for support.
2. He begins by establishing why he (and all others who preach the gospel) have the right to be supported by the churches being served.
3. The first reason is that of the call of God on his life - he says: **"Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?"**
4. Although no one today has the TRUE office of apostle (as one requirement was to have seen the Lord), the essence of Paul's argument is that he represents the Lord as one who is called into the ministry.

5. Paul declares that proof that the power was of God and not him was the way the gospel had affected their lives -- changing them - so that at least in them there is no question as to his credentials - **"If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord."**

## **B. THE CONCERN FOR GOD'S SERVANT - vv. 3-6**

1. Paul then gives some ways by which believers ought to be concerned about caring for God's servants

2. They include:

a. Physical provision for the servant himself - **"Do we not have a right to eat and drink?"**

b. Provision for his family - **"Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?"** - These verses teach that a pastor ought to be paid enough so that two things are true:

(I) A pastor ought to be able to minister without having to work a second job

(II) A pastor ought to be paid enough so that his wife does not have to work and can have more time to be with their husbands in the ministry. (Cp. **"... take along ..."** - "to carry about in one's company")

c. Now, Paul states that he was an exceptional situation ... that although he had the right to this support by the church, he refused it and supported himself to avoid the offense of some - **"Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?"**

## **II. IT'S ONLY RIGHT - 9:7**

**1 Cor. 9:7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?**

### **A. THE LABORER IS WORTHY OF HIS WAGE**

1. He cites different professions where people labor and are properly paid for their services.
2. He provides three illustrations:
  - a. SOLDIER - **"Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense?"**
  - b. FARMER - **"Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it?"**
  - c. SHEPHERD - **"Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?"**

## **B. THE POINT IS:**

1. The point that he is making is that it is customary and proper for people who work hard and faithfully to be properly paid for their labor.
2. The question Paul raises is this: "Why shouldn't this also be true of God's workers?"
3. Are they to be treated less properly than other workers? - Obviously, these are rhetorical questions.

## **III. IT'S IN THE BOOK! - 9:8-12**

**1 Cor. 9:8-12 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? [9] For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? [10] Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. [11] If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? [12] If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.**

### **A. IT'S WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF GOD - vv. 8-9**

1. The principle of workers being paid for their work is not merely according to human judgment, as in the previous illustrations, God's Law teaches the same



thing - **"I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things?"**

2. The Divine instruction was **"written in the Law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.'"**

3. Then Paul asks: **"God is not concerned about oxen, is He?"** - in other words, God was not merely intending this to be applied to a beast of the field and not that the same consideration or even more be applied to one made in His own image.

4. He continues: **"Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes for our sake it was written ..."**

## **B. IT WAS WRITTEN FOR THE SERVANT - vv. 10-12**

1. Hence compensating someone who has devoted themselves solely to the ministry is one clear application of the Moral Law of God.

2. He states: **"Yes for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops."**

3. In verse 11, Paul asks **"If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?"**

4. In the normal course of events, material work is compensated by material payment. However, in the ministry, material payment is given for spiritual work.

5. Paul then states that since they were willing to support others who are working among them, ought they not be willing to do so for Paul? - **"If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ."**

6. Paul had previously refused support as he did not want to cause any one to stumble in the face of the gospel. He also did not want them to allow the attitude that had developed to continue that since Paul had earlier refused their support, that it was not something they were obligated to provide under normal circumstances.

7. Generally, all men ought to earn their living from their labor, including pastors.

#### **IV. THE PREACHER LIVES BY HIS MINISTRY - 9:13-14**

**1 Cor. 9:13-14** **Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? [14] Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.**

##### **A. SUPPORT IS PROVIDED BECAUSE OF FAITHFUL MINISTRY - v. 13**

1. Once again, if genuine spiritual things are being "sowed in you," "reaping material things" is appropriate.
2. He states, **"Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?"**
3. The common practice in Israel has always been that those who serve the people spiritually were supported through their work. However, it must be understood, that if spiritual work is not being done, then compensation is something that needs to be curtailed.
4. Notice the qualifying phrase: **"attend regularly ..."** Also consider what verse 14 says: **"those WHO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL [ought] to get their living FROM THE GOSPEL."**

##### **B. IT IS PROVIDED TO SUPPORT THE MINISTRY -v.14**

1. The Lord Jesus himself **"directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel."** - so it is not a matter of pastor, missionaries, and full time Christian workers attempting to "fleece" the flock.
2. The Lord commands His people to offer support to those who minister to them.
3. Although the Lord provides His own spiritual rewards for those who serve Him faithfully, His people are to provide material reward, and to do so generously as unto Him -- Paul calls for "double honor" - cp. **1 Timothy 5:17**

4. Consequently, we should pay them as generously as is feasible and leave the stewardship of that money to them, just as we expect the stewardship of our own money to be left to us.

**"AVOIDING DISQUALIFICATION"**

**1 Corinthians 9:15-27**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Insisting on indulging in whatever clears your conscience may result in an indulgent attitude leading to disqualification.

**V. THE MOTIVATION FOR SELF-DENIAL - 9:15-18**

**1 Cor. 9:15-18** **But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. [16] For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! [17] For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. [18] What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.**

**A. THE SPIRITUALLY MATURE SURRENDER - vv.15-17**

1. Once again, we are reminded by Paul that the essence of maturity spiritually is the ability to surrender one's freedoms in Christ for the welfare of others - whether saved or unsaved.
2. In this section, he provides us with the rationale for exhibiting self-denial when it comes to his rights, privileges, and indulgences.
3. He begins by reminding us that although he had the right to receive material support for his ministry to them, he **"used none of these things."**
4. He then refutes the accusation that he is merely attempting to use "reverse psychology" in attempting to induce their support - he says: **"And I am not writing these things so that it will be done so in my case;"**
5. He states that in light of the higher and more noble priorities he shares, that **"it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one."**

a. The idea of a "boast" often confuses people as they connect it with arrogance -- but, the word refers to that in which one glories - receives greatest joy.

b. Paul declares that he was glad for the spiritual privilege and commitment he enjoyed in preaching the truth.

c. He would rather **"die than have any man"** believe that he was preaching for the money he could glean from it.

6. He then refutes the idea that he was "out for the glory" - in stating that he receives no credit for the message because he is **"under compulsion;"** God had called him and he was not able to resist the call of God -- cp. **Acts 9:3-6, 15** Therefore gets no credit for this -- he couldn't help but cooperate - cp. **Jeremiah 20:9**

7. Thus, he says **"woe is me if I do not preach the gospel"** - failing to fulfill the call of God would result in severe chastisement

8. Hence, he declares that he is nothing more than a steward because he does not do what he does at his own initiative or volunteering - **"For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me."**

## **B. THE INCENTIVE FOR PREACHING GOD'S WORD - v. 18**

1. So, why then does he preach? - Because the privilege of preaching is in itself a reward.

2. He says: **"What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge."**

3. It is the delight of any preacher to herald the good news of the gospel -- not because of the remuneration one receives, but because of the tremendous sense of duty and privilege in answering the call of God.

4. Consequently, Paul **"offers the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel."**

## **VI. THE MODEL FOR SELF-DENIAL - 9:19-23**

**1 Cor. 9:19-23** For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. [20] And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; [21] To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. [22] To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. [23] And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

#### **A. THE MODEL SURRENDER - vv. 19-22**

1. His commitment to seeing people reached with the message of the Gospel reached into his very soul. He states that voluntarily refusing to receive the material support he is due is only the beginning of the self-denial he would practice for the sake of souls.
2. He is not legalistically surrendering himself to the peculiarities of others, **"For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more."**
3. Thus, he states that it is compassion for the lost that causes him to behave as he is - sacrificing his freedoms and rights in Christ in essence, he makes himself an indentured servant of others.
4. He demonstrates three spheres wherein he voluntarily yields his rights and comforts for the sake of others:
  - a. **"To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win the Jews"** - that is, within Scriptural limits, he would be as Jewish as necessary when working with Jews.
    - (I) Although no longer bound by Jewish ceremonies, rituals, and traditions, he would restrain his liberty in Christ in order to avoid offending Jews
    - (II) What had at one time been legal restraints for him now love restrains him for the welfare of the Jewish people - cp. **Romans 9:3**
  - b. **"To those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law."**

(I) certainly he could abide by their ceremonial regulations, observe a special day, or refrain from eating certain foods -- if doing those things would help win the lost!

(II) Certainly he did not ever believe or teach that following the law was of any spiritual benefit -- he simply placed himself under the constraints of the Law to open doors to work among the Jews - cp. **Acts 16:3; 21:20-26**

c. **"... to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law."**

(I) Paul was also willing to live like a Gentile when he worked with Gentiles.

(II) However, this did not mean that he violated any of the tenets of the law of Christ -- he simply demonstrated that believers are committed to obeying the Lord Jesus Christ because of a love for Him, and through the externalities of the law.

d. **"To the weak I became weak; that I might win the weak"** - refers to Paul's willingness to simplify the message as far as he needed to in order to accommodate those having a hard time grasping the message of the Gospel.

5. Finally, he gives the principle -- **"I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some."**

6. Paul would never compromise the truth of Scripture, but he would gladly restrict his liberty in the gospel for the sake of Jew, Gentile, weak, or anyone who needed to be saved.

## **B. FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL - v. 23**

1. He declares that he does **"all things for the sake of the gospel,"** - he would set aside anything that would hinder the Gospel's power and effectiveness.

2. Why? What was the stimulus that would motivate him to do this? - **"so that I may become a fellow partaker of it."** - that is, that Paul wanted everyone else to be a **"fellow partaker"** with him in the benefits and blessing of the gospel.

## **VII. THE MEANS OF SELF-DENIAL - 9:24-27**

**1 Cor. 9:24-27** **Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. [25] And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. [26] I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: [27] But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**

### **A. THE NECESSITY OF SELF-CONTROL - vv. 24-26**

1. Paul then acknowledges that denying oneself is a very difficult task - one that takes an incredible amount of self-control. Many of us refuse to exert the necessary amount of discipline necessary to gain the victory over impulses and offending exertions of freedoms.

2. Thus, Paul draws an analogy between our limiting ourselves through self-control and the self-discipline that is practiced by various athletes - **"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize?"**

3. "We do not compete against each other but against the obstacles -- practical, physical, and spiritual -- that would hinder us"

4. He says "Run in such a way that you may win" - by laying aside anything that might hinder our ability to win others to Christ.

5. If the Olympic athletes exercised such great discipline and **"self-control in all things,"** why cannot Christians, especially since **"they then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable?"**

6. The athlete's disciplined self-control is a rebuke of half-hearted, out-of-shape Christians who do almost nothing to prepare themselves to witness to the lost - and therefore seldom do.

7. Paul was not conditioned for the sake of appearance or form, but was **"not without aim;"** he was not merely shadow boxing, but attempted to engage in a real battle - **"I box in such a way, as not beating the air"**

## **B. THE ATTAINMENT OF SELF-CONTROL - v. 27**

1. Our worst enemy is not other people, or even the devil ... but it is our own selves. Paul indicates that the object of his boxing efforts is his own body -- those things that would attempt to draw him into self-indulgence and proud exertion of his individual liberties.
2. He says: "**but I beat my body and make it my slave . . .**" - literally to "hit under the eye." Thus, Paul would give his own body a black eye to subject it to his own control to make it a slave to his mission to draw others to Christ.
3. Most people, including many Christians, are instead slaves to their bodies, being enslaved to them as to the satisfaction of their cravings physically, emotionally, and even spiritually.
4. However, committed athletes cannot so indulge, but have to deny themselves "**so that, after I have preached to other, I myself will not be disqualified.**"
5. "**Disqualified**" means to be rejected as unusable, not that he loses his salvation, but cannot be used to preach or lead others to a relationship with Christ. Thus, Paul's great joy was to deny himself for the sake of others and their relationship with Christ Jesus.

### **LEARNING FROM THE MISTAKES OF OTHERS"**

#### **1 Corinthians 10:1-13**

#### **Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** In light of what has happened to other believers, a godly believer refuses to stretch his liberty to the extreme, to see how close to evil he can come before being harmed.

## **I. CHAPTER 10 - THE PRIVILEGES OF GRACE - 10:1-4**

**1 Cor. 10:1-4** **Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; [2] And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; [3] And did all eat the same spiritual meat; [4] And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.**



## A. THE PRIVILEGE OF DELIVERANCE - v.1

1. **"I do not want you to be unaware"** - reveals that often, Christians are oblivious to the dangers of disqualification from service and become overconfident in their daily, practical living.
2. These Corinthian believers thought they were strong enough to freely associate with pagans in their ceremonies and social activities and not be affected morally or spiritually.
3. Paul tells them that they are self-deceived and over-confident, bringing them to the examples of such thinking in the lives of their spiritual fore-fathers who also the recipients of the manifold grace of God.
4. The first privilege he identifies by recalling the deliverance God graciously provided them in bringing them out of Egypt: **". . . our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea"**
5. Although Israel was not spiritually saved as a nation, their national deliverance from Egypt was a symbol of God's Covenant to save individuals from their personal "Egypt" of sinful lives.
6. However, instead of remaining faithful and true to God, those who were delivered turned from God -- Paul is going to say ... "Don't let what happened to them happen to you."

## B. THE PRIVILEGE OF DIVINE LEADERSHIP - v. 2

1. Paul continues to recount the privileges of Israel and says that **"all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea."**
2. This second privilege does not refer to water baptism but carries the basic or fundamental meaning of identification. It emphasizes the spiritual identification rather than a physical ceremony. Thus, the Israelites identified with Moses as the Lord's appointed leader over them.
3. Their experiences of following him as he followed the cloud and into the sea were the proving actions that closely identified his leadership as being God's man.

4. Hence, Israel had the privilege of realizing that they were lead by a man who was a Godly provision and so identified with him.

### **C. THE PRIVILEGE OF DAILY SUPPLY - vv. 3-4**

1. In addition to these other privileges, they "**all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink**"

2. This is not a reference to the work of God in "all" their hearts and nourished their spirit; rather, it refers to the fact that they were sustained from provisions that were from a supernatural "spiritual" source rather than a natural one.

3. Illustrations of this was manna, quail, etc... that was provided clearly from God. He continues and capitalizes on a popular Jewish myth -- that a literal physical rock followed them around the wilderness: "**for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.**"

4. In essence he states: "Yes, you were followed around by a rock -- but it was the Lord Jesus Christ, not some physical object, but the Messiah - a spiritual rock that protected and provided for you."

## **II. THE PERVERSIONS OF GRACE - 10:5-10**

**1 Cor. 10:5-10 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. [6] Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. [7] Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. [8] Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. [9] Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. [10] Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.**

### **A. THE PERVERSION OF IDOLATRY - v. 5-7**

1. However, despite these privileges, they were not willing to deny themselves various kinds of indulgences in their flesh. They engaged in various perversions of the grace they received which cost them dearly - "**Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.**"

2. **"Laid low in the wilderness"** - refers to the fact that only two of the original number that left Egypt ever made it into the promised land -- all the others died in the wilderness (Joshua & Caleb were the only ones).

3. Then Paul states that the reason this is all recorded in Scripture was to serve as object lessons for us: **"Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved."**

4. However, many of the Corinthian believers had become over-confident in their own moral and spiritual strength, and had become careless about their participation in activities where false gods were worshiped.

5. There were four areas of greatest danger that comes from this over-confidence that tend to transcend cultures and people groups. He begins with the issue of idolatry.

6. **"Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, 'THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY.'"**

7. The event in Paul's mind is that of the golden calf - that included all types of drunken revelry. However, Christians today can fall prey to idolatry -- when Christians worship anyone or anything besides God, that is idolatry. Worshiping the Virgin Mary, saints, icons, or angels is idolatry.

8. No matter how sincerely they are meant to honor God, such practices are false worship and are strictly forbidden in Scripture.

## **B. THE PERVERSION OF IMMORALITY - v. 8**

1. The second perversion presented as common among over-confident people is next mentioned: **"Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day."**

2. The event in mind here is when the Israelites became sexually involved with the Moabites. - ( **Numbers 25**)

3. Paul suggests in this passage that Christians can fall into moral problems because they are over-confident in themselves. They enter into relationships that may not be wrong in themselves, but which offer strong temptations.

4. Or, they go places and do things that are closely associated with immorality. When a person allows their mind to be filled with vulgar ideas and images, their spiritual life is greatly weakened.

5. Paul appeals to us not to allow ourselves to be drawn into disqualification because we refuse to bring our bodies under enough self-control as to avoid the corruption that occurs through the ever increasing insensitivity produced through exposure to sexual immorality.

### **C. THE PERVERSION OF TESTING GOD - v. 9**

1. Next, Paul warns about trying the Lord -- **"Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents."**

2. The people of Israel questioned God's goodness and tried his patience by accusing Him of bringing them out of Egypt only to starve them to death - cp. **Numbers 21**

3. Sometimes, Christians use their freedom to push God to the limit, trying to see how much they can get away with, seeing how carnal they can be and how much of the world they can enjoy without getting into "serious trouble."

4. When we, through our indulgences in various things, force God to extend his long-suffering and patient hand toward his, we will inevitably discover that there are limits to His accommodation.

5. There are limits to His mercy and grace - cp. **1 Corinthians 11:30**

### **D. THE PERVERSION OF IRREVERENCE - v. 10**

1. The fourth area that Paul warns about is the irreverence of a critical spirit: **"Nor murmur, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer."**

2. This refers to the refusal to see the will of God as "good, acceptable, and perfect" and grumbling against it - cp. **Numbers 16** God does not take such criticism lightly, but views it as a direct insult of His Sovereign right.

3. Sometimes, we get so hooked on our own opinions that we actually convince ourselves that we are qualified to sit in judgment of God's will - the arbiter of what is desirable -- God's will or our own.

4. Such irreverence results in a tremendous disqualification in the service of the Kingdom of God.

### **III. THE PROVISIONS OF GRACE - 10:11-13**

**1 Cor. 10:11-13** Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. [12] Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. [13] There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

#### **A. THE ABILITY TO LEARN FROM OTHERS - v. 11**

1. **"Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."**
2. The failures and resulting experiences of the Hebrews were not only for the benefit of their contemporaries, to warn them about sin, but also to believers in every age.
3. **"Instruction"** is more than ordinary teaching -- carrying the idea of admonition and warning
4. The phrase **"the ends of the ages"** refers to that time immediately prior to the coming of the Messianic Kingdom - referring to the Church age.
5. "We are living in a greatly different age from that of the Hebrews in the wilderness under Moses, but we can learn a valuable lesson from their experience. Like them we can forfeit our blessing, reward, and effectiveness in the Lord's service if, in overconfidence and presumption, we take our liberties too far and fall into disobedience and sin. We will not lose our salvation, but we can easily lose our virtue and usefulness, and become disqualified in the race of the Christian life."

#### **B. THE ADMONISHMENT TO AVOID OVERCONFIDENCE - v. 12**

1. Hence, we are warned **"let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall."**

2. It is extremely easy to substitute confidence in ourselves for confidence in the Lord - cp. **Proverbs 16:18**

3. The great danger in overconfidence is that we become less dependent on God's Word and God's Spirit and become careless in the way we live.

4. "When we feel most secure in ourselves - when we think our spiritual life is the strongest, our doctrine the soundest, and our morals the purest - we should be most on our guard and most dependent on the Lord."

### **C. THE AWARENESS OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS - v. 13**

1. By now, the Corinthians must have been wondering "how do we keep from craving evil things as Israel did? How do we keep from falling into idolatry in our hearts? How can we live righteous lives when the society around us is so wicked?"

2. Paul's response is to assure us of the faithfulness of God in the midst of temptation. - **"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able."**

3. **"Temptation"** basically means to test or prove, and has no negative connotation. Whether it becomes a proof of righteousness or an inducement to evil depends on our response.

4. A temptation becomes an inducement to evil only when a person "is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin." - cp. **James 1:14-15**

#### **"REFUSING TO SHARE WITH DEMONS"**

**1 Corinthians 10:14-22**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Participating in idolatry not only declares that the Lord is not the only true God, it states that there are others who deserve to share in His glory.

### **IV. IDOLATRY IS OUTLAWED - 10:14-18**

**1 Cor. 10:14-18    Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. [15] I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. [16] The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the**

**communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? [17] For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. [18] Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?**

#### **A. IT IS OUTLAWED BY DECREE - vv. 14-15**

1. In these verses, Paul provides some reasons why God finds the sin of idolatry particularly offensive. The Word of God is without confusion concerning the issue of idolatry.
2. Paul's affection for the people of Corinth is clearly expressed through the use of the term **"MY BELOVED"** as he begins this section.
3. His solution is for them to conduct themselves as **"WISE MEN"** and **"FLEE FROM IDOLATRY."**
4. Paul, based on his confidence in their awareness of God's hatred for idolatry, trusts that they are able to correctly **"judge what I say"** and completely free themselves from any form of idolatry.
5. To Paul, this is imperative because those who worship an idol declare that the Lord is not the only true God and that other "so-called gods" (**8:5**) are worthy to share His glory and honor.
6. Idolatry is having any false god -- any object, idea, philosophy, habit, occupation, sport, or whatever that has one's primary concern and loyalty or that to any degree decreases one's trust in and loyalty to the Lord - cp. **Isaiah 48:11**
7. The obvious forms of idolatry ought not exhaust our awareness of what actually constitutes idolatry. There are other, more obscure manifestations of idolatry that ought to be acknowledged by us:
  - a. Worshipping the true God in the wrong way is idolatry - cp. **Exodus 32:7-9**
  - b. Worshipping an image is idolatry - even the image of Christ - cp. **John 4:24**
  - c. Worshipping angels is idolatry - **Colossians 2:18**
  - d. Worshipping demons is idolatry - **Revelation 9:20**

e. Worshipping dead men is idolatry (even so-called saints) -  
**Psalm 106:28-29**

f. Supreme loyalty in our heart to anything other than God is idolatry - cp. **Matthew 6:21** (Is there anything that if God asked you to give up, you'd say "No!")

## **B. IT IS OUTLAWED BY THE FACT WE BELONG TO JESUS - vv. 16-18**

1. Now, when we say that idolatry ought to be refused because it is outlawed by default, we mean that there are already claims upon your heart that cause your "settings to over-ride" the impulse to new affection.

2. Basically, Paul brings us back to the basics of our faith - the relationship we enjoy with both Christ Jesus and each other.

3. **"IS NOT THE CUP OF BLESSING WHICH WE BLESS A SHARING IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST?"** - this **"CUP OF BLESSING"** is what the third cup in the Passover feast is called, the one used to institute the Lord's Table.

4. Hence, it came to be a reference to Communion when we commune with the Lord as we remember his sacrificial death and atonement for our sins.

5. Paul reminds them that **"WE BLESS"** this cup, that is, we express our deep gratitude to God for the price of our redemption - every time we gather and share in communion.

6. Likewise, **"NOT THE BREAD WE BREAK A SHARING IN THE BODY OF CHRIST?"** - **"SHARING"** is literally "to have in common" or fellowship.

7. Then he states that our fellowship is not only with our Lord, but with each other - a bond is established when we worship - **"SINCE THERE IS ONE BREAD, WE WHO ARE MANY ARE ONE BODY; FOR WE ALL PARTAKE OF THE ONE BREAD."**

8. He then turns to Israel as an example of the bond that is established through sharing in their offerings.

9. Paul's point is that to sacrifice to an idol is to identify with it, to participate with the idol and with all others who sacrifice to it. Thus it is completely



inconsistent for believers to participate in any expression of worship that is apart from and contrary to their Lord.

10. When a man or woman becomes convinced that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, there is nothing that his heart will embrace above Him - cp. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

## **V. REFUSE BECAUSE IT IS OCCULTIC - 10:19-21**

**1 Cor. 10:19-21**    **What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? [20] But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. [21] Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.**

### **A. THE INFLUENCE OF IDOLATRY - vv. 19-20**

1. Paul now broadens his condemnation of idolatry in that it is demonic in its essence.
2. He clarifies that "**A THING SACRIFICED TO IDOLS IS [NOTHING]**" - there is no inherent power.
3. In addition, he asks: Is the physical "**IDOL ANYTHING?**" - no, there is no power or inherent ability in any idol - cp. **8:4**
4. However, that does not suggest that there is no spiritual power present in idols -- idols represent that which is demonic.
5. "**NO, BUT I SAY THAT THE THINGS WHICH THE GENTILES SACRIFICE, THEY SACRIFICE TO DEMONS AND NOT TO GOD.**"
6. Consequently, demons are the spiritual force behind all idolatry - "**THEY SACRIFICE TO DEMONS**" who can exhibit significant power.
7. "Much that goes under the name of astrology, for instance, is simply exploitation of the gullible. But many predictions come true through the work of demonic forces."

### **B. THE INCONSISTENCY OF IDOLATRY - v. 21**

1. For these reasons, a Christian must "FLEE IDOLATRY" - because there is no way to remain loyal to Jesus Christ while participating in idolatry, regardless of how "Christian-like" that participation is - **"I DO NOT WANT YOU TO BECOME SHARERS IN DEMONS."**

2. **"YOU CANNOT DRINK THE CUP OF THE LORD AND THE CUP OF DEMONS; YOU CANNOT PARTAKE OF THE TABLE OF THE LORD AND THE TABLE OF DEMONS."**

3. This is an application of the principle spoken by Christ that you cannot serve two masters - it is impossible to "share in the work of Christ" and at the same time "share in demons."

4. Whenever the believer participates in idolatry, or any sort, he opens himself up to demonic influence and power.

## **VI. REFUSE BECAUSE IT IS OFFENSIVE TO GOD - 10:22**

**1 Cor. 10:22    Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?**

### **A. THE JEALOUSY OF GOD**

1. When we attempt to divide our allegiance between God and demons, we **"provoke the Lord to jealousy"**

2. Again, the issue is that God will not permit competition, it demeans the holiness of His name - cp. **2 Corinthians 6:14-18**

3. God's anger is kindled against those who disgrace His holiness by promoting shared glory with God - cp. **Deuteronomy 32:21**

4. Hence, God is stirred to action in His hatred of sin and mixed allegiance - cp. **Psalms 78:58-59**

### **B. THE JUSTICE OF GOD**

1. In light of the jealousy of God, and how He is provoked by idolatry, Paul reminds us of just how "outmatched" we are when we provoke the wrath of Almighty God.

2. **"We are not stronger than He, are we?"**- an obviously rhetorical question designed to underscore the folly of thinking we can escape the consequences of mixed allegiances.
3. Even God's own people cannot escape severe chastisement if they persist in worshiping any sort of idol - some of the Corinthians had done that and had paid with their health, or even their lives - cp. **1 Corinthians 11:30**
4. Therefore, there is no hope of abating the consequences of God's jealousy unless there is repentance and a return one's commitment to turn **"to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come."** - **1 Thessalonians 1:9b-10**

### **"HOW TO IMITATE CHRIST"**

#### **1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1**

#### **Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Regarding "gray areas" of personal conduct, a believer should avoid both what may prevent the unsaved from entering the family of God as well as what may alienate those who are already saved.

## **VII. A WILLING DENIAL OF ONESELF FOR THE WELFARE OF OTHERS - 10:23-26**

**1 Cor. 10:23-26** **All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. [24] Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. [25] Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: [26] For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.**

### **A. THE PARAMETERS OF OUR FREEDOMS - vv. 23-24**

1. Paul brings his discussion of "CHRISTIAN LIBERTY" to a conclusion. In this section he provides the governing principle that must govern all our decisions regarding our freedom in Christ.
2. First, he gives us a rule that had been indiscriminately embraced by the believers at Corinth - **"ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL ..."**

3. In other words, Paul states that although there may not be specific Scripture that forbids a particular practice, the silence of Scripture does not - by itself - provide endorsement.

4. In fact, there are other tests that ought to be involved:

- a. **"... not all things are profitable."** - this refers to spiritual good in general, particularly our own spiritual growth.
- b. **"... not all things edify."** - this is a synonym of "profitable" and refers to the building up of others for their spiritual growth.

5. Paul underscores the need to prioritize both of these considerations by saying: "You can't just consider the impact something has on your own spiritual welfare, you must also consider what impact it is going to have on your brothers" - **"Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor."**

6. So, the parameters on our conduct in "gray areas" is not just whether something in Scripture forbids it, but whether it is profitable and edifying for ourselves and others.

## **B. FOLLOWING OUR CONSCIENCE - vv. 25-26**

1. Next, Paul teaches us that we are not to discard our conscience and live according to an artificial standard of legalism defined by others.

2. He states: **"Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience sake"**

3. He is trying to emphasize that freedom in Christ is a privilege to be forfeited only when it clearly may offend another person.

4. In the privacy of your own home and heart, you do not live according to some legalistic compulsion of the weakest of your Christian brothers. You are free to conduct yourself as you believe is appropriate in the sight of God.

5. Notice, we are not discussing hypocritical indulgence in sinful activity, but an area of lawful activity, but what may not contribute to the spiritual growth of others who may be weak.

6. This is seen by the quotation vs. 26 from **Psalm 24:1** "For the Earth is the Lord's, and all it contains." - cp. **1 Timothy 4:4-5**

7. The use of your conscience remains a legitimate means by which you determine what God would have you do in these matters.

## **VIII. A WHOLE-HEARTED DEVOTION TO BRINGING GOD GLORY - 10:27-31**

**1 Cor. 10:27-31** If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. [28] But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: [29] Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? [30] For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? [31] Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

### **A. THE PRACTICAL OPPORTUNITIES TO GLORIFY GOD - vv. 27-30**

1. Having just established that you can glorify the Lord by following your conscience when in private, he now provides an illustration of how you are able to glorify the Lord in public conduct.

2. It is clear that we are not merely to walk in fear of offending potential critics of our freedom. He says: **"If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience' sake"**

3. In this situation, if you believed the act completely innocent - that an idol is nothing but a hunk of wood or stone - then **"eat anything that is set before you"** - even if you suspect that it might be meat offered to idols since your in an unbelievers home.

4. However, **"if anyone says to you, 'This is meat sacrificed to idols,' do not eat it."**

5. Now, "if anyone" - refers to another believer who happens to be there with you, and this person by virtue of the fact that they are pointing it out demonstrates that it is a violation of their conscience, then voluntarily restrict

your freedom **"for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience' sake."**

6. He clarifies this and says - **"not your own conscience, but the other man's"** - we are to modify our behavior for the sake of others, but we are not to modify our consciences.

7. We must not recklessly throw around our freedom to be a focus of **"judg[ment] by another's conscience"**

8. Even though you might **"partake with thankfulness, [don't allow yourself to be] ... slandered concerning that for which [you] give thanks"**

## **B. THE PRINCIPLE GOVERNING OUR CONDUCT - v. 31**

1. The greatest of all man's accomplishment, and the greatest pleasure a man can attain is the opportunity to bring glory to God.

2. The voluntary and careful management of our freedom is not simply to avoid offending a weaker brother, it is to glorify God: **"Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."**

## **IX. A DISPLAY OF COMPASSION FOR THE LOST - 10:32-11:1**

**1 Cor. 10:32-11:1 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: [33] Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.  
[11:1] Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.**

### **A. SENSITIVITY TO THE IMPORTANCE OF OTHERS - v. 32**

1. Thus, Paul states that this sensitivity ought not be merely reserved for a brother, but this principle must be applied **"to Jews, or to Greeks or to the church of God."**

2. Our responsibility to bring glory to God extends to all men. We must **"give no offense"** to any one. All men are to be viewed as precious to us.

### **B. THE SACRIFICE FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL - vv. 33-11:1**

1. Paul states that "**just as I also please all men in all things, ...**" - is a reference to the self-denial demonstrated in **9:19-23**
2. Instead of conducting his life in such a way as to disregard the impact of his freedom in the lives of others, he is "**not seeking [his] own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved.**"
3. This characteristic of self-denial is not something that springs from his own innate quality of spiritual accomplishment, but it flows from the nature and character of Christ.
4. Hence to be willing to deny one's own rights, and freedoms, one ultimately becomes an "**imatator of ... Christ**" - just as Paul was.

### **THE RITES OF SUBMISSION**

**1 Corinthians 11:2-16**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** The distinctions between men and women must be preserved even in worship.

## **I. CHAPTER 11 - THE PRESENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLE - 11:2-3**

**1 Cor. 11:2-3**    **Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. [3] But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.**

### **A. THE CONTROVERSY REGARDING CUSTOM - v. 2**

1. The Corinthian church faced a situation similar to the one we face today, concerning the role of women in the church, and the believers were confused about it -- so they wrote Paul - cp. **1 Corinthians 7:1** - among which things was the issue of the submission of women.
2. Paul expresses his pleasure in their desire to do what is right, and states:  
**"NOW I PRAISE YOU BECAUSE YOU REMEMBER ME IN EVERYTHING AND HOLD FIRMLY TO THE TRADITIONS, JUST AS I DELIVERED THEM TO YOU."**

3. Apparently, there was some controversy concerning some of Paul's instructions to them regarding the "covering" of women during worship.
4. Some women were declaring that since in Christ there is no distinction between Jew/Gentile, Bond/Free, or Men/Women, that they could completely throw off the "traditional" marks of the distinction that exists between the roles of men and women - the veil.
5. Paul commends the church for **"HOLD[ING] FIRMLY TO THE TRADITIONS"** - lit. "that which is handed down"
6. Hence, there were those who were firmly hanging on to the customs Paul had advocated while with them, namely that women worship while veiled, while others were immodestly flaunting themselves in a culture of extreme modesty - claiming that male & female are without distinctive in Christ.

## **B. THE THINKING BEHIND THE CONVICTION - v. 3**

1. Hence, Paul brings us back to the foundation - what is the issue at stake here?
2. Let it be clear - the primary issue of this passage is not women veiling themselves in worship, rather the God-ordained roles that men & women have in the administration of God's will.
3. He states: **"BUT, I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND THAT CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF EVERY MAN, AND THE MAN IS THE HEAD OF A WOMAN, AND GOD IS THE HEAD OF CHRIST."**
4. The principle of subordination and authority pervades the entire universe
  - a. **God is the Head of Christ:** If Christ had not submitted to the Father, redemption would have been impossible, and we would be doomed - cp. **John 5:30**
  - b. **Christ is the Head of Man:** If an individual does not submit to Christ as Savior and Lord, they remain doomed - **Philippians 2:10-11**
  - c. **Man is the Head of Woman:** If women do not submit to men, then the family and society as a whole are disrupted and destroyed - **Ephesians 5:22-23; Isaiah 3:12**
5. "Head" refers to the ruling and sovereign part of the body - symbolically, to the place of authority.



6. Now, we desire to hold to what the Bible teaches about the equality of women;

- a. They stand before God as equal to men, being made in His image.
- b. They are fellow heirs of the grace of life, not second class citizens of God's Kingdom - **1 Peter 3:7**
- c. They are as fully gifted by the Holy Spirit and empowered by Him to do God's will as men are - **Ephesians 5:15-21**
- d. They shared in the early church's struggle for the progress of the Gospel (**Philippians 4:1-3**) and will continue in that same struggle in the church today.
- e. They fulfill a vital part of the ministry in the work of building God's church.

7. The "feminist" movement was in place in Corinth, attempting to deny the Divinely ordered role distinctions - and demonstrating this through the rebellion against the symbol of female submission in that society - a veil.

## **II. THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE - 11:4-10**

**1 Cor. 11:4-10 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. [5] But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. [6] For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. [7] For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. [8] For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. [9] Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. [10] For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.**

### **A. THE APPLICATION EXPLAINED - vv. 4-6**

1. He begins by applying this principle to men - **"EVERY MAN WHO HAS SOMETHING ON HIS HEAD"** - literally, this says: "down from the head" and has led some to believe this refers to hair but as the issue is the veil, then veil is most likely what is being referred to. In other words if a man prays with his head veiled this is a dishonor to him.

2. However, in **v. 5**, the term for veil is clearly used and therefore, it is **not** best to identify this as "long hair".
3. For a man to where what has been reserved to portray female subordination **"WHILE PRAYING OR PROPHESYING DISGRACES HIS HEAD."**
4. **"DISGRACES"** - conveys the idea of dishonoring something -- failing to properly recognize the significance of his role as symbolized in the Corinthian culture - a symbolism that differentiates between the appropriate attire for men and women.
5. This passage presents some difficulty because of the scarcity of historical data, but clarifies the principle that Paul has in mind, whatever the covering may have been.
6. It seems, therefore, that Paul is not stating a divine universal requirement, but simply acknowledging how a local custom portrays the deeper spiritual principle.
7. In that a man would cover his head would bring shame for it would suggest a reversal of the proper relationships.
8. In the same way, **"EVERY WOMAN WHO HAS HER HEAD UNCOVERED WHILE PRAYING OR PROPHESYING DISGRACES HER HEAD . . ."**
9. **"HEAD UNCOVERED"** is a word that in its normal interpretation means "unveiled" and advances the idea of that the head covering in this passage is not simply a hat, nor long hair that hangs down, but a veil across her face - cp. Use of the same root word in **2 Corinthians 3:13**
10. When these women claimed "equality in Christ" to the exclusion of honoring the principle of their proper role, Paul states that **"SHE IS ONE AND THE SAME AS THE WOMAN WHOSE HEAD IS SHAVED"**
11. This concept is one of great shame - shaving one's head was a characteristic of a prostitute.
12. He continues: **"FOR IF A WOMAN DOES NOT COVER HER HEAD, LET HER ALSO HAVE HER HAIR CUT OFF; BUT IF IT IS DISGRACEFUL FOR A WOMAN TO HAVE HER HAIR CUT OFF OR HER HEAD SHAVED, LET HER COVER HER HEAD"** to maintain propriety in worship and preserve the commitment to the principle.

13. "Dress is largely cultural and, unless what a person wears is immodest, [a reflection of clear rebellion,] or sexually suggestive, it has no moral or spiritual significance. . . . It is the principle of women's subordination to men, not the particular mark or symbol of that subordination, that Paul is teaching in this passage. The apostle is not laying down a universal principle that Christian women should always worship with their heads covered."

## **B. THE APPLICATION EVALUATED - vv. 7-10**

1. Paul then turns and provides some reasoning why this custom was good, proper and ought to be observed.

2. He begins by saying "**FOR ...**" and indications of some of his reasoning: - that is, because a covered head was a sign of subordination, "**. . . A MAN OUGHT NOT TO HAVE HIS HEAD COVERED, SINCE HE IS THE IMAGE AND GLORY OF GOD; BUT HE WOMAN IS THE GLORY OF MAN.**"

3. Having been created and given the task of ruling over creation, God invested man with the role to match his responsibility - all of which is designed to be the manifestation of the glory of God through his steward.

4. There is no higher authority other than man within creation - he stands as God's deputy - portraying the authority of God over creation - cp. **Genesis 1:26**

5. However, the woman was not formed out of the dust of the ground, but out of the man after man's rule over creation was established by his naming the animals.

6. Hence, "**THE WOMAN IS THE GLORY OF MAN**"

7. This order of creation is given for the principle of the headship of the man - "**FOR MAN DOES NOT ORIGINATE FROM WOMAN, BUT WOMAN FROM MAN; FOR INDEED MAN WAS NOT CREATED FOR THE WOMAN'S SAKE, BUT WOMAN FOR THE MAN'S SAKE.**"

8. Lest we misunderstand, he is not stating that woman is in any way inferior to the man - mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. He is merely indicating that the **role distinctives are not a matter of cultural origin, but because of the design and creation of God.**

9. To further emphasize that the principle of faithfulness to divinely ordered roles is the major concern, Paul states that the woman must not abandon her commitment to demonstrating this willing subordination, and **"HAVE A SYMBOL OF AUTHORITY ON HER HEAD, BECAUSE OF THE ANGELS."**

- a. "Angels" are the heavenly messengers of God who are committed to immediate and total obedience to the Lord.
- b. Here Paul intimates that one of the most offensive things to these angels is for the divinely established roles to be willingly violated.
- c. Perhaps this is true because of the essence of the rebellion of Satan and the fallen angels - and therefore, similar disregard for God's authority and established order are particularly offensive.
- d. These angels attend our times of worship and can be offended by what we do.

### **III. THE GOAL OF THE PRINCIPLE - 11:11-12 (BALANCE)**

**1 Cor. 11:11-12    Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. [12] For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.**

#### **A. THE INTER-DEPENDENCE OF MEN & WOMEN - v. 11**

- 1. It is true that if Satan cannot get us to abandon God's Word, he'll attempt to induce us to misinterpret it and carry it to extremes.
- 2. Many throughout history have asserted that because of the roles given by God, man is somehow superior to women. However, no man has inherent superiority over a woman
- 3. Submission is not an issue of inferiority, merely one of role and authority - no man has the right to exercise his God-given authority tyrannically or selfishly.
- 4. To insure that this not be misunderstood, Paul states: **"HOWEVER, IN THE LORD, NEITHER IS WOMAN INDEPENDENT OF MAN, NOR IS MAN INDEPENDENT OF WOMAN."**

5. All are dependent on women for a strong a healthy church - however, their role is distinct from the role of men - cp. **1 Timothy 2:15**

## **B. THE INFLUENCE OF GOD REGARDING ROLES - v. 12**

1. God is wise and perfect in establishing the tremendous balance between men and women.
2. Men and women have different roles, but not different importance - both are equally important and significant.
3. He created both to perform a role that He Himself established - **"AND, ALL THINGS ORIGINATE FROM GOD."**

## **IV. THE AGREEMENT WITH THE PRINCIPLE - 11:13-16**

**1 Cor. 11:13-16 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? [14] Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? [15] But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. [16] But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.**

### **A. THE AGREEMENT OF CREATION - vv. 13-15**

1. Paul then asks the Corinthians to look at nature and **"JUDGE FOR YOURSELVES: IS IT PROPER FOR A WOMAN TO PRAY TO GOD WITH HER HEAD UNCOVERED?"** - cp. **1 Timothy 2:9-11**
2. Previously, Paul had been discussing the symbol of one's role being worn or not worn as an expression of commitment to the principle.
3. Now he states that the spiritual lesson can be seen in the realm of creation - **"DOES NOT EVEN NATURE ITSELF TEACH YOU THAT IF A MAN HAS LONG HAIR, IT IS A DISHONOR TO HIM"**
4. Women naturally possess a "covering" - **"BUT IF A WOMAN HAS LONG HAIR, IT IS A GLORY TO HER? FOR HER HAIR IS GIVEN TO HER FOR A COVERING"**
5. The word **"COVERING"** here is not the same word used previously in this chapter - it is contrasted to verse 5. Hence, long hair is not an acceptable covering -- it is merely an illustration in the natural realm that it is proper also to cover one's head in the spiritual realm.

### **B. THE ARGUMENT OF THE CONTENTIOUS (resistent) - v. 16**

**1. "BUT IF ONE IS INCLINED TO BE CONTENTIOUS, WE HAVE NO OTHER PRACTICE, NOR HAVE THE CHURCHES OF GOD."**

2. The apostles were absolutely committed that the distinctions between men and women be faithfully maintained.

3. The symbolism of this distinction must not be discarded - even in the way we dress.

4. Consequently, it is imperative that a woman's hair and her dress be distinctly feminine and demonstrate her gracefulness as a submissive, yielded woman.

5. According to the Dake Bible note: Some Corinthian women had claimed their equality with men on the basis that there was no distinction in Christ and went so far as to overstep their authority and came forward to prophesy with the heads unveiled. This Paul has disapproved of. However, he sums up his presentation by saying that if a man defends this new freedom of women then a woman may pray or prophesy with her head uncovered and a man may have long hair providing each is willing to bear the reproach and shame of such action. Paul makes it plain that there is no such law or custom governing this in the churches of God.

### **HOW TO PROPERLY OBSERVE COMMUNION**

**1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Participating in the Lord's Supper is a testimony of your devotion to the Lord and His people.

## **V. THE MISUSE AND ABUSE OF LORD'S SUPPER - 11:17-22**

**1 Cor. 11:17-22** Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. [18] For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. [19] For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. [20] When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. [21] For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. [22] What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

#### A. The disunity of the Church - vv. 17-19

1. Earlier in the chapter, Paul praises the members of the Corinthian church because they had endeavored to “hold firmly to the traditions” they had received from Paul.
2. However, in v. 17, Paul states that while praising them for the efforts to maintain the distinctions between men and women, **“in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse.”**
3. **“worse”** - is a term that conveys the idea of moral evil – their assembling was resulting in this moral evil.
4. Specifically, Paul states that **“when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you;”** - instead of a divine unity that portrayed the presence of God's Spirit, there was an antagonism present that demonstrated the absence of the Spirit - cp. **Ephesians 4:1-3**
5. Apparently, the reports Paul received were slightly exaggerated, but he states: **“and in part I believe it.”**
6. Because of the fact of the human element, Paul states that it is necessary at times for factions to develop - primarily because of the deviation of some from the truth - **“For there must also be factions among you,”**
7. The purpose of this is **“so that those who are approved may become evident.”**
8. The divisions that sometimes exist in the church, although a result of the quenching of the Spirit on the part of some, is used by the Lord to prove the value of His faithful saints - cp. **James 1:12**

#### B. The Problem Surrounding the Communion - vv. 20-22

1. This divisive spirit was finding its primary expression within the context of that which ought to have been portraying the supernatural unity of the people of God – Communion.

2. **“Therefore, when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's supper”** - a reference to a “love feast” that began with an actual dinner and concluded with a communion service.
3. This was a congregational meal stressing fellowship, affection, and mutual caring among believers.
4. The emphasis was unity, which led very naturally into a celebration of the unifying accomplishment of Christ Jesus on His cross.
5. However, **“in eating each one takes his own supper first”** - a reference to the way that people were refusing to share what they brought with the poor who were **“hungry”**
6. The result was that the assembly was very disunited - resulting in the fact that **“one is hungry and another is drunk.”**
7. Paul rebukes them severely for their ungodly attitudes toward one another - stating that they were **“despising the church of God and shaming those who have nothing”**

## VI. THE EXPLANATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER - 11:23-26

**1 Cor. 11:23-26 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: [24] And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. [25] After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. [26] For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.**

### A. The Particulars of the Service - vv. 23-25

1. Paul steps back and reviews that basics of the proper observance of the Lord's Supper
2. He begins by stating that this information is not merely some tradition, but came directly from the Lord Himself - **“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you.”**



3. **“The Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks . . .”** - the word “thanks” is Eucharist.
4. Jesus then proceeds to give us the symbolism involved in the elements of the Lord's Supper - the bread and cup.
5. **“He . . . took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’”** - the Passover bread was now to represent His body – the humanity that qualified Him to serve as our substitute
6. **“For you . . .”** - a beautiful phrase spoken in this section, refers to the vicarious or substitutionary suffering of our Redeemer.
7. The same is true of the cup - **“This cup is the new covenant in My blood”** - this was the fulfillment of all the shadows of the Old Covenant - the repeated sacrifices of animals; now, **the “new covenant”** is ratified by the blood of the “lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.”

#### **B. The Purpose for the Supper - v. 26**

1. Jesus said: **“do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”**
2. To remember means more than merely to bring to mind – it is to go back and recapture the reality and significance of what He accomplished.
3. Paul continues and states **“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”**
4. This is therefore designed to be a testimony, given to each other and to the world that we are not ashamed of our Lord or of His blood, that we belong to Him and are obedient to Him.

### **VII. THE EXHORTATION REGARDING THE LORD'S SUPPER - 11:27-34**

**1 Cor. 11:27-34    Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. [28] But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. [29] For**

he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. [30] For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. [31] For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. [32] But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. [33] Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. [34] And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

#### A. The Caution - vv. 27-29

1. Because of how sacred the ceremony is - portraying the very heart of the Gospel of Christ's work of atonement, **“whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.”**
2. How can you partake **“in an unworthy manner”**
  - a) You can partake ritualistically - with no emotion or heart;
  - b) You can partake thinking that the ceremony itself or the elements impart grace or merit; when they are actually only symbols of what we have already received in Christ
  - c) You can partake with a unyielded spirit - one containing bitterness or hatred toward another believer;
  - d) You can partake with known sin of which you will not repent;
  - e) You can partake with no sentiment of love toward God or the people of God and therefore partake unworthily.
3. When we do so, we become **“guilty”** of bringing dishonor to the work of the Lord – therefore, **“a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”**
4. The one who haphazardly or “unworthily” participates in communion, **“eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.”**
5. One must properly discern and respond to the holiness of the occasion or he will receive the chastisement from God who serves as “judge.”

## B. The Chastisement - vv. 30-32

1. Paul states that **“for this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.”**
2. God had dealt with this issue seriously in the church at Corinth, bringing sickness, and even death in a number of cases.
3. We need to grasp how seriously God takes the worthy participation in the Table of the Lord.
4. This chastising hand of the Lord can be **avoided “if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.”**
5. Paul states that **“when we are judged”** for abusing communion, **“we are disciplined by the Lord”** - He is interested in our propriety and is devoted to our sanctification.
6. This security - that God will discipline us even to the point of taking our lives - shows that He is unwilling to allow us **“to be condemned along with the world.”**

## C. The Conclusion - vv. 33-34

1. **“So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another”** - Paul supports the continuation of the “love feast,” but admonishes them to be considerate of each other.
2. He wants unity, consideration, and love to characterize their activity as a church - not the self-serving gluttony that was prevailing.
3. He advises them that if someone cannot control their hunger, **“let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment.”**
4. There were apparently some other issues that needed to be handled with regard to this, but too minor to include in the Scriptures, so Paul states: **“The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.”**

## THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT

### 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

#### Strong's Concordance

**Theme:** God's Spirit manifests His power through gifts which He sovereignly dispenses.

## I. CHAPTER 12 - THE DEFENSE REGARDING THE SPIRIT'S MANIFESTATION - 12:1-3

**1 Cor. 12:1-3** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. [2] Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. [3] Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

### A. THE EXCESSES OF SPIRITUALITY - vv. 1-2

1. **"Now concerning . . ."** - denotes that he is moving to the next area of concern where the Corinthian church had written him for clarification.
2. He addresses this extremely controversial and dangerous subject of **"spiritual gifts"** – things of the Spirit -- a reference to issues surrounding the spiritual realm - particularly of the Holy Spirit's activity among us.
3. He proceeds to state that it is not the will of God that we approach this subject with a perspective that possesses little or no objective reality - **"I do not want you to be unaware"** - ("unaware" - is the word from which we get "agnostic")
4. **"You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols"**
  - a. Within the practice of the heathen religions, they were given to times when they **"led"** (**"carried away"** KJV) to moments of ecstatic ecstasies - a illustration of the presence of **"tongues"** and other forms of ecstatic speech.
  - b. However, this loss of control was **"to the mute idols"** - gods who could not speak but were representative of demons who would give expression through the people being possessed

5. According to Paul's comments here, some of the Corinthian believers had fallen back into some of their old idolatrous practices of being **"led astray"** into excess - particularly into these ecstasies generated by demonic power.

## **B. THE EXPOSURE OF SPIRITUALITY - v. 3**

1. In light of the confusion that was gaining ground in the Corinthian church, Paul provides a means by which **"spiritualities"** can be exposed as either of the Holy Spirit or of demonic origin.

2. First, he declares that "no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is accursed (anathema)'."

- a. The bottom line in this test is that God's Spirit will never generate a believer under His guidance and energy to state something that is doctrinally erroneous.

- b. We must always compare what any person preaches or teaches with what has been declared in God's Word; if it contradicts that, it is not of God.

- c. **"The only way to be sure if something is spiritual is to be sure it is scriptural. If it agrees with Scripture, a new revelation from the Spirit is unnecessary; if it does not agree with Scripture, a new revelation cannot be from the Spirit and is false."**

3. Secondly, he says: **"and not one can say 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."**

- a. Here, we have to understand that Paul is not talking about the mere formulation of these words, but the sincere confession of the truth of the statement - cp. Acts 16:16-18

- b. Confessing Jesus as Lord means nothing unless it involves affirming who He really is and obeying what He commands - cp. Matthew 7:21

- c. Thus, the Holy Spirit will always lead men to ascribe lordship to Jesus Christ, calling on them to obey Him completely.

## **II. DIFFERENT GIFTS BUT OF ONE SPIRIT - 12:4-7**

**1 Cor. 12:4-7** Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. [5] And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. [6] And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. [7] But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

#### **A. THE DIFFERENCES AMONG THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS - vv. 4-6**

1. Having established the principles by which we are to recognize the legitimacy of "**spiritualities**," Paul now discusses that there is great diversity in how these gifts are manifested.

2. He states first of all, that "**there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit**"

- a. This is the first time in this passage that "**gifts**"; is actually in the text - charisma from which we get "**Charismatic**"
- b. The meaning of the word emphasizes a "**gift of grace**"; or "**free gift**" and is normally used relating to the divine enablements for believers to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- c. The point Paul is making here is that there are "**varieties**" of these divine allocations for ministry - that not everyone is "**gifted**" in the identical way.
- d. There are great differences in how individuals are gifted, but each "**distribution**" of grace is of "**the same Spirit**."

3. Second, "**there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord**."

- a. Here the diversity is taken even further, indicating that people who are gifted in the same way may not use that gift in ministry in the same way.
- b. This emphasizes that the gifts once again are given but for one reason "**ministry**" – to serve and edify (build up) the body.
- c. By emphasizing "**the same Lord**" - the body life within the church, which is the body of Christ is highlighted.

4. Finally, "**There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons**."

- a. Here we are made aware that not only does God give the gifts to believers, he also "**energizes**" them.
- b. "Varieties of effects" illustrates that the way God energizes the gifts will likewise vary depending on His will and plan.
- c. A person exercising his gift will not always see the same result.

d. We are completely dependent on God's power and energizing for the benefit of our gift.

## **B. THE DESIGN FOR THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS - v. 7**

1. Notice that **"to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit"** - but the previous three verses illustrate that each Person of the Trinity is involved - Spirit, Lord, and God (Spirit, Son, and Father).
2. The unity in the midst of diversity comes in the wisdom of God in His sovereign bestowal of the gifts within the body of Christ.
3. The welfare of the body is the priority of the Spirit of God as the gifts are distributed - it is **"for the common good"** ("to profit withal" KJV).
  - a. **"Common good" comes from sumferw** - "to bring together" and suggests a bestowal of advantage or benefit on those brought together.
  - b. This then is the priority and basis for spiritual giftedness in the church - to edify and help the church - brought together in His Name.

## **III. THE DISTRIBUTION REVEALING THE SPIRIT'S MANIFESTATION - 12:8-11**

**1 Cor. 12:8-11 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; [9] To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; [10] To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: [11] But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.**

### **A. THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS - vv. 8-10**

1. The gifts that are given are given **"through [or by] one Spirit"** and include:
  - a. **"The word of wisdom ..."** - This refers to the supernatural ability to make practical application to the truths of God's Word
  - b. **"The word of knowledge ..."** - This refers to the supernatural ability to grasp the meaning of those things that cannot be known apart from revelation.

- c. "**Faith** ..." - This does not refer to saving faith. This is a reference to the supernatural ability to lay claim on the promises of the Word of God even in the face of obstacles and seeming impossibilities.
- d. "**Gifts of healings** ..." - This is the first of the sign gifts mentioned by Paul in this list. It refers to the supernatural ability of those who, through a word or touch, could instantaneously and totally heal all who came to them. (It is to be noted that this gift was exercised on the basis of the giftedness of the healer, not the faith of the one being healed.)
- e. "**Effecting of miracles** ..." - This is another sign gift - the supernatural ability to exercise power ( dunami") - and was often demonstrated in the casting out of demons.
- f. "**Prophecy** ..." - This is the supernatural ability to proclaim the Word of God - this is viewed as one of the most crucial of all spiritual gifts since it edifies - cp. **14:1**
- g. "**Distinguishing of spirits** ..." - This is the supernatural ability to recognize whether or not spiritual activity is truly of God's Spirit, natural imitations, or demonic counterfeits - cp. **14:29**
- h. "**Various kinds of tongues** ..." - This is another of the sign gifts - whereby one has the supernatural ability to speak known languages that have never been studied by the speaker or perhaps the language of angels.
- i. "**Interpretation of tongues** ..." - This is the supernatural ability to interpret a message given in tongues so that it can be understood by the listeners.

## **B. THE SOURCE OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS - v. 11**

1. Although there are a variety of gifts, there is "**one and the same Spirit [who] works all these things.**"
2. Unity is attainable in the midst of great diversity because there is a common Source who has the common good of the Body in mind as He is "**distributing to each one individually just as He wills.**"
3. Believers yield themselves to the Sovereign plan of the eternal Spirit of God who Himself determines what gifts are given to which believers. However, Paul does tell us to "covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues..." (14:39). In other words there is nothing wrong with asking for the gifts and desiring that we could be a vessel of the Holy Spirit's working as long as we are surrendered to His will.



## THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

### 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

### Strong's Concordance

**Theme:** Each believer receives the Holy Spirit at the time of their salvation.

## IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRIT BAPTISM - 12:12

**1 Cor. 12:12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

### A. THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE BODY - v. 12a

1. Paul's emphasis throughout this section is the unity that exists in the Body of Christ. However, he has just dealt with the issue of the diversity that exists in the gifts of the Spirit.
2. As a summary, Paul mentions that "**even as the body is one and yet has many members, . . .**" there is an emphasis on the individuality of those who make up the church.
3. Here he uses an analogy with the physical body to describe the powerful truth of diversity making up a whole. The body possesses many difference parts - feet, hands, ears, eyes, noses, etc....
4. As we will see in the next verse, the baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ is experienced by each member, individually - it is a personal event that occurs to every one of us.
5. It is this common denominator of receiving the gifts of grace by the Holy Spirit that creates a unity in the midst of diversity.

### B. THE INTER-DEPENDENCE WITHIN THE BODY - v. 12b

1. Paul continues: "**. . . though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.**"
2. This emphasizes the interdependence that exists - although the Holy Spirit is received individually, it causes the unity of the body of Christ wherein each member is dependent on the others.

3. Physically, if you cut off a part of the body, it dies since it has no sustenance - likewise, spiritually, every believer needs the life that is produced within the Body of Christ.
4. This stems from the nourishment that each person receives from his or her relationship with Jesus Christ.

## **V. THE BAPTISM - 12:13a**

**(Note that the teaching, which follows in this section is not held by RevC and other Bible teachers, but is presented here to give our students an understanding of other views on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. For a more detailed explanation of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as I have taught in the class on Discipleship, go to the very end of II Corinthians where it is copied for comparison with what is taught in the following section.**

**It is my view that the passage examined here describes the baptism of the believer into the body of Christ, which happens at the time of salvation as we are made members of His body. In that event the body of Christ (the church universal) is the element into which the new believer is baptized. The Holy Spirit is the one doing the baptism and the believer is the candidate being baptized.**

**In the case of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit it is Jesus who does the baptizing as stated in Matt. 3:11-12, it is the believer who is baptized, and it is the element of the Holy Spirit that he is baptized in. Thus I see these as two separate events, which certainly could happen at or about the same time.**

**I do believe when a new convert accepts Christ he is baptized into the body of Christ receiving all of the Holy Spirit. To me, greater evidence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life is only due to their releasing more of His presence within them. This is accomplished by yielding to the Holy Spirit's presence.**

**I don't believe (concerning what we refer to as the Baptism in the Holy Spirit) that we receive more of the Holy Spirit at some future point in time even though I see it as usually being a subsequent experience to salvation. I believe the Holy Spirit is resident in each believer in His fullness waiting for us to yield to the baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, thereby, releasing power into the believer through any number of manifestations of the Spirit.**

**Thus I see the potential resident in the believer for the manifestation of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation. Which may explain**

why some new converts exhibit the manifestation of tongues at the time of their conversion. This as Christ so touches them, and they responding release the fullness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. I further believe the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is first evidenced by speaking in tongues.

My understanding sees the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as a separate experience that most often happens after salvation as the result of a work of Christ in the heart of the believer.

Christ brings the believer to the point of faith whereby Christ releases the fullness of the presence of the Holy Spirit evidenced by the expression of the gifts of the Spirit that are given to each.

I would also admit that the more I think I know, the more I realize how little I know. Thus I am not fully convinced by any teaching on the subject, including my own. However, I am convinced that the experience is real, that it is of the Lord, available to all believers, and for this day. Exactly how or when a person receives it to me is not so much the issue as everyone be encouraged to seek the Lord for all that He has to give, including the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and those gifts the Holy Spirit wills to work through each believer.

Finally, I would also like to state that I do not agree with what follows in respect to the teaching that, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Baptism into the body of Christ are one and the same and necessary for salvation.

I do agree that if you have not received the Holy Spirit then you are not saved; as this was the promise of Christ to those who would believe, but I do not agree that the two experiences are one and the same. I believe you are saved having received the Holy Spirit even if you do not accept or manifest the gifts of the Spirit received in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I have added comments to the following in (Bold) where I felt I must.)

**1 Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.**

#### **A. THE AGENT OF SPIRIT BAPTISM**

1. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." - This has created a great deal of confusion - notice that the term "by" can also be translated

"with". **(this is the teaching of John MacArthur, and not accepted by RevC)**

2. We are told that Jesus is the agent of Spirit baptism - cp. **Matthew 3:11-12**
  - a. "Baptize you with the Holy Spirit" - a reference to the provision of the Holy Spirit sent to the church at Pentecost.
  - b. ". . and [baptize you with] fire" - a reference to the work of Christ in damning those who are the "chaff" (v. 12) or ungodly who are not part of the Body of Christ.
3. "To be baptized with the Holy Spirit means that Christ immerses us in the Spirit, thereby giving us a common life principle. This spiritual baptism is what connects us with all other believers in Christ and makes us part of Christ's own body, Baptism with the Spirit makes all believers one."  
**(MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, p. 189—RevC does not agree with this teaching as I see we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ)**
4. Hence, Spirit baptism is an essential part of every Christian's salvation experience; if you have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit, you are not saved - cp. **Romans 8:9** **(RevC disagrees as this reference does not mention "Baptism", however, it does mean that we must have the Holy Spirit to be saved)**
5. This means that the Charismatic doctrine of "Subsequence" - that is, a post-conversion bestowal (or Baptism) of the Holy Spirit is completely unbiblical. **(Naturally those who have experienced this would disagree.)**

## **B. THE AWARENESS OF SPIRIT BAPTISM**

1. So, how do we know that we have actually received the Holy Spirit? Is it an experiential FEELING or FACT?
2. Notice the terminology used here: "we were **ALL** baptized into ..."; "we were **ALL** made to drink . . ."
3. As John the Baptist declared, there are only two kinds of people - those baptized with the Spirit by Christ - the saved, and those who will be baptized with "unquenchable fire" - the unsaved.

4. Therefore, it is not possible to be a Christian and not be baptized by Christ with the Holy Spirit. **(I disagree as evidenced in John 20:22 when Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, “receive ye the Holy Spirit”—no mention of baptism in the Spirit by Jesus until Acts 1:4-5 yet surely these disciples who had now received the Holy Spirit were saved)**
5. However, the Charismatics with their doctrine known as "Subsequence" have separated the baptism with the Spirit from the instant of salvation. They claim that the inevitable sign of Spirit baptism is the physical evidence of speaking in tongues.
6. The confusion comes because of a complete misunderstanding of the initial provision of the Holy Spirit in the early church wherein a sign was provided to unbelieving Israel that three things were occurring at Pentecost:
  - a. God was indicating through the sign of tongues that God was judging unbelieving Israel;
  - b. God was indicating thereby the inclusion of other groups in the one church; and,
  - c. God was confirming the apostles' spiritual authority through tongues.
7. There are three major passages that the Charismatics point to for proof of "Subsequence" and for the experience of tongues to confirm it.
  - a. **Acts 2** - the event of the initial bestowal of the Holy Spirit by Christ that established a new order, exceptionally certified by unprecedented and unduplicated signs.
  - b. **Acts 8:14-17** - another step in the establishment of the Church - here the Gospel reaches beyond the Jewish people and includes Samaritans (half Jewish, half Gentiles), considered Mongrels by pure Jews.
    - (I) There is an interval between salvation and the bestowal of God's Spirit in this situation - however, it was because of the need for everyone to clearly see that God's purpose for the Church transcended the nation of Israel and included all believers in one Church.
    - (II) This unusual event served as a clear indication that the middle wall of partition had indeed been broken down - cp. **Ephesians 2:14-15**.
    - (III) The major purpose here was that everyone present would know that there were not two churches, there was only one, with the same Holy Spirit under the same apostolic authority.

c. **Acts 10:44-48** - once again, an exception occurs in the baptism of the Spirit in that it was physically demonstrated through tongues, an event not considered a norm.

(I) If there was a rift between Jews and Samaritans, there was open hostility between Jews and Gentiles - therefore, the same need existed for a sign from God that the Gentiles were likewise included in the Church.

(II) Hence, here God is again illustrating that they "have received the Holy Spirit just as we did" - creating unity in this crucial transition period when they were without the completed New Testament Scriptures.

8. Thus, every illustration when Spirit Baptism was either delayed or accompanied by tongues was unique and exceptional designed to serve as a sign to verify the identity of the Body of Christ Jesus.
9. Nowhere does Paul ever even hint that the events during this transitional period of Acts were to be considered normative experience of those being Baptized with the Holy Spirit. **(I disagree as most of 1Cor. 14 was written to give instruction on how gifts were to function publicly and privately)**
10. Thus, to be seeking a subsequent bestowal of God's Spirit is to look for something that is unbiblical - to strive after evidence that God has truly done what He promised He would do is wrong, no matter how euphoric the experience might be.

## **VI. THE INFLUENCE OF THIS BAPTISM - 12:13b**

**1 Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.**

### **A. THERE IS ONE SPIRIT**

1. **"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, we were all made to drink of one Spirit."**
2. Here the issue demonstrated in the Book of Acts is once again laid out for us - that there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, and one God and Father of all - **"whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves**

or free." - cp. **Ephesians 4:4-6** Every believer is a partaker of the same Holy Spirit.

3. Thus, the unity of the Body of Christ is established through the common experience of Spirit Baptism, being placed into the one Body of Christ marked by the receiving of the Holy Spirit by Christ. **(I disagree with this teaching as it is obvious that there is more than “one baptism” as others are named in scripture of which Christian water baptism and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are two, John’s baptism unto repentance was another. The idea of “one baptism” here refers to the fact that the baptism into the body of Christ is the only baptism without which a person cannot be saved. RevC)**

## **B. THE SATISFACTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

1. **"We were all made to drink of one Spirit"** - indicates the incredible joy that comes from the indwelling Holy Spirit.
2. This experience of possessing God's Spirit is the unique experience of the Church, unprecedented by any other dispensation - cp. **John 14:16-17**
3. There remains no more of the Spirit to receive than what we receive in Christ - you and I who are in Christ have received all of the Spirit that we will ever know – Christ received the Spirit without measure - cp. **John 3:34**
4. This is the fulfillment of the promise of Christ concerning the satisfaction the believer would know in possessing the Holy Spirit - cp. **John 7:37-39**
5. In Christ, who gives us the Holy Spirit, we have been granted "everything pertaining to life and godliness" - **2 Peter 1:3-4**

### **THE UNITY OF THE BODY**

**1 Corinthians 12:14-26**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** God has placed each member of the Body where they need to be for the common good.

## **VII. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNITY OF THE BODY- 12:14**

**1 Cor. 12:14    For the body is not one member, but many.**

## A. THE DISAPPROVAL OF UNIFORMITY

1. There is a commonality emphasized in verse 13 where Paul states that "we [are] all made to drink of one Spirit". However, lest the Corinthians push this emphasis too far, he proceeds to express that the unity just emphasized does not mean that there is to be absolute uniformity - **"For the body is not one member."**
2. That is, being a part of the body does not eliminate the need, benefit and relevance of individuality as a believer. We are not able to identify one member of the church and see him as the ideal member and attempt to clone him.
3. The reason is that one member is only gifted for the one purpose God has intended him/her to fulfill.

## B. THE DIVERSITY OF UNITY

1. Rather, **"the body is not one member, but many."**
2. God gifts different people within the church with different strengths in order that they might accomplish different ministries - all to the glory of God. He then turns to the analogy of the body to demonstrate his point.
3. The Corinthian Church had become greatly confused - emphasizing unity on what ought to have been a celebration of diversity (spiritual gifts) and pursuing diversity in areas where unity ought to have prevailed (leaders).

## VIII. THE EXCUSES FOR USELESSNESS IN THE BODY-12:15-24a

**1 Cor. 12:15-24** If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? [16] And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? [17] If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? [18] But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. [19] And if they were all one member, where were the body? [20] But now are they many members, yet but one body. [21] And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. [22] Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are



necessary: [23] And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. [24] For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

#### A. "THEY DON'T NEED ME!" - vv. 15-20

1. Many believers attempt to exempt themselves from responsibility as part of the body for a diversity of reasons including:
  - a. Spiritual lethargy & apathy
  - b. Preoccupation with other interests
  - c. Dissatisfaction with their giftedness coupled with an envy for others' giftedness.
  - d. Pride which vaunts oneself above the rest of the believers.
2. Some excuse themselves because they look at the church and don't see where they can achieve the same level of prestige as some others and therefore withdraw stating "they don't need me!"
3. This is portrayed in the illustrations that Paul provides: **"If the foot says, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body."**
4. In this illustration, the foot and the ear look at the prestige that the hand and the eye possess and feel inferior. Therefore, they attempt to dismiss their responsibility to function as part of the body.
5. Paul notes the absurdity of such an assessment by stating how inappropriate it is to assess one member of the body as more significant than another - **"If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?"**
6. The point Paul is making is that each member of the body has its own **Divinely designed and crafted** purpose, which, when neglected, results in the disruption of the effectiveness of the body - cp. **Romans 9:20-21**

7. **"God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired."** - for the benefit of the body as a whole.
8. This Divinely appointed distribution is indeed disrupted when one gift is valued and pursued to the exclusion of another - **"If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body."**
9. "A Christian who does not have a ministry is a contradiction. He is disobedient and denies God the right to use him in the way He intends and for which He has gifted him.

## **B. "I DON'T NEED THEM!" - v. 21-24a**

1. The other excuse given is when spiritual pride works in the other direction. Instead of thinking "they don't need me," someone become haughty and declares: "I don't need them!"
2. **"And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you': or again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'"**
3. Such individualism is commonly admired in American culture - a pioneering, self-sufficient persona is often the stuff of our heroes. However, such independence of heart is contrary to the purpose of God within the church. Such people grossly overestimate their own importance and under-estimate that of other believers.
4. In refutation of such pride, Paul states that **"On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary."**
5. **"weaker"** - refers to that which is internal, unseen, and less prominent.
6. **"necessary"** - refers to that which is vital for life to continue - such as the heart, lungs, brain, etc. . . .
7. **". . . and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor"** - most likely, this refers to the portions of the body that are not considered to be attractive that are made more attractive by our clothing ourselves.

8. **". . . and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness, whereas our seemly members have not need of it."**  
**"unseemly"** means shameful or indecent and refers to our private parts.
9. These are brought to more abundant seemliness through our modesty and **"bestowal of more abundant honor"** meaning we give proper attention and care to their special needs.
10. Hence, Paul is stating that the **"seemly members have [no] need of"** such obscurity and covering. But, this does not mean that they are of less value or necessity.

## **IX. USEFULNESS IN THE BODY - 12:24b-26**

**1 Cor. 12:24-26 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: [25] That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. [26] And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.**

### **A. GOD'S DESIGN FOR EQUITY - vv. 24b-25**

1. God's design does not suggest that any member has greater significance than another. To Him, each member is placed so that the result is a well coordinated single body governed by the Head of the body which is Christ.
2. **"But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked."**
3. The reason God has designed each person to be crucial to the proper functioning of the body is **"so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another."**

### **B. GOD'S DESIRE FOR EQUALITY - v. 26**

1. The equality within the body where every member is as crucial as every other is designed by God to produce a unity of heart. His desire is that instead of every member doing their own thing and pursuing their own agenda, that every member be brought into unity of purpose being aware of the contribution of every other member.

2. Thus the desire of God is for love to exist, portrayed **when "one member suffers, [and] all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, al members rejoice with it."**
3. Thus there is no rivalry or competition, no inferiority or superiority, no envy or malice - only "the same care for one another" as love is portrayed within the body.

## **THE DANGER OF SPIRITUAL PRIDE**

### **1 Corinthians 12:27-31**

### **Strong's Concordance**

## **X. ONE BODY DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS - 12:27-28**

**1 Cor. 12:27-28** **Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. [28] And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.**

### **A. THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY - v. 27**

1. He then begins this section by emphasizing that **"you are Christ's body, and individually members of it."**
2. Again, although there are some gifts which God indicates are to receive "more abundant honor" - **v. 24**, every member of the body is necessary for the body to be complete.

### **B. THE PRIORITIES OF GOD - v. 28**

1. Now God clarifies what He means by the fact that He "gives more abundant honor" to some gifts - **"And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues."**
2. Paul first mentions three offices of gifted men in order of priority and then proceeds to mention certain spiritual gifts.

- a. **"Appointed"** - refers to that which is put into place indicating an official appointment to an office.
  - b. The other appointed offices, in addition to those listed here, are Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers - cp. **Ephesians 4:11**
- 3. The use of the terms: "First, Second, Third" - indicate that God is informing us of the positions that carried the most priority in the Church.
  - a. The first two offices mentioned were **"appointed"** for the purpose of establishing the Church
    - (I) **". . . first apostles"** - the term **"apostle"** generally means "one sent on a mission" and technically refers to the twelve disciples of Christ who sat directly under the teaching of Christ, witnessed the resurrection, and were commissioned by Christ to serve as the foundation for the church - **Ephesians 2:20**
      - (A) They received and declared revelation - **Ephesians 3:5**
      - (B) They gave confirmation of the Word through "signs and wonders" - **2 Corinthians 12:12**
      - (C) This office was for the establishment of the church and some believe no longer exists within the church. Certainly if it continues, it does so under different qualifications as one requirement was to have seen the Lord after His resurrection. The spirit of the office certainly continues as certain men are called to pioneer many churches rather than to pastor a particular local church.
    - (II) **". . . second prophets"** - the message of the prophets was judged by the apostles - the apostles providing the teaching, while the prophets provided the practical and personal application, speaking from God even as did the apostles. The office of the prophet continues today in those men who are called to speak forth the Word of God to bring direction and correction in the Church.

- b. The office given for the maintenance of the church: "**.. . third teachers**" - (Ephesians 4:11 adds "Evangelists" here).
    - (I)The responsibility of this office is to study that which is provided by the apostles and prophets and interpret it for the people - cp. Acts 2:42
    - (II)This office will be filled by persons who have the spiritual gift of teaching.
- 4. The Scripture then changes from numbering the priorities of the offices to the listing of some gifts that were not offices.
  - a. "**then**" - continues the thought of priority, and begins a list of gifts that were not offices within the church.
  - b. "**miracles, then gifts of healings**" - two serving gifts that in the period of establishment of the church were important gifts to confirm & authenticate the gospel.
  - c. "**helps**" - this would be the same as "service" and refers to the lightening of someone's load by personally assuming it. These are people who can serve in a variety of situations and are of great benefit to the body.
  - d. "**administrations**" - the same as "leadership" - and refers to the ministry of exercising discernment in mobilizing, motivating, and directing others toward an objective.
  - e. "**various kinds of tongues**" – the fact that tongues is listed here is another indication of its important place in the gifts to the body.

## **XI. IT'S NOT ABOUT PRESTIGE - 12:29-31**

**1 Cor. 12:29-31    Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? [30] Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? [31] But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.**

### **A.     IT'S A DIVINE CALL - vv. 29-30**

1. Paul then asks rhetorical questions to emphasize that God has not left it up to individuals to seek the gift of their choice - including those gifts or offices that were deemed as most significant: "**All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they?**"

**All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues do they? All do not interpret do they?"**

2. God distributes the gifts "individually just as He wills" - cp. **12:11**
3. The responsibility that you and I have as believers is to accept the ministries that we've been appointed to and fulfill those ministries with diligence and faithfulness.

## **B. DESIRE SPIRITUAL GIFTS- v. 31**

1. Paul encourages believers to: **"...earnestly desire the greater gifts."**
2. We differ in our gifts as the body differs in its members. However, there is nothing wrong with desiring a strong gifting that will allow you to serve Christ to your fullest. No gift will be its best without love as a basis for its manifestation.

### **"THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE"**

#### **1 Corinthians 13:1-3**

#### **Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** The exercise of genuine love produces value in any work of service.

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### **Introduction**

Man left to himself will typically be selfish, self-willed, self-motivated, and completely self promoting. They do their own thing, for their own good, in their own time, with little regard for others. When a person is not in contact with the source of love, it is impossible to be loving.

Many people fail to comprehend what love is with most people thinking it is defined by warm feelings romance, or desire - "eros." However, romance or attraction has little to do with true love in God's terms "agape." This biblical, Christian love, is a willing, joyful desire to put the welfare of others above our own, and is an act of choice that we are commanded to exercise even in behalf of our enemies - Matthew 5:44-45.

"Believers have little excuse for failing to love 'because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to

us' (Rom. 5:5). We do not have to manufacture love; we only have to share the love we have been given. We do not have to be humanly taught to love, because we ourselves 'are taught by God to love one another' (1 Thess. 4:9). We are therefore told to 'pursue love' (1 Cor. 14:1), to 'put on love' (Col. 3:14), to 'increase and abound in love' (1 Thess. 3:12; Phil. 1:9\_), to be sincere in love (2 Cor. 8:8), to be unified in love (Ph8il. 2:2), to be 'fervent in love' (1 Pet. 4:8), and to 'stimulate one another to love' (Heb. 10:24)."

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## **I. CHAPTER 13 - LOVE MAKES EVERYTHING MEANINGFUL - 13:1**

**1 Cor. 13:1    Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.**

1. Paul here begins his introduction of "a more excellent way" mentioned in 12:31. These believers in that they were not walking in the Spirit, were seeking significance and prominence in the church.
2. They were misusing spiritual gifts the result of the lack of genuine love for one another that is required for the life of the body - cp. **Romans 12:3-9**
3. Here, Paul begins to introduce them to their abuses of spiritual gifts by using hyperbole - exaggerating the degree of ability in various areas of giftedness and then relating them to the importance of love.
4. He begins by stating: **"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels . . ."** the gift of tongues as important as it is by itself was of little value without love
5. **"but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging symbol."** The gifts have as their foundation "love," without love they are only noise.

## **II.    LOVE MAKES EVERYTHING SIGNIFICANT - 13:2**

**1 Cor. 13:2    And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.**

### **A.    THE COMMAND OF SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT**



1. Next, Paul deals with some of the gifts that deal with the perception of truth in various ways:
2. **"If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge . . ."**
  - a. **"gift of prophecy"** - identified as the greatest gift in 14:1-4 because it involves the ability to proclaim the truth of God in such a way as to be understood and practically applied.
  - b. **". . . and know all mysteries and all knowledge"** - a reference to the awareness of possessing a command of **"all"** truth - both revealed (**"mysteries"**) and naturally observed (**"knowledge"**)
3. In other words, if one could fathom all the observable, knowable facts of the created universe, be virtually omniscient, he would still be useless to the building up of the church without the dynamic of love.
4. **". . . and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains"** - referring here not to saving faith, but to the confidence and expectancy in the Lord's ability to do even the impossible.

## **B. THE CATASTROPHE OF GIFTS WITHOUT LOVE**

1. When a person possesses any gift of God no matter how important it might seem to the individual, without love - **"but do not have love, I am nothing."**
2. **"Nothing"** - refers to that which counts for nothing - "an absolute zero"
3. Without love we become like Jonah who knew little joy because he possessed no love in the delivery of the truth - hoping for the judgment of God on those he was condemning - cp. **Jonah 4:1-3**

## **III. LOVE MAKES SACRIFICE REWARDING - 13:3**

**1 Cor. 13:3    And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.**

### **A. THE DEGREE OF SACRIFICES**

1. Paul takes two illustrations of supreme demonstrations of sacrifice - both of which are designed to portray one's generous and self-less approach to life.
2. First, "**And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor,**" - a reference to the greatest act of benevolence
3. Another form of sacrifice is "**if I surrender my body to be burned**" - a reference to the willingness to lay down one's life in devotion to Christ, making the "last full measure of devotion" possible in service to Christ.
4. In either case such sacrifice is "**profits me nothing**" if it is done without the motivation of love.
5. Paul is making a strong point with those Corinthian believers who were motivated through selfish, egotistical reason for the good works they were performing - seeking to gain prestige, reward, reputation, or recognition. Without love, God's servant's work is worth nothing, gains nothing, and accomplishes no eternal reward - cp.  
**1 Corinthians 3:12-15.**

### **"THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE"**

#### **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

#### **Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Love places its object above its own comfort and patiently endures all things.

### **IV. THE SPIRIT OF LOVE - 13:4-7**

**1 Cor. 13:4-7**    **Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, [5] Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; [6] Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; [7] Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.**

## **A. LOVE IS TOLERANT . . . (PATIENT)**

1. Previously, vv. 1-3 convinced us of the emptiness generated when love is absent. Yet Corinth was full of those who were like the noisy gongs and clanging symbols - void of love and corrupt in their approach to others within the body.
2. **"Love is patient"** - a word used to describe one's response to people, as opposed to responding to circumstances or events. This is used of a person who has the power to avenge himself, but will not do so. Hence, a spirit of tolerance of others is one of the key elements in understanding love.

## **B. LOVE IS KIND**

1. Second, Paul states: **"Love is kind."** Whereas patience will tolerate others even when they mistreat them, kindness will give anything to others.
2. Kindness is active goodwill . . . and actively works to advance the welfare of others, even one's enemies.

## **C. IS NOT ENVIOUS - ". . . is not jealous"**

1. One way that jealousy is demonstrated is through the desire to have what others possess - "envy."
2. Another way jealousy is demonstrated is through the sentiment that wishes that someone didn't have what they do have.
3. Jealousy stems from a selfish ambition that produces "every evil thing" - cp. **James 3:14-16**

## **D. IS NOT PRIDEFUL - "love does not brag"**

1. When jealousy exists, there is necessarily then its sister sentiment, "selfish ambition"
2. This results in the desire to see oneself elevated, not only in one's own eyes, but also in those of others. Hence, bragging is trying to make others jealous of what we have.

3. The Corinthians were certainly guilty of this sin - seeking to elevate themselves through association with the "best leaders" or through the exercise of the most prestigious spiritual gifts. This is in tremendous contrast to Christ who humbled Himself - cp. **Philippians 2:6-8**

**E. IS NOT EGOTISTICAL - "... is not arrogant" or "puffed up" KJV**

1. Again, when one is jealous of what others have, and attempting to make others jealous of what they have, arrogance is the inevitable consequence. Trying to make others think we are important.

2. Paul had warned the Corinthians on several occasions to beware of arrogance - the thought that they "had arrived" spiritually - cp.

**1 Corinthians 4:6-8**

**F. DOES NOT BRING EMBARRASSMENT - "... does not act unbecomingly"**

1. When a person becomes arrogant, they fail to concern themselves with the way their behavior affects others.

2. Previously in this book, Paul mentions the need to deny what one feels free to do in order to avoid offending weaker brothers.

3. Here, however, we are told that genuine Godly love "**does not act unbecomingly**" or does not bring embarrassment to others. This person is careless and is rude, exhibiting no manners or consideration of others - cp.

**1 Corinthians 11:21**

**G. DOES NOT SEEK SELFISH GAIN - "... it does not seek its own"**

1. Here we find yet another perversion that is eliminated by genuine love - one does not seek to use others to gain their own gratification.

2. Wanting to have one's own way will often bring tremendous harm to others whose interests are not prioritized by those failing to love - cp.

**Philippians 2:4**

**H. DOES NOT EXPLODE - "... is not provoked"**

1. **"Provoked"** means to arouse to anger and often results in an outburst of emotion - "losing one's cool"
2. "Love guards against being irritated, upset, or angered by things said or done against it."
3. Anger that is righteous indignation is stirred because of a violation of the holiness of God's perfect standards, not because of some violation of my rights.
4. Love does not consume itself with the preservation of one's own rights and privileges; but, with the execution of one's duties and obligations.

**I. DOES NOT MAKE A SHOW OF A WRONG - "... does not take into account a wrong suffered" , "thinketh no evil" KJV**

1. This idea of taking **"into account"** is a financial term used to describe the keeping to detailed records of transactions. The purpose of such records, of course, is for future consultation and reference in order to make a show before others.
2. However, love refuses to do this - cp. **Romans 4:7-8**
3. This could also mean that we do not assume a person has evil intent when we suffer wrong at their hands.

**J. DOES NOT TAKE PLEASURE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS - "... does not rejoice in unrighteousness"**

1. Our society is increasingly finding itself celebrating the debauchery of sin - going so far as defending it as the acceptable and right thing - cp. Isaiah 5:20
2. Genuine love refuses to tolerate sin. To love a person is to hate his sin and to seek to do something about it, often having to separate from others because of the presence of sin - not that one is fearful of contamination, but that the one sinning might be ashamed - cp. **1 Thessalonians 3:14**

**K. LOVE IS DEVOTED TO THE TRUTH - "but rejoices with the truth"**

1. Instead of celebrating error and sin, true love shows limitations to tolerance. The first limitation is a devotion to the truth that eliminates toleration for wrong doctrine. Some might say that "doctrine isn't important! What is important is that we all just love one another."

2. However, if we love others it will matter a great deal to us whether or not what they believe is right or wrong; not only because it affects their own destiny, but also that of those they influence.

#### **L. LOVE COVERS - "... bears all things"**

1. This phrase emphasizes the willingness of love to cover or protect a sinner from unnecessary harm. Love never protects sin, but seeks to support and protect the sinner.

2. At times, love will even seek to take upon itself the consequences of the sin of the one loved - **Isaiah 53:4-5**; **1 Peter 4:8**

#### **M. LOVE TRUSTS - "... believes all things"**

1. Instead of being cynical, love trusts its object until there is not ability to do so. This is demonstrated most effectively in the refusal of love to doubt another person's motivation.

2. Some believe the worst in a situation involving another, before the facts are even established, many will "jump to conclusions" that are detrimental to the people involved.

#### **N. LOVE BELIEVES - "... hopes all things"**

1. Even when faith in a person is destroyed through the awareness of guilt, love will always be "pulling for" the person to eventually "make it"

2. "As long as God's grace is operative - failure is never final."

#### **O. LOVE PERSEVERES- "... endures all things"**

This term is a military term that describes the willingness to hold a position at all costs. It suggests that love will endure any hardship or suffering in order to stay true to its object. Although all may fail, faith, hope, devotion, et al, **"love never fails"**

## **"THE PERMANENCE OF LOVE"**

### **1 Corinthians 13:8-13**

### **Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Since the most prestigious spiritual gifts are only temporary, believers ought not pursue them at the expense of love.

## **V. LOVE'S STABILITY IS EXPLAINED - 13:8**

**1 Cor. 13:8** **Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.**

### **A. THE TENURE OF LOVE**

1. Here Paul is demonstrating that because of love's priority in the character of God, it is to be viewed as the greatest of gifts, the more excellent way of conduct in the church.
2. He indicates that **"love never fails"**
3. **"Fails"** - comes from a word that means "to wither, decay or fall to the ground" as a flower that has wilted and died.
4. The emphasis is that love never withers up or dies out - it never becomes inoperative.
5. It is permanent - and will never be abolished nor will it ever run its course and be used up.

### **B. THE TEMPORARY CHARACTER OF "THE GREATER GIFTS"**

However, in contrast to the permanence of love, the things that were so coveted by the Corinthians: prophecy, tongues, and knowledge - they cannot be compared to the greatest thing - "love."

## **VI. LOVE'S STANDARD IS ESTABLISHED - 13:9-12**

**1 Cor. 13:9-12** **For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. [10] But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. [11] When I**

**was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. [12] For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.**

#### **A. LOVE MAKES US COMPLETE - vv. 9-11**

1. Now Paul continues to express why the permanence that characterizes love must be the standard by which all other characteristics in the church must be compared.
2. He indicates to the Corinthians that at the time he was writing to them, **"we know in part and we prophesy in part"**
  - a. The phrase **"in part"** refers to that which is "incomplete or immature."
  - b. In essence, Paul is stating that revelation was not yet complete and therefore these gifts had not yet been "done away"
3. However, **"when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."**
  - a. The term **"perfect"** means complete and refers to that which is "fully matured" or "fully developed". Only Christ, Himself is fully matured, fully developed, complete, lacking nothing.

(It should be noted that those who do not accept these gifts as for today, usually base part of their belief on their interpretation of the meaning of "that which is perfect." They take the stand that the Holy Bible is "that which is perfect," and since we have the Bible we no longer need these manifestation gifts.)
  - b. There will come a time when prophecy will be completed in its fulfillment. Those prophecies, which have been fulfilled are complete. Others will be when that which is perfect comes.
  - c. Tongues will also cease when replaced by a more complete means of communication at the time when that which is perfect arrives.



d. Knowledge, which presently is increasing faster than man can keep up with will also reach a point of completion when that which is perfect comes.

4. **"When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things."**
5. Thus in the same way that an adult is far advanced beyond childhood as to be on another plane entirely. There will be no need of prophecies when we shall know as we are known (vs. 12). There will be no need for the gift of tongues when we shall know all languages of the universe. There will be no partial knowledge when we have perfect insight and understanding in spiritual and eternal things. (Dake Bible note pg. 186).
6. For now we see as through a glass darkly (vs. 12). We have through the scripture somewhat of an understanding of what life will be like in heaven but yet it is only a part of what God has prepared for us. When we are face to face with Him we shall understand completely.

## VII. LOVE'S SIGNIFICANCE IS EMPHASIZED - 13:13

**1 Cor. 13:13    And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.**

Three things that abide : **"But now faith, hope, love, abide these three"** Because love really includes the attributes of "faith & hope" - Paul states **"but the greatest of these is love."**

### **Tongues & Prophecy**

#### **1 Corinthians 14:1-14**

Notes on this section are, for the most part, from The Preachers Outline Sermon Bible by NavPress. Some modification and paraphrasing was done by RevC.

**Theme:** The gift of tongues and prophecy contrasted.

## I. CHAPTER 14 - INTRODUCTION

The gift of tongues, like prophecy, is only one of several gifts. With the real issue being that it function in its proper place for the edification of the body of Christ.

## II. SPIRITUAL GIFTS: PROPHECY 14:1

**1 Cor. 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.**

**Gifts are to be coveted, especially prophecy**

- A. Love is to be pursued above all else in life.** Gifts, abilities, and service are important; but they pale into insignificance in comparison with love. Love is the greatest need and the supreme answer to all the needs of men.
- B. Spiritual gifts are to be desired.** We are to pursue love first, but this does not mean we are not to seek the spiritual gifts of God. On the contrary, the more we love God and men, the more we covet the gifts of God so that we can minister and help the world of men more effectively.

## III. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TONGUES AND PROPHECY 14:2-5

**1 Cor. 14:2-5 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. [3] But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. [4] He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. [5] I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.**

### **A. THE PROBLEM OF PRIDE:**

Remember that the gift of tongues is the gift that is so subject to pride and super-spirituality because of its unearthly or heavenly nature. However, its true importance is shown by contrasting it with the gift of prophecy. The differences between tongues and prophecy are immediately said to be threefold.

1. Tongues are addressed to God, whereas prophecy is addressed to men (1 Cor. 14:2-3). Very simply stated, Scripture declares that tongues do not edify or benefit men as much as prophecy unless there is interpretation of the tongue. There are reasons for this.

- a. Tongues are directed toward God; they are for God, for communion with Him, for sharing the mysteries (secret things) of God with God.
  - b. Tongues are not understood by men. Scripture is clear: “no man understands,” that is, hears, gets the sense, grasps the meaning of what is being said.
  - c. The believer who prophesies edifies, exhorts, and comforts men
2. Tongues edify self, whereas prophecy edifies the church (1 Cor. 14:4) unless there is interpretation of the tongue. The point is clear: tongues are useful; they edify self. But prophecy is of much more benefit. The believer who prophesies edifies the *whole* church; he builds up far more people.
3. Tongues are commendable, but prophecy is even more commendable. This is a verse that needs to be given close attention both by those who emphasize and by those who minimize and deny tongues.
- a. Paul would like for all to speak with tongues.
  - b. But it is far more important for all to prophecy and proclaim the gospel.
  - c. The prophet is far more important than the man who speaks in tongues unless the tongues are interpreted.
  - d. Again, note that the stress is edification. The purpose for the believer speaking in worship must be to edify the church.

#### IV. THE TWO PROBLEMS WITH TONGUES 14:6-14

**1 Cor. 14:6-14** Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? [7] And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? [8] For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? [9] So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. [10] There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. [11] Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. [12] Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. [13] Wherefore let him that speaketh in an

**unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. [14] For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.**

**A. The first problem:** tongues do not communicate in the church, apart from some other gift (interpretation, 1 Cor. 14:13).

1. Paul himself, if he were to visit the church, would not speak with tongues. Why? Because his speaking in a tongue would not profit us. We would not be able to understand what he was saying. His visit and proclamation would do us no good. The only way his visit and words would help us would be if he shared...
  - a. some revelation.
  - b. some knowledge.
  - c. some prophesying.
  - d. some teaching.
2. A person must speak words that are understood or else the listeners do not know what he is saying. He is doing nothing more than speaking into the air.
3. Different foreign languages are an illustration. Very simply, there are many different voices (languages) in the world, and each language has its own distinct speech. If a foreigner speaks to men and I do not understand what he is saying...
  - a. I am as a barbarian, that is, as a dumb and senseless man to him.
  - b. he is as a barbarian, that is, as a dumb and senseless man to me.

He is of no use to me, not in sharing and communicating the gospel. What he has to say is meaningless, unintelligible, unprofitable, and of no value. It does not reach or edify, strengthen or comfort me.
4. The point is striking: the believer who is zealous of spiritual gifts is to seek for the gifts that edify the church. Note: a believer's zeal is not to be dampened even if he has been misinformed and emphasizes the wrong gift. He is to straighten out his emphasis, keep his zeal, and direct his energy to edifying the church. The most important gifts are those that build up people for Christ.

**B. The second problem:** tongues do not communicate to man even in prayer, apart from the gift (interpretation). Paul definitely says one can pray in a tongue. The idea seems to be a tongue of “ecstasy” (1 Cor. 14:2) or of some “strange language” (1 Cor. 14:2).

1. The speaking in tongues in Acts seems to be the speaking of foreign or heavenly languages as Paul declared in 13:1 “Though I speak with **the tongues of men and of angels**, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” In either case the language spoken is not known by the person speaking.

An objective and thorough study of 1 Cor. 12-14 shows this. Some of the passages have to be really strained to make them apply only to foreign languages (or to a learned and conditioned reflex as claimed by some interpreters). Several examples are as follows.

**“Tongues speaketh not unto men, but unto God...in the spirit he speaketh mysteries” (1 Cor. 14:2).**

**“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself” (1 Cor. 14:4).**

**“If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth....” (1 Cor. 14:14).**

2. The point is an eye-opener: even if a believer prays in an unknown tongue, it is unfruitful in the sense that neither he nor anyone else understands unless he or someone else has the gift of interpretation. He has no idea what he is praying unless there is the gift of interpretation. His prayer seems to be the function of the communication between his human spirit and God.

## **V. THE NEED FOR COMPREHENSION - 14:15-19**

**1 Cor. 14:15-19 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. [16] Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? [17] For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. [18] I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: [19] Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.**

## **A. THE NEED TO EDIFY - vv. 15-17**

1. The commitment to edifying the church is portrayed by Paul's attitude: **"What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also."** - Why? . because it edifies!
2. The advantage is that the truth of God can connect with people and people are edified providing you speak in the language of the people or if there is a public message in tongue it would require interpretation. **"Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted (unlearned KJV) say the 'Amen' at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?"** – Tongues without interpretation leaves people without understanding.
3. He summarizes by stating: "For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified."

## **B. THE COMMITMENT TO EDIFYING -vv. 18-19**

1. Thus, Paul indicates that he praises God for the spiritual gift of tongues - **"I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all."**
2. But is quick to point out that in the public church service it is much preferred to speak in the language of the people so all understand. As Paul will teach in verses 27-28 where there is a tongue in the public service there should always be interpretation otherwise the speaker of the tongue should keep silent.

## **VI. THE CALL FOR MATURITY – 14:20**

**1 Cor. 14:20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.**

### **A. The gifts are not toys for children**

1. Contrary to current popular thinking, an emphasis on speaking in tongues is not an indication of spirituality and maturity. This is evident from the situation in Corinth: this church was full of gross spiritual dross – schisms, immorality, marital disrespect, self-indulgence, gluttony during communion, lovelessness, and yet they were all exercising themselves in speaking in tongues.

2. Paul demands that they stop **"being children in your thinking"** – and indication that their desire and misuse of the gifts was an indication of their immaturity.
3. They were not interested in truth – only what they could experience; good feelings, not right doctrine or right living.

#### **B. The gifts Mandate an Indication of Maturity**

1. Hence, Paul commands them to **"in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature"**
2. Instead of downplaying the role of truth, these people needed to grow in respect to their dependency on it.
3. If they were ever going to mature, they would need to maximize their commitment to truth and understanding of spiritual things.

### **VII. A SIGN TO UNBELIEVERS – 14:21-22a**

**1 Cor. 14:21-22 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. [22] Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.**

1. Paul now delivers the key passage in understanding one of the roles that tongues played in the early church. He refers us to the prophecy given in Isaiah 28:9-11 –
2. In the time of Isaiah this was a warning being issued to Judah to avoid becoming like the northern tribes who had been conquered by Assyria. However, the people were proud and instead of listening to the warnings of God through Isaiah, they were complaining about the technique of Isaiah; they claimed he was treating them like children – cp. **Isaiah 28:9-10**
3. Isaiah warned God's people that one of the signs of their judgement would be that **"by men of strange tongues and by the lips of**

**strangers I will speak to his people, and even so they will not listen to me."**

4. Here Paul shows that tongues was a sign given over 700 years before Christ that God would use as a sign to unbelievers that through their manifestation unbelievers might see the manifestation of the supernatural.

## **VIII. THE EDIFICATION OF PREACHING – 14:22b-25**

**1 Cor. 14:22-25 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. [23] If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? [24] But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: [25] And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.**

1. Paul states: **"but, prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe."** Prophecy (speaking forth the Word of God) is meant to bring edification to the believer.
2. **"Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?"**
3. An unbeliever would go away from a service where tongues were abused thinking that it was just another wild, meaningless pagan ritual.
4. However, **"if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all."** This is true because prophesy would be within his language and understanding. The power of the Word of God will accomplish the purpose for which it is sent forth, it will not return void.
5. The idea of his heart being **"convinced of all"** vs. 24 is defined here by the phrase **"the secrets of his heart are disclosed"** vs. 25 – not to others but to himself.



6. This is a reference to the work of God's Spirit in the first step to a man coming to faith. His sin is revealed to him as the Spirit allows him to see himself for what he really is.
7. The result of the Spirit's quickening power is that the sinner **"will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among**

**"The Protocol for Tongues"**

**1 Corinthians 14:26-40**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** The worship of a believer must correspond to the character and nature of God – orderly and proper.

**IX. ORDER IN GOD'S HOUSE – 14:26-35 (POSB indicates commentary from the Preachers Outline Sermon Bible by NavPress)**

**1 Cor. 14:26-35    How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. [27] If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. [28] But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. [29] Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. [30] If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. [31] For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. [32] And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. [33] For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. [34] Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. [35] And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.**

**A. The order of worship – v. 26**

1. **(POSB)** The gifts are to be used in church to edify people. The worship services in the Corinthian church had become very disorderly—confusion prevailed. Many were speaking in tongues, talking, praying, and singing their own personal songs—all at the same time. Each person was struggling for the right to share his latest inspiration and spiritual insight. Note exactly what is said and the disorder is clearly seen: “How is it then, brethren? when ye come, together, every one of you...

- a. hath a psalm [song, Greek],
- b. hath a doctrine [some teaching],
- c. hath a tongue,
- d. hath a revelation [some spiritual insight],
- e. hath an interpretation."

The worship services had degenerated into utter disorder and mass confusion. To the visitor, the services were hardly more than an uproar of mumbo jumbo and gibberish. Everyone was talking and doing his own thing—all simultaneously. pride, puffiness, self-centeredness, super-spirituality, and division prevailed instead of love, respect, humility, unity, and edification. Decency and orderliness were totally lacking.

2. Paul once again reminds them of the better way of love that makes edifying one another the greatest good and chief desire. Hence he states: **"Let all things be done for edification."**

#### **B. The order for tongues in the public service – vv. 27-28**

1. So, when the spirit of humility exists and people "let all things be done for edification," there were certain procedures that ought to be followed.
2. First, **"If anyone speaks in a *unknown* tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret."**
  - a. **(Dake Bible note)**The use of the word "*unknown*" is added for clarification as there are no language is unknown to the people who speak it, but if it is the "gift of tongues" in operation it will be a language completely unknown to the speaker.
  - b. **"By two or at the most three"** - Instead of everyone speaking simultaneously, each attempting to outdo the other, a single church service was limited to only two or three individuals speaking.
  - c. **"Each in turn"** – they couldn't speak all at once, but had to do so in an orderly consecutive manner.
  - d. **"... and one must interpret"** – indicating that each message should be interpreted or else the speaker should be silent.
3. In addition, **"if there is not interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God."** – Hence, there was to be no speaking in tongues without a duly recognized interpreter

there to provide the interpretation so that edification of the saints could occur.

4. **(POSB)** Some Bible teachers believe that Paul was not at all trying to advance the use of tongues in the public service and that in fact would himself rather tongues was used only in private. This from his statements and teaching that:
  - a. Tongues are said to edify self while prophecy edifies the church (cp. 1 Cor. 14:1-25).
  - b. Tongues are said to be an extremely sensitive gift with the potential of causing severe problems (1 Cor. 12:1-3; 1 Cor. 14:6-14, 36-40).
  - c. Paul's own practice of tongues was most likely only in private (1 Cor. 14:15-20).
  - d. Paul's statement is undeniably clear: he would rather speak five words that can be understood in a public service than to speak ten thousand in a tongue (1 Cor. 14:19).

Even though there is some evidence that this may well have been Paul's true feeling he also knew that the church of Corinth was not likely to give up something that was very much a part of their worship. Also Paul was already on shaky ground with them and telling them they had to give it up altogether in the public service may have cause them to dismiss him altogether. Thus he chose to bring some order to their confusion.

### **C. The Principles Regulating Prophecy – 14:29-35**

1. Applying the same principles to the prophets as to the tongues speakers, Paul states **“let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge”** – that is, the other prophets who were steeped in Scripture were to carefully evaluate what was being delivered as God's Word.
2. Vs. 30 **“If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.”** If another person who is listening receives some special insight into what is being proclaimed by a speaker, the speaker is to allow the person to share his insight.

3. Vs. 31 They all had to wait and take their turn so that edification could occur – **"For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be comforted."**
4. The regulations of the prophets and those speaking in tongues are the same – they were to give priority to the edification of the body and if that were not possible, they were to keep silent.
5. **"and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets."** The spirits of the speakers are to be controlled by the speakers. Again, gifted believers, no matter the gift, are not overcome by an irresistible surge of the Spirit—not to the point that they cannot control themselves.
6. Vs. 33 The reason that these things are so important is that **"God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."** – this is the key to the whole discussion; our worship should reflect the character and nature of God!
7. Vs. 34 **Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.**

a. (POSB) Women were to keep silent in the church— Note two points.

(I) An interpretation of these verses must keep in mind the context of

1 Cor. 14. To lift these verses out of context does violence to Scripture and to the high esteem with which Christ and the New Testament hold women. Paul mentions this matter because women were probably the ones most abusing the speaking out in the public service. They may have been guilty of the misuse of the gift of tongues and prophecy as well as questioning their husbands during the service. Paul's charge is for the women to calm down and keep quiet, to bring things into order. The passage is directed both to the local problem of the Corinthians and to any other church where women are abusing order. Note the abuse of order would apply to men or women.

- (II) Most commentators interpret this passage by saying that it must be understood in the context of its day. It would certainly be very wrong to take these words of Paul out of the context for which they were written and make them a universal rule for the Church.”

Whatever this passage is saying, it is not disallowing women from participating and sharing their gifts and talents in the church. Other Scriptures are clear about this:

**“Your sons and your *daughters* shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17).**

**“And the same man [Philip the evangelist] had *four daughters*, virgins, which did prophesy” (Acts 21:9).**

Paul clearly recognized the fact: **“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth” (1 Cor. 11:5)**

However, the call to order and submission to leadership are key issues before the church at Corinth. Issues for both men and women to consider.

## **X. THESE ARE GOD’S COMMANDMENTS– 14:36-40**

**1 Cor. 14:36-40   What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? [37] If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. [38] But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. [39] Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. [40] Let all things be done decently and in order.**

### **A. The Test of Integrity – vv. 36-38**

1. As he brings his discussion of tongues to a close, Paul confronts the Corinthians with their attitudes and perspectives on the things that he has taught them.
2. He asks: **"Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only?"** – that is, "If you didn't write the Scriptures, and if other believers have a responsibility to obey them, then you must as well, regardless of whether you agree."

3. He then provides a test of whether someone ought to be given the right to speak in the church: **"If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment."**
4. That is, if he agrees with these things and submits to them, he is to be regarded, but, if anyone does not regard the truth of what Paul has said let him remain as he is: ignorant of truth.

#### **B. The call to order – vv. 39-40**

1. The bottom line is that if the people of Corinth were to simply prioritize the right things, much of the confusion could be eliminated.
2. The overriding priority in the church must be to edify the saints. So, Paul states: **"Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy"** – not each individual (it's a plural reference), but as a church in general, place a premium of the exercise of the spiritual gift of prophecy since it edifies.
3. However, lest they deny the legitimate exercise of the Spiritual gift of tongues in deference to prophecy, he states, **"do not forbid to speak in tongues."** - allow the gift to be exercised.
4. Finally, he concludes with a reminder that our worship must portray the character of God – **"But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner."**
  - a. **"Properly"** – means properly and decently and can be contrasted to riotous, drunken parties – cp. **Romans 13:13**.
  - b. **"In an orderly manner"** – refers to "in turn" or "one at a time"

#### **THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST"**

**1 Corinthians 15:1-11**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme: The Gospel of Jesus Christ demonstrates the immensity of the love of God.**

#### **I. CHAPTER 15 – THE ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL – 15:1-4**

**1 Cor. 15:1-4** Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; [2] By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. [3] For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; [4] And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

#### **A. The Essential Focus of the Gospel – vv. 1-2**

1. Paul addresses those in Corinth who have embraced the Gospel and discusses how **“having received”** the gospel, it is that **“in which you also stand, by which also you are saved”**
2. When a person is genuinely born again, having been saved by the grace of God, **“if they hold fast the word”** – Paul preached to them **“less they believed in vain”**
3. **(POSB)** Some in the church were in danger of not continuing in the faith; they were denying the very hope of personally living in the presence of God (1 Cor. 15:12). They desperately needed the importance of the gospel proclaimed again. Note what Paul says about the believers in the church.
  - a. They had received the gospel, that is, actually embraced it as true believers.
  - b. They stood in the gospel. The idea is that they firmly adhered to it, professing and standing for the truths of the gospel. This indicates that some were still faithful to the truth of the resurrection despite the error being taught by others (1 Cor. 15:12).
  - c. They were saved by the gospel. The word “saved” is present or continuous action, “you are being saved.” Scripture teaches three tenses or stages to salvation: the past, present, and future. In this verse Scripture is referring to the present or progressive stage of salvation. Salvation is a **continuous experience** that is here said to be **conditional**.

**They must keep the gospel in “memory.”** The Greek words (ei katechete) mean **if you hold fast**. In order to be saved, of course, a person must hold fast to the gospel. No man could ever deny the gospel and expect to be saved.

**They must not believe in vain.** The idea is that some might believe, but believe in the wrong thing—believe in something that is vain, empty, worthless, useless. A person must hold fast, continue to believe to be saved.

For if a man rejected the gospel which he had received his belief would have been in vain, for nothing.

**“...he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 10:22).**

**“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)” (Hebrews 10:23).**

4. **(POSB)** Men are placed into one of two categories, **perishing or being saved**. A man goes through life having one of these two experiences: he is either perishing, moving ever downward toward the grave; or he is being saved, moving ever upward toward eternal life. In the Greek, both words are continuous action; that is, a man is perishing or is being saved. The words are not static; a man is not sitting still. He is ever “perishing,” more and more being gripped by the flesh and being conditioned to accept a perishing, dying world; or he is ever “being saved,” more and more being freed to walk righteously and godly in this present world. The man who is saved is being conditioned to break loose from a perishing, dying world and to look for the glorious appearing of the new world.
5. **(POSB)** The terrible word perishing means to be lost, to be utterly destroyed, to lose eternal life, to be spiritually destitute, to be cut off.
6. **(POSB)** The great word salvation is used in Scripture to describe at least three experiences for the believer.
  - a. **The once-for-all experience of salvation.** It is an experience that has happened sometime in the past: “Ye have been saved” (Luke 7:50). It is the initial act of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is receiving Christ into one’s heart and life as Lord. It means being saved or delivered from sin, death, and hell; and being given the assurance that one will never be separated from God—either in this life or in the world to come.

**“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him” (John 17:2).**

**“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1:9).**



**b. The continuous experience of salvation.** It is an experience that is occurring right now, in the present. “Ye are being saved” (1 Cor. 1:18). It is a description of God’s work day by day in the believer’s life. It is the Holy Spirit of God working within the believer. ( Romans 6:14; Romans 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Galatians 2:20; Phil. 1:19; Phil. 2:12-13; 2 Thes. 2:13.)

- (I) To guide and teach him and to deliver him through all the trials and problems of life.
- (II) To fill him with a heart of love, joy, and peace—all the fruit and resources necessary to live life to the fullest.
- (III) To conform him more and more to the image of Christ.
- (IV) To stir and equip him to live and witness for Christ day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, and moment by moment.

**c. The redemptive experience of salvation that is to occur in the future.**

“Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans 13:11). This future reference to salvation points to the day of redemption—to the day of Christ’s kingdom—to the day when Christ shall usher in His kingdom upon this earth—to the day when God will create a new heavens and earth and bring about His perfect will and rule throughout the universe.

**“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:21-23).**

## **B. The Essential Facts of the Gospel – vv. 3-4**

1. Paul declares "**for I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received**" – indicating that the following expression of the Gospel is of utmost significance.
2. The essential facts include:
  - a. The payment for sin – "**Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture**"
  - b. The product of judgment – "**... and that he was buried**"

c. The power over sin – "**... and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures**".

## **II. THE EVIDENCES OF THE GOSPEL – 15:5-8**

**1 Cor. 15:5-8    And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: [6] After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. [7] After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. [8] And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.**

### **A. The Gospel Is Tolerant – v. 5a**

1. In providing evidence of the resurrection, Paul cites irrefutable evidence of multiple eyewitnesses.
2. "**and that He appeared to Cephas**" - it is interesting that the first eyewitness introduced was Peter. Peter had forsaken and denied the Lord during Christ's darkest hour. Here we have evidence of the truth that God is truly tolerant toward sinners – refusing to deal with us according to our sins and iniquities.
3. No matter how great our shame is in ourselves and our sin, the Gospel of Jesus Christ emphasizes the grace of God – Peter was the first to preach of the resurrected, living Christ Jesus – **Acts 2:14**.

### **B. The Gospel Is Tender – v. 5b**

1. Next we are told that Jesus "**then [appeared] to the twelve**" – an obvious description to the inner circle of Christ's disciples (since there were now only eleven).
2. On that first Easter night, the men who would later be known as the Apostles were cowering with fear, huddled in the upper room terrified of the Romans, the Jews, the Ghost reportedly seen by some of the others.
3. Here we see the evidence that God understands the hesitancy and fear of sinners. The Gospel message overwhelms our fears and brings peace.

### C. The Gospel Is Trustworthy – v. 6

1. **"After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time"** – an overwhelming testimony to the trustworthiness of the message of Christ's resurrection.
2. Having been completely disillusioned by the crucifixion, hundreds of people who had believed that Jesus was the real thing had begun to disperse back to their homes with dashed hopes. However, the trustworthiness of God is demonstrated through the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ – they hadn't misplaced their hope.
3. The emphasis here is that the sinner who trusts in the Gospel message of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not disappointed – cp. **Romans 10:9-11**.
4. As a further emphasis on the trustworthiness established through the Gospel message, Paul states: **"most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep."**

### D. The Gospel Is Tenacious – v. 7a

1. That the Gospel doesn't give up on a person, Paul includes the appearance of the resurrected Lord to his unbelieving half-brother: **"then He appeared to James"**
2. We know that James was not a believer from **John 7:5**. This emphasizes that the Gospel does not falter or stumble in the face of unbelief – that it will keep pressing the hearts of those whom God has chosen.

### E. The Gospel Is Truthful – v. 7b

1. Yet another evidence of the Gospel was that the risen Lord appeared **"then to all the apostles"**. Here you see a reference to the ministry of the Lord as those who would officially represent the Lord were trained over the 40 day period prior to the ascension.
2. The truths entrusted to these apostles, which later they taught, were given by Christ Himself and could therefore be esteemed as truth.

### F. The Gospel Is Timely – v. 8

1. Finally, Paul cites himself as the final eyewitness of the glory of the resurrection: **"and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also."**
2. **"untimely"** refers to an abortion or miscarriage, and refers to the condition he was in when the Lord appeared to him; dead in his sins and hopeless of life. Perhaps Paul is seeing himself as not exactly in the same class or group as the other Apostles though he definitely was an Apostle by every right.
3. At the appropriate time – that of God's choosing – Paul was selected as one who would give testimony of the fact of the resurrection.

### **III. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOSPEL – 15:9-11**

**1 Cor. 15:9-11 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. [10] But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. [11] Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.**

#### **A. The taking away of Our Guilt – v. 9-10a**

1. In light of Paul's past, he states: **"For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church"**
2. Paul was always mindful of the atrocities that he was guilty of performing on the Christians prior to his conversion. These memories of his past served as catalysts for his devotion and sacrifice in service.
3. He continues to state that **"By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain"**
4. The magnitude of his sin highlighted the intensity of God's grace in removing the guilt from him and making him not only clean, but an apostle!

#### **B. The Objective of God's Grace – v. 10b-11**

1. This all motivated him to insure that that **"grace toward me did not prove vain"** and therefore, **"I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."**

2. God doesn't merely save us and provide a grace that is spent in the delivery; true saving grace extends and operates throughout a life of service for Christ, proving that grace was not vain.
3. Hence, "**whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.**"
4. We are not the end of the line when it comes to the Gospel – we receive grace in order to be a means of the conveyance of God's grace through preaching and witnessing. God's grace is given to us as a stewardship, and we must mindfully labor to demonstrate that it was not entrusted to us vainly.

**"CHRISTIANS: PITIED OR EMPOWERED?"**

**1 Corinthians 15:12-20**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme: All New Testament truth stands or falls with the resurrection.**

#### **IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION – 15:12**

**1 Cor. 15:12    Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?**

- A. As the previous section demonstrates, the core truth that energizes the Gospel message is that Jesus Christ conquered death by rising from the dead. This truth was the central focus of the early church preaching:
- B. Now, Paul begins a defense of the doctrine to those who would call it into question by restating it: **"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"**
- C. If we deny the resurrection of the believer's body, some very significant things result. There are some severe consequences that affect the whole Christian faith and everything that we believe.
- D. Once again, Corinth provides us with a group within the church that had strayed far from what was preached by the Apostles and had allowed their pagan heritage to shape their Christianity.
- E. Most likely, these errant believers were **"dualists"** – believing that all that was spiritual was by itself good, while everything physical was by itself evil.

F. "To anyone holding that view the idea of a resurrected body was repulsive. For them, the very reason for going to an afterlife was to escape all things physical." (MacArthur, p. 408)

G. Some current fallacies still exist concerning the issue of the resurrection:

1. **Seventh Day Adventism** – teaches "soul sleep" in which the body dies and disintegrates, while the soul or spirit rests.
2. **Materialists** – teach utter extinction and total annihilation, meaning nothing of the body continues, it is totally destroyed and done away with.
3. **Eastern Mysticism** – teaches reincarnation, wherein the soul or spirit is continually recycled from one form to another.
4. **New Age Philosophy** – teaches an absorption, in which the spirit returns to its source and is absorbed back into the ultimate divine mind or being. This concept was the underlying theme of the Star Wars movie series where the character Luke Skywalker while struggling to become a Jedi Knight sought the mystical "Force," for his power, this was where the power of all the former Jedi Knights resided.

## V. THE DISASTER OF DENYING THE RESURRECTION – 15:13-19

**1 Cor. 15:13-19 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: [14] And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. [15] Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. [16] For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: [17] And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. [18] Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. [19] If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.**

### A. No resurrection means the defeat of Christ – v. 13

1. However, denying the Biblical teaching concerning the resurrection has disastrous eternal affects.
2. The first affect is that **"if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised."** That is, if the dead cannot rise, then Christ is still dead, and did not rise. This would mean that Christ did not truly conquer death and is not alive to make intercession for us.

3. The “dualist” thinking would say that Christ was not really a man, just appeared as a man, and did not really die, just appeared to have died, and did not really rise again, just appeared to have risen, since nothing physical can be sacred.
4. However, in essence, if Jesus were not human, He could not have served as our substitute and therefore must have perpetrated a complex hoax that results in our still being enslaved to sin.

#### **B. Without the resurrection the Gospel is nothing – v. 14a**

1. The next disastrous impact of Lord that did not rise is that **"if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain."**
2. Since Paul was devoted to preaching the Gospel, he is stating here that the Gospel message itself is worthless or vain if Jesus did not literally rise from the dead – **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**
3. If Jesus Christ did not conquer death and sin, thereby providing a means by which men could likewise have victory, there is no good news to proclaim.

#### **C. Without the resurrection our faith is useless – v. 14b**

1. He continues and states: **"your faith also is vain."**
2. **"vain"** – means empty, useless, to no purpose
3. A dead Savior cannot give life and therefore, if we have placed our faith in a dead savior, our faith is useless – cp. **Psalm 73:13; Isaiah 49:4**

#### **D. Without the resurrection the Apostles are liars – v. 15**

1. Further, **"we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised."**
2. There is no accident in the testimony of the Apostles, they couldn't have made a mistake about this issue. If it is not true, they are clearly

liars. If they lied about the resurrection, how can they be then trusted with any of the truth they purportedly provided in Scripture?

3. Thus, without the reality of the resurrection, the morality and doctrines of the Apostles have no credence or loftiness – **it all stands or falls together.**

#### **E. Without the resurrection the saints are lost – vv. 16-17**

1. Paul then repeats what he's stated: **"If the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless"**
2. Then he takes this further to a conclusive statement: If your faith is worthless, **"you are still in your sins!"**
3. Thus, the saint is no better off spiritually than the sinner, and there is no expectation that we should be any more victorious over the flesh and the ungodly.

#### **F. Without the resurrection the dead in Christ suffer damnation – v. 18**

1. If the saint is no better off than the sinner, **"Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished."**
2. All believers of all ages would have believed for nothing, lived for nothing, and died for nothing.
3. All the heroes of the faith, martyrs, and fathers are right now suffering the consequences of their sin – damnation or at best complete annihilation.

#### **G. Without the resurrection our hope is without substance – v. 19**

1. The final disastrous impact of no resurrection is that **"If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."**
2. That is, we are living under such a strong delusion that someone who is dead could grant us peace, power, and purity. We would be the victims of a hoax, a charade, an eternal prank.



3. If such is the case, we pray to the ceiling, we sing to the air, we hope in a lie. All these things result in a vast number of people being defrauded – hopes and desires raised that will never be fulfilled.
4. What a true statement: we are **"to be pitied."**

## VI. THE CERTAINTY OF THE RESURRECTION – 15:20

**1 Cor. 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.**

### A. The Dependability of the Resurrection

1. **"But now . . ."** – is not a temporal reference, but logical and returns to considering reality instead of the disastrous fallacies listed above.
2. **"Christ has been raised from the dead"** – a statement providing assurance to all believers and countering the fallacies of a resurrectionless faith.
3. The issue of the resurrection is clearly established as a reality – having been proven through the eye-witness accounts, failure to produce the body, as well as the willingness of thousands of Christians to die – all which would hardly seem possible if it were not true.

### B. The Destiny Provided by the Resurrection

1. **"the first fruits of those who are asleep"** – a statement that provides a vision for what exists for the future of each believer. This is the introduction to an entirely new discussion concerning the theological implications of the resurrection.
2. Certainly, it holds forth for the believer the reality of what awaits us – that we will follow in the footsteps of the One who has led the way.  
**Colossians 1:18**

**"GOD'S PLOT TO OVERTHROW DEATH"**

**1 Corinthians 15:20-28**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Christ's resurrection guarantees our eternal life!

**VII. THE PROMISE OF OUR RESURRECTION – 15:20-22**

**1 Cor. 15:20-22 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. [21] For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.**

**A. The Announcement of the Promise – v. 20**

1. Paul now turns his attention on asserting the realities of God's eternal plan to complete the work of redemption fully – resulting in the eternal glory of the triune God.
2. In a rebuttal of the imagined disasters, Paul announces the earth shattering truth that **"now Christ has been raised from the dead."**
3. In the analysis of the significance of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, Paul declares that Christ Jesus is **"the first fruits of those who are asleep."**
4. This is the focus of a ritual found in the Old Testament. Before Israel was permitted to harvest their crops, they were to bring a sample – called "first fruits" – to the priests as an offering to the Lord – cp. **Leviticus 23:10**.
5. In essence, Christ's resurrection serves notice of two things:
  - a. **First**, that the first installment of the "harvest" has been provided to the Lord through the person of Christ – that is, His resurrection guarantees ours because it is part of a larger resurrection of all the redeemed; and,
  - b. **Second**, that the kind of resurrection in view is eternal – Jesus' resurrection was unique in that it was the first resurrection that resulted in eternal life – death never again visiting its victim

6. Thus, Christ resurrection establishes the certainty that **"those who are asleep"** will see future resurrection. The term "asleep or as in the KJV that slept" is a reference to the body being in the grave awaiting its resurrection while the soul continues to exist, not sleep. Paul said, "To be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord." 2 Cor. 5:8

## **B. The Analysis of the Promise – vv. 21-22**

1. Paul now explains this promise **"For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead."** He is emphasizing the qualification that Jesus Christ possessed that enabled Him to secure our resurrection – the first fruits had to be of the same crop and therefore **"by a man also came the resurrection of the dead."**
2. He then explains how we know that everyone who is "in Christ" through faith is guaranteed resurrection – **"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive."**
  - a. Just as Adam was the ancestor of everyone who dies, Jesus is the forbearer of everyone who will be raised.
  - b. All those who are identified with Adam – which is every person ever born – is subject to death through Adams sin.
  - c. All those who are identified with Christ – which is every person ever to be born again through faith – is subject to resurrection to eternal life through Jesus Christ's accomplishment.

## **VIII. THE PROGRESSION OF THE RESURRECTION – 15:23**

**1 Cor. 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.**

### **A. The Sequence of the Resurrection**

1. Lest we become discouraged or disillusioned concerning the issue of death Paul clarifies that although Christ is the first fruits, the believer must not become cynical because of the space of time between Christ's resurrection and that of those who have already died.
2. He states **"But each in his own order"** – indicating that there is organization and timing involved in the resurrection – a sequence that God has planned.

## B. The Succession of the Resurrection

1. Paul then gives us the order of succession for the resurrection – **"Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming."**
2. We know from other passages of Scripture that the resurrection of **"those who are Christ's"** will occur in stages, according to different groups of believers: (Post-trib view of the resurrection-no pre-trib rapture—RevC)
  - a. First is the resurrection of those who died having faith in Christ, The Messiah, their Redeemer– **1 Thessalonians 4:15-16**.
  - b. Second will be the resurrection of those who are alive at the time of His coming—**1 Thessalonians 4:15-16**. both to meet the Lord in the air and return triumphantly with Him to Armageddon.
3. The only resurrection not in view in this portion of Scripture is the resurrection of those who are outside the faith – the ungodly who will be raised at the end of the Millennium for the purpose of judgment – cp. **Revelation 21:8**.

## IX. THE PRUPOSE OF THE RESURRECTION – 15:24-28

**1 Cor. 15:24-28** **Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. [25] For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. [26] The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. [27] For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. [28] And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.**

### A. The Abolishment of the Enemies of God – vv. 24-26

1. **"Then comes the end"** – a summary statement is given here of the purpose of the resurrection; that is, to bring all things to "completion"
2. His purpose is that after an interval of time ("**then**"), Jesus is going to bring all things to completion **"when he hands over the kingdom to God, even the Father"**

- a. All things will then be as they were meant to be, with God reigning over all things.
  - b. This shows us the ultimate beauty of redemption plan – Christ turns over the restored world to God His Father, who sent Him to recover it!
3. In order for this to be realized, Christ must permanently conquer the enemies of God: **"when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power."** The consummation of redemption will be worked out by Christ through the events recorded in Revelation 5-20 where God pours out His wrath upon the ungodly of the earth, ultimately abolishing all of the earthly authority of his enemies at Armageddon.
4. In doing this, **"He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet"** – "a common practice in ancient times of kings and emperors always sitting enthroned above their subjects, so that when the subjects bowed they were literally under, or lower, than the sovereign's feet. With enemies, a king often would literally put his foot on the neck of the conquered king or general, symbolizing the enemy's total subjection." (MacArthur, pp. 420-421)
5. **"The last enemy that will be abolished is death"** – Christ having completed defeated the one who had the power of death (**Hebrews 2:14**), at the cross, making an "public display of them" – (**Colossians 2:15**), will permanently abolish Satan and death at the end of the Millennium - **Revelation 20:10, 14**.

## **B. The Accomplishment of the Mission of Redemption – vv. 27-28**

1. **"For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, 'All things are put in subjection,' it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him."**
  - a. God the Father is the only exception who will not be subject to Christ.
  - b. It is the Father who gave the rule and authority to the Son and whom the Son faithfully served – cp. **Matthew 28:18**; **John 5:27**.
2. When the total abolishment of the enemies of God is accomplished, Christ can with finality fulfill the mission of redemption, **"When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him so that God may be all in all."**

3. "Christ will continue to reign, because His reign is eternal (Rev. 11:15), but He will reign with the Father in trinitarian glory, subject to the Trinity in that way eternally designed for Him." (MacArthur, p. 421)

**"HAVE YOU HAD ENOUGH?"**

**1 Corinthians 15:29-34**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** The resurrection serves as the key motivation for proper Christian living.

**X. THE RESURRECTION IS THE INCENTIVE FOR DELIVERENCE – 15:29**

**1 Cor. 15:29    Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?**

**A. The Influence of the Witness of the Deceased**

1. Righteous living is something valuable only if there is a future reward for such living. If you deny the resurrection, you eliminate one of the greatest motivations given by God for coming to Christ and living in subjection to Him.
2. Paul states here: **"Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead?"** What would be their motivation for doing so if they did not believe in a resurrection from the dead? There are various viewpoints on this verse. I will present that which came within these original notes first, and follow it with the commentary from the Preachers Outline Sermon Bible.

**FIRST FROM THE ORIGINAL NOTES:**

- a. There are some who believe that what is being taught here is the ability of someone living to be baptized to save someone who is dead (e.g. Mormons).
- b. This however, is heresy for several reasons:
  - (I) Baptism is always a gesture that gives testimony to something that has already occurred, not as a means to acquire what is needed.
  - (II) Once a person is dead, their spiritual destiny has already been set – **Hebrews 9:27**.
  - (III) Salvation does not result from good works – either of ourselves or what others may do for us.

(IV) The phrase "**for the dead**" can also mean "**because of the dead**" and would indicate that the reason some people come to faith is because of the testimonies of those who have come before us.

c. The issue of baptism is one of distinguishing – one does not have to be baptized in order to be a Christian, but one has to be baptized if they are to be an obedient Christian.

d. "In the early church a person who was saved was assumed to have been baptized; and a person was not baptized unless the church was satisfied he was saved. To ask, then, if a person was baptized, was equivalent to asking if he was saved." (MacArthur, p. 425).

e. Thus, to be "**baptized for the dead**" would refer to those who come to Christ for salvation because of the testimony of those who have already died" – cp. Hebrews 13:7.

f. Paul is saying here: "If there is no future resurrection for the believer, what sense would there be of anyone professing Christ? They can see for themselves where all men end up . . . the grave."

g. But, because of the reality of resurrection and the confidence that such testimonies of faith in those going before us inspire us to faith ourselves, we can also place our confidence in Christ Jesus – cp. Hebrews 12:1-2.

h. Paul not only addresses the fact that a "resurrection-less" faith eliminates the motivation of people to get saved, it also eliminates the motivation of the saved to witness to others: "**If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?**"

In Summary: The position above is that Paul was not addressing a group who believed a living person could be baptized for the benefit of a dead person who had not been saved. But that the word baptism being used here was synonymous with salvation. Thus Paul's meaning was that a living person would receive salvation based on the testimony of believers who had already died. Their testimonies encouraged the living to receive salvation.

**SECONDLY FROM THE PREACHERS OUTLINE SERMON BIBLE:**

1. Why worship, why be baptized, why observe the Lord's Supper, why pray, why read the Bible if there is no resurrection of the dead? All religious worship and rituals are empty; they are meaningless and profit nothing if there is no resurrection. This is the meaning of this particular point and it is easily understood.
2. However, the particular practice or form of baptism to which Paul refers is not so easily understood. What does he mean by the phrase, being "baptized for the dead." Who is baptized, and who is dead? Someone is being baptized for someone who is dead. Who are the baptized persons, and who is the dead person or persons? Has the church ever practiced baptism for the dead, that is, allowed a living believer to be baptized for a loved one who had died before he or she could be baptized?

The practice did take place in the second century, but it was apparently only practiced by heretics. Is it possible that the practice had begun as early as the early church and had seeped into the Corinthian church? Some think so, and some think this is the only possible explanation of the words.

3. Those who hold that the practice had seeped into the early church argue the following:
  - a. Paul does separate himself from the practice. Note the verse: Paul says "they," not "we." He disassociates himself.
  - b. Paul does sometimes differ with a practice, and yet uses the practice in an argument. (For example, he discusses the practice of attending a social function in the temple of an idol. He used the practice to argue his position without denouncing it, but he thought it was wrong, 1 Cor. 8:10.)
  - c. Just what Paul means is not known, and it is extremely difficult to know, for there are over thirty different positions. Note what could be two significant points.
  - d. When reading 1 Cor. 15:29 and 1 Cor. 15:30 together, there does seem to be a sharp contrast between "they" (1 Cor. 15:29) and "we" (1 Cor. 15:30). Paul does seem to be saying "they": they who oppose me; they who deny the resurrection; they who are in error.



- e. When comparing 1 Cor. 15:30-34 with 1 Cor. 15:29, there does seem to be a sharp contrast. 1 Cor. 15:29 uses the word “they”; 1 Cor. 15:30 “we”; and 1 Cor. 15:31, 33-34 “you” and “your.” This strongly suggests that “they” stand in opposition to Paul and the mainline believers of the church.
4. In light of the details of the Scripture itself, it seems best to say that “they” are...
- a. the persons who opposed Paul so strongly.
  - b. the false teachers and persons who were denying the resurrection.
  - c. the false teachers and persons who were allowing their followers to be baptized for their loved ones who had failed to be baptized before they died.
5. Following this interpretation, Paul is saying: if they agree that the dead do not rise, then...
- a. what shall they do who are being baptized for their dead?
  - b. why are they being baptized for the dead? What they are doing is useless, empty, futile, meaningless. If they do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, they are practicing a ritual that will do them absolutely no good.

END OF POSB

In Summary of this view: This view holds that there was a group which taught that a living person could be baptized in the place of someone who had already died without salvation. Further that Paul in no way indicates he agreed with the group but rather used the fact of their existence to show that they would not do this if they did not believe in the resurrection from the dead. The belief in the resurrection is what this chapter is all about as without it there is no basis for our Christian hope. If this view is correct then it may well be that this practice was beginning to have an influence among believers in Corinth.

## **XI. THE RESURRECTION IS THE INCENTIVE FOR DEVOTION – 15:30-32a**

**1 Cor. 15:30-32    And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? [31] I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. [32] If after the manner**

**of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.**

#### **A. The Attitude of Devotion – vv. 30-31**

1. In keeping with the truth that conduct proceeds from one's beliefs, Paul addresses the impact on one's willingness to serve God when the hope of the resurrection is removed.
2. It is the hope of the resurrection that creates the disposition or attitude that results in devotion and the willingness to sacrifice all for Christ – **"Why are we also in danger every hour?"**
3. It is the confidence in the resurrection that enables the servants of God to face death with confidence and joy. If death ends it all, avoid death no matter what it takes. But, if death does not end it all, but merely serves as the ingress to eternal life, it is not to be feared.
4. This attitude is then summarized by Paul: **"I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, 'I die daily.'"**
5. It is the hope of eternal life that causes Paul and any of us who do not count this life dear and face death daily for the glory of Jesus Christ – **2 Corinthians 4:7-18.**

#### **B. The Display of Devotion – v. 32a**

1. The attitude created by the hope of resurrection unto eternal life always manifests itself in conduct – **"If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me?"**
2. This may be a literal account of something unrecorded anywhere else in Scripture, when Paul was made to enter the arena with lions – a common fate of Christians in the first century.
3. It also may be a reference to the situation described in **Acts 19:23-41** when Demetrius accused Paul of ruining his business of selling idols of Artemis – the goddess Diana.

4. This fittingly represented the many life-threatening experiences that he experienced in his service for Christ – why risk death if death ends everything?

## **XII. THE RESURRECTION IS THE INCENTIVE FOR RIGHTEOUS LIVING – 15:32b-34**

**1 Cor. 15:32-34** **If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. [33] Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. [34] Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.**

### **A. If there's no resurrection, Let's Party – v. 32b**

1. To complete the issue of how what we believe determines how we behave, Paul states: **"If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."**
  - a. This verse is a direct quote from **Isaiah 22:13** that reflected the hopelessness and hedonistic view of the backslidden Israelites.
  - b. He is stating that if we live only to die and stay dead, it is only proper that we fill life with all the pleasures we can accrue – whatever gives you pleasure is then right for you.
2. Paul's point here is that there is absolutely no sense in living a restrained, morally excellent life that calls for self-denial if all there is to life is what we can obtain here – if this is true, live it up and get all you can get.

### **B. The resurrection calls for Righteous Living – vv. 33-34**

1. However, there is more to life than what we know in the "here and now" . . . there is a here-after, guaranteed to us by the power of the resurrected Son of God.
2. Therefore, **"Do not be deceived: 'Evil company (KJV "communications") corrupts good morals'"**
3. The word for **"company"** is the word **"homilia."** It can mean a message spoken, or can refer to message delivered by being with someone with whom you keep company. Those with whom you "associate".

4. Thus, Paul states that it is impossible to associate regularly with wicked people without being contaminated both by their ideas and by their habits. Some of the Corinthians were consistently associating with individuals who were denying the resurrection and we being seduced by their teachings and the resulting immoral behavior.
5. He wants them to stop being "deceived" into thinking that good morals will outweigh the power of "bad company" – it will not; the impure always defiles the pure.
6. Thus, it is necessary for the sin of those we are around to be confronted lovingly with the truth of the Gospel – lifestyle evangelism only works when it is the platform for eventual confrontation with the truth of the Gospel.
7. Like in the situation with the Corinthians, when there is no confrontation with the truth of the Gospel, including the truth of the accountabilities of the life to come that is addressed in the resurrection, defilement results.
8. Paul concludes this specific address of how our behavior is affected by what we believe by calling for revival: **"Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame."**
9. Without the prospect of the resurrection and the sense of accountability it brings, there is no incentive for doing anything except what we feel like doing. Instead, we need to **"stop sinning [and recognize] . . . the knowledge of God"** and His truth concerning the resurrection.

#### **FULL BODY MAKE-OVER"**

**1 Corinthians 15:35-49**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** Our resurrection bodies will be remarkably different yet very much the same.

### **XIII. THE PATTERN FOR CHANGE – 15:35-38**

**1 Cor. 15:35-38    But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? [36] Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: [37] And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but**

**bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: [38] But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.**

#### **A. The Illustration from Creation – vv. 35-37**

1. Having established the fact that the resurrection is crucial to the Christian faith, and that it is therefore an essential for any who would call themselves Christian, Paul then moves on to another objection that the skeptics might throw out against the truth of the resurrection: **"But someone will say, 'How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?'"** – cp. Acts 26:8
2. Paul responds to this objection with an exclamation – **"You fool!"** – a reference to the fact that those who refuse to believe because they are unwilling to apply themselves to understanding it, are foolish
3. He then attempts to simplify the truths of the resurrection by drawing an analogy from nature: **"That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies"**
4. Using the illustration of planting seeds to be later harvested – **"and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else."**
  - a. First, a seed is sown and it must die and begin to decompose for germination to occur.
  - b. After germination, what grows does not look like what was sown – it is different.
  - c. However, there is continuity between the seed and the harvest, you harvest of the same kind as what was planted.

#### **B. The Intention of the Creator – v. 38**

1. This issue of continuity displays the intention of the Creator in the matter of both resurrection bodies as well as agriculture . . . **"But God give it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own."**
2. The identity of the seed is continued and preserved into the growth of the new plant. Corn seed does not become barley, or wheat become pumpkin . . . they each have a **"body of its own"** that will consistently result in the sameness of the fruit – a law established by God in all things.

#### XIV. THE BODY WILL CHANGE – 15:39-44

**1 Cor. 15:39-44** All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. [40] There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. [41] There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. [42] So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: [43] It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: [44] It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

##### A. A Respect for the Assortment of Bodies – vv. 39-41

1. Paul continues here to attempt to enable people to understand what our bodies will be like in glory.
2. **"All flesh is not the same flesh"** – a statement that enables us to understand that our resurrection bodies will not be of the same consistency or make-up of our present bodies. Although there will be tremendous similarities, the differences will also be significant.
3. In much the same way as there are presently difference in the kinds of flesh among earthly beings, there will also be differences in the bodies of people now and their bodies in glory: **"there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another flesh of fish."**
4. Paul draws the point now to relevancy: **"There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies"** – but they are not the same quality or identical in feature (just like the fruit will be different from the seed).
  - a. He further explains the difference: **"But the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another"**
  - b. Even among the heavenly bodies there are differences: **"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory."**
5. His point is that if God is able to establish all these differences in the make-up and consistency, why should His ability to raise up bodies and change their form be such a problem?

6. Seeing what He has done in the original creation to establish such a great assortment of "bodies," we should not question His ability to create bodies in glory that are different from our present bodies, but yet continuous and the same.

## **B. A Realization of the Alterations Needed – vv. 42-44**

1. In that the bodies will be different in glory from what they are now, what are the changes which need to be made?
2. Returning to the analogy of the resurrection body being portrayed by the sowing of a seed which produces fruit, he gives several contrasts from what is planted and what is harvested by means of resurrection:
  - a. **"It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable"** – this refers to the fact that whereas our current bodies are mortal because of the consequence of sin, our heavenly body will not be subject to the consequences of sin – we will be delivered not only from the power of sin, but the very presence of sin itself.
  - b. **"It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory;"** – **"dishonor"** is used of being stripped of the rights and privileges of citizenship. Our current bodies possess this limitation; but, our heavenly bodies will know the delights of being valued greatly in Heaven itself –
  - c. **"It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;"** – Whereas currently we now say that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, with our heavenly body, anything that we feel God would have us do, we will be able to handle it.
  - d. **"It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."** – although our current body is suited for this present world, in glory, our souls will inhabit spirit bodies – not limited to the physical.
3. This is the basic issue – **"If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."**

## **XV. THE PRIORITY OF CHANGE – 15:45-49**

**1 Cor. 15:45-49    And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. [46] Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. [47] The**

**first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. [48] As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. [49] And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.**

#### **A. The fashion of the Resurrection – vv. 45-48**

1. Paul then further qualifies the character of our resurrection bodies by drawing an analogy between the bodies we inherited fashioned after that which Adam possessed and the bodies that will be fashioned after the resurrected Christ.
2. **"So also it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul.'"** – refers to the fact that every human being's body is the same as what was given to Adam.
3. **"The last Adam became a life-giving spirit"** – refers to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam – Jesus Christ and that our resurrected bodies will be the same as what He received upon His resurrection.
4. No one can gain the spiritual body available in Christ without first receiving a physical body and all the consequences of the flesh . . . sin – **"However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual."** VS. 46
5. The nature, features, and characteristics of the two kinds of bodies are different: **"The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven."**
  - a. **"As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy;"** – a reference to the fact that mankind is suffering right now from the universal characteristics of those who are in the flesh – struggling with the three biggest nemeses of man: "Sin," (our bent) "Skin" (our flesh) and "Satan" (our enemy)
  - b. **"And as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly."** – the day is coming when all will be different and we will be delivered into perfect conformity to the image of Jesus Christ – cp. **1 John 3:1-2.**

#### **B. The Destiny of the Resurrection – v. 49**

1. To those who are in Christ Jesus by faith, the certainty of our conformity to Christ's resurrected body through our own resurrection is as certain as our conformity to Adam's condition through the possession of our earthy bodies.



2. **"Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly."** – Even as we've known the stamp of Adam's condition, we will know the stamp of Christ's perfection.  
We will one day be like Christ in body and spirit – **Romans 8:29-30**

**"THE DEATH OF DEATH"**

**1 Corinthians 15:50-58**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** In light of our assurance of our future victory over death, we ought to live lives devoted to serving Christ Jesus.

**XVI. THE SIGN OF DEATH'S DEATH – 15:50-53**

**1 Cor. 15:50-53** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. [51] Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, [52] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

**A. The Indication of the Reality of Death – v. 50**

1. There is no person, regardless of their social status or position, wealth or power, that is able to cheat death . . . it is an enemy that crushes every opponent it faces – except one: the Son of God.
2. Paul states: **"Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."**
3. **"The Kingdom of God"** in this reference is speaking not of the sense of God ruling over the universe, nor of the spiritual sense of God ruling in the hearts of men, but in the sense of – Heaven.
4. **"Flesh and blood"** are not suited for heaven – primarily because of the impact that sin has had – and the curse under which all creation has fallen because of sin.
5. **(POSB)** The human body is corruptible, not incorruptible. This is clearly seen in everyday experiences. The human body ends: it ages, dies, decays,

deteriorates, and wastes away to nothing but dirt and dust. It has embedded within its very nature the seed of corruption.

6. The point is that the human body must be completely changed if it is to ever become incorruptible and given the privilege of living in the Kingdom of God. The human body must be changed and recreated, totally remade.

## **B. The Indication of the Victory over Death – vv. 51-53**

1. However, a change will occur that will signal the absolute defeat of death – a sign that will occur both to those who have died and to those who are yet living: **"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed."**
2. This conquest over death will be instantaneous and sudden, described by Paul as follows: **"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet;"**
3. The conquest of death includes a resurrection that is fore-shadowed by the resurrection of Christ Jesus – **"for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."**
4. Then Paul gives the reason such a change brought on by the resurrection: **"For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality."**

## **XVII. THE DEATH OF DEATH – 15:54-57**

**1 Cor. 15:54-57    So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. [55] O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? [56] The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. [57] But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

## **A. The Celebration of the Victory over Death – vv. 54-56**

1. The great triumph over death will thus be celebrated – **"But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory'."**

2. This is a quote from **Isaiah 25:8** and implies not merely that death will do no more harm, but that the harm done by death will be undone by the power of the resurrection.
3. Paul proceeds by tauntingly shouting to death: **"O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?"**
4. He can do this because Christ Jesus took the entire sting of death on Himself that we would have to bear none of it.
  - a. He explains this by stating that **"the sting of death is sin"** – that is, Christ Jesus, became sin for us and therefore took upon Himself the reproach and penalty for our sin.
  - b. Sin which is **"the sting of death"** was so powerful because of the inability we possess to keep the law: **"and the power of sin is the law"**
5. The law of God reveals the standards of God, which when violated result in sin that causes death. In order to defeat death, the standards of God had to be totally fulfilled meaning a life without sin, which could then be exempted from the tyranny of death. Christ Jesus faced death, experienced death, but death could not hold him fast – He was sinless! –. **Acts 2:23-24.**

## **B. Praise for the Victory over Death – v. 57**

Thus, Paul embarks on praising the Lord Jesus Christ for the victory that He gained for us all when He rose from the dead: **"but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

## **XVIII. THE PRESENT APPLICATION OF WHAT WE KNOW – 15:58**

**1 Cor. 15:58    Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.**

### **A. Death's defeat Influences the Vitality of Our Service**

1. If we genuinely believe that Christ Jesus rose from the dead, and that we too will rise victoriously over death, there ought to be nothing that would hinder an absolute commitment to serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Paul states: "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast . . .**" – a reference to being "settled and firmly situated," not easily swayed from a commitment or our devotion to the Lord.
3. Then he shares two ways that the firmness of our commitment will be seen:
  - a. "**immovable**" – a negative reference describing the intensity of our steadfastness; we ought to be totally motionless and unable to be moved away from the fulfillment of the will of God.
  - b. "**always abounding in the work of the Lord**" – a reference to exceeding the requirements, to overdo for the cause of the Lord Jesus
4. To allow ourselves to retire from the work of the Lord in preference to the pursuit of leisure is to no longer be steadfast or immovable, and portrays a lack of understanding concerning the resurrection.

#### **B. It Insures the Value of Our Service**

1. The reason this service is seen as important is because God promises to use it – "**knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.**"
2. Until the Lord returns, there are souls to be reached and untold diversities of ministries to be performed to build up the body of Christ.
3. Some would say: "What difference do I really make? Someone else could do just as well!" -- However, God indicates that each one is important to the overall health of the church and promises to use your efforts to glorify His name. The term "**toil**" implies that we are not lax, casual, or half-hearted; but, that we are committed and strenuously applying ourselves for the cause of Christ.

#### **"PERSPECTIVES ON CHRISTIAN GIVING"**

##### **1 Corinthians 16:1-4**

##### **Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** The Believer gives to the ministry of the church to the glory of God as a form of worship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **I. CHAPTER 16 - THE PATTERN OF GIVING – 16:1**

**1 Cor. 16:1    Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.**

1. Paul immediately addresses the issue of giving in the local church – "**Now concerning the collection for the saints . . .** "
2. Clearly, Paul indicates that the purpose of giving was "**for the saints**" – those who were knowing the distress caused by the poverty of the believers in Jerusalem.
  - a. Jerusalem was perhaps where the persecution and sacrifices of the believers were most blatant – **Acts 8:1-3.**
  - b. In addition, there had been a famine from which the believers in Jerusalem, because of their being cast off by the Jewish community, had not recovered **Acts 11:28.**
3. Hence, one of the primary purposes of giving in the local church is for the spiritual welfare as well as physical need of the members of the Body of Christ – both in the local assembly as well as in other churches – and the support of those who labored in the gospel as Paul discussed in chapter 9, so that the Gospel might go forth, in part verified by the love and compassion demonstrated within the church body.
4. This brings yet another point to this discussion – that of the desire by Paul for the collection being received to express the spiritual unity of the Church.
5. Because the Gospel was provided through the Jews first, the Gentiles who were also the recipients of the Gospel were in certain respects indebted to the Jewish brethren.
6. Concerning the collection of monies for the welfare of the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem, Paul stated that the Gentile believers were glad to participate in this collection because "they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles has shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things." **Romans 15:27.**
7. Thus, God sees the giving of His people's financial resources as a means by which the hearts of believers come together and are united in the effort to minister to one another.

**II. THE DETAILS OF GIVING – 16:2**

**1 Cor. 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.**

### **A. The Timing of Our Giving**

1. This passage provides us some practical guidelines for our giving.
2. Notice that we are to be giving to the work of the Lord **"on the first day of the week"**
  - a. The timing of our giving is clearly when we come together for the purpose of worshipping our risen Savior – **"the first day of the week"** which is Sunday.
  - b. Giving should therefore be a regular part of the weekly worship of a believer
  - c. One of the benefits of such a practice is that it forces us each to consider our sensitivities to the regular spiritual responsibilities to be faithful stewards of what God has given us.
3. Notice that no person is exempt – from the rich to the poor, **"each one of you is to put aside"** – a clear indication that this is the weekly responsibility of every saint – **1 Peter 2:5**.

### **B. The Technique of Our Giving**

1. We've already noted that the giving is to be regular – weekly and that every believer is to participate. This giving is to be deliberate and entrusted into the safe-keeping of the church – **"each one of you is to put aside and save."**

The concept of "saving" here is a reference to the "storehouses" usually connected with the Temples of the day – both Jewish and pagan. Paul wanted them to bring their offering weekly to the church where it was to be stored until he arrived **"so that no collections be made when I come"** when it would be sent to the work in Jerusalem.

2. Now we come to the section that everyone wants to consider from the outset – "How much am I supposed to be giving?" The phrase in our text explains the answer to this question: **"as he may prosper"**
  - a. Typically, the answer to this question has been 10% or a tithe.

b. However, a careful study of the issue of tithing indicates that there were several tithes required of the people of God for different purposes

(I) One tithe was to support the "sons of Levi" or the spiritual leadership – **Numbers 18:21**; caring for spiritual leaders has been the responsibility of the people of God from the beginning.

(II) A second tithe was required to support the national feasts and holidays – **Deuteronomy 14**.

(III) A third tithe was required every third year to serve as a basis for the support of the widows and orphans – **Deuteronomy 14:28-29**

c. Thus, the amount paid annually by the Jewish people in tithes totaled about 23% and was essentially a tax.

d. In addition to the giving that was required, there was voluntary offerings that were expected above the tithes required – **Proverbs 3:9-10**

(I) The standard for this kind of giving was heart-directed generosity that served as a means of the expression of thanks to the Lord – **Exodus 25:1-2**.

(II) This serves as the basis for the giving of the New Testament – an expression of worship not of the fulfillment of a legal requirement.

e. In the New Testament, a "tithe" is never required – only that a believer gives from the heart – **2 Corinthians 9:7**.

3. The benefits of giving in a willing and cheerful manner are clearly delineated in Scripture – **Luke 6:38**

4. The only delineation of the amount that is appropriate is that it springs out of having first given oneself to the Lord and then give according to a sense of devotion – **2 Corinthians 8:5**.

### **III. THE DISBURSEMENT OF GIVING – 16:3-4**

**1 Cor. 16:3-4    And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. [4] And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.**

### A. The Requirement of Supervision – v. 3

1. It is incumbent on every church to select individuals who are capable of handling the gifts of the Lord's people to the Lord's work – **"When I arrive, whomever you may approve"** – a reference to men selected who would handle the money.
2. There seems to be an emphasis on trustworthiness and accountability here – **"I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem"**
3. These **"letters"** may have included both a accounting sheet as well as introductions to the people of Jerusalem so that the couriers would be well-received without suspicion of having kept something for themselves.
4. Notice that the qualifications for such a position are not financial or commercial, but moral and spiritual – Acts 6:2-3.

### B. The Reflection our giving has on our Sanctification – v. 4

1. Paul then mentions that if the gifts were of such an amount that would indicate the devotion of the people to the Lord, Paul states that he would accompany them to Jerusalem: **"and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me."**
2. It seems there is an association made here between the quality of the spiritual devotion of a church and the amount of money they are willing to part with. If giving of monetary gifts springs forth from having first given our hearts to the Lord, then it becomes a fair barometer of our spiritual condition.

#### **"The Adversaries of the Gospel"**

**1 Corinthians 16:5-12**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme:** There exists great opportunity for the work of Christ – despite the obstacles in the way.

### IV. THE NEED FOR FLEXIBLE PLANNING – 16:5-7

**1 Cor. 16:5-7** **Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. [6] And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter**



**with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. [7] For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.**

#### **A. The Importance of Planning – vv. 5**

1. Paul states **"But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia."**
2. At first this may not seem like much, but it provides us a glimpse into the heart and character of Paul – that he was an ambitious servant of the Lord who made careful plans about his activity.
3. Any effective servant of the Lord will have a vision for the future – planning ahead, looking for additional open doors whereby they can advance the gospel.
4. Thus, we see that making plans and dreaming of what God might be willing to do through you is not wrong, nor does it portray a presumptuous mind – it is expected by God as long as it remains yielded to the Sovereign will of God – **James 4:13-15**.

#### **B. The Importance of Being Flexible – vv. 6-7**

1. If we remain yielded to the will of God as we make our plans, we will thus not be shaken when our plans do not materialize. Paul states here: **"and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go."**
2. Paul demonstrates the need to be flexible – willing to yield himself to however the Lord would direct. The reference to being sent by Corinth most likely refers to the issue of the offering going to Jerusalem – as to whether Paul would accompany it or not.
3. Always yielding himself to the Lord, Paul states what he would like, but then adds that whatever the Lord desires is what is best: **"For I do not wish to see you now just in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits."**

#### **V. OPPORTUNITIES AND ADVERSITIES – 16:8-9**

**1 Cor. 16:8-9 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. [9] For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.**

#### **A. The Opportunities to Advance the Gospel – vv. 8-9a**

1. Paul then explains what God was currently doing and the need that existed for him to be in Ephesus right then – **"But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost"** There was an incredible response occurring to the Gospel in Ephesus at that time – **"for a wide door for effective service has opened to me"**
2. Paul was seeing many people repenting of their sin and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation – **Acts 19:17-20**
3. We often wonder about what impact the Word of God is able to have when we preach it or even share it personally. However, we are assured that at any time, in any place, under whatever circumstances may be, the Spirit of God can take the Word of God and do radical work in the hearts of men – **Isaiah 55:11.**
4. Opportunities exist all around us – every day if we will only step out by faith and share the Gospel.

#### **B. The Opposition to the Advance of the Gospel – v. 9b**

1. However, a work done for God that does not face opposition is not a great work of God at all – Paul continues and declares **"and there are many adversaries"**
2. In Ephesus, the opposition came in the form of persecution as Paul was greatly imperiled – **2 Corinthians 1:8-10**
3. Paul was not intimidated by the opposition of persecution, in fact he seemed to be driven on by it because he understood that Satan's greatest efforts to oppose the servants of God exist where God is using those servants most effectively and doing a genuine work..

### **VI. WHEN SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IS DISCOUNTED– 16:10-12**

**1 Cor. 16:10-12 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. [11] Let no man therefore despise**

**him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren. [12] As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.**

#### **A. The Saints' Reaction toward Leadership – vv. 10-11**

1. Yet perhaps the most damaging of adversaries is what is faced from within the church itself – as the saints react to what is preached or the leadership that is offered by men of God.
2. Paul here appeals to the church **"Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am."**
3. Paul calls on the believers in Corinth, and to us today, to honor the God-given spiritual leadership within the church – **"So let no one despise him."**
  - a. Lit. **"despise"** means to "consider as nothing" or "make light of" someone.
  - b. This is a clear reference to granting the appropriate honor to men of God.
4. Paul instructs the Corinthians to honor him appropriately and then **"send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren."**
5. There is a balance to be achieved in this. On one hand spiritual leadership is to be respected, and on the other spiritual leaders are not to "lord over" the church – but always point people to the Great Shepherd – Jesus Christ. If we are to error concerning following spiritual leaders, let us error in having followed their leadership as long as we find nothing contrary to scripture.

#### **B. The Servant's Responses toward One Another – v. 12**

1. In addition to the reaction that people give to pastors, often the responses that pastors give to people or to one another is a problem.
2. Here Paul indicates a potential point of stress regarding Apollos: **"But concerning Apollos our brother, I encouraged him greatly to come to you**

**with the brethren; and it was not at all his desire to come now, but he will come when he has opportunity."**

3. In this reference to Apollos, Paul demonstrates a willingness to be a team-player, not a dictator or a "lord" over the people of God – he gives Apollos the freedom to seek the face of the Lord individually and receive direction from Him.
4. He also gives Apollos the benefit of the doubt – indicating that Paul was sure that **"he will come when he has opportunity."**
5. Thus, spiritual leaders must give room to others to seek the face of God – others in ministry as well as others in the church. He indicates that the Corinthian believers must give the same room to each other and to the spiritual leadership

**"Keys to a Powerful Testimony"**

**1 Corinthians 16:13-14**

**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme: Before you can be heard, you must be..**

## **VII. THE STRENGTH OF A STRONG TESTIMONY – 16:13**

**1 Cor. 16:13    Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.**

### **A.    Being Attentive: "Be on the Alert"   KJV="Watch Ye"**

1. Throughout the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul has been addressing various difficulties that existed in the church of Corinth which were listed in the beginning of our study.
2. Such were the lives of the believer's in Corinth – and at the close of this letter, he gives 4 antidotes to their problems. He begins with **"Be on the alert"** – a probable reference to one of the major reasons the church had been so susceptible to the encroachment of error - they had been careless or indifferent to the various things that brought defeat.

### **B.    Being Assured: "Stand Firm in the Faith"**

1. The next issue that Paul addresses is the confidence that the Corinthians needed regarding the truthfulness of the things they had been taught.
2. He indicated that he had made known to them "**the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand.**" - **15:1**.
3. We are called upon to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" – **Jude 3**, understanding that in God's Word we have been granted everything we need for life and godliness – cp. **2 Peter 1:3-4**.

#### **C. Being Active: "Act Like Men" KJV="quit you like men"**

1. He calls on the Corinthians to allow their activity to portray a maturity that ought to mark those who are being perfected by the power of God's Word – "**act like men**" stand fast don't give ground to the enemy.
2. Here Paul is addressing the need of the Corinthians to "grow up" in their faith through the nourishment of God's Word – **3:1-3**.

#### **D. Being Armed: "Be Strong"**

1. The final admonition given here is that the Corinthian believers "**be strong**" – a reference to the need to operate in the power of the Lord and not depending on their own natural resources.
2. This verb is in the passive voice – meaning that it is **not** something they can do for themselves, but is something that they must deliberately allow the Lord to do in them – **Ephesians 3:16**
3. The specific issue this refers to in the Corinthian church deals with the problem of the self-dependence that they manifested in **4:7-10** and Paul warned against in **10:12**.

### **VIII. THE FOUNDATION OF A STRONG TESTIMONY – 16:14**

**1 Cor. 16:14    Let all your things be done with charity.**

1. Often those who want to be attentive or alert can become suspicious and cynical; those who are assured can become obstinate and dogmatic; those who are active can become harsh and insensitive; and those who are armed can become domineering.
2. Being aware of these matters, Paul calls the attention of the Corinthians back to chapter **13** by saying, "**Let all that you do be done with love.**"
3. His emphasis is that in all your affairs – in whatever you do or think – allow the garment that dresses it all be love.

**"Genuine Fellowship"**  
**1 Corinthians 16:15-24**  
**Strong's Concordance**

**Theme: The marks of genuine fellowship are clearly seen in victorious, fruitful believers.**

## **IX. A COMMITMENT TO SERVICE – 16:15-16**

**1 Cor. 16:15-16** **I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) [16] That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.**

### **A. The Example to Follow – v. 15**

1. Now as Paul brings this book to a close, he refers to an individual who is clearly an example of what he believes should exist in every believer – one in whom full fellowship is possible – "**Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia. . .)**" – **1 Corinthians 1:16**
  - a. As "**first fruits**" – they served as a sample of what God would be "bringing in" to the church
  - b. They serve as the prototype of what all the believers in Corinth should individually realize

2. What was it about them that ought to be emulated? **"that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints"**
  - a. **"Devoted themselves"** is an intense form in Greek, demonstrating that they were not externally compelled to serve the Body of Christ, but did so on their own initiative.
  - b. The KJV translators chose the word **"addicted"** to describe the character of the family of Stephanas – that is, they were perpetually serving **"the saints"**
3. These people were the kind that when they saw a need, they didn't run to someone and say "somebody needs to do this or that" – they would just meet it.

#### **B. The Exhortation to Fulfill – v. 16**

1. In light of their testimony of devotion and service, Paul exhorts us to be **"in subjection to such men (referred to in vv. 13-14), and to everyone who helps in the work and labors."**
2. In order for a church to enjoy proper fellowship, those who are busy in faithfully serving the Lord need to be respected and followed in their leadership.
3. Paul is confronting the believers who are not involved in serving to bring themselves into alignment with those who have clearly demonstrated their submission to Christ through their service.
4. The rest are called upon the "submit" to their leadership.

### **X. SERVE TOGETHER – 16:17-18**

**1 Cor. 16:17-18 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. [18] For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.**

#### **A. The Realized Benefit of Companionship – vv. 17-18a**

1. Paul then makes a comment on the tremendous benefit that he knew through his fellowship with some of the men from Corinth that had come to visit him. Presumably, these men brought the letter mentioned

in 1 Corinthians 7:1 and they lingered with Paul while he composed this epistle.

2. He says: **"I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours"**
3. How did they accomplish this? - merely by being present with Paul, providing him companionship.

#### **B. The Respect Bred through Companionship – v. 18b**

1. Paul, having noted the willingness to serve and the willingness to provide companionship by Stephanas and his friends, states:  
**"Therefore acknowledge such men."** "Acknowledge" – carries the idea of giving full credence to something; to see it for what it really is.
2. In essence, Paul is calling for the Corinthians to allow the godly men from within the church to lead..

### **XI. BE SOCIABLE – 16:19-20**

**1 Cor. 16:19-20    The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. [20] All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.**

#### **A. The Warmth of an Open Home – v. 19**

1. He states: **"The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house"**
2. This godly couple **"Aquila and Prisca"** provide an excellent example of willingly opening their home for the purpose of ministry – a natural outgrowth of possessing a love for the brethren that stems out of a love for Christ

#### **B. The Witness of Open Arms – v. 20**

1. **"All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss."** – an indication that there were no matters that prevented full fellowship.



2. **"All the brethren greet you"** – a demonstration that there are really no strangers among the body of Christ – that there is an immediate and very deep bond that exists between believers of any place.
3. Hence Paul is addressing here the spontaneous and genuine expression of brotherly love that ought to exist between those who have been bought by the blood of Christ

## **XII. FOR THE LOVE OF JESUS – 16:21-24**

**1 Cor. 16:21-24    The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. [22] If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. [23] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. [24] My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.**

### **A. The Announcement of Condemnation – vv. 21-22**

1. Paul now takes up the "pen" himself to complete the letter by giving his own personally written greeting: **"The greeting is in my own hand – Paul"**
2. Having established this, he then proceeds to censure anyone who fails to possess such affection as referred to above for the person of Christ Jesus – **"If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha"**
3. The **"love [for] the Lord"** mentioned here is not the super-committed **"agape"** kind of love, but the brotherly love – the "tender affection" that ought to exist within one's heart for the Lord.
4. If a person doesn't even have this lessor love for the Lord, it is certain that he cannot possess the supreme kind of love for Christ and therefore has no part with Him – **"he is to be accursed"**
5. Then Paul declares: **"Maranatha"** an Aramaic phrase that means: "Our Lord, come!"

### **B. The Affirmation of God's Blessing – vv. 23-24**

However, on behalf of the believers in Corinth, Paul calls on God to bring blessing to them: **"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you."** – a request that

would enable the strength the church needs to be cleansed of the various spiritual problems that plague them.

## **II CORINTHIANS**

This outline of 2 Corinthians was originally furnished to me by Pastor Louis Ruales. From the information presented, I am confident that the material which follows is from the Preacher's Outline Sermon Bible distributed by NavPress. The material here is not presented in its complete original form but has been modified to fit our study needs.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. AUTHOR:** Paul, the Apostle

**B. DATE:** A.D. 56-57. There is an indication that the Epistle was written almost immediately after hearing of the church's repentance (2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:2-16). The letter was probably written from the province of Macedonia, more specifically from the city of Philippi.

**C. TO WHOM WRITTEN:** The church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia" (2 Corinthians. 1:1).

**D. PURPOSE:** Paul writes for three reasons.

1. To vindicate the purity of his life and the authority of his ministry.
2. To crush the false accusations against him with a final blow, and to solidify the church more firmly in the gospel.
3. To encourage the church to complete its special mission project to the poor saints in Jerusalem and Judea.

### **E. SPECIAL FEATURES:**

There was a certain person in the Corinthian Church who caused great grief to Paul. This person evidently stood face to face with Paul when Paul made a hurried and painful visit to Corinth. This divisive person slandered Paul and his character beyond imagination. The Corinthian Church as a whole became affected—tragically so (2 Corinthians. 2:5-6)—so much so that several cliques were formed against Paul. It was Paul himself that was being attacked, both his character and his right and authority as a minister of the gospel.

The accusations and their seriousness and severity were a threat to Paul's ministry. Thus Paul was forced to pen his "severe letter" to the Corinthian Church.

## **II. OUTLINE - 2 CORINTHIANS**

### **I. THE GOD OF PAUL, 1:1-11**

A. God and His People, 1:1-2

B. God and Suffering, 1:3-11

### **II. THE PERSONAL DEFENSE OF PAUL, 1:12-2:11**

A. Paul Answers Charges Against Himself: A Minister's Answer to His Attackers, 1:12-22

B. Paul's Reasons for Delaying a Visit to the Church: When a Minister is Under Attack, 1:23-2:4

C. Paul's Treatment of an Offender: Church Discipline and Forgiveness, 2:5-11

### **III. THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16**

A. The Ministry: An Overview, 2:12-17

B. The Ministry: Its Credentials, 3:1-5

C. The Ministry: Its New Covenant, 3:6-18

D. The Ministry: Its Demands, 4:1-6

E. The Ministry: Its Sustaining and Enduring Spirit, 4:7-18

F. The Ministry: Its Hope and Assurance of An Eternal Home, 5:1-10

G. The Ministry: Its Compelling Motives, 5:11-16

H. The Ministry: Its Message, 5:17-6:2

I. The Ministry: Its Call to Consistency and Endurance, 6:3-10

J. The Ministry: Its Call to Separation and Consecration, 6:11-7:1

K. The Ministry: Its End—A Transforming Revival, 7:2-16

### **IV. THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL COLLECTIONS, 8:1-9:15**

A. The Challenge to Give, 8:1-15

B. The Men Who Handle the Collection, 8:16-24

C. The Givers Who Please God, 9:1-7

D. The Motives for Giving Generously and Sacrificially, 9:8-15

### **V. THE MINISTER'S ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS, 10:1-13:14**

A. The Minister: His Warfare and Weapons, 10:1-6

B. The Minister: His Right to Be Accepted, 10:7-18

C. The Minister: His Warning Against Seduction, 11:1-15

D. The Minister: His Boast and Costly Labors, 11:16-33

E. The Minister: His Spiritual Experiences, 12:1-10

F. The Minister: His Behavior Before the Church, 12:11-21

G. The Minister: His Final Warning, Prayer, Challenge, and Blessing, 13:1-14

### **VI. THREE BAPTISMS OF BELIEVERS**

A. Baptism into Jesus Christ

- B. Baptism in Water
- C. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

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## 2 CORINTHIANS

### **I. THE GOD OF PAUL 1:1-11**

**2 Cor. 1:1-11** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: [2] Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. [3] Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; [4] Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. [5] For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. [6] And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. [7] And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. [8] For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: [9] But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: [10] Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; [11] Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

**A. God and His People, 1:1-2 - Introduction:** this is the introduction of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians.

- 1. (1:1) Ministers, Call of:** God is the source of the believer's call. Paul says that he is "an apostle...by the will of God." Paul says that he has been called by God to serve God. He has been appointed by God to be the messenger of God. He has been chosen by God to work for God. God is the source of his call and appointment. His life's work is not due to men; it is not even due to his own choice. It is due to God and to God alone.

Note that the very first thing Paul does is stress his apostleship. Some of the Corinthian believers were questioning and denying Paul's call by God (2 Corinthians. 1:21; 3:1, 5-6; 10:10; cp. 1 Corinthians. 9:1-2).

2. **(1:1) Brotherhood:** God is the source of brotherhood among believers. Paul calls Timothy "our brother," which means that he was a brother in Christ. Timothy was a young man who had been led to the Lord at a very early age. Paul had sensed God's call upon Timothy's life, so Paul encouraged him to give his life to the ministry. This Timothy did, serving and ministering with Paul all over the Roman world. (Note that Timothy is with Paul in the district of Macedonia (probably the city of Philippi) while Paul is writing this letter to the Corinthians. Apparently Timothy had just returned from the mission tour which Paul had mentioned in his first letter to the Corinthians. Paul had said that Timothy was on a mission tour making his way to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians. 4:17), but he also said that there was a possibility that Timothy might not be able to extend his mission tour as far as Corinth (1 Corinthians. 16:10). We do not know if Timothy ever reached Corinth or not.

The point is this: the messenger of God, no matter how great his call or ministry, is not better or superior to other believers. Just think of Paul, who he was and what a great ministry he had. His call and ministry were to be respected, but his great call and ministry did not make him a superior person. He served God not because he was a better person, but because God had a work to do and out of His sovereign mercy God had called Paul to do it.

3. **(1:1) Church:** God is the source of the church and of all saints or believers. Note that Paul is writing not only to the church at Corinth, but to all the other churches in Achaia. He knew that writing would help all the churches, so he wanted the letter to be circulated among them all.

4. **(1:2) Grace—Peace:** God is the source of grace and peace

**B. God and Suffering, 1:3-11 - Introduction:** suffering has always posed a problem for man. It may be disease, accident, trial, temptation, abuse, death—no matter what the suffering is, every person who suffers wonders, "Why me? Why do I have to suffer this affliction?"

1. **(1:3) Suffering—Mercy—Comfort—God, Nature:** God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.

- a. The word **“mercies”** (oiktirmon) means compassion, pity, and mercy. It means looking upon people in need and having compassion and mercy upon them.
  - (I) Note that God is not the God of mercies but the Father of mercies. His very nature and behavior toward us is that of a Father, not of a God. He is our Father, a Father who is merciful and compassionate, and who showers His mercies and compassion’s upon us.
  - (II) Note that the word mercies is plural. God does not show mercy just once, nor just here and there. God showers His mercies upon us continuously (Romans 12:1; Phil. 2:1; Col. 3:12; Hebrews 10:28).
- b. The word **“comfort”** (parakleseos) means to be by the side of another; to relieve and support; to give solace, consolation, and encouragement. But there is always an underlying meaning to the word. There is the idea of strength, an enablement, and a confidence.
 

It consoles and relieves a person, but it strengthens him at the same time. It charges a person to go out and face the world. Note the word is used ten times in 2 Corinthians. 1:3-7.

Note that the word comfort (parakleseos) is the same word that is used for the Holy Spirit (paraklete). The Holy Spirit is given the title The Comforter by Christ.

**2. (1:4) Suffering—Affliction—Trials—Trouble—Comfort:** God comforts the sufferer so that he might be a testimony to other sufferers.

- a. The word “tribulation” (thlipsei) means to be weighed down exceedingly; to be pressed and crushed. It is the picture of a beast of burden being crushed beneath a load that is just too heavy. It is the picture of a person having a heavy weight placed on his breast and being pressed and crushed to the point that he feels he is going to die.
  - (I) Note the words “us” and “all tribulation.” Paul is not only talking about his own trials and sufferings, but about ours as well. God comforts us all—all believers. He does not have favorites; His mercies and comfort are for everyone.
  - (II) And note: He comforts us in “all,” not in just a few of our trials and sufferings. We do not have to bear a single trial or moment of suffering by ourselves. His Spirit, the precious Holy Spirit, is right here with us to comfort us in all our suffering. This He does so we will be able to comfort others in their suffering.

**3. (1:5) Suffering—Trials—Comfort:** God matches the comfort to equal the sufferings. Note that the sufferings being stressed are “the sufferings of Christ,” that is, the very kind of sufferings which Christ Himself bore. What kind of sufferings did Christ bear? Very simply, Christ bore every kind of suffering imaginable, even the suffering of death. He had to experience every situation, condition, and trial of man in order to become the Perfect Sympathizer or Savior. For this reason, He experienced the most humiliating experiences possible. He experienced...

- a. being born to an unwed mother (Matthew 1:18-19).
- b. being born in a stable, the worst of conditions (Luke 2:7).
- c. being born to poor parents (Luke 2:24).
- d. having his life threatened as a baby (Matthew 2:13).
- e. being the cause of unimaginable sorrow (Matthew 2:16).
- f. having to be moved and shifted as a baby (Matthew 2:13).
- g. being reared in a despicable place, Nazareth (Luke 2:39).
- h. having His father die during His youth (Matthew 13:53-58 no mention of Joseph likely means he was deceased by this time).
- i. having to support His mother and brothers and sisters (Matthew 13:53-58).
- j. having no home, not even a place to lay His head (Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58).
- k. being hated and opposed by religionists (Mark 14:1-2).
- l. being charged with insanity (Mark 3:21).
- m. being charged with demon-possession (Mark 3:22).
- n. being opposed by His own family (Mark 3:31-32).
- o. being rejected, hated, and opposed by listeners (Matthew 13:53-58; Luke 4:28-29).
- p. being betrayed by a close friend (Mark 14:10-11, 18).
- q. being left alone, rejected, and forsaken by all of His friends (Mark 14:50).
- r. being tried before the high court of the land on the charge of treason (John 18:33).
- s. He was beaten beyond recognition
- t. He died on a cruel cross.

**4. (1:6-7) Suffering—Trials—Comfort:** God uses suffering to stir up other believers. A person who suffers often becomes self-centered and begins to feel sorry for himself. He sometimes begins to feel self-pity and apathy and to want special attention. He may even become bitter. A believer must never let this happen. This is what these two verses are all about. Note that both the affliction and the comfort are for the same purposes. God uses both suffering and comfort in a believer to stir four things in other believers.

- a. God uses suffering to stir consolation or comfort in others who suffer
- b. God uses suffering to stir salvation. A person cannot trust God today and not trust Him tomorrow. A person cannot bless God when things are going well and curse God when things go bad. A person who truly believes in God trusts Him no matter the circumstance. He continues with God throughout life...
- c. God uses suffering to stir endurance. Very simply, when we suffer and allow God to comfort us, others are encouraged to endure through their sufferings.
- d. God uses suffering to stir sharing among believers. Believers who suffer are not to become self-centered, bitter, discouraged, apathetic, nor are they to begin complaining. They are to allow God to comfort them. God expects us to suffer with the right attitude, to allow Him to share His comfort with us. How can a person share the comfort of God unless he has suffered and experienced the comfort of God?

**5. (1:8-10) Suffering—Trials—Comfort:** God uses suffering to teach trust. God allows great suffering. He allowed Paul, probably the greatest missionary of all time, to experience terrible suffering time and again. What was the suffering that is referred to in these three verses? We do not know. There is no record of it anywhere in Scripture.

- a. The point to see is that God allowed Paul to suffer some terrible trouble. And note the intensity of the trouble: “we were pressed [weighed down, crushed by a very heavy weight]”...
  - (I) out of measure.
  - (II) above strength.
  - (III) we despaired even for our life.
  - (IV) we had the sentence of death in ourselves (sensed he was going to die).
- b. Why does God allow His dear servant to go through such suffering, especially when he is such a great servant, a servant who labors so faithfully for God? There are two primary reasons.
  - (I) Note that God is called the **“God that raises the dead.”** The one thing that man must learn is that he cannot save himself; he cannot raise himself up from the dead. Only God can save man and raise him up and give him eternal life. Suffering teaches man that he is helpless to save himself. If he wishes to be saved, he must trust God. Therefore, suffering



teaches man that he is not self-sufficient. He must have the presence and help of God if he wishes to conquer the sufferings of this world—the sufferings that eventually end in the suffering of death.

(II) God allows suffering to teach a daily trust for deliverance. Note: Paul says that God continued to deliver him through the trials of life and that he continued to trust God to deliver him. The point is that we must trust God daily, trust Him to deliver us from daily sufferings.

**6. (1:11) Suffering—Trials—Comfort:** God uses suffering to teach prayer and thanksgiving. The prayers of believers “help” us. Paul definitely says that the prayers of others helped him. Prayer causes God to move in our behalf and to deliver us through our suffering. And when we are strengthened and delivered, everyone praises God. Intercessory prayer, prayer for others, works. God hears and answers prayer, and He hears and answers our prayers for others. This is the reason Scripture stresses intercessory prayer.

**“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).**

## **II. THE PERSONAL DEFENSE OF PAUL, 1:12-2:11**

### **A. Paul Answers Charges Against Himself: A Minister’s Answer to His Attackers, 1:12-22**

**2 Cor. 1:12-22** For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. [13] For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; [14] As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

[15] And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; [16] And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea. [17] When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? [18] But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. [19] For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. [20] For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. [21]

**Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; [22]  
Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.**

- 1. (1:12-22) Paul, Accusations Against:** Paul was criticized with what seems an innumerable list of charges. These criticisms or charges, which called forth the writing of this letter, are found primarily in the following passages.
  - a. 2 Corinthians 1:12-21. The charges were:**
    - (I)** Unholy and improper conduct (2 Corinthians. 1:12).
    - (II)** Hidden and selfish motives (2 Corinthians. 1:13; cp. 2 Corinthians. 3:12).
    - (III)** Fickle and indecisive (2 Corinthians. 1:15).
    - (IV)** Inconsistent in his message and preaching (2 Corinthians. 1:18; cp. 2 Corinthians. 6:3).
    - (V)** Weak and shaky in the faith (2 Corinthians. 1:21).
    - (VI)** Not anointed for the ministry (2 Corinthians. 1:21; cp. 2 Corinthians. 3:5).
  - b. 2 Corinthians 3:1. The charge was that he praised himself and lacked letters of commendation.**
  - c. 2 Corinthians 4:1-2. The charges were:**
    - (I)** Being sometimes faint-hearted and slack.
    - (II)** Doing some shameful, disgraceful, scandalous things.
    - (III)** Walking about deceiving people.
    - (IV)** Mishandling the Word of God.
  - d. 2 Corinthians 5:12-15. The charge was that Paul was beside himself, mad, insane.**
  - e. 2 Corinthians 7:2. The charges were:**
    - (I)** Wronging people; treating people unjustly.
    - (II)** Corrupting, injuring, and destroying people.
    - (III)** Defrauding, cheating, and stealing from people.
  - f. 2 Corinthians 10:1-13. The charges were:**
    - (I)** Walking after the flesh (unsaved or carnal) (2 Corinthians. 10:1-2).
    - (II)** Being a coward (2 Corinthians. 10:1-2; cp. 2 Corinthians. 11:32).
    - (III)** Not of Christ (2 Corinthians. 1:7).
    - (IV)** Claiming unauthorized authority (2 Corinthians. 1:8).
    - (V)** Having a weak appearance (2 Corinthians. 1:10).

- (VI) Being a poor speaker (2 Corinthians. 1:10; cp. 2 Corinthians. 11:6).
- (VII) Exceeding his authority (2 Corinthians. 1:13).

g. 2 Corinthians 12:11-18. The charges were:

- (I) Not being an apostle (2 Corinthians. 1:11).
- (II) Damaging the church's image (2 Corinthians. 1:13).
- (III) Taking money through middle men (2 Corinthians. 12:17-18; cp. 2 Corinthians. 8:20-22. 2 Corinthians. 12:13-18.)

2. (1:12) **Conscience—Believer, Life:** Paul had a pure conscience. He was not pricked by a violated conscience, nor consumed or nagged by guilt. The testimony of Paul's conscience was that of purity.

a. Paul lived a life of **simplicity** (aploteti), which means singleness of mind, a mind set upon God and being unmoved. It is the opposite of duplicity, of a dual mind and conduct. It means not being distracted or turned aside, not being double minded. It means setting one's life upon God and staying there. It means determining to follow God in all the simplicity or singleness of mind possible and doing it.

b. Paul lived a life of **"godly sincerity"** (eilikrineia theou) which means purity. It is the unadulterated, the pure that has been shaken and rolled through a sieve. It means the unadulterated, the pure that shows up unstained and untainted when examined in the sunlight. Paul is saying that he is pure, unstained, untainted, unadulterated in his conduct and behavior. This word is used only one other time by Paul in 1 Corinthians. 5:8.

c. Paul **lived by the grace of God**, not in fleshly wisdom. By **"fleshly wisdom"** is meant the human, natural, corrupt wisdom of men. It is the natural reasoning of the human mind. Paul is saying that he did not use his own reasonings...

(I) What Paul did was set his mind upon the grace of God. By grace is meant the glorious favor of God in saving us and in showing us how to live. God's grace has not only given us the written Word of God to tell us how to live; it has given us Jesus Christ to show us how to live with a pure conscience. Jesus Christ Himself is the gift of God, the grace of God to the world.

(II) **The point is this:** Paul lived by God's grace, by Jesus Christ. He set his mind and life upon Jesus Christ, not upon rules and principles thought up

by his own fleshly mind. He gave his heart and life to Christ; therefore, God forgave his sins and removed his guilt. Thereby, he had a pure conscience.

- 3. (1:13-14) Paul, Writings—Ministry:** Paul did not write with a hidden and deceptive motive. Some in the church were saying that Paul's first letter (1 Corinthians) was full of deception: that he did not really believe nor live the things he had written, that in writing about spiritual matters he was only trying to sound pious and to secure the support of the church. Paul's response was **twofold**.
- a.** He meant and lived exactly what he had written: all that he had written and only what he had written—no more, no less. He was utterly sincere, and what he had written was the truth.
  - b.** He had only one motive: to rejoice in the day of Christ. The Corinthians had acknowledged his testimony in the past and rejoiced in it, even as he had in their testimony. His only motive was to write and live in such a way that he and God's people could rejoice in the day of the Lord Jesus.
- 4. (1:15-17) Paul, Ministry:** Paul was not fickle and indecisive in his plans. The story lying behind this point is interesting. Paul had changed his plans, and by such he had left himself wide open to the charge of indecisiveness. Just what happened is unknown. One possibility is as follows.
- a.** Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, telling the Corinthians that he was going to visit them on his way back from Macedonia (1 Corinthians. 16:5).
  - b.** He later made the plans mentioned here—to visit on his way to Macedonia and on his return—thus seeing them twice (2 Corinthians. 1:15-16).
  - c.** But he did neither; therefore, some in the church were saying that Paul could not be trusted; that he made promises that he did not keep; that he was indecisive, fickle and frivolous; that he could not be trusted to stick to his word "yes, yes" or "no, no."
- 5. (1:18-20) Paul, Accusations Against:** Paul was not inconsistent in his message and preaching. Some in the church were saying that Paul's word could not be trusted, that what he preached and taught could not be trusted. If a man treats his word so lightly, how can anything he says be trusted? How can we be sure that God has revealed His Word to Paul?

- a. Emphatically, Paul declares that his words were not the words of a vacillator nor were they inconsistent. Note how emphatically Paul answers those who oppose him: “As God is true so is what I preach: my words were not the words of a vacillator, not yes and no; not this is true, then turning around and saying this is false. I did not preach one thing and then another.” Paul gives two forceful reasons why he preached with strong affirmation and authority, two reasons why he insisted that what he preached and taught was the truth.
  - b. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, was not fickle and inconsistent. He was the absolute truth; therefore, He had to proclaim “yes”—that is, nothing but the truth. The Son of God could have nothing to do with uncertainty and inconsistency, with being untrustworthy and undependable. What he preached and taught had to be the truth.
  - c. All the promises of God are sure and certain in Christ.
  - d. **The point is this:** the preaching of Paul, Timothy, and Silas to the Corinthians was not untrustworthy. It is dependable. It is the truth coming from the very words of the Son of God Himself. The very words and truth of the Son of God, of Jesus Christ, have been passed on down to the Corinthians through Paul and the other apostles. The preaching and teaching of both Christ and Paul are “Yes! The promises of God in Christ are true.” And “Amen! Yes indeed.”
6. (1:21-22) **Paul, Ministry:** Paul was just as much in Christ and anointed as others. The word “us” refers primarily to Paul. He is comparing himself with the Corinthians and he is also including those who oppose him. In no uncertain terms, Paul says that the same God who has worked in the Corinthians has also worked in him. Note the four great things that God does for believers.
- a. God “**establishes**” (bebaion) believers. The word means to confirm; to make firm, steadfast, and constant.
  - b. God “**anoints**” believers: the word means to be consecrated and qualified for service.
  - c. God “**seals**” (sphragizo) believers. The word means to mark, to stamp, to place a seal upon. God places His seal, His stamp, His mark upon believers.
  - d. God gives “**the earnest of the Spirit**” in the hearts of believers. The word “earnest” (arrobion) means guarantee, security, deposit, payment. It was the first installment paid on an item to guarantee that the rest would be paid. It was the engagement ring that guaranteed the marriage. God has given the

Holy Spirit as the guarantee of eternal life. The Holy Spirit is an advanced payment, a down payment on His promise to believers.

**B. PAUL'S REASONS FOR DELAYING A VISIT TO THE CHURCH: WHEN A MINISTER IS UNDER ATTACK, 1:23-2:4** **Introduction:** What should a minister do when he is under attack by some persons in the church?

**2 Cor. 1:23-2:4** **Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. [24] Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.**

**[2:1] But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. [2] For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? [3] And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. [4] For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.**

**1. (1:23-24) Minister—Paul, Ministry:** it was best for the minister to spare the rod of discipline. Some within the Corinthian church were attacking Paul, accusing him of every conceivable weakness and fault. Some in the church had also become corrupt, morally and doctrinally—living in sin and teaching contrary to the Word of God.

**a. The point is this:** Paul felt it best that he not be with the church in the midst of such controversy and corruption. Therefore, he changed his plans: he did not go to them as he had originally planned. Note why: if he had gone to them, it would have been necessary for him to carry the rod of discipline so long as they were corrupt. As the minister of God, he had spiritual authority over their welfare; therefore, he would be forced to deal with their sin and shame.

**b. But note a crucial point:** in mentioning ministerial authority, he does not mean...

**(I)** that he had dominion over their faith.

**(II)** that he had the authority of a tyrant.

**(III)** that he controlled their spiritual lives.

**(IV)** that he could dictate and take authority over their behavior.

**c. What he means was this:** when he came to them, he wanted to be able to minister to them, to be as he says, a **“helper of their joy.”** This simply means that his job as a minister was...

- (I) to be a helper.
  - (II) to work along with them.
  - (III) to join them in their efforts to grow.
  - (IV) to help them in fulfilling their joy in Christ.
- d. Note that Paul says, “**By faith ye stand [firm].**” They did not stand firm because of him, but because of their faith in Christ. Paul had no personal power to make people believe in Christ nor could he make people stand firm in Christ; he could only help them. They had to make the effort to fulfill the joy of life themselves.
- e. **Again, the point is this:** Paul felt it was best that he not be with the church, for they were not standing firm in Christ. They were engulfed in controversy over him and in sin before God. If he had gone to them, he would have become involved in discipline and not ministry. He would not have been able to help them in their growth in Christ, not while they were unwilling to seek the joy of life in Christ.

2. **(2:1) Minister—Paul, Ministry, Trips to Corinth:** it was best for the minister not to be the cause of pain. Note Paul’s words, “**But I determined...that I would not come again to you in heaviness.**” This just cannot apply to Paul’s first visit to Corinth, for his first visit did not end in failure and rejection. When Paul first left Corinth, he was filled with joy over the great success God had given. Therefore, he must be speaking about some other visit when the church rejected him and cut his heart, causing great heaviness.

Note also the statement in 2 Corinthians. 1:23, “I came not as yet [ouketi elthon] to Corinth.” The statement can be equally translated, “I came no more to Corinth.” This, too, points toward Paul having made a quick visit to Corinth after writing his first letter, a visit that resulted in the people rejecting him and breaking his heart (        The point is strong: Paul loved and cared for the people and their church; he just did not want to be the cause of more pain and hurt; therefore, he stayed away.

3. **(2:2) Minister—Paul, Ministry:** it was best for the minister not to conflict with those whom he loved. Very simply, if Paul returned to the church, his presence would only cause pain, not gladness and joy.
4. **(2:3) Minister—Paul, Ministry:** it was best for the minister not to be attacked and hurt time and again. Paul longed to minister, not to have controversy and sin swirling around him, certainly not in the church. Therefore, he had written a letter urging the church to put the Lord first and to quit the controversy. The letter which he had written is the discussion of the next verse and point. His

point in this verse is tragic: if he had come to them, he would be cut and hurt just as he had been before. Those who should have brought joy to him would only have attacked and criticized him again. And he just could not bear to be hurt and sorrowed by their rejection again. He could not bear to be the center of controversy and disturbance again.

- 5. (2:4) Minister—Paul, Ministry:** it was best for the minister to write a strong appeal. Paul chose to write before he returned to the Corinthians. His heart was just broken; he could not face them and go through the pain and controversy again. The words “affliction and anguish” mean deep sorrow and distress, unbelievable pain and hurt, grief and heaviness of heart.

Note that Paul had shed many tears over the situation.

### **C. PAUL’S TREATMENT OF AN OFFENDER: CHURCH DISCIPLINE & FORGIVENESS, 2:5-11**

**2 Cor. 2:5-11** But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. [6] Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. [7] So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. [8] Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. [9] For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. [10] To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; [11] Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

- 1. (2:5) Church Discipline—Division:** there was the offender, a person who caused grief for the whole church. Some interpreters believe the offender was the immoral man dealt with in 1 Corinthians. 5. Others think he was the ringleader of those who opposed Paul. It is not necessary to know who the offender was to understand the passage; however, the weight of the Scripture points toward the offender being the ringleader of the opposition to Paul. How do we know this? Because the problem being dealt with was not immorality (2 Corinthians. 2:1-11). There is no hint of a moral problem in these verses. The problem concerned someone who had mistreated Paul, someone who had made him the center of controversy, someone who had criticized and insulted him to such a degree that it had caused him severe pain and heaviness of heart
- 2. (2:6) Church Discipline—Division:** there was church discipline and correction. Apparently, one person had initially poisoned and led a clique of people to



oppose Paul. Paul had insisted that the church deal with the problem and discipline the offender. Note two points.

- a. The church voted on the matter and the majority agreed. They did discipline the offender. Note that the vote was not unanimous; it was only a majority (“many”).
- b. Some in the church felt the discipline was not stern enough. They wanted the offender to be disciplined more severely.

**3. (2:7-8) Church Discipline:** the first purpose for discipline is the restoration of the offender. This is critical to note: it is one of the two major purposes for church discipline. Any believer who attacks God’s minister and disturbs the church must be corrected. The offending brother must be corrected not only for the sake of the church and the minister, but for his own sake. The offending believer must be restored to the point that he loves God and the people of God, including the minister of God.

- a. Note that the man had repented of his sin: he was gripped with sorrow—much sorrow. (2 Corinthians. 2:7). Therefore, the purpose of the discipline had been achieved. Hence, Paul encouraged the church to restore him. Note the four things involved in restoration.

- b. **There is the forgiveness of the church.** The man had committed a terrible sin:

- (I) criticizing and attacking God’s minister, disturbing the fellowship of the church, and affecting the name and witness of the church in the community. There was the danger of some church members holding bad feelings and not forgiving the man. The exhortation of Paul and Scripture is strong: “Forgive him.” Forgiveness would also involve bringing the person back into the fellowship of the church if he had been excommunicated or had his membership withdrawn.

- c. **There is the comfort or the encouragement of the church.** The man needed to be comforted and encouraged. Unquestionably, he felt shame and embarrassment, for he had been the focus of church-wide attention and discipline. He would also be wondering just how people really felt about him. Would they be forgiving and accepting or withdrawn and begrudging.

- d. **There is the repentance of the offender.** The man who attacked Paul had repented. He had demonstrated a repentant, godly sorrow. Therefore, it was time for restoration. The purpose for the discipline had been achieved.

However, note Paul's concern and warning. There is danger that the discipline can last too long and be too severe. There is a point at which the discipline can become destructive instead of corrective. The offender must be forgiven and comforted...

- e. **There is the assurance and demonstration of love by the church.** The believers were to go out of their way to show the man that he was loved. The discipline and correction were only to straighten out the mess and to get everyone back on the track of loving one another and ministering for the Lord.

**4. (2:9) Church Discipline:** the second purpose for the discipline was the obedience of the church to its mission. Very simply, as long as the church allowed the man to continue his disturbance, the church could not focus upon its mission and ministry. It could not do its work; it was being disobedient to God, allowing controversy and division to rule. Its fellowship was being ruined, and its very purpose for being upon earth was being drastically affected.

- a. **The point is this:** Paul had instructed the church to discipline the offender in order to prove its obedience to Christ.

- (I) If the church was concerned about obeying Christ, then it had to deal with the man.

- (II) If the church was not concerned with obeying Christ, then it would just continue on allowing its minister to be attacked and its own attention to be distracted from its ministry and focused upon controversy.

- b. Disciplining the offender was to free the church from controversy, allowing it to focus upon its mission and ministry.

It is through the correction of offenders and disturbances that the church proves...

- (A) its love for the offending brother and its minister.

- (B) obedience to Christ "in all things."

**5. (2:10-11) Church Discipline:** there was the forgiving spirit of the minister. Paul says that he forgave the man for three reasons.

- a. **Paul forgave the man in order to help the church and himself.** The very foundation and nature of the church is forgiveness. The church exists because God forgives our sins. Therefore, if the church refuses to forgive a person who truly repents, the church is denying its very nature and purpose for existing. The church has no reason for ever existing if it does not forgive and restore people into the fellowship.

- b. The point is this:** the minister must take the lead in forgiving and in teaching forgiveness. Therefore, Paul forgave the man and encouraged the Corinthian church to forgive the man as well. As Paul says, “I forgave it [the wrong done me], for your sakes.”
- c. Paul forgave the man for the sake of Christ.** “In the person of Christ” means in the presence or face of Christ, that is, before Christ. Christ is so displeased with an unforgiving spirit, that he refuses to forgive the sins of any man who is himself unforgiving. The heart of Christ pours out in forgiveness; therefore, he expects all men to be forgiving of others.
- d. Paul forgave the man to keep Satan from getting an advantage.** The results would have been tragic.
  - (I) Satan would have had an advantage over the man. If the church had not forgiven him...he would have remained out of the church, out in the world.
  - (II) Satan would have had an advantage over Paul. Paul’s ministry would have become ineffective, for God could no longer bless a man who did not do what he was preaching: forgiving the sins of men.
  - (III) Satan would have had an advantage over the church for the same reason. God would not be able to use the church any longer, for it would be denying its very purpose for existing. Instead of opening its doors to the repentant sinner, it would be closing its doors to meeting the needs of people
  - (IV) Note what Paul says: “We are not ignorant of his [Satan’s] devices.” Satan has great influence upon men and their affairs. Believers must not be ignorant of his devices to tempt and destroy people.

### **III. THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16**

- A. The Ministry: An Overview, 2:12-17 - Introduction:** this is a clear picture of the minister and the ministry to which God has called him. It is a strong challenge for the minister to be just what God has called him to be and to do just what God has called him to do.

**2 Cor. 2:12-17** Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, [13] I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. [14] Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. [15] For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: [16] To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? [17] For we are not

**as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.**

1. **(2:12-13) Minister—Ministry:** the minister is gripped by a burning passion to preach and a deep concern for troubled churches. Paul is still describing his great love and concern for the believers in the Corinthian church (2 Corinthians. 2:4).

The minister had a deep concern for troubled churches. The Corinthian church was in trouble, serious trouble. As with any faithful minister, Paul's heart reached out to all involved. Week after week passed, apparently stretching into several months, and no word had come from Titus about the welfare of the Corinthian church. Paul was anxious and concerned. As he said, **"I had no rest [relief] in my spirit."** The situation got to Paul: he could not stand the suspense any longer. Therefore, he struck out for Macedonia looking for Titus along the great highway stretching across the province.

2. **(2:14) Minister—Victory:** the minister always triumphs in Christ. Paul learns that the church had responded and experienced revival. Just the thought of what had happened in the church caused Paul to break forth in thanksgiving. Paul had every reason to thank God, for he had been heavily criticized and attacked by a clique in the church and the church was about to be destroyed by controversy and divisiveness. He thanked God for the glorious triumph which God always gives to His ministers through Christ. God never fails His ministers, and He had not failed Paul. He had caused Paul to triumph in Christ.
  - a. The picture of triumph is descriptive. It is the picture of a military commander returning to Rome after some great victory. The commander was always welcomed into the city in a great march of triumph. Most people have seen such scenes in films either on television or in movies.
  - b. What Paul pictures is the triumph of Christ. He sees God giving Christ the glorious and triumphant victory as the Word of God is proclaimed throughout the world. And Paul sees himself, as a minister of God, being a part of that glorious and triumphant victory.
3. **(2:15-16) Minister:** the minister is a sweet fragrance to God, for he spreads the message of Christ among the saved and the perishing. The picture is that of a flower. The flower is a sweet fragrance to men; therefore, the flower is acceptable to men. The minister is a sweet fragrance to God; therefore, the minister is acceptable to God.
4. **(2:16-17) Minister:** the minister has stringent demands laid upon him. The minister has an awesome responsibility. Just imagine being responsible for a message that involves both eternal life and eternal death.

Who is sufficient or qualified for such a task? Is any man? Paul says, “Yes,” but not many. The only men who are qualified are those who meet five stringent demands.

- a. The qualified man does not **“corrupt the word of God.”** The word “corrupt” (kapeleuontes) is taken from an old word meaning huckster or peddler. It means to contaminate, to tamper with, to mix other things into the gospel, for example, personal ideas, speculations, the latest religious fads or novel ideas.
- b. The qualified man is **“sincere”** (eilikrineia). This means that the minister and his motives are pure. He is in the ministry to serve God and to help people. He is not in the ministry because he respects it as a profession, nor for any other reason. God has called him, and he is gripped by the necessity to serve God.
- c. The qualified man is **“of God.”** He is called, commissioned, and sent by God; and he lives by the grace and strength of God and for God.
- d. The qualified man lives **“in the sight of God.”** He is conscious and aware of God’s presence, knowing that he lives and moves in the sight of God every moment of every day.
- e. The qualified man **“speaks in Christ.”** He speaks in the communion and fellowship and power of Christ. He does not speak in his own energy and strength, but in the energy and strength of Christ.

**B. THE MINISTRY: ITS CREDENTIALS, 3:1-5 - Introduction:** churches often have to consider the credentials of ministers, in particular when they are either seeking a new minister or handling some problem surrounding a minister. What are the credentials that should be considered? The present passage gives several important considerations.

**2 Cor. 3:1-5    Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? [2] Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: [3] Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. [4] And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: [5] Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;**

1. (3:1) **Ministers, Qualification: the minister’s credentials are not letters of commendation.** There were those in the Corinthian church who accused Paul...
  - a. of pride and arrogance.
  - b. of acting as though he was the messenger of God, more special than others.

- c. of claiming that what he said was the Word of God itself and what others said was less than the Word of God.
- d. of acting as though he had a corner on the truth.
- e. of praising and commending himself.
- f. of exalting himself above others.

(I) Very simply, why should the Corinthians or anyone else listen to Paul, the minister? What credentials does he have that should cause people to listen to him and his claims?

In answering the questions and in establishing his credentials, there is one basic truth: the minister's credentials are not letters of commendation. Men always have and probably always will place some confidence in letters of reference or commendation, but as all responsible people know, such letters are often exaggerated and uncertain. They are not always accurate or truthful. Therefore, **a person is not really known until he has proven himself on some field of ministry or in some position.**

(II) Note: Paul says that some in the Corinthian church had used letters of reference to recommend themselves to the church. This apparently refers to some other teachers or ministers in the church, perhaps the very ones who were opposing Paul. **Paul's point is this:** his commendation to the church is not letters of reference, but something of far more value. The credentials he presents to the church mean much more, far more than letters of commendation.

## 2. (3:2) Minister—Paul, Ministry: the first credential of the minister is the human lives written upon his heart. Two striking things are being said.

a. Paul says that the Corinthian believers were written upon his heart. Anyone who knew him could see that he deeply cared for the Corinthian church; that he was always praying for them and expressing love and concern for them. He cherished them. They were dear to him, so dear that he could actually say that they were written in his heart.

(I) **The point is this:** people are far more important than letters. A minister's commendation is not letters of recommendation, but a heart...

(A) that has people written upon it.

(B) that endears people to itself.

(C) that loves and cares for people.

(D) that deeply feels for people.

(E) that cannot let people go.

(F) that must reach and grow people for Christ.

(II) This is the true letter of commendation that should matter to a church: a heart that has people written upon it.

- b. Paul says that the fact was known and read by all men. Anyone could look and read the lives of the Corinthian believers and tell that they were in the heart of Paul. Paul had gone to Corinth to minister to the people, and some had been reached and others grown in the Lord. Their testimony was his letter of commendation, and their testimony before the world was far more important than a letter of commendation.

**3. (3:3) Minister—Paul, Ministry: the second credential of the minister is the lives written by Christ through the minister.** This is a critical point to note, for the minister is not the one who converts and changes the lives of people.

- a. It is Christ and Christ alone who converts and grows people.
  - (I) The lives of believers are said to be “the epistle [letter] of Christ.” Christ is the author of the believer’s life, the author of his conversion and righteousness.
  - (II) The lives of believers are not written with ink which men use, but with the Spirit of the living God
- b. It is the minister who ministers to the lives of believers. Note the words “ministered by us.” Paul is saying that Christ creates the letter, the lives of believers, and the minister looks after and cares for it.

**4. (3:4-5) Minister—Paul, Ministry: the third credential is the minister being qualified and made fit by God.** Paul declares two significant points about his ministry.

- a. He was made fit for the ministry through Christ. He was not sufficient for the ministry, not in and of himself. His only sufficiency was of God. He could not make himself fit for the ministry even if he had wished to do so. He had no power...
  - (I) to change the heart of a person.
  - (II) to give life to a person.
  - (III) to give the assurance and security of God’s presence and care to a person.
  - (IV) to give the Spirit of God to a person.
  - (V) to write the law of God in the heart of a person.
  - (VI) Only Christ could do such spiritual work; therefore, only Christ can qualify and fit the minister to share God’s Word with people.
  - (VII) Note the words “**to God-ward.**” The words mean that the minister serves God and that he serves before God, before the gaze and inspection of God. The minister is not only qualified and made fit by God, he is responsible to God for how he ministers.
- b. The minister has no greater commendation than the fact that he is qualified and fitted for the ministry by both Christ and God.

c. The point is striking: a minister's credentials are the presence and power of Christ in his life...

(I) the fact that God is moving and working in and through his ministry.

(II) the fact that great works are being done that could not be done by the sufficiency of men.

(III) the fact that great works are being done that could be done only by God.

### C. THE MINISTRY: ITS NEW COVENANT 3:6-18

**2 Cor. 3:6-18** Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. [7] But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: [8] How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? [9] For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. [10] For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. [11] For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. [12] Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: [13] And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: [14] But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. [15] But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. [16] Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. [17] Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. [18] But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

1. **(3:6) Covenant—Minister:** the minister serves the new covenant. The word “testament” (diathekes) is better translated covenant. It means an agreement made between two parties; a contract drawn up between two or more people; a special relationship set up and established between persons. In the Old Testament period of history, God had set up an old covenant between Himself and man which is here called the covenant of the letter. This simply means a written covenant or the covenant of the law. Since Christ, He has set up a new covenant with man which is here called the “new covenant of the Spirit.” This is simply another way of describing the covenant of grace or of the gospel (Hebrews 8:8).



**The point is this:** God used to deal with man by law, but now He deals with man through the Holy Spirit. The law was the old covenant between God and man. The Spirit is the new covenant between God and man. Today, since Christ, the minister serves the new covenant of the Spirit, not the old covenant of the law.

- 2. (3:6) Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant was a written law; the new covenant is the Spirit of God Himself. The old covenant was written words and letters, a written document, a set of laws that men had to obey (Exodus 24:1-8). The fact to note is this: the law was external; it sat outside man and insisted that man subject himself to the rule and obey it.

The new covenant is different, entirely different. It is internal, within man. It is a personal relationship with God, a relationship that is created by God Himself. When a person believes in God's Son, God places His Spirit in the heart of the person, and the person becomes a Spirit filled person.

- 3. (3:6) Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant or law killed; the new covenant gives life. How does the law kill? There are two ways.
- a.** First, when society sets a law before a man, he has to obey it. If he fails to obey it, he breaks and severs his relationship with society and he has to bear the punishment of a broken and severed relationship. He has to be put away, cut off, separated from society. The punishment for breaking God's law is the same: when a man breaks God's law, he breaks and severs his relationship with God. He cuts himself off from God; he has no relationship, no connection, no life with God. The law kills him, his relationship and life with God.
  - b.** Second, the law is only letters and words written on paper, stone, or wood. It is external and outside man. It only commands; it does not give man the power to do the command. The will, ability, and power to obey are entirely left up to the man. The man may wish to keep the commandment, but he may not have the will or power to keep it. Therefore, he breaks the law, and the law kills him. It should be noted that the law not only kills man eternally, but through guilt and despair, it kills his human spirit and will, sapping his energy, ambition, drive, and hope.
  - c. (3:7-8) Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant or law was glorious; the new covenant is more glorious. How can the law which kills and ministers death be said to be glorious?
    - (I)** The law was glorious in that it was given to Moses by God Himself—face to face.

- (II) The law was glorious in that it reveals the nature of God Himself, that He is holy and righteous and must be approached in holiness and righteousness.
- (III) The law was glorious in that it pointed men to their desperate need for salvation. It showed men as nothing else could that they were sinners and short of God's glory and desperately needed a Savior.
- (IV) The glory of the old covenant is illustrated by Moses' experience in receiving the law from God. God Himself gave Moses the law face to face, and being in the presence of God caused Moses' face to shine with the glory of God. In fact, the glory upon Moses' face was so bright, the people could not continually look upon him (Exodus 34:30).

Note what Paul says: **the glory of God that was upon Moses' face was to pass away.** Paul is saying that this was a symbol of God upon the old covenant. The glory of God upon the old covenant was to pass away. **The old covenant, the law, was meant to be only a temporary arrangement between God and man.**

- (V) The new covenant is different, gloriously different. The difference is clearly seen in the thought provoking question asked: if the old covenant that ministered death was glorious, how shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? The answer is obvious: the ministry of the Spirit is to give life to men and the power to live life; and life is far more glorious than death. In fact, life is eternally more glorious than death.

4. **(3:9-10) Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant or law brought condemnation; the new covenant brings righteousness. The law condemned a man when he broke the law: the law condemned him to a broken and severed relationship with God. The man was to die. However the new covenant, the Spirit of God, imparted righteousness, the very nature of God to a man (2 Peter 1:4). Therefore, the glory of the new covenant exceeds the old covenant so much that by comparison the old covenant has no glory at all (2 Corinthians. 3:10).
5. **(3:11) Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant or law faded away; the new covenant remains and is permanent. The glory of the new covenant is permanent. Its glory and function will never be superceded. If a man is ever to have a relationship with God, he must allow God's Spirit to enter his heart and life. There is no other way to live with God.
6. **(3:12-16) Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant spoke with veiled meaning; the new covenant speaks with plain (outspoken, clear, and bold) meaning.

- a. The new covenant gives such a glorious hope that the minister of God can proclaim it clearly and boldly. Of course, the reason he can proclaim it so clearly and boldly is because the new covenant is given by the Spirit in a clear and unveiled message.  
**“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual”**  
**(1 Cor. 2:12-13).**
- b. The old covenant was not like the new covenant. The old covenant was set up by God with veiled meanings.
- c. The veiled meaning is illustrated by Moses. When the people saw the glory of God shining in the face of Moses, Moses had to put a veil upon his face. Why? Because the people withdrew from the glory of God, and because the people were not to see the fading away of the glory from Moses’ face. Note the exact words of Paul: Moses veiled his face so that they **“could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.”**
- d. Paul is saying that what Moses did was an illustration of how man sees the old covenant or law. Man looks at the law and sees that he is to obey it if he wishes to please God. Therefore, man works and works to keep the law, believing all the time that he is earning the favor and acceptance of God. Man is blinded to the real meaning of the law.
- e. The glory and meaning of the law are veiled from his sight; he is unable...
  - (I) to see the real meaning of the law.
  - (II) to see that the law was given to reveal the nature of God’s glory and perfection.
  - (III) to see that man comes short of the glory and perfection of God.
  - (IV) to see that man cannot keep the law, not perfectly.
  - (V) to see that the law was given to show man his desperate need for a Savior.
- f. The veil of the old covenant is removed only when a person turns to the Lord. When a person truly turns to Jesus Christ, he is shown how Jesus Christ is the glory of God and the end, purpose, and fulfillment of the law. The veil is removed from the law, and he understands the marvelous glory of God.

**7. (3:17-18) Covenant, New:** the new covenant brings liberty through the Lord Jesus Christ. Note that the Lord is identified as the Spirit: **“the Lord is that Spirit.”** This does not mean that the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the same Person. They are two different Persons, but they are one in their Godhead and Deity. Jesus Christ is One with the Spirit in the same way He is one with God

the Father: one in mind, spirit, being, nature, and essence. Therefore, they are one in will, purpose, and work.

- a. Note how the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all involved in showing and revealing salvation to man. This is what is meant by saying the Lord is that Spirit. The Lord Himself was actually the One who secured salvation and liberty for man, but it is the Spirit who is actively involved in revealing the truth of salvation and liberty to man. **“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”**
- b. In beholding Christ, believers are transformed into His image. The phrase “we all” means believers, those who have turned to Christ...
  - (I) who have had the veil removed from their face.
  - (II) who stand face to face with the glory of the Lord.

**D. THE MINISTRY: ITS DEMANDS, 4:1-6 - Introduction:** the demands of the ministry are clear and are to be heeded by every minister of Christ.

**2 Cor. 4:1-6** **Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; [2] But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. [3] But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: [4] In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. [5] For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. [6] For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**

- 1. **(4:1) Ministry—Steadfastness—Faint Not:** the ministry demands constancy, demands that one never faint. The words **“faint not”** (ouk egkakoumen) mean not to give up, not to lose heart, not to become discouraged, spiritless, fainthearted, despondent, or discouraged. The minister, Paul, did not quit or give up for any reason, not even because of persecution or weariness and exhaustion. There are two reasons why he did not quit.
  - a. The minister did not quit because of the greatness of his ministry: **“We have this ministry.”** “This ministry” refers to the great task God had given him, the task of proclaiming the new covenant the ministry of the glorious gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ, that men can now be saved and forgiven their sins and redeemed to live forever in the glory of God.

- b. The minister does not quit because he has **received mercy**. Paul had personally received the mercy of God. God's mercy had forgiven his sins and given him life forever with Christ.

**2. (4:2) Ministry—Word of God—Dishonesty—Deceit—Preaching:** the ministry demands honesty and integrity in life and ministry. Note four points.

- a. The minister is to renounce dishonesty, **“the hidden things of dishonesty.”**  
The word “dishonesty” (aischunes) means shame, disgrace, scandal. The hidden or secret things that shame and disgrace men, that cause scandals are to have no part in the minister's life. The minister is to live an open and above-board life, a life of honesty and integrity.
- b. The minister is not to **“walk in craftiness”** (panourgiai). The word means trickery, cunning, cleverness, shrewdness, evil design. It means a man who will do anything and use any means to get what he wants. Note the minister is not to “walk” this way; he is not to walk using and misusing people, circumstances, events, and things for his own end. The minister of God is to walk as Jesus walked.
- c. The minister is not to handle **“the word of God deceitfully”** (dolountes). The word means to falsify, adulterate, corrupt, deceive, ensnare. God is the Authority of the Word of God. The minister is only the spokesman for God; therefore, he is not to misuse it in any way.
- d. The minister is not to add the ideas, traditions, philosophies, or speculations of men to the Word of God. Neither is he to take away portions of Scripture, denying that they are the Word of God; nor is he to neglect, ignore, or keep silent about some part of God's Word. The minister of God is not to distort the Word of God in any form or fashion.
- e. The minister proclaims the **truth honestly**, openly, and purely. He is to be both humble and receptive before God in his study and prayer life. He is not to be wise in his own conceits. And when he goes before people, he is to proclaim and teach the truth as God's Word reveals it.

**3. (4:3-4) Ministry—Gospel—Satan:** the ministry demands openness, never hiding the gospel.

- a. If the gospel was hid to men, if there were men who did not believe...
  - (I) it was not due to Paul's faint-heartedness. He had proclaimed the gospel with all the energy he had and under the most severe circumstances. He had been as steadfast as a man could be.
  - (II) it was not due to Paul's living an impure life nor to Paul's mishandling of the Word of God.
- b. Paul says that the gospel was and is hid to men for two terrible reasons.

- (I) The gospel is “hid” to men because they are “**lost**” (apollumenois). The word means perishing. The word “perishing” means to be lost, to be in the process of being destroyed or ruined, corrupted and put to death.

**The thing to note is this:** when a person is on the road to perdition, he has turned away from God and is pointed in the opposite direction. He is travelling away from God. He has deliberately separated himself from God and severed all ties with God. Therefore he cannot see God, nor the things of God. His face and eyes are not turned toward the gospel, but toward the world that perishes.

- (II) The gospel is hid to men because the “**god of this world**” has blinded the minds of those who do not believe. Note several facts.

(A) The “god of this world” is Satan

(B) Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers lest they should believe the gospel. This is Satan’s purpose: to keep people from believing the gospel. How does he blind a person’s mind? By appealing to his flesh, by enticing him with the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-16). If Satan can get a person to focus his life upon himself and the world, the person will become enslaved to his flesh and the things of the world.

(C) The point is simply this: Satan blinds the mind of a person by appealing to his flesh (sensual appetites) and hooking him on the pleasures of sin. And the more he becomes hooked, the blinder and harder he becomes to the gospel.

- (III) Jesus Christ is the “**image of God**.” When Jesus Christ came to earth, men were able to see God, to see exactly what God is like:

(A) loving, compassionate, caring

(B) healing, restoring, saving

(C) correcting, disciplining, controlling

(D) holy, righteous, just

**4. (4:5) Ministry—Preaching:** the ministry demands servitude, demands that we preach Christ and serve man, not self.

a. The minister must preach Christ, not self.

b. The minister must serve men, not self. Note the word “servant” (doulos): it means bond-slave. The minister is to be a slave to others, serving and ministering to them. Note why: for Jesus’ sake. What does this mean?

c. Jesus became our servant or slave. Therefore, all ministers are to become servants to men, to sacrifice themselves in serving men for the sake of Jesus Christ—because Jesus Christ did it for the minister. No higher service can be

done than to serve others for the sake of Christ, the sake of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

5. **(4:6) Ministry:** the ministry demands personal conversion, demands the very presence of God Himself shining in one's heart. The reason Paul preached Christ is that God had shined in his heart, that is, God had actually entered his heart and converted him.

#### **E. THE MINISTRY: ITS SUSTAINING AND ENDURING SPIRIT, 4:7-18 -**

**Introduction:** the diligent minister faces trial after trial. The minister needs a strong spirit of endurance. He needs a very special power to sustain him. This passage deals with his enduring spirit, with the things that do sustain him.

**2 Cor. 4:7-18** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. [8] We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; [9] Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; [10] Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. [11] For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. [12] So then death worketh in us, but life in you. [13] We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; [14] Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. [15] For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. [16] For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. [17] For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; [18] While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

1. **(4:7) Indwelling Presence—God:** the presence of God sustains the minister. This is a precious, yet very striking verse. “**This treasure**” refers back to the former verse (2 Corinthians. 4:6). It is the presence of God Himself shining in the believer's earthly vessel, in his heart, in his earthly body.

**The point is this:** the treasure of God's presence is in this earthly vessel, this earthly body that is ever so weak and frail. God does so much for us, therefore, God and God alone gets all the credit, and He is thereby praised (2 Corinthians. 4:15). As the verse says, the power is of God, not of us.

2. **(4:7-9) God, Power:** the power of God sustains the minister.

- a. The minister (and believers) of God face all kinds of trouble and difficult situations in life. However, he has one great resource: the presence and power of God within him. The minister (or believer) may be troubled on every side, but God's power saves him from distress.
    - (I) **“Troubled”** (thlibomenoi) means to be pressed, squeezed, oppressed, hedged in, pressured.
    - (II) **“Distressed”** (stenochoroumenoi) means to be kept in a narrow, cramped place; to be crushed.
    - (III) **“On every side”** means in every imaginable way and place and occasion.
  - b. The minister (or believer) may be perplexed, but God's power saves him from despair.
    - (I) **“Perplexed”** (aporoumenoi) means to be at a loss, to be doubting, not knowing, questioning, wondering which way to go, what to do, what to say unable to find an answer.
    - (II) **“Despair”** (exaporoumenoi) means to be hopeless, to have no confidence or assurance, to be without any sense of security.
    - (III) The minister is often perplexed, not understanding why this or that happened, what should be done or said, how the situation should be handled, and on and on. Sometimes situations are so puzzling that he is almost in despair. But again, the presence and power of God steps in and saves the minister from despair. God gives him hope and stirs his confidence and shows him the way out. God never allows him to be overcome by despair.
  - c. The minister (or believer) may be **persecuted**, but he is **not forsaken**. The persecution may be behind his back or to his face. However, God never forsakes, abandons, or deserts his dear servant. God never leaves him alone.
  - d. The minister (or believer) may be **cast down**, but he is **never destroyed**.
    - (I) **“Cast down”** (kataballomenoi) means to be smitten down, struck down, or knocked down.
    - (II) **“Destroyed”** (apollumenoi) means to perish, to die, to strike out.
    - (III) The minister may be struck down, but he is never allowed to strike out; he may be knocked down, but he is never knocked out.
3. (4:10-12) **Minister—Self-Denial—Cross**: the spirit of dying daily sustains the minister. Note three points.
- a. The minister is to bear in his own body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and he is to do it all the time—continually—as he walks about day by day. Simply put, Paul **denied himself in order to live for Christ**.



Paul died to self. **“Dying”** means the sense in which Jesus was dying every day. When Jesus came to earth, He came to secure a perfect righteousness for man. To do this, He had to live a sinless life; He had to struggle against sin every day. He had to die to self, to deny His own desires and live for God. He had to struggle against the daily temptations which men face, and He had to conquer them all.

- b. The minister is to die to self so that Christ might be seen in his body. Paul denied himself so that the presence of Christ could be seen conquering the flesh, temptations, and trials of life.
- c. The minister is to die to self so that others might receive life. When a minister dies to self, others see the power of Christ. They are led to turn to Christ in order to receive the same conquering life and power.

4. **(4:13) Minister—Faith:** the spirit of faith sustains the minister. When nothing else sustains the minister, his faith will sustain him.

By faith the minister believes the promises of God: he stays in the ministry and continues to speak just as David and Paul did. The minister believes with all his heart...

- (I) that the presence of God will sustain him.
- (II) that the power of God will sustain him.
- (III) that the spirit of dying daily will sustain him.

5. **(4:14) Minister—Resurrection, The:** the hope of being resurrected sustains the minister. The minister bears in his body the “dying of the Lord Jesus” (denies himself and dies daily) for one great reason: he knows that he is to die some day. Because God raised Jesus from the dead, the minister has the promise that God will likewise raise him up at the appointed time.

6. **(4:15) Minister:** the need of others and the glory of God sustain the minister. Note the words **“all things.”** The minister of God bears all things for two reasons: for the sake of the people and for the glory of God.

- a. As he ministers to people, they learn more and more about God. They experience more and more of God’s wonderful grace and blessings.
- b. The result is a marvelous happening: the people joy and rejoice in God and God is thereby glorified.

7. **(4:16) Minister—Inner Man:** the inner man being renewed day by day sustains the minister. Note three significant points.

- a. The minister does not faint he does not give up or quit; he does not lose heart or become discouraged; he does not allow anything to defeat him. Nothing,

absolutely nothing can drive him from the ministry nor keep him from preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- b. The minister's outward man perishes every day as it was wearing out and wasting away every day. It was in the process of perishing and dying.
- c. The minister's "inner man" is renewed day by day. The inner man is...
  - (I) the spirit of man that has been "born again" or created anew by the Spirit of God (John 3:3, 5-6).
  - (II) the spirit of man that was dead in trespasses and sins until it was quickened and made alive by Christ (Ephesians. 2:2, 4-5).
  - (III) the "new creature" (2 Corinthians. 5:17) and the "new man" (Ephesians. 4:24; Col. 3:10).
  - (IV) the highest and deepest part of a man's being where the Holy Spirit dwells.
  - (V) the "hidden man of the heart" (1 Peter 3:4).

**8. (4:17-18) Glory—Minister:** the hope of glory sustains the minister. Note two significant points.

- a. The minister's afflictions are light when compared to the glory he shall receive in Heaven.
- b. The minister's eyes are not focused on the physical and temporal, but on the spiritual and eternal. The word "look" (scopeo) means to focus one's eyes and attention on a set goal or end. The minister does not look at the things which are seen (the physical and corruptible), but at things which are not seen (the spiritual and incorruptible).

#### **F. THE MINISTRY: ITS HOPE AND THE ASSURANCE OF AN ETERNAL HOME, 5:1-10 - Introduction: Hope—Heaven—Death—Reward—Body:**

**2 Cor. 5:1-10** For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2] For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: [3] If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. [4] For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. [5] Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. [6] Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: [7] (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) [8] We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. [9] Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. [10] For we must all

**appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.**

What is Paul talking about in this passage? Is he referring to a temporary body, or to the eternal heavenly house (building) which is to be given to the believer when he dies and goes to heaven?

It seems Paul is speaking about the eternal house or form we shall have in heaven. However, we also know that at our death the body goes to the grave to await the resurrection of the body we are to receive when Christ returns. That body is not in heaven; it is to be created when Christ returns. The believer does not receive his resurrected body until he is raised from the dead at Christ's return (1 Corinthians. 15:12; 1 Thessalonians. 4:14). It seems most likely that Paul is referring to our eternal form as he states "an house is not made with hands, **eternal** in the heavens."

If Paul is talking about receiving a body when he passes from this life into heaven, then he is talking about receiving a temporary body, a body that will house his spirit up until the resurrection. However, Scripture has nothing to say about a temporary body, although God may actually give us a temporary body when we die and go to heaven. There is nothing to keep Him from doing it, but Scripture is silent about the matter. It is one of the subjects that is not necessary for our faith and salvation; it is one of the "exceeding riches" that God has locked up in Himself and that He is going to show and lavish upon us in the eternal ages to come (Ephesians. 2:7). What Scripture teaches is what Paul is saying here: the believer goes immediately to be with the Lord at death. And, as already pointed out, the Scripture also teaches that the believer's earthly body is to be raised from the dead and perfected when Christ returns (cp. 1 Corinthians. 15:1-58).

In light of this, curiosity naturally asks what happens to us when we die? How do we exist before God: with a temporary body or only as a disembodied or bodyless spirit? Note two facts.

1. Scripture is clear: when we die, we immediately go to heaven to be with the Lord.
2. Scripture is not clear about how we exist between death and the resurrection. Shall we be disembodied spirits or be given temporary bodies? Any comments about the matter are pure speculation, for Scripture is silent. However, two things must always be kept in mind about God.
  - a. God can cause us to exist as spirits without bodies. True, it is difficult for man to imagine a person without a body, but God can do it if that is the method He has chosen to use.
  - b. God can also give us temporary bodies if He chooses. Man can more easily imagine this, for he lives within a temporary body now. God could even

cause the temporary bodies to become a part of our eternal bodies that we are to receive at the resurrection.

- 3. (5:1-4) Heaven:** the first assurance is personal conviction—the conviction that we have a hope, that we have a house in heaven. Note the word **“know.”** The conviction is firm and sure. It is not the kind of conviction that hopes something is true. It is the conviction of knowledge. Paul knew beyond question: he had a building, a house in heaven.
- a.** The earthly body is pictured as a tent that houses man’s spirit, his real self, during its earthly pilgrimage. But the tent (body) is ever so frail and temporary; it goes through the wears and tears of this life, and it deteriorates and eventually dissolves. The believer’s body dies (2 Peter 1:13-14). However, the Christian believer never fears, for he is to receive a building from God, a spiritual house made eternal in the heavens. The heavenly house lasts forever; it does not have to suffer wear and tear. It is not corruptible: it does not age, fade, deteriorate, or waste away; and he never has to leave it. This is the believer’s glorious hope. However, while in the world—while in his present tabernacle (body)—the believer has two significant experiences.
  - b.** He groans for his house in heaven. Note how deeply Paul desired his heavenly home: he groaned and earnestly desired.
  - c.** The word **“clothed”** means that he wanted to be clothed with his heavenly home and fitted for it just as though he was being fitted and clothed with a suit.
  - d.** He groans both for release and for immortality (2 Corinthians. 5:2-3). Paul does not just groan to be naked, that is, to die and be released from the trials of this world; he is burdened to be clothed with the immortality of his heavenly home.
- 4. (5:5) God—Holy Spirit:** the second assurance is God—God guarantees that we shall receive immortality, shall receive our immortal house in heaven, guarantees it by the Holy Spirit. Paul had just said that he knew he had a house in heaven. How could he be so certain? Because of God.

God has **“wrought”** us, that is, made us, worked us out, fitted us, fashioned us to undergo an immortal change. How? By entering our lives God puts His presence and power into our bodies and we become immortal or eternal beings.

- 5. (5:5-8) Holy Spirit—Assurance:** the third assurance is the Holy Spirit—He enhances the knowledge that we have a house in heaven. He does three significant things for us.

- a. The Holy Spirit stirs confidence and courage to face the present life. The word **“confidence”** (tharroumen) means courage, or to be cheered up. No matter what we face, the Holy Spirit stirs the courage to face it all. How? Again, note the word **“knowing.”** The Holy Spirit enhances our knowledge...
  - (I) that our present home is the body, but it is temporary and passing. Therefore all trials and problems will quickly pass away.
  - (II) that we are now absent from the Lord. The idea is that we are to be with Him. The Holy Spirit stirs a longing within us to be with Him. And that longing gives us courage to march on through this life.
- b. The Holy Spirit stirs faith within us. Knowing that our present home (body) is only temporary—that we are soon to move to our heavenly home.
- c. The Holy Spirit stirs great courage, even a preference to be with the Lord. This is a crucial point, extremely important for day to day living. The Holy Spirit not only gives courage to live day by day; He gives the courage to die. He even stirs within the faithful believer a preference to be **“present with the Lord.”** To love not even our own lives unto death.

**6. (5:9-10) Judgment:** the fourth assurance is judgment—judgment stirs the longing to please God and to receive our heavenly home. Judgment stirs diligent **“labor”** (philotimoumetha) in order to please God. The word means to constantly aim, to be constantly ambitious, to strive earnestly. Paul says that he is to be judged; therefore, he worked constantly that he might **be accepted** (euairetoi) by God. The word means well pleasing in the sense of being accepted.

#### **G. THE MINISTRY: ITS COMPELLING MOTIVES, 5:11-16 - Introduction:**

What is it that drives and compels a person to minister? This passage discusses the compelling motives of the ministry or the minister.

**2 Cor. 5:11-16** **Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. [12] For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. [13] For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. [14] For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: [15] And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. [16] Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.**

1. **(5:11) Fear—Reverence—Witness: the fear of the Lord compels the minister.** The word “**terror**” (phobon) means fear, reverence, standing in awe of the Lord. It does not mean the kind of terror or fear that trembles and shrinks back from God. Paul knows he is to face the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians. 5:10); therefore he fears the Lord: holds Him in the highest regard and respect, reverences Him, stands in awe of His high and exalted position.
2. **(5:12) Minister—Testimony: the testimony of a genuine heart compels the minister.** Paul was under heavy attack; a barrage of charges were being launched against him by some in the church. Note two points.
  - a. Just about everything Paul has said to the Corinthians up to this point has concerned the ministry, in particular his own personal ministry. By talking about himself, there was a possibility that some would again jump on his case and charge him with boasting in himself.

As stated, he trusted his credentials were well known by now. His purpose had been to give the faithful believers a way to answer his critics. The only way to solve the controversy surrounding him was to deal with it. They needed to get the matter settled, for the church needed to get back to the ministry of reaching and growing people for Christ.

- b. Those who opposed Paul (the minister) were those who gloried in their appearance and not in heart.

But note: their hearts were not upon Christ. Their hearts were upon themselves. They were not glorying in Christ and what He had done for them, but in self and what they were doing. They felt as though they were above others: more privileged, more gifted, more acceptable, more intelligent, more blessed, more spiritual. Their profession was false, for it was not of the heart.

3. **(5:13) Minister: the glory of God and the needs of people compel the minister.** One of the charges against Paul was that he was **beside himself** (exestemen), that he was mad, insane, out of his mind. It means to act in the extreme, abnormally, unlike what others act. Paul was charged with being a “fool” for Christ. Note that he accepts the charge as true. But he says it is true for two reasons:
  - a. Paul was a fool for God’s glory.
  - b. Paul was a fool for the sake of people—to meet their needs.

- 4. (5:14-16) Minister, Justification: the love of Christ compels the minister.** The word “**constrain**” (sunechei) means to press, to hold together, to hold fast. The love of Christ presses, compels, and stirs Paul to hold fast to the ministry.
- a.** All of these areas of the Lord’s life are important, critically so, but they are not the foundation of our salvation and ministry. The foundation of the believer’s life is the love of Christ. The love of Christ is seen in three acts.
  - b.** Christ died that all persons might die in Him. In the Greek this verse says:
    - (I)** “One died for all” (heis huper panton apethanen).
    - (II)** “Therefore, all died” (ara hoi pantes apethanon).
    - (A)** Note the exact words: “One died for all; therefore, all died.” Paul is saying...
      - (1)** that Jesus Christ died for all men; therefore all men died when He died.
      - (2)** that since Christ died for all, then it follows that all men died in Him.
      - (3)** that all men were represented in Christ when He died.
      - (4)** that all men are counted as having died when Christ died.
      - (5)** that Jesus Christ died the ideal death, the death that stands for all men.
    - (B)** Of course, this is simply saying the same thing in different ways so that we can more easily grasp exactly what Paul is saying. But note: the word “all” is not teaching universal salvation, that is, that every human being is saved by the death of Christ. This passage has to be kept in context with the rest of Scripture; therefore “all” means all who are redeemed by faith in the death of Christ by accepting what Christ has done on their behalf. Very simply stated, when a person believes that Jesus Christ died for him, God takes that person’s faith and counts it as his death in Christ.
    - (C)** Christ died that all men might live for Him. Christ died that men might **not** live for themselves. Most persons are self-centered, focusing most of their thoughts and efforts upon meeting their own needs, upon satisfying themselves. A person must take care of himself, but he is not to live for himself. Christ died so that we would not live for ourselves.
    - (D)** To create a new man: a man that no longer judges after the flesh. Christ died so that we would no longer judge men after the flesh, no longer judge men to be only fleshly, human, earthly beings. Men are also spiritual beings who are to exist forever.

## **H. THE MINISTRY: ITS MESSAGE, 5:17-6:2**

**2 Cor. 5:17-6:2** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. [18] And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. [20] Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. [21] For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

[6:1] We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. [2] (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

1. **(5:17) New Creature—New Man—Regeneration:** the message is one of regeneration, the making of a “new creature.”
  - a. What does it mean for a man to become a “new creature”? Very simply, it means just what the Scripture says: the man actually becomes a new creature—his whole being, nature, life, and behavior changes.
  - b. How does a person become a new creature? Note the words of this Scripture: **“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.”** It is being “in Christ” that makes a person a new creature. When a person truly believes in Christ, God places and positions him in Christ, in all that Christ is. He is counted and considered to be “in Christ,” reckoned and credited as “in Christ.”
2. **(5:18-19) Reconciliation:** the message is one of reconciliation—a world of men can be brought back to God. Reconciliation means to change thoroughly, to change from enmity to friendship, to bring together, to restore. The idea is that two persons who should have been together all along are brought together; two persons who had allowed something to come between them are restored and reunited.
  - a. This is the point of God’s great love or reconciliation. He did not reconcile and save us when we were righteous and good. He reconciled and saved us when we were enemies, ignoring and rejecting Him. It is because we are sinners and enemies that we need to be reconciled.
  - b. Note how God wrought or worked out reconciliation. God did three things to make reconciliation possible.
    - (I) First, God came to earth “in Christ,” that is, in the person of Christ. As this verse says, **“God was in Christ.”** This is a phenomenal statement. This means that...
      - (A) when Jesus Christ came to earth, God Himself came to earth.



(B) when Jesus Christ bore sin for man, God Himself was bearing sin for man.

(C) when Jesus Christ died for man, God Himself was dying for man.

(D) This means that God Himself was in the person of Jesus Christ reaching out to man—that God himself had come to earth to reconcile man.

(II) Second, God does not impute sin to men. The word “**impute**” (logizomenos) means to reckon, count, and credit. It means to charge or put to a person’s account. If God does not impute or charge sin against men, then it means that He forgives their sins. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, God was in Christ dying for the sins of men. God was making it possible for men to be freed from the guilt and condemnation of their sins.

(III) Third, God has **committed the word of reconciliation to us**. God has not left the word of reconciliation up to men. God has taken the initiative. God calls and equips ministers of God to proclaim the word of reconciliation. He has done everything possible to reconcile men.

**3. (5:20) Ministers—Preaching—Message:** the message of reconciliation is committed to ambassadors. This is a great passage for ministers of the gospel. Note two points.

a. Ministers and all other believers are given the highest of titles: they are “ambassadors for Christ.” The “**ambassadors**” (presbeuomen) are persons who are sent forth as official envoys to represent the Sender and to announce the message of the Sender. Four things are always true about the ambassador.

(I) The ambassador belongs to the One who sent him out.

(II) The ambassador is commissioned to be sent out. He exists only for the purpose for which he was sent.

(III) The ambassador possesses all the authority and power of the One who sent him out.

(IV) The ambassador is sent forth with the message of the Sender.

b. We are given the greatest of messages: “**Be reconciled to God.**” The message is so critical that ministers are to “**beseech**” (deometha) men: beg, intreat, cry, and plead with them to be reconciled to God.

**4. (5:21) Jesus Christ, Death:** the message seems almost unbelievable—a message of redemption, that is, of a substitution for sin. This is one of the great verses proclaiming the unbelievable love of God. It is impossible for man to grasp how God could make Christ become sin for us. Yet, this is exactly what Scripture

declares: “[God] hath made him to be sin for us.” How was it possible for Christ to be made sin for us? Note the three points that are declared.

- a. Christ **“knew no sin.”** One of the very reasons Jesus Christ came to earth was to live a sinless and perfect life. As Man He never broke the law of God; He never went contrary to the will of God. He never sinned, not even once. He lived a perfect life. His righteousness could stand as the ideal righteousness for man. His righteousness could embrace and cover man. As the Ideal Pattern, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ could be counted as righteousness for man.
- b. God **“made Christ to be sin for us.”** This was absolutely necessary. Why? Because man needs more than just righteousness to stand perfect before God. To stand righteous before God is not enough, for man has already sinned. Man already stands guilty of breaking God’s law, and the judgment and condemnation of death has already taken effect upon man. Therefore, **the condemnation and judgment against sin had to be taken care of.** This, too, God did. God did it by laying all the sins of man upon Christ—all the guilt and condemnation of sin. God placed all sin upon Christ and let Him bear it all Himself. Christ became sin for us and faced the judgement of sin.
- c. God’s purpose was **that we might be made the righteousness of God in Christ.**

What does this mean? Very simply, when a person believes in Jesus Christ—really believes—God takes that man’s faith and counts it as righteousness. The man is not righteous, but God considers and credits the man’s faith as righteousness.

5. **(6:1-2) Decision:** the message demands a decision. Note three facts.
- a. Ministers are co-workers with God. They actually have the great privilege of working together with God. The minister **“beseeches,”** that is, urges, begs, and pleads with men to receive the wonderful grace of God.
  - b. The message of redemption is not to be received in vain. A person must not hear the message with empty, deaf ears. Redemption and salvation are available. God has made it possible—He even begs and pleads with men—to be saved; but a person can receive the message with empty ears and heart to no effect.
  - c. The decision to be saved is to be made now. Now is the only reasonable time to be saved. There may be no tomorrow; in fact, there may not even be one hour left for any of us. Isaiah 49:8

## I. THE MINISTRY: ITS CALL TO CONSISTENCY AND ENDURANCE, 6:3-10

**2 Cor. 6:3-10** Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: [4] But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, [5] In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; [6] By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, [7] By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, [8] By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; [9] As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; [10] As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

1. **(6:3) Ministry—Faithfulness:** Paul had one great concern—consistency, to offend in nothing. Paul wanted his life and ministry to be so consistent that he would never give any reason for anyone to reject or to turn sour on the Lord Jesus Christ. The word “**offense**” (proskope) means to stumble, to strike against. Paul was careful; he guarded his behavior and conduct lest he cause a person to stumble and fall and reject the gospel of Christ.
2. **(6:4) Endurance:** Paul was consistent in endurance. “**Patience**” (hupomone) means steadfast endurance. Endurance is the supreme quality, the very backbone of consistency. Unless a man endures, he will never be consistent, not in a corruptible and sinful world.
  - a. **Paul’s point is this:** he has lived a life of endurance for the sake of the ministry.
  - b. And he lists all the areas in which he has endured. They are covered in the rest of this passage. Note how the areas span all the areas of a minister’s life and ministry.
3. **(6:4-5) Ministry:** Paul was consistent and enduring in physical and mental suffering and stress.
  - a. Paul endured “**afflictions**” (thlipseis): pressure, strain, tension that comes both from within and without.
  - b. Paul endured “**necessities**” (anagkai): inescapable hardship, difficulties, privation, and pain of life.
  - c. Paul endured “**distresses**” (stenochoriai): straits, calamities, tight places, inescapable situations. It is the picture of being cornered and being unable to escape; a picture of having no room or place to turn, of being forced to confront the situation or else being utterly devastated and defeated.

- d. Paul endured **“stripes”**: scourgings, beatings, lashings, whippings. This was a savage, excruciating punishment. The whip (phagellon) was made of leather straps with two small balls attached to the end of each strap. The balls were made of rough lead or sharp bones or spikes, so that they would cut deeply into the flesh. Paul’s hands were tied to a post above his head and he was scourged. It was the custom for the prisoner to be lashed until he was judged near death by the presiding centurion (Jewish trials allowed only forty lashes.) The criminal’s back was, of course, nothing more than an unrecognizable mass of torn flesh. Paul was scourged at least eight times—just imagine! Eight times—five times by the Jews and three times by the Gentiles (2 Cor. 11:24-25).
  - e. Paul endured **“imprisonments.”** Paul was arrested and imprisoned several times: in Philippi (Acts 16), Jerusalem, Cesarea, and Rome. The early church Christian, Clement of Rome (A.D. 96), says that Paul was imprisoned seven times throughout the whole span of his ministry. When the believer, minister or layman, faces imprisonment for Christ, the call of the hour is for consistency: he must endure despite the threat.
  - f. Paul endured **“tumults”**: mob uprisings and attacks. Paul often faced angered mobs: at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:50); Lystra (Acts 14:19); Philippi (Acts 16:19); Ephesus (Acts 19:29); and at Jerusalem (Acts 21:30). Mob uprisings present one of the most difficult and frightening situations imaginable for a believer, for a mob cannot be controlled by reason.
  - g. Paul endured **“labors”** (kopois): toil, laborous work to the point of exhaustion. As we study the life of Paul, one striking characteristic about Paul’s ministry becomes clear: he never stopped preaching, teaching, or ministering until he just had to have rest.
  - h. Paul endured **“watchings,”** that is, sleepless nights. As stated, the record of his life indicates that he arose early and rested only as he needed. He spent nights in prayer, and sometimes found the weight of the churches on his mind so much that he could sleep little if any.
  - i. Paul endured **“fastings.”** This means not only deliberate fastings, but being so involved in his work that he forgot to eat or else chose to keep working instead of eating.
4. **(6:6-7) Ministry:** Paul was consistent and enduring in spiritual growth and behavior. Nine areas in particular are covered.
- a. Paul endured in **“purity”** (hagnotetic): innocence, cleanliness; free from the dirt, filth, and pollution of the world; free from immoral and unjust behavior and motive.

- b. Paul endured in knowledge:** the study and understanding of God’s revelation and Word. Paul did not neglect the meditation and study of God’s Word and revealed will.
  - c. Paul endured in “longsuffering”** (makrothumia): patience, bearing and suffering a long time with people, especially when they were wrong, unjust, abusive, slanderous, and injurious.
  - d. Paul endured in “kindness”** (chrestotes): goodness and benevolence of heart and behavior. It is being kind and good, gentle and sweet even when others are abusive and evil, severe and hurting, unappreciative and unthankful.
  - e. Paul endured in the “Holy Spirit”:** in the presence, power, and gifts of the Spirit. The great proof that he was a true minister of God was the fact that the Spirit of God worked in and through him.
  - f. Paul endured in “unfeigned love”:** love that is not counterfeited or faked; love that is sincere, genuine, and pure; love that is unlimited, selfless, and sacrificial.
  - g. Paul endured in the “word of truth”:** the preaching and teaching of the truth, that is, of the gospel, of the Word of God. The minister must always preach the truth of God’s Word
  - h. Paul endured in the “power of God”:** the power of God was an absolute essential, for no human being could deliver men from sin, death, and judgment. Only God had the power to create men anew and give them eternal life. Therefore, Paul had to have the power of God upon his life and ministry if his labor was to be effective and bear genuine fruit.
  - i. Paul endured in “the armor of righteousness”:** the righteousness or justification of Christ; the power to live a life of righteousness; the acts of righteousness to which Christ had called him. All of these meanings are probably meant here. No matter what the attacks were or against which hand they attacked, from the right hand or the left hand, Paul resorted to righteousness.
- 5. (6:8) Ministry:** Paul was consistent and enduring in disregarding the world’s reaction. The world’s reaction to Paul is covered in three sharp contrasts.
- a. Paul was honored by some and dishonored by others.** Some showed respect; others did not. However, Paul stood and endured all dishonor done him.
  - b. Paul was talked about:** some spread evil reports about him; others good reports.
  - c. Paul was treated as a deceiver, yet he was as true as a person could be.** The word **“deceiver”** means to be an imposter, a false teacher, a quack. However, he stood fast: no matter the charge, he endured and continued right on preaching the truth.

**6. (6:9) Ministry:** Paul was consistent and enduring in the face of social abuse and persecution.

- a. Some treated Paul as unknown; others as well known. The word “**unknown**” means to dismiss, ignore, disregard. Some just wanted nothing to do with the minister of God. But others loved Paul because of what he had done for them.
- b. Paul was treated **as dying**, yet he lived. Some looked upon Paul as reckless and unwise, as a man who courted the disfavor, anger, and rejection of men. But others understood and knew the truth: he was a new creature in Christ, a man who had found eternal life, and he was compelled to share the glorious news with the world no matter the threat to his own safety.
- c. Paul was **chastened**, yet he was never killed. Paul was constantly suffering for the cause of Christ and he was willing to be chastened in order to help and reach people for Christ. No person and no thing could kill him until Christ was ready for him to depart for heaven.

**7. (6:10) Ministry:** Paul was consistent and enduring in being content—always. Three contrasts are again made.

- a. Paul was looked upon as sorrowful, yet he was always rejoicing. The worldly and carnal saw him as seldom if ever having fun. He never joined the crowd in their worldly pleasures and activities, nor did he seek the comforts and possessions of the world. He was viewed as an extremist in separation, a man who missed out on the pleasures and fun of living. However, Paul was filled with joy, true joy—the joy that comes from knowing where he had come from, why he was here, and where he was going.
- b. Paul was considered poor, yet he made many rich. He was a travelling missionary, a man who in the eyes of the world was homeless and without worldly possessions. Yet, he possessed the true wealth, the only wealth that can really make a man secure—the wealth of God’s presence and love and care.
- c. Paul was looked upon as having nothing, yet he possessed all things. He had no worldly goods, but he did have the promise of God: he was to possess all things very shortly, as soon as Jesus returned.

## **J. THE MINISTRY: ITS CALL TO SEPARATION AND CONSECRATION,**

**6:11-7:1 - Introduction:** when the subject of separation is approached, it is often dreaded. People just misunderstand what separation really means. To most people, spiritual separation means that they have to give up this, quit going there, and stop doing that. They feel it means never again having fun and enjoying the pleasures of this world. However, the greatest call in all the world is the call to separation and consecration. A person can be saved from this world and given absolute assurance

of living forever as a son or daughter of God. This is the truth of separation and consecration.

**2 Cor. 6:11-13** **O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. [12] Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. [13] Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.**

1. **(6:11-13) Heart, Open:** the first call is for an open heart. An open heart is an absolute essential for separation and consecration. No person is going to separate himself from the world and consecrate his life to God unless he has an open heart and mind.
  - a. Note how Paul's heart is open and full of affection for the Corinthian church.
    - (I) **"O ye Corinthians"**: he speaks directly to the church as though face to face, which always shows strong feelings.
    - (II) **"Our mouth is open to you"**: he has spoken openly and honestly, without hesitation or equivocation.
    - (III) **"Our heart is enlarged"**: his heart is open to them, and his affection has grown as he has been sharing the truth with them.
    - (IV) **"You are not straitened in us"**: the word **"straitened"** (stenochoreisthe) means to be restricted, to lack room, to be pressed or distressed, to be in anguish or straits. Paul says there was no lack of room in his heart for the church; no restriction against them. He held nothing against them. His heart was wide open to receive them.
  - b. Note how narrow and closed the church was to Paul vs. 12b. Their hearts were **straitened** (stenochoreisthe), restricted, closed, had little if any room for Paul.
  - c. Vs. 13 Paul appeals to them: **"recompense,"** that is, return to him the same enlarged and open heart that he has shown them. Note that Paul calls them his children; therefore, just as children open their hearts and receive their parents with affection, he begs them to receive him and his instructions with affection.

**2 Cor. 6:14-16** **Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? [15] And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? [16] And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**

**2. (6:14-16) Separation:** the second call is for believers not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. The word **“unequally yoked”** (heterozugountes) refers back to the Old Testament where God forbade the plowing of an ox with an ass (Deut. 22:10), or the union of different kinds of animals (Leviticus 19:19). The point is...

- a. that the union of a genuine believer with an unbeliever would be as different as the union between two kinds of animals.
- b. that the plowing through life of a believer with an unbeliever would be as difficult as the plowing of a field with an ox and an ass yoked together.
- c. Genuine believers are radically different from unbelievers. Five areas clearly reveal the fact. Note that each area is introduced with a question.

(I) Believers differ from unbelievers **in fellowship**. **“What fellowship does righteousness have with unrighteousness?”** The word **“unrighteousness”** (anomia) means lawlessness. Unbelievers have not and do not obey God. They live and do as they wish, not as God says.

(II) Believers differ from unbelievers **in communion**. **“What communion does light have with darkness?”** The word **“communion”** (koinonia) means to be in union, in partnership, in a bound fellowship, to be closely bound together. It means to be so closely bound together that there is open and mutual sharing: what one has belongs to the other. The point is clear: there is no such communion or union between light and darkness. They cannot co-exist.

(III) Believers differ in attachment and covenant. **“What concord does Christ have with Belial?”** Belial refers to Satan. The name “Belial” refers in particular to the worthlessness, wickedness, and impurity of Satan’s character. He is pictured as the head or leader of unbelievers; whereas Christ is pictured as the Head or Leader of believers.

(IV) Believers differ **in faith or belief**. **“What part does he who believes have with an infidel?”** The word **“infidel”** (apistou) means a person who has chosen to disbelieve in Christ and has deliberately rejected Him. The word **“part”** (meris) means a person’s portion, lot, sphere, realm, or participation in life. The believer’s faith is pictured as changing his whole life: his belief causes him to move in a whole new sphere or realm of life. He may live among unbelievers, living and working next to them, but he moves in a different realm. His purpose and behavior upon earth is different:

(V) Believers differ **in worship**. **“What agreement does the temple of God have with idols?”** The word **“agreement”** (sunkatathesis) means close agreement, a close union and bond of mind and spirit. There can be no agreement, no union, and no bond whatsoever between the temple of God and idols. Idolatry, above all else, is despised by God, for an idol is the substitute god of a man. An idol replaces God in a man’s life.



**2 Cor. 6:17-18** Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, [18] And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

**3. (6:17-18) Separation—Adoption:** the third call is for believers to come out from unbelievers and be separate. These two verses are a quote from the Old Testament (Isaiah 52:11-12). When God led Israel out of the Babylonian captivity, He told them to leave everything behind. They were to take nothing out of the defiled land, for they were to begin a totally new life under His leadership. Note three significant points.

- a. First, believers are to come out from among unbelievers and be separate. What does this mean? Believers are not to isolate themselves from unbelievers. Both believers and unbelievers are in the world, and they have to share the world together.
- b. Second, note that separation is a command of God Himself. **“Be ye separate, saith the Lord.”** There is to be no questioning, rationalizing, twisting, or ignoring of the command. God demands separation. In fact, separation is so important to God, it is one of the essentials to be received by God.
- c. Third, the results of separation are phenomenal.

(I) If we separate ourselves and consecrate our lives to God, **He receives us.**  
The word means to accept, approve, welcome.

(II) If we separate ourselves and consecrate our lives to God, **God will become our Father and adopt us as sons and daughters of His.**

**2 Cor. 7:1** Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

**4. (7:1) Separation:** the fourth call is for believers to cleanse themselves and to perfect holiness. God gives two of the most wonderful promises imaginable: to receive us and to adopt us as His sons and daughters. Therefore, God expects two things from us.

- a. God expects us to **cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.** All sin makes man dirty, but there are certain sins that especially pollute his flesh and other sins that especially pollute his spirit. Sins of the flesh would be such sins as immorality and drunkenness, and sins of the spirit would be such sins as hatred and jealousy.
- b. God expects us to **perfect holiness in the fear of God.** Note that this is continuous action. The word **“perfecting”** (epitelountes) is an aggressive

word demanding aggressive action. It means not only to practice but to finish and complete. The believer is, of course, to practice holiness. That is, he is to practice doing the things that will make him holy. But he is to do much more: he is to pursue holiness aggressively, seeking to perfect and complete holiness in his life.

#### **K. THE MINISTRY: ITS END—A TRANSFORMING REVIVAL, 7:2-16 -**

**Introduction:** this is the passage that covers the great revival that took place in Corinth. All the hurt that Paul had suffered from the Corinthians and all the hours of prayer that he had offered up in their behalf bore fruit—great fruit. The church repented. And God sent His Spirit of revival upon them. This is a great passage on the factors involved in revival.

**2 Cor. 7:2-16** Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. [3] I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you. [4] Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. [5] For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. [6] Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; [7] And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. [8] For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. [9] Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. [10] For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. [11] For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. [12] Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you. [13] Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all. [14] For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. [15] And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear

**and trembling ye received him. [16] I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.**

**1. (7:2-6) Revival—Minister—Faithfulness:** the revival had a solid foundation—a faithful minister. Faithfulness is an absolute essential if there is to be revival in the church. No church has ever experienced more problems than the Corinthian church. The Corinthian church was filled with division

**a. There was Paul's (the minister's) great desire to be received by the church** and be reconciled with those who opposed him. Note how he wrote about securing reconciliation.

(I) He tenderly and warmly appealed to the opposition: receive us. He let them know that he wanted reconciliation; he wanted to be received by them.

(II) He declared that he was innocent of the charges leveled against him.

(III) He had wronged no man: treated no man unjustly.

(IV) He had corrupted no man; he had not destroyed any person either morally or doctrinally. He had lived a moral life, always guarding himself; and he had preached and taught only the Word of God, not the ideas of other men nor of his own mind.

(V) He had defrauded no man; he had not taken advantage of anyone financially or morally. He had not stolen or confiscated money from the offerings nor taken advantage of families or friends who helped and supported his ministry.

**b. There was Paul's (the minister's) great love for the church.** Note how softly and tenderly Paul spoke to the church and to those who opposed him.

(I) **"I do not speak this to condemn you":** that is, I do not mean to accuse or down you while defending myself.

(II) **"You are in our hearts":** I love you—love you so much I would die with you and for you, even as I long to live with you.

**c. There was Paul's (the minister's) boldness in proclaiming the truth.**

Glance at the awful corruptions of the church listed above in this note and imagine the terrible accusations against Paul. Paul has written with boldness in both I and 2 Corinthians. The faithful minister of God must always confront error and corruption with a clear and bold proclamation of God's Word.

**d. There was Paul's (the minister's) confidence that the people would respond vs.4.** The word **"glorying"** means boasting. In the present passage the church has already repented and experienced revival, and Paul was actually experiencing the joy and rejoicing of the church's repentance. He was boasting in them, for his confidence in them had proven to be well-founded.

- e. **Vs. 5 There was Paul's (the minister's) faithfulness despite great trouble both within and without.** Very simply, Paul is saying that he, his flesh, never had rest from trouble.
- f. **Vs. 6 There was Paul's (the minister's) great sufficiency: God and His comfort.** When God's dear servants are under attack, God always meets the need of His servants. If a minister has ever needed God's presence and comfort, Paul did.

**2. (7:7-12) Sorrow, Godly; Worldly—Repentance—Revival:** the revival was stirred by godly sorrow and repentance. These verses give clear insight into what brings about revival within a corrupt and divided church, a church that is attacking its minister.

- a. **Vs. 7 The church had an earnest desire to correct its evil.** Many within longed, yearned, and ached to be reconciled to their minister.
  - (I) They mourned: wept, wailed, lamented over the sin within their midst and over the mistreatment of their minister.
  - (II) They now had a "**fervent mind**," a zeal to correct the sin and to defend Paul, their dear minister.
- b. **Vs. 8 The church experienced sorrow.** Paul had proclaimed the truth: the church needed to cleanse itself of sin and of false teachers. It needed to stop the attacks upon its minister. It needed to repent and get back to ministering for Christ instead of living in sin and being embroiled in controversy. The church would not let Paul stand in the pulpit, so he had proclaimed the truth in a letter to them. The letter had done its work: the church, at least a majority of its members, had been stricken with a spirit of sorrow.
- c. **Vs. 9 The minister rejoiced,** but note over what: Paul's rejoicing was not over the church being made to feel guilty and sorrowful, but **over the fact of their repentance.** He says that he would not damage or harm them in any way whatsoever.
- d. **The church's evidence of godly sorrow.** There are eight results of godly sorrow, of true repentance and revival mentioned in this verse.
  - (I) Carefulness or earnestness and **eagerness to correct the sin**, pollution, dirt, wrong, and hurt.
  - (II) The cleansing of oneself: the church **acknowledged its sin and repented.** The church turned away from sin and turned back to God. It dealt with the leader of the opposition against Paul (2 Corinthians. 7:12) and apparently dealt with and corrected all the wrongs in its midst.
  - (III) **Indignation with sin:** there was anger at the fact that the sin was ever allowed to seep into the church. In fact, there was a renewed anger at sin itself—a renewed commitment to combat sin with all the resources available in the power of God's Spirit.

**(IV) Fear: there was fear of the wrath of God** and fear that great damage had been done to the church and to one of God's great servants, and to the name of Christ.

**(V) Vehement desire: there was a longing desire to correct all the wrong done.**

**(VI) Zeal: there was a zealous commitment to tackle the task immediately** because so much wrong had been done. A strenuous and long effort was needed to overcome for Christ. There was also a zeal to lead all sinners to repentance.

**(VII) Revenge: this means vengeance, punishment, the avenging of wrong.** There was a renewed sense of justice, of **punishing and correcting wrong-doers**. This was necessary if some persons persisted in their sin and in attacking the minister, and in disturbing the fellowship of the church. There was a renewed commitment to allow no more open sin or underhanded divisiveness.

**(VIII) Innocence: the church, by its godly sorrow and repentance, had cleared itself.** Note the words **"in all things."** What a glorious picture of true repentance and of God's glorious grace. As corrupt and polluted as the church was, when they truly repented, God cleared them of all things!

**e. Vs. 12 The minister's purpose for reaching out to the church became clear to all.** This is a difficult verse to break down into clauses, even in the Greek. The point deals with Paul's purpose for staying after the Corinthians. He straightened out the mess in their midst. Paul had not written and called them to repentance...

**(I)** for the sake of the wrong-doer,

**(II)** nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong (himself),

**(III)** but for the sake of the church as a whole: that the church might learn its true character. It is a genuine church; the church does care for its minister and for righteousness and for the Lord's cause.

**3. (7:13-15) Revival—Titus:** the revival brought a renewed spirit to a young disciple. The points of the outline for the most part cover this discussion. Revival always stirs a renewed spirit within young disciples. This was true of Titus.

**a.** The young disciple, Titus, had the wonderful privilege of being one of God's instruments in bringing revival to the church. Being in the midst of a church-wide repentance (revival) had eased his concern for the church and given him a refreshed and rested spirit.

**b.** The young disciple had been informed of the church's good qualities by Paul. Apparently, Titus had heard Paul boast in the qualities and strengths of the

Corinthians many times. He had heard Paul share his expectation of God granting a revival of true repentance among the Corinthians. The young disciple had the privilege of witnessing the proof of a true church: the Corinthian church proved worthy of Paul's boasting.

- c. The young disciple joyed greatly over the church's submissive obedience to the proclamation of God's Word. Titus, no doubt, not only delivered the letter written by Paul, but he also proclaimed the Word of God himself. Note how the church responded: with fear and trembling. They realized that they stood before a holy and righteous God who loved them, but they also realized that a loving God demanded repentance or else the facing of judgment. They feared lest they fail to do all that God's wonderful love demanded.

**4. (7:16) Conclusion:** the minister held great confidence in the church since its revival and repentance. The church had experienced...

- a. a revival of unity: its problem of division was solved (1 Corinthians. 3:3).
- b. a revival of humility: its problem of pride was solved (1 Corinthians. 3:18; 1 Corinthians. 4:18).
- c. a revival of morality: its problem of tolerating immorality in its midst was solved (1 Corinthians. 5:1).
- d. a revival of honesty: its problem of tolerating the wrongdoing and cheating within its midst was corrected (1 Corinthians. 6:8).
- e. a revival of love: its problem of allowing questionable social practices and stumbling blocks in its midst was corrected (1 Corinthians. 8:1f).
- f. a revival of observing the Lord's Supper properly: its problem of allowing abuse of the Lord's Supper was corrected (1 Corinthians. 11:17f).
- g. a revival of exercising the spiritual gifts properly: its problem of allowing the abuse of the gifts was corrected (1 Corinthians. 12-14).
- h. a revival of doctrinal truth: the problem of allowing doctrinal error was handled and corrected (1 Corinthians. 15:12).

#### **IV. THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL COLLECTIONS, 8:1-9:15**

- A. THE CHALLENGE TO GIVE, 8:1-15 - Introduction:** the churches throughout Judea were suffering great poverty and needed help badly. Here Paul challenges the Church in Corinth in their giving.

**2 Cor. 8:1-15** **Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; [2] How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. [3] For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they**

were willing of themselves; [4] Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. [5] And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. [6] Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. [7] Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. [8] I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. [9] For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. [10] And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. [11] Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. [12] For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. [13] For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: [14] But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: [15] As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

1. **(8:1-5) Stewardship—Giving—Offerings:** the first challenge is to know the spirit of the Macedonians. The Roman province of Macedonia included all of northern Greece. The known churches of the region were Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. The first two are well known by every generation of Christians because of the two letters addressed to them in the New Testament. At one time, the Macedonian province had been known for its natural resources. But down through the centuries the area had been ravaged by war, and Rome had stripped it of its wealth. Because of this the churches of the area were somewhat poor in material wealth. But note a glorious fact: they were extremely wealthy in the grace of God. God had bestowed an abundance of grace upon the churches—so much grace that Paul is able to use them as a dynamic example of God’s grace. They knew the grace, the favor, and the blessings of God in a very, very special way.
2. **(8:6-7) Stewardship—Giving:** the second challenge is to excel in the same spirit of giving as the Macedonians. Sometime earlier the Corinthian church had begun to take up an offering for the poor churches of Judea, but something had happened that caused the church to stop the project. Just what is not actually known, but it was probably all the trouble and problems covered in the letters of 1 and 2 Corinthians. Since the church had experienced revival, it was now time

for the offering project to be completed. Very simply, Paul says two things that apply to every church.

The grace of giving is to be completed in you. The Corinthians were to financially support the Lord's work. They were to support the ministry of meeting the needs of desperate people and of proclaiming the gospel to a lost and dying world. This glorious privilege is clearly seen when it is remembered that God has not given to angels the privilege of supporting His work; God has committed this grace, this privilege only to men.

The other graces abound in you; therefore, the grace of giving is to abound in you. The Corinthians had an abundance of spiritual resources, especially the gifts that involved...

**a. faith:** the trust in God that enabled them to walk through life victoriously and to serve God faithfully.

**b. utterance:** the ability to share the gospel and the doctrines of God's Word.

**c. knowledge:** the understanding of God's Word.

**d. diligence:** the energy and zeal to carry on the ministry of the Lord Jesus.

**e. love to us:** the care for the minister of God who serves Christ so faithfully.

Because the church was so strong in these gifts, they needed to abound in the gift of giving as well. Giving and helping others in their desperate need was as much a duty as any other responsibility.

3. **(8:8) Stewardship—Giving:** the third exhortation is to prove the sincerity of your love. Note that Paul does not command the Corinthians to give. If giving is forced or coerced, it benefits nothing; it does not please God. God is pleased only with gifts that are willingly and cheerfully given. He blesses only those who willingly help others.
4. **(8:9) Stewardship—Giving—Jesus Christ, Humiliation; Condescension:** the fourth challenge is to know the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Above all others, Jesus Christ demonstrates not only that we are to give, but how we are to give.
5. **(8:10) Stewardship—Giving:** the fifth challenge is to remember your own past record. As mentioned above, the Corinthians had undertaken the mission project of meeting the needs of the poor churches in Judea, but they had backed off the project when divisiveness had reared its ugly head in the church. Now that they had experienced revival, Paul gives his advice: pick up the mission project again. **“This is expedient for you”:** expedient and beneficial for you personally and for your ministry. Recommitting yourselves to missions will stir God to bless the church.



- a. Note that the church had been forward, that is, zealous in undertaking the mission project about a year before. Since the revival of recommitment, they should be even more zealous to launch a ministry of missions for the Lord.

**6. (8:11-12) Stewardship—Giving:** the sixth challenge is to give readily and willingly. Note: Paul is no longer giving advice; he is now charging the church to give itself to missions and to undertake this particular mission project.

- a. **Give yourselves to missions. This is implied,** understood. Paul is dealing with one mission project, but underlying the whole discussion is the absolute necessity for a permanent commitment to missions.
- b. **Finish the mission.** The Corinthian church had begun the project; they needed to finish it. The church is to reach out in mission projects all over the world, and it is to finish the projects. Remember that Jerusalem was a foreign field to the Corinthians.
- c. **Give readily and willingly**—lay hold of “a willing mind.” Note that this is the first requirement when a person gives. Above all else, he is to give willingly.
- d. **God is going to judge us for what we give.** The idea is this: in the day of judgment God is going to look at what we gave and at what we kept back.

**7. (8:13-15) Stewardship—Giving:** the seventh challenge is to meet the needs of one another—equally. It is critical to note that these verses are not dealing with possessions or property, not with what a person has, but with needs.

- a. One person’s need is not to be eased while another person has a need.
- b. Each need is to be equally met. This is an explosive principle, for it goes contrary to what society practices. It eliminates the hoarding and keeping of goods beyond our needs.
- c. The Old Testament Scripture supports this principle (Exodus 16:18). When God miraculously fed Israel with the manna from the sky, the people were to gather only what they needed. If they gathered too much and attempted to hoard and put it back, it spoiled overnight. If a person was unable to gather enough due to some illness or inability, his need was either met by the help of others or by God Himself.

**B. THE MEN WHO HANDLE THE COLLECTION, 8:16-24 - Introduction:** men who handle collections in the church have an important function, very important. They hold a position that is very visible. People are always aware of the persons who handle their money. Therefore, within the church it is important that such persons be trustworthy and moral; that they live a good and clean life, and that they have a strong Christian testimony.

**2 Cor. 8:16-24** But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. [17] For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. [18] And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; [19] And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: [20] Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: [21] Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. [22] And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. [23] Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. [24] Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

1. **8:16-17) Stewardship—Offerings:** men who handle collections (ushers) care for the church, earnestly care. Paul says that Titus had the **“same earnest care”** for the Corinthian church that he had. Imagine caring for the church as much as Paul cared! The word **“earnest”** means zeal. Men who handle collections must have a zealous concern for the church and its welfare.
2. **(8:18) Stewardship—Offerings:** men who handle collections (ushers) should have a reputation for the gospel, that is, for believing the gospel and for bearing witness to it. The man mentioned in this verse is never named, and any attempt to identify him is futile and worthless conjecture. Three significant things are said about him.
  - a. He was a **“brother”** in the Lord, a Christian brother to Paul and to other believers. This is essential for those who handle collections:
  - b. He had a **strong testimony in the gospel**. This means that he was a strong witness to the gospel. He not only lived for Christ, but he bore witness to the saving power of Christ.
  - c. His testimony was so strong that it was known throughout **“all the churches.”**
3. **(8:19-21) Stewardship—Offerings—Ushers:** men who handle collections (ushers) are representatives chosen by the church in order to avoid charges of misconduct against the minister. This is a very significant fact—a lesson that must be heeded by ministers and churches alike. If Paul had handled the offering himself, he could have left himself open to the charge of confiscating or stealing

money. The only wise course was to have the church elect one of its own men to handle the offering.

- a. Note that the offering was called **“this grace.”** Vs. 19 Therefore, the offering of a church is a grace; it is the heart of the church being poured out in a free gift to reach and help the desperate of the world.
- b. Note another significant point: why the offering was being ministered. It **was for the glory of the Lord.** When people saw the offering and knew what it was to be used for, their hearts would glorify the Lord.
- c. Note: Paul clearly states why he had taken such precautions. He wanted all men to know that he was honest, that he would never put his hand into the till and take money out of the offerings.

**4. (8:22) Stewardship—Offerings—Ushers:** men who handle collections (ushers) are diligent in many things, but especially in collections. Who this unnamed brother was is not known. Three significant points are made about him, points that should speak to the heart of every usher and person who handles collections.

- a. **He was a brother,** a true believer who was in fellowship with other believers and cooperated with the church in its mission endeavors.
- b. He had often **“proved diligent”** when other ministries had been assigned to him. The word “diligent” (spoudaion) means earnest, zealous, devoted. He gave himself wholeheartedly to whatever task the church gave him.
- c. He observed and was alert to the testimony of churches. When Paul told him about the Corinthian church—about the great revival of the church—he became excited and was more willing than ever to serve Christ in the midst of the church.

**5. (8:23) Stewardship—Offerings—Ushers:** men who handle collections (ushers) are partners of the ministers. Note that Paul expected people to be asking who these men were. This is a natural inquiry, for the men handle the offerings for the church. Therefore, it was extremely important that the credentials of the men be of the highest quality.

**6. (8:24) Stewardship—Offerings—Ushers:** men who handle collections (ushers) are to be loved by the church. This is essential: the church had to prove its love to the men who were handling the money if they were to effectively fulfill their ministry. The church was to prove its love in two ways:

- a. First, by receiving the men, accepting both them and their ministry.
- b. Second, by helping the men fulfill their ministry. The church had to let the men present the mission project and then contribute to it.

**C. THE GIVERS WHO PLEASE GOD 9:1-7 - Introduction:** giving pleases God, for giving is of the very nature of God. God is the very One who has given the supreme gift—the Lord Jesus Christ. The most loved passage of Scripture clearly proclaims the glorious truth.

**2 Cor. 9:1-7** For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: [2] For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. [3] Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: [4] Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting. [5] Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness. [6] But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. [7] Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

1. **(9:1-2) Stewardship—Giving:** givers who please God have a readiness, an eagerness to give. This is seen in four clear statements made by Paul.
  - a. He expected the Corinthians to give. Why? Because some dear “**saints**” of God needed help. Some fellow believers were in desperate need. The churches in Judea were poor and desperately needed help; therefore the Corinthians were expected to help them.
  - b. Paul knew the **forwardness, the readiness of their minds to give**. How often can this be said of believers? Of a church? Are we honestly forward, reaching out, searching for needs to meet?
  - c. Paul **boasted in the Corinthians**, in their readiness to give. It had happened a year earlier. The spirit of the Corinthians had been so committed to ministry, to meeting the needs of their fellow believers, that they had immediately underwritten the mission project to help the churches of Judea. But soon afterward some problems had arisen, and the church backed off its commitment. Before the problem, Paul had boasted in the zeal of the Corinthians, how quickly they had committed themselves to the mission project.
  - d. The zeal and commitment of the Corinthians stirred “**many**” to help in the mission project.
2. **(9:3-5) Stewardship—Giving:** givers who please God are not caught unprepared to give. As Paul traveled from place to place, he was always training young

disciples in the ministry, and these disciples often traveled with him. In addition to these, Paul was sometimes escorted to the next city by men from the place where he had just completed his ministry. This was soon to be the case: some men from Macedonia were going to escort him to Corinth. This fact is the background for what Paul now says.

**a. Being unprepared to give causes shame.** Paul says that he was sending Titus and the two other men to reactivate the mission project among the Corinthians. He was doing this lest he be ashamed and embarrassed when he and the other Macedonians arrived. He had boasted in the Corinthians a year earlier, using their commitment to missions as a testimony to stir the Macedonians to underwrite the same project. If he and their representatives arrived and the Corinthians had slipped back and failed to follow through, the situation would be a reflection upon Christ, Paul, and the Corinthian church.

**b. Being prepared shows love, not covetousness.** Paul says that he was sending the men ahead of him so that the church could reactivate the mission project and offering. They needed to have the collection ready when he arrived. Note why Paul felt this was necessary: so that the Corinthians would demonstrate love and generosity, not covetousness. If the mission project was still being delayed when he and the Macedonians arrived, the church would seem to be covetous and worldly. They would be failing in their very purpose for being on earth: to minister to those in need.

**3. (9:6) Stewardship—Giving—Reaping—Reward:** givers who please God give much and reap much. In fact, when it comes to reaping, they reap exactly what they sow only in abundance. Note that the picture is that of sowing seed: when a man plants the seed, the same is returned to him; in fact, much more is returned to him—a full harvest. This is one of the great principles of Scripture, but it must be carefully noted: it is not the man who pretends to sacrificially give who shall be greatly blessed by God. It shall be the man who actually does sacrifice all he is and has. This man will never go lacking; God will abundantly provide for him.

**4. (9:7) Stewardship—Giving:** the giver who pleases God gives deliberately, not grudgingly and not from compulsion. It is absolutely crucial to note one thing: God does not accept the gift of a person who does not want to give. God expects four things of the person who gives.

**a. The giver must give as he purposes in his heart.** This does not mean that people are not to be encouraged to give nor that they cannot be stirred to give. It means that a person is to consider the need, consider what God

would have him give, and cheerfully give out of the blessing he has received.

- b. The giver must **not give grudgingly**: not out of sorrow, not with reluctance or regret. If the giver is going to be mulling over his gift and regretting that he had given it, his gift is unacceptable to God.
- c. The giver must **not give out of necessity**. A person's gift is not acceptable to God when he feels forced, gives to please men, or to be recognized.
- d. The giver **must give cheerfully** if he wishes God to accept his gift. The word "**cheerful**" (hilaron) means joyful. The giver is pleased and delighted to give to meet the needs of God's people and of the world.

#### D. THE MOTIVES FOR GIVING GENEROUSLY AND SACRIFICALLY, 9:8-15

**2 Cor. 9:8-15** And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: [9] (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. [10] Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) [11] Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. [12] For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; [13] Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection into the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; [14] And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. [15] Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

1. (9:8-11) **Stewardship—Giving**: the first motive for giving is to be enriched more and more by God. The Christian is called upon to give sacrificially; in fact, he is to give all he is and has to meet the needs of a desperate world. This seems very risky and unwise to many, but it is the clear teaching of Scripture. How could God expect us to give sacrificially, to give all beyond what we need for our own families?
  - a. God is able to make **all grace abound and overflow toward us**. God is able to pay us back what we give.
  - b. God expects the believer to give sacrificially so that the believer **may abound to every good work**. That is, God gives the believer more and more so that he can give more and more.
  - c. Note something else as well: note what God does for the sacrificial giver. The oldest and best Greek texts make this a declaration of fact and not a prayer. **God ministers seed to the sower**; therefore...

- (I) God will minister and **give bread** to the sacrificial giver.
- (II) God will **multiply the gift** given by the sacrificial giver.
- (III) God will **increase the fruits** of the believer's just and good deeds or righteousness.
- (IV) God will **enrich everything in all ways** so that the believer can continue to give liberally and bountifully.

**2. (9:12) Stewardship—Giving:** the second motive for giving is to meet the needs of the world and to bring praise to God.

- a. From all that Paul has said concerning giving, we can see that there is a priority in our giving of which we should be mindful. We are first to be responsible to our immediate family and their needs, as a man who does not take care of his family is considered as worse than an infidel. Next would be the care of the saints in the house of God, our brothers and sisters in Christ. Beyond that would be our compassion for the lost world beginning with those living in close proximity and then beyond our borders, their needs would include both physical and spiritual. (this point by RevC)
  - (I) And the most terrible fate of all: dying without ever knowing the love and salvation of God in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the greatest motives for giving is to meet the desperate needs of the world.
- b. There is another motive that is just as important—the praise of God. When needs are truly met...
  - (I) the recipient gives thanks and praises God.
  - (II) the witnesses or observers give thanks and praise God.
  - (III) the giver gives thanks and praises God.

**3. (9:13) Stewardship—Giving:** the third motive for giving is to prove one's loyalty to the gospel of Christ. The gospel is the proclamation of the greatest love and gift ever made known—that of God's love and of God's very own Son. Any person who claims to follow the gospel of God's love must be loyal in carrying the gospel of love forth. He must live a sacrificial life just as Jesus did, a life that gives all it is and has to meet the needs of the desperate.

- a. If we are loyal to Christ and His gospel, then we give and give and keep on giving to share the gospel and to meet the needs of the world.

**4. (9:14) Stewardship—Giving:** the fourth motive for giving is to enhance prayer, love, and fellowship. Very simply, when believers give to people in their desperate needs, the people give thanks for them and their fellowship in the Lord. Giving stirs great prayer, love, and fellowship among God's people.

5. **(9:15) Stewardship—Giving:** the fifth motive for giving is to praise God for His unspeakable gift. The greatest gift ever given was God’s gift to the world: the gift of His own Son. No greater gift could ever be given. God has given the supreme gift.

## **V. THE MINISTER’S ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS, 10:1-13:14**

**2 Cor. 10:1-6** Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you: [2] But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. [3] For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: [4] (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) [5] Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; [6] And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

**A. THE MINISTER: HIS WARFARE & WEAPONS, 10:1-6 - Introduction:** this section begins a sharp break from what Paul has been saying and teaching. He disassociates himself from Timothy. He no longer says “we,” but “now I Paul myself beseech you.” The phrase is forceful. Paul is now going to deal primarily with his critics, both with the false teachers who had crept into the church and with any of their followers who had not shared in the revival of repentance that had taken place (2 Corinthians. 7:2-6).

This was necessary, for the church needed to make sure that the false teachers did not regain a foothold in the church. They needed to know that Paul intended to personally confront any who had not repented. He was going to deal with those who were attacking him and teaching false doctrine.

1. **(10:1-2) Paul, Accusations Against:** Paul was accused of walking after the flesh. This charge can be seen behind the words of Paul in these two verses. He was answering “**some**” who thought of him as walking after the flesh (2 Corinthians. 10:2). They were saying two things about Paul.
  - a. Some were saying that Paul was a coward (2 Corinthians. 10:1). This is what is meant by The word “**base**” (tapeinos). They were saying that Paul was bold in his instructions; that is, he rebuked the church when he was writing to them, but he was a coward when it came to speaking face to face with them.



Note Paul's answer to the church and to his critics; it was that of tenderness in the midst of warning: **"I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."** Christ was meek and gentle in handling the insults, attacks, rumors, lies, wrong, and evil done to Him. Paul was saying that Jesus Christ was his example in dealing with people; that is the reason he was meek and gentle when preaching and confronting people face to face. He was not base and lowly because he was a coward, but because Jesus Christ demonstrated how people are to be handled, even people who are evil and in error. Jesus Christ confronted people in meekness and gentleness; therefore, he, Paul, was meek and gentle.

- b. Some were saying that Paul was carnal—that he walked after the flesh. This means several things:
  - (I) that Paul was unregenerate, that is, not really saved.
  - (II) that Paul was preaching and ministering in the flesh; he was not really called of God.
  - (III) that Paul was living in the flesh; he was an ungodly and immoral man seeking only to please and live for himself.
  - (IV) that Paul was only ministering in the flesh; he was only after a personal following—only seeking to sell his own ideas and position—only interested in lining his own pockets and in securing personal recognition and honor.

**2. (10:3-5) Minister—Spiritual Warfare—Mind—Thoughts:** the minister wars and fights, but not in a fleshly way. This is a great passage of Scripture. It deals with the believer's spiritual warfare, a passage that every believer should memorize and chew upon often. It often stirs the believer to discipline and gain control over his mind and thoughts. Note three significant points.

- a. The war is not waged against flesh and blood, against physical and material beings, but against spiritual forces. Spiritual forces lie behind man's evil and lustful behavior, unbelief and arguments against God. These spiritual forces attack and prey upon the imaginations and thoughts of men. They inject selfish and devilish ideas against God and against other men. And from the energy of these ideas come the evil acts of men.

Paul's point is this: he and other believers **"walk in the flesh"**; that is, they live in a body just like all other people. But they do not war in the flesh. They do not fight the struggles of life using only their own strength. Why? Because believers know that there is a spiritual warfare going on for the minds and lives of people.

- b. The believer's weapons are not physical, but spiritual. Physical or carnal weapons would be human weapons of the mind and body such as discipline, strength, knowledge, wealth, etc.
- c. The believer knows that there is nothing in the world that can conquer the spiritual forces that lie behind the evil and death of this world. Therefore, he fights the spiritual battles of this life with spiritual weapons, weapons that are of God and are made mighty and powerful by God.

Note that the believer uses spiritual weapons to **“pull down strongholds.”** The evils of this world are deeply entrenched and fortified. Only the spiritual weapons of God can permanently conquer evil.

- d. The believer's method of conquering the forces of evil are clearly described.
- e. The believer **casts down imaginations** (logismos): thoughts and imaginations that are uncontrolled, wild, evil, lustful, immoral, unjust, wrong, untrue, devilish, and set against God.

**“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened....And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Romans 1:20-21, 28-32).**

- f. The believer casts down **“every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God”**: false ideas about God, false doctrine, false teaching, false reasonings; the human pride and arrogance, self-sufficiency and self-righteousness that set themselves up against God.
- g. The believer seeks **to captivate every thought to the obedience of Christ**. This is the spiritual objective of the true Christian believer. God created man for fellowship and communion, and the believer knows it; therefore, the believer wars—struggles and fights—to captivate every thought and focus it upon God and His righteousness.

**3. (10:6) Minister—Church Discipline:** the minister stands ready to deal with false teachers and rebels, but only after genuine believers have stepped forward. Paul had just shared how he struggled and fought to live for Christ every day—struggled and fought to conquer every imagination and thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God. Therefore, **he would not hesitate to punish all disobedience. But note: he would discipline only after giving everyone a chance to be obedient.** The Corinthians who were willing to submit to the truth had to come forward first. Then Paul would act swiftly. He would never resort to severity until he knew for sure who stood for the truth and who stood against the truth

**B. THE MINISTER HAS A RIGHT TO BE ACCEPTED, 10:7-18 - Introduction:** the minister has many rights, but the one right that means as much to him as any other is the right to be accepted. Every church, no matter the situation or circumstances, should open its arms and accept the minister. If he needs help, then the church should help him—no matter the problem.

**2 Cor. 10:7-18 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's. [8] For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: [9] That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. [10] For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. [11] Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present. [12] For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. [13] But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. [14] For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: [15] Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, [16] To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. [17] But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. [18] For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.**

- 1. (10:7) Minister—Paul, Accusations Against:** the minister is to be accepted because he belongs to Christ as much as any other minister. The troublemakers and critics of Paul felt that Paul ranked less than other ministers. They said that Paul did not measure up as a minister, that he was not as called or gifted as other ministers of God; therefore, he did not belong in the pulpit at Corinth, nor should his authority be accepted at Corinth.
- a.** Paul's claim is that all ministers are equal. Note how Paul exposes the shameful emphasis upon **“outward appearance”** and upon the ranking of ministers. Apparently some were judging Paul...
- (I)** because of his past sinful life as the persecutor and murderer of early believers
- (II)** because other ministers and teachers appeared to have stronger and more appealing gifts.
- (III)** because other ministers and teachers had more charisma and were stronger speakers (2 Corinthians. 10:10).
- b.** Paul is forceful in his rebuke: **“Why do you look upon and judge by outward appearance?”** Any man that claims he belongs to Christ and that Christ has called him, as I also claim does so out of personal conviction. Personal conviction is subjective. One man's personal conviction and claim is as good as another man's. Therefore, if a man says that he is Christ's and called of Christ, my claim is as valid as his.” However, much more is needed to prove whether or not a man is a true minister of Christ.

- 2. (10:8) Minister—Paul, Accusations Against:** the minister is to be accepted because he is separated for edification and not for destruction.

Paul forcefully claimed that Christ had called him for edification, not for destruction. He was called to build up people, not to destroy them. In no way had he ever damaged or destroyed the church. Note: Paul says that he could boast in his ministry and in his faithfulness. He could even boast more than most other ministers; and if he chose to do this, it would not shame him, for he had every right to boast. He had served Christ faithfully.

- 3. (10:9-13) Minister—Paul, Accusations Against:** the minister is to be accepted because of the authority and rule God has given him, not because of appearance. The charge against Paul was that he was weak in appearance and a poor preacher; therefore, he could not possibly be called of God nor possess the authority of God.

- a. There is a definite time for authority and discipline within the church. And if authority and discipline are needed, Paul will exercise it when he visits the church with the same bold authority that is evident in his writings
- b. Human commendations and judgments are unwise. Paul would never do what his critics and some others did: seek the praise and testimonials of men. Apparently, some were seeking letters of commendation in order to secure more recognition, honor, and position.
- c. With clear insight, Paul says that such self-seeking only pits one minister against another; it compares one to another. And such measuring of ministers is not wise.
- d. A minister is to exercise authority only in the area and within the limits God has given him. The minister has no other legitimate authority, but he does have that authority.

**4. (10:14-16) Minister, Authority—Paul, Accusations Against:** the minister is to be accepted because he ministers and preaches the gospel of Christ. This is the authority of the minister, the only authority that he has: the authority to minister and preach the gospel. The implication is this: the false teachers needed to repent and become one with the other believers of the church and work and strive together with the believers for the sake of the gospel.

**5. (10:17-18) Minister:** the minister is to be accepted because he glories in the Lord and not in men. Paul has had much to say about boasting and self-glorying throughout this passage (2 Corinthians. 10:7, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16). Now he forcefully drives the point home: he that glories must glory in the Lord, or he is not approved or accepted by God. The man who seeks to glorify himself is not the true minister of God.

### **C. THE MINISTER: HIS WARNING AGAINST SEDUCTION, 11:1-15 -**

**Introduction:** some false teachers and critics in the church were attacking Paul and his ministry with every conceivable accusation. The way they went about gaining control was to use the same methods that every power seeking person uses: seduction and deception and lies.

**2 Cor. 11:1-15** **Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. [2] For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. [3] But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. [4] For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might**

well bear with him. [5] For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. [6] But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things. [7] Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? [8] I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. [9] And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. [10] As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. [11] Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. [12] But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. [13] For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. [14] And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. [15] Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

1. (11:1-2) **Minister—Church:** the minister has a godly jealousy for the church. The church was dear, very dear to Paul; he just would not offend the church in any way. He had to expose the error of the false teachers and of his critics, and to do so he had to defend himself. This bothered Paul; he did not want to talk about himself. He would much rather talk about Jesus Christ. But he had no choice, he had to defend himself. Note the soft, loving, positive approach he took:

Paul had a **godly jealousy** for them because he had led so many of them to Christ. He loved them and loved them dearly. Note that Paul's **one aim was to present the church to Christ as a chaste virgin, that is, pure, holy, and without blemish or error.** In Paul's day the bridegroom had what was called a friend of the bridegroom. This friend took care of the wedding arrangements, especially the particular function of guaranteeing the chastity of the bride. In modern society it is usually the father of the bride who handles the arrangements. He is also the one responsible for guaranteeing the chastity of his daughter, the bride. Paul is here claiming to be the friend, the father of the Corinthians, who loved and cared so much for them that he must guarantee their chastity to the Lord. Therefore, they must listen to him.

2. (11:3) **Seduction—Church:** the church must fear seduction, fear having their minds corrupted. Note that their minds were not yet corrupted, but the danger was there.

a. The danger was that the believers would be led away **from the simplicity (aplotetos) that is in Christ**. The word means devotion, loyalty, and commitment to Christ. Believers are to have their minds and lives focused upon Christ and upon Him alone. This was the danger facing the Corinthian church and it is the danger that faces church after church today: minds that are corrupted and led away from loyalty to Christ by false teachers.

(I) Note the illustration that Paul uses: the seduction of Eve by the serpent.

Eve illustrates how easily a believer can be corrupted and led away from Christ.

(II) Eve gave in to the seduction: she was disloyal to God and His Word.

Therefore she lost her devotion and commitment to God. In comparison to Eve and to what Eve had, believers stand in a precarious (very dangerous) position. Therefore, they must be protected from false teachers. They must be warned against seduction, against having their minds corrupted. When false teachers are present in a church, they must be dealt with or some believers will be corrupted and misled.

3. (11:4) **Preaching—False Teachers**: the church must fear the preaching of another Jesus. This is always the danger of false teachers. Note: it is not another Christ (Messiah) that they were preaching, but another Jesus. That is, they were mixed up about who Jesus the carpenter was and who Jesus the Son of God was. They were confused about the humanity of Jesus. They were teaching that...

a. Jesus was only a good man who lived as men should live.

b. Jesus was only a great teacher who taught man how to live.

c. Jesus was only a wonderful martyr who showed men how they should die.

They stressed the humanness of Jesus and ignored or denied His deity. Note what Paul says: he says **men can receive another spirit other than the Spirit of God, and that they can receive another gospel other than the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ**. There are other spirits and gospels who seek after the loyalty of men; therefore, the church and its believers must be on guard against the preaching of another Jesus.

4. (11:5-6) **Ministers**: the church should fear comparing ministers with one another. The false teachers were saying that Paul was not a true apostle, that he had not been called by God to be a minister. His appearance and speaking ability were too weak; he did not speak forcefully enough to be gifted and called by God (1 Corinthians. 9:1; 2 Corinthians. 1:21; 2 Corinthians. 10:7, 10; 2 Corinthians. 12:11).

Very simply, the essential gift of God is not the ability to speak, but knowledge—the knowledge of God and of Christ and of the truth. Note: Paul says that he had fully revealed and proclaimed the truth in all things (salvation and redemption.)

- 5. (11:7-12) Finances—Minister:** the church should fear those who criticize honest money policy.
- a.** Paul had ministered at Corinth free of charge, not accepting any gifts or financial support (2 Corinthians. 11:7).
  - b.** However, he did receive support from other churches (2 Corinthians. 11:8).
  - c.** This he did because he had need when he was in Corinth, but he did not want to be a burden to the Corinthians nor did he want to be obligated to them. He wanted no restraints upon the preaching of the truth and its gospel.
  - d.** Paul's policy was to secure support from churches in other areas so that he could keep the gospel free where he was ministering. This, he declared, would continue to be his policy (2 Corinthians. 11:9).
  - e.** Paul was criticized for this policy. There were apparently two criticisms: first, he refused to take anything because he knew his teaching was inferior. He was thereby ashamed. Second, he was too proud to allow himself to be ministered to by others. Such criticisms clearly show that these men were only looking for opportunity to criticize Paul (2 Corinthians. 11:12).
  - f.** Paul followed this policy because he loved the church. The truth was not what the critics and false teachers were saying: that he did not care enough for the church to allow them to be a part of his ministry. If he took money from them, his critics would charge him with ministering for the sake of money. Therefore, his policy was the proof that he loved the church (2 Corinthians. 11:11-12).
- 6. (11:13-15) Satan—False Teachers:** the church should fear false ministers and deceitful workers. False ministers are clearly exposed and identified in these three verses.
- a.** False ministers are disguised as the ministers of Christ, but they are deceitful workers. They are religious workers who deceive and mislead people away from Christ:
    - (I) into false beliefs and doctrine.
    - (II) into new ideas and positions.
    - (III) into ritual and ceremony.
    - (IV) into organizations and programs.
    - (V) into focusing upon some person or minister instead of Christ.
  - b.** False ministers are **disguised just like Satan—as ministers of light**. Satan often appears as an angel or messenger of light, especially in industrialized



societies. His position is always presented as the truth, as the path of intelligence and knowledge and enlightenment.

- c. Satan always presents himself as the supreme intelligence who knows what is best for man and who will provide real pleasure, enjoyment, and fulfillment for man. When Satan presents his way to men, it attracts, appeals, and pulls man to want, desire, and lust. His way always seems to be the way of light, that is, of intelligence or pleasure.

**d. False ministers are of Satan: disguised as ministers of righteousness.**

Since Satan disguises himself into an angel or messenger of light, so do his ministers. They appear to be ministers of righteousness, and they preach and teach that a man is saved by righteousness, a righteousness of...

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> morality | <input type="checkbox"/> education   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> goodness | <input type="checkbox"/> development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> justice  | <input type="checkbox"/> ministry    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> giving   | <input type="checkbox"/> helping     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> serving  |                                      |

They stress the life and teachings of Jesus, all the good qualities of life—all the traits that should characterize people. They tell people to copy the life of Jesus and to focus their hearts upon these good qualities of life, and if they do, God will accept them. However, they make one fatal mistake: they ignore and deny...

(A) the righteousness of Jesus Christ which He had to secure for man by living the ideal, perfect, sinless life.

(B) the death of Jesus Christ which He had to die in order to bear the judgment, condemnation, and punishment of sin for man.

(C) the resurrection of Jesus Christ which He had to experience in order to conquer death and to provide a new life for man.

**D. THE MINISTER: HIS BOAST AND COSTLY LABORS, 11:16-33 -**

**Introduction:** should a minister or any other believer ever boast of who he is or what he has done? This passage discusses the subject.

**2 Cor. 11:16-33** I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little. [17] That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. [18] Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. [19] For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. [20] For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. [21] I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. [22] Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. [23] Are

they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. [24] Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. [25] Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; [26] In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; [27] In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. [28] Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. [29] Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? [30] If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. [31] The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. [32] In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: [33] And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

1. (11:16-21) **Boasting—Minister, Defense:** the minister appeals to be received and heard.
  - a. Paul was forced to defend his ministry and authority as a minister of God. If he failed to defend himself, his critics would interpret his silence as weakness. They would begin to spread the rumor that his silence was proof that he was not called of God, for he did not consider his ministry worth defending.
  - b. However, there was another reason for Paul defending his ministry: to save the Corinthian church from the false leaders and teachers. The outline of these six verses shows how Paul appealed to the Corinthians to receive him and to hear him.
  - c. He needed to boast a little. Only a “**fool**” boasts in himself, and Paul hesitated to defend himself by boasting in his call and ministry. But it was the only way to defend himself against these critics. Therefore, he appealed to the church to receive him as a fool and allow him to do a foolish thing: to boast in his ministry for a few moments (2 Corinthians. 11:16).
  - d. However, **his boasting was not the way the Lord talked.** The Lord did not go about boasting in His ministry. But he, Paul, was confident that his boasting was the thing that had to be done in order to defend himself against his critics and to save the church from the false teachers (2 Corinthians. 11:17).

This is the crucial point: Paul will boast in his ministry because the critics and false teachers are boasting and talking big about who they are and what

they have done

(2 Corinthians. 11:18).

- e. The church was receiving such **“fools gladly,”** and in receiving them the church felt it was wiser than others. Therefore, the church ought to receive Paul and let him play the fool (2 Corinthians. 11:19).

The church was receiving people..Vs. 20

- (A) who enslaved believers.
- (B) who devoured and took money from believers.
- (C) who preyed upon believers.
- (D) who exalted and lorded themselves over believers.
- (E) who slapped, that is, humiliated believers.

2. (11:22) **Paul—Minister:** the minister is to stand equal in having a godly heritage. It is interesting that the false teachers and critics in Corinth were apparently Jewish converts.

- a. The **false teachers claimed to be Hebrews**; that is, they were so loyal to God that they had kept up the Hebrew language. Their primary purpose for doing this was so they could study the Holy Scripture in its original language (Hebrew). This was a most unusual feat, for the Jews had been scattered all over the world by the nations that had conquered them. The depth of a Jew’s commitment to God was measured by his being a Hebrew, his having kept up with the language of the ancient people of God, and his studying the Scripture in its original language. Note: Paul said that he, too, was a Hebrew. He could make the very same claim as the false teachers.
- b. The false teachers claimed **to be Israelites**; that is, they were citizens of God’s chosen race, Israel.

As stated above, by claiming to be Israelites the false teachers were claiming to be citizens of God’s chosen people, to be the covenant people of God, the people who had been adopted by God as His very special people. Note that Paul claimed to be an Israelite.

- c. The false teachers claimed to be **“the seed of Abraham”**; that is, they were to receive all the promises made to Abraham

Again, Paul claimed to be of “the seed of Abraham.” The false teachers and critics were not superior to him in their godly heritage. He was as committed as they were...

- (A) to the study of the Scripture (a Hebrew).
- (B) to being a true follower of God’s covenant (an Israelite).

(C) to trusting and hoping in the promises made to Abraham (a seed of Abraham).

**3. (11:23-31) Paul—Minister:** the minister must be more than a minister. He must go well beyond ministering and laboring and suffering. The minister must do far more than most people.

**a.** The minister must be more than a minister in that he labors and suffers more than most men do for Christ.

(I) He labored more than those who were claiming to be ministers of Christ. He worked longer hours and more diligently than they. He focused upon ministering for Christ throughout the day and did not allow his attention to become diverted and waste time here and there with non-essentials as so many of them did. He just labored more diligently than they did.

(II) He suffered beatings and stripes beyond measure, that is, a countless number of times.

(III) He suffered being imprisoned far more than those who claimed to be ministers of Christ. Clement of Rome says that Paul was in prison seven times

(IV) He often suffered the threat of death. He was almost constantly facing death for Christ. Imagine living under such pressure! What an unbelievable love this great minister had for our Lord!

**b.** The minister must be more than a minister in that he remains faithful while suffering for Christ. So little is really known about Paul. This passage points out just how little. He was writing the Corinthian church from Ephesus. His stay in Ephesus is found in Acts 19. Naturally, this list of sufferings only records what had happened to Paul before that time. Only the annals of eternity will record what sufferings were borne after Ephesus. Paul said in Acts 20:23, “The Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me

(I) “**Five times...stripes**” : none of these events are recorded (2 Corinthians. 11:25).

(II) “**Thrice...rods**”: only one event is recorded (2 Corinthians. 11:25. Cp. Acts 16:22.)

(III) “**Once stoned**” (2 Corinthians. 11:25. Cp. Acts 16:19.)

(IV) “**Shipwrecked three times**”: none of these is recorded. The shipwreck recorded in Acts 27 happened after this writing (2 Corinthians. 11:25). This means he was shipwrecked at least four times. Just imagine the terror!

(V) “**Journeying often**”: perilous and fatiguing, dangerous, and uncomfortable (2 Corinthians. 11:26).

- (VI) **“Perils of waters”**: literally, rivers, swollen streams, flash floods. There were few bridges in that day (2 Corinthians. 11:26).
- (VII) **“Perils of robbers”**: compare the Good Samaritan (2 Corinthians. 11:26. Cp. Luke 10:25-37.)
- (VIII) **Perils of his own countrymen, the Jews** (2 Corinthians. 11:26. Cp. Acts 9:23, 29; Acts 13:50; Acts 14:5; Acts 17:5, 13; Acts 18:12; Acts 23:12; Acts 24:27.) This was due to the fact that Paul preached salvation by grace through faith in Christ and not the law.
- (IX) **Perils from the heathen**: for example, in Philippi (Acts 16:20f) and in Ephesus (Acts 19:23f) (2 Corinthians. 11:26).
- (X) **Perils in the city**: for example at Damascus (Acts 9:23f) and at Ephesus (Acts 19:23f) (2 Corinthians. 11:26).
- (XI) **Perils in the wilderness**: for example, exposure to the heat, cold, storms, wild animals, and robbers (2 Corinthians. 11:26).
- (XII) **Perils of the sea**: for example, pirates and unexpected storms (2 Corinthians. 11:26).
- (XIII) **Perils among false brothers**: those who professed to be Christians, yet were only making false professions and stood as a constant threat in opposing the mission of the church and the true minister of Christ (2 Corinthians. 11:26).
- (XIV) **“In weariness and painfulness”**: severe work and labor, toil, fatigue, exhaustion, travail to the point that the body ached and hurt (2 Corinthians. 11:27).
- (XV) **“In watchings often”**: being unable to sleep because of being burdened, anxious, weary, or because of praying for the needs of God’s people (2 Corinthians. 11:27).
- (XVI) **“In hunger and thirst”**: going without food and water because of sacrificing all he was and had to preach and minister to the desperate needs of others (2 Corinthians. 11:27).
- (XVII) **“In fastings often”**: going without in order to seek God’s face for others or to give to meet the needs of others (2 Corinthians. 11:27).
- (XVIII) **“In cold and nakedness”**: being exposed to the elements of nature and giving all that he had to help the needy, even to the point of giving his clothes and suffering the cold of winters and the dampness and cold of dungeons and prisons (2 Corinthians. 11:27).
- (XIX) **“That which comes upon me daily”**: means to press upon. The force of the Greek cannot be adequately expressed. It is like being smothered in a blanket; crushed by a great animal; bearing one down. It is an intolerable load—a heavy, heavy burden. Paul held a daily pressure

of anxiety for the churches, a daily burden for their moral and doctrinal purity (2 Corinthians. 11:28).

**(XX) He suffered and sympathized and felt the sufferings of others:**

when others were weak, he counted himself as weak in order to drive himself to teach them more. When others were offended, that is, led astray and caused to stumble into sin, he became indignant and inflamed against those who set the evil example or taught the false doctrine (2 Corinthians. 11:29).

- c. The minister **must boast only in his infirmities**. Remember: Paul had started out to boast in who he was and in what he had accomplished. But note what he has ended up doing: sharing those things about which most men would be ashamed and never mention: the rejections and humiliating experiences he has suffered at the hands of men and nature. Men and society were constantly rejecting him, and nature was always posing a threat to his safety and livelihood.

**The point is this:** Paul had laid down the principle that a minister must boast only in his infirmities and sufferings for Christ, not in his position, achievements, accomplishments, or results. Men do not applaud rejections, weaknesses, sufferings, and shameful experiences. But when a minister suffers for Christ, he has something to boast about—something that is acceptable to God: the minister's faithful witness to Christ.

- d. The minister must not exaggerate or lie about his sufferings. Paul calls God to witness that he has not exaggerated or lied about his sufferings. Of course, no minister should ever boast of anything he has ever done or borne for Christ—unless he is forced to defend himself. And, if he is ever called upon to boast...
- (I) he is to boast only of his infirmities.  
(II) he is not to exaggerate or lie.

4. **(11:32-33) Paul—Minister:** the false teachers and critics were probably saying that Paul had acted like a coward in his earlier flight from Damascus. A coward is unworthy to be followed and obeyed. Paul answered by showing that a powerful ruler was after him, but God's purposes could not be stopped. He was delivered and sent on his way to further the gospel. (Acts 9:23)

**E. THE MINISTER: HIS SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES, 12:1-10 - Introduction:**

**2 Cor. 12:1-10 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. [2] I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God**

knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. [3] And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) [4] How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. [5] Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. [6] For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. [7] And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. [8] For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. [9] And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Paul seldom if ever talked about himself from the pulpit. He certainly did not boast in himself or in his achievements (2 Corinthians 11:1, 16-17).

1. Because of his hesitancy to speak about himself, the false teachers and critics of Paul were saying that he lacked in spiritual experiences, that his salvation and ministry were suspect because he had not had the kind of experiences they were privileged to have. They thought to themselves and questioned others: “How could Paul be called of God if he has not had spiritual visions and revelations from the Lord? We have had them. If he has really been called of God, why has he not had them?”
2. Paul had to defend himself against his critics, and he had to save the Corinthian church from the false teachers. This is the reason he shares this spiritual experience. However, even in sharing this experience, He does not share anything about it. He wants no attention upon himself, but rather all attention upon Christ Jesus our Lord.
3. His boasting is unprofitable, but he must defend himself (v.1).
  - a. He had experienced unspeakable spiritual experiences—visions and revelations (v.2-6).
  - b. He had experienced the spiritual power of Christ (v.7-10).
4. **(12:1) Minister—Boasting:** the minister’s boasting is unprofitable, but he must defend himself. Paul had no choice; he had to defend himself against the false accusations. His salvation and call from God were real. God had saved him and called him into the ministry; therefore, he had to do all he could to substantiate his salvation and call. Therefore, he would share the visions and revelations which the Lord had given him.

5. **(12:2-6) Paul—Minister:** Paul had experienced unbelievable spiritual experiences, that is, visions and revelations. Note that Paul called himself “**a man in Christ**”; he did not share this experience in the first person. He was reluctant to speak about himself and his spiritual experiences. (2 Corinthians. 12:7, which shows that Paul was referring to himself.)

The experience happened fourteen years ago. This experience is not referring to his conversion experience on the Damascus road, for his conversion had occurred about twenty years before the writing of 2 Corinthians. Apparently, God had given Paul this wonderful experience one or two years before the launch of his missionary journeys.

- (I) Paul was caught up into the third heaven. The third heaven is God’s dwelling place (Luke 24:43), the very special place where the presence and the glory of the Lord are fully manifested and experienced.
- (II) Paul called it “paradise”. How it took place is not known, whether in the body or out of the body; only God knows. Paul heard unspeakable words, which were unlawful for him to utter.
- (III) A man with such spiritual experiences has the right to boast, but Paul says that he will boast only in his infirmities.
- (IV) Paul desired but one thing: not to be judged by such spiritual experiences, but by what is really essential—what they saw in his life and what they heard him preach and teach.

6. **(12:7-10) Paul—Minister:** Paul had experienced the spiritual power of Christ. God had given Paul deep and intimate spiritual experiences. There was the danger that he might begin to think too highly of himself; therefore, God gave Paul a “thorn in the flesh.”

a. Paul needed a “**thorn**” to keep him ever mindful that he was no better than other men. He was totally dependent upon God despite the indescribable spiritual experiences. What was his “**thorn in the flesh?**” The word “thorn” (skolops) **means either thorn or stake**. It is generally taken to mean thorn in this verse.

- (I) There are many guesses as to what the “thorn” was:
  - (A) some spiritual suffering such as constant attacks by Satan or opposition by men.
  - (B) some physical suffering such as a recurring fever (for example, malaria), or epilepsy, or poor eyesight.
- (II) Just what the thorn was is not known. The best guess seems to be some physical ailment. The clearest description of the thorn is probably eye trouble (2 Corinthians. 10:10; Galatians 4:13-15; Galatians 6:11). Paul



had been stricken blind for three days at his conversion, and he had been badly beaten and stoned several times (2 Corinthians. 11:24-27). A serious injury to his eyes, or for that matter to any other part of his body, could have occurred at any of these tragedies.

(III) Paul wanted deliverance and relief; he wanted God to remove the thorn. Why?:

(A) it pricked and bothered him.

(B) it distracted him from his labor.

(C) it made him appear personally weak and sickly.

b. There were three reasons why God refused to remove the thorn from Paul's flesh.

(I) **First**, God wanted to guard against Paul's being puffed up.

(II) **Second**, God wanted to reveal His power in Paul. The weaker the vessel, the more God is glorified when the vessel really serves Christ. Note God's answer to Paul:

(A) **"My grace is sufficient for thee"**: the presence, love, favor, and blessings of God are sufficient to help the believer walk through any suffering. The word **"sufficient"** (arkei) means the power or strength to withstand any danger.

(B) **"My strength is made perfect in weakness"**: the weaker the believer, the more God can demonstrate His strength.

(C) **"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me."** Note the point of this statement: infirmities or weaknesses are purposeful. The believer suffers for a reason: that the power of Christ may be demonstrated and clearly seen in his life. The word **"rest"** (episkenosei) means **to fix a tent upon**. The idea is that the power of Christ rests upon the suffering believer just as the Shekinah glory dwelt in the holy place of the tabernacle.

(III) **Third**, God wanted to teach Paul to live **"for Christ's sake."** When Paul suffered some infirmity or weakness, it gave Christ the chance to infuse power into Paul and to overcome the weakness for Paul. Paul's infirmity gave Christ an opportunity to prove Himself. Therefore, Paul says that he took pleasure...

(A) **"in infirmities"**: a general term meaning all kinds of sufferings and weaknesses, whether moral or physical. The power of Christ can overcome any weakness or temptation for the believer.

(B) **"in reproaches"**: whether ridicule, insult, slander, rumor, or whatever.

(C) **"in necessities"**: hardships, needs, deprivations, hunger, thirst, lack of shelter or clothing, or any other necessity.

(D) “in persecutions”: verbal or physical attack, abuse, or injury.

(E) “in distresses”: tight situations, perplexities, disturbances, anxious moments, inescapable problems and difficulties.

#### **F. THE MINISTER: HIS BEHAVIOR BEFORE THE CHURCH, 12:11-21 -**

**Introduction:** how the minister behaves before the church is critical. Few subjects are as important as the minister’s behavior before people, especially before those whom he serves.

**2 Cor. 12:11-21** I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. [12] Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. [13] For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong. [14] Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. [15] And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. [16] But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile. [17] Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? [18] I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps? [19] Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. [20] For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: [21] And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

1. (12:11-12) **Minister—Call:** the minister seeks only to demonstrate and prove his ministry and call. Paul did not wish to boast in his ministry feeling such glorying was foolishness, but the church had forced him to do it. How? The church had forced Paul to boast in himself by not coming to his aid. The church should have defended Paul, but it had failed to silence the critics when they first arose. Now the situation had gotten out of hand. Therefore, Paul had no choice: for the sake of his ministry and for the protection of the church he had to defend himself and handle the critics and false teachers.

Note the specific charge against Paul: he was either an inferior apostle or minister or not an apostle or minister at all. Paul answered in no uncertain terms: he was equal to any apostle or minister, and his ministry among the church proved it. The signs of an apostle had been wrought among the church. What were the signs? They were...

(I) “**signs**” (semeia): miracles.

(II) “**wonders**” (terata): the effect of miracles upon the observers.

(III) “**mighty deeds**” (dunameis): great works; powerful deeds.

**2. (12:13-18) Minister—Stewardship:** the minister seeks only people, nothing else. Two charges dealing with finances are made against Paul in these verses.

**a.** There was the charge that he had damaged the church’s image by not accepting financial support from the church. By not allowing the church to support him, he had made the church appear inferior to other churches that supported Paul.

**b.** Paul’s answer to the charges and criticism was threefold.

(I) Paul asked the church to forgive him this wrong. He did not mean for his action to reflect so negatively upon them. He loved them too much to deliberately make them appear inferior to anyone.

(II) Paul sought them for Christ, not their money. Paul was soon to visit the Corinthian church for a third time. Note that he planned to continue his policy: he would not be able to personally accept money from them. His primary reason is clearly stated: he sought them for Christ, not their money. The implication is that if he accepted their money his critics would say that he was mercenary and taking advantage of the church. Note that Paul drew support for his policy from the illustration of a father and his children. He says that he was the spiritual father of the church, and the father was the one who laid up for the children, not the children for the father.

(III) Paul loved the church with an intense love. He loved them deeply; therefore, he would gladly spend all he had and was for them.

However, it seemed that the more he loved them, the less they loved him (vs. 15). They were just not showing and expressing their love nor defending him when critics spoke up against him.

**c.** There was the charge that Paul took money through middlemen (2 Corinthians. 12:16-18).

(I) They said that his policy in not accepting money was a ploy, a crafty scheme; that he wanted to appear sacrificial and disinterested in money in order to keep from arousing suspicion about what he was really doing. What did they think he was doing? Using middlemen to take advantage of the church financially. They said that when Titus and others were sent

to challenge the church to underwrite special mission projects, Paul was confiscating some of the money. The charge was that Paul had “sticky fingers,” that some of the money given to the poor at Jerusalem was taken by Paul

(II) Paul dramatically declared that the Corinthians knew the truth. He fired question after question at the church:

(A) Did I take advantage or steal money from you by the messengers whom I sent to you? The implied answer is a forceful: You know better!

(B) Did Titus take advantage or steal money from you? Same answer

(C) Did not Titus and I have the same spirit of Christ? The implied answer is forceful: We have the same spirit of Christ!

(D) Did not Titus and I walk in the same steps? The implied answer is forceful: We walk in the steps of Christ, living righteously and godly lives, not the lives of two crafty cheats and thieves.

3. (12:19-21) **Minister:** the minister seeks only repentance from wrongdoers, from the carnal within the church. Note three points.

a. Paul had a deep awareness that he stood accountable to God and not to men. For what? To edify (build up) the church. He had not been defending himself before the church in order to have them pass judgment upon him. He was called of God, no matter what some of them thought. They were not his judges; God was his judge.

b. Paul was stricken with fear, fear lest the church fail to be what it should be and reject him and his ministry. Paul feared that the church would fail to deal with the carnal critics and continue putting up with their evil attacks against him. He lists eight evils that were and still are characteristic of divisive critics in the church.

(I) **“Debates”** (ereis): strife, contention, rivalry, competitiveness, quarrelling.

(II) **“Envyings”** (zeloi): jealousy, begrudging what others have, whether position, abilities, recognition, acceptance, loyalty, wealth, or anything else.

(III) **“Wraths”** (thumoi): fiery anger, outbursts of anger, fits of anger.

(IV) **“Strifes”** (eirtheiai): factions, a party-like spirit or clique that stands as a rival to others, a factious spirit caused by selfishness or self-seeking.

(V) **“Backbiting”** (katalaliai): open slander, insult, vilification, attacks.

(VI) **“Whisperings”** (psithurismoi): gossip, behind-the-back talk, spicy rumor, secret and wild imaginations that are passed on to a close friend who has a close friend who has a close friend, and on and on.

- (VII) **“Swellings”** (phusioseis): pride, insolence, conceit, arrogance, haughtiness.
- (VIII) **“Tumults”** (akatastasiai): disorder, anarchy, confusion.
- c. The point is forceful: the church is allowing such flagrant sins in its midst—all being caused by false teachers and critics. Paul says in no uncertain terms that unless the church and the carnal repent of their sins, he will deal with both when he arrives.
  - (I) Remember: many in the church had already repented and experienced revival, but there were some that still persisted in their false teaching and in their critical and divisive spirit. And the church was still reluctant to deal with them. The church desperately needed to correct the situation.
- d. Paul closes by adding three more sins from which some must repent:
  - (I) **“Uncleanness”** (akatharsia): the impure, unclean, indulgent, and extravagant things people do out in the world.
  - (II) **“Fornication”** (porneia): immorality, sexual vice, premarital sex, and adultery.
  - (III) **“Lasciviousness”** (aselgeia): sensuality and indecency; uncontrolled, undisciplined, and unrestrained lust and passion.
- e. Again, the point is forceful: those living in sin had to repent or else be dealt with and disciplined when Paul arrived. Paul had poured his heart out declaring his deep love for them (2 Corinthians. 12:15) and doing all he could to lead them to repentance. The decision was now theirs.

## **G. THE MINISTER: HIS FINAL WARNING, PRAYER, CHALLENGE, & BLESSING, 13:1-14**

**2 Cor. 13:1-6 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. [2] I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare: [3] Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. [4] For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you. [5] Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? [6] But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.**

1. **(13:1-6) Minister, Authority—Reprobate—Self-Examination:** there was the minister’s warning. Paul was soon to visit the church, so he issued three warnings to the church.

- a. The first warning was that he **would demand proof of the charges against him**. He had put up with the criticisms, rumors, accusations, and divisiveness long enough—for over a year. It was time to deal with the problem face to face. It could not be allowed to go on, for many in the church had already repented of their sins and experienced. If the false teachers and critics who refused to repent were allowed to go on, they would again affect the whole church.

Therefore, when he arrived, he would do exactly what Christ and Scripture say: he would demand that two or three witnesses be presented to prove his guilt or innocence. The critics and false teachers had to repent or else leave the church before he arrived. If they refused, they would have to face him and prove their criticisms and rumors.

- b. The second warning was that **he would not spare**; he would exercise his spiritual authority and discipline all offenders when he arrived.
- c. The third warning was that the believers must examine themselves to make sure they were in the faith.

**2 Cor. 13:7-10** Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. [8] For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. [9] For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection. [10] Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

**2. (13:7-10) Minister—Prayer:** there was the minister's prayer for a carnal church. He made three very specific requests.

- a. He prayed that they do no evil. He wanted them to stop their sinning, their attacks against him, their divisiveness, and their immorality.
- b. He prayed that they might all stand for the truth. Most commentators understand this verse to be referring to Paul, but it is probably best to see it as part of Paul's prayer, that is, as applying to everyone involved, to both Paul and the Corinthian church. The verse is certainly applicable to every believer and should be a part of our daily prayer:
- c. He prayed that they might be strong and perfected. Paul was glad when the believers were strong in the Lord and he was able to appear weak, that is, when he did not have to be exercising authority and discipline. At such times, the believers and the church were growing toward perfection

(katartisis). The word means to repair what is broken and to restore it to a more perfect condition.

d. Note Paul's reasons for praying and writing these things:

(I) to prevent his having to confront those who were sinning and having to use sharp, severe discipline.

(II) to have the opportunity to edify and build up the sinners and not to be forced to destroy them. He did not want to be forced to tear them and their lives down in order to save the church and its ministry.

**2 Cor. 13:11-13 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. [12] Greet one another with an holy kiss. [13] All the saints salute you.**

**3. (13:11-13) Minister—Challenge:** there was the minister's challenge. The challenge was encouraging.

a. **"Be perfect"**: restore, reform, correct, mend yourselves and your ways. Stop your sinning: criticism, divisiveness, immorality.

b. **"Be of good comfort"**: be assured, consoled, and helped by repenting and turning back to God. The word comfort (parakaleisthe) could also mean, "be exhorted"; that is, listen and heed what I have said.

c. **"Be of one mind"**: in faith, belief, purpose, mission, and ministry.

d. **"Live in peace"**: love, care, forbear, be longsuffering and concerned for each other. Have nothing to do with criticism, divisiveness, snobbishness, pride, or feeling superior.

e. If the believers of the church would do these things then the God of love and peace would be with them.

(I) Note: Paul expected the church to follow through. He challenged them, **"Greet one another with an holy kiss."** It was the practice of early believers to show their love and communion by greeting each other with a kiss.

(II) Note also that Paul attempted to stir the Corinthian believers by sending greetings from **"all the saints."** Just the mention of the word "saints" would be meaningful to the Corinthians, for it means those who are set apart from the world to God.

**2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.**

**4. (13:14) Minister—Blessing:** This is one of the most used blessings in the Bible. Note how clearly the Trinity is seen in this verse. The blessing includes three parts.

- a. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ:** Paul wished them to experience all the favor and blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ. He wanted them to know the saving power of the Lord's death and His day by day deliverance which is to be consummated in the glorious day of eternal redemption.
- b. The love of God:** Paul wished them to experience all the love of God, ranging from the gift of Christ to save the world over to the day by day provision of necessities.
- c. The Communion of the Holy Spirit:** Paul wished them to experience the presence and power of God's Spirit as they walk in fellowship with the Father and the Son and with other believers.

## **VI. THREE BAPTISMS OF BELIEVERS**

### **A. Baptism into Jesus Christ:**

**I Corinthians 12:12-31** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 12:14 For the body is not one member, but many. 12:15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 12:16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 12:19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 12:20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 12:21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 12:22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 12:23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 12:24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: 12:25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 12:26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. 12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 12:28



**And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 12:29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 12:30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 12:31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.**

This is a Spiritual baptism that takes place when you are saved. This speaks of you being placed into the body of Christ and a member of His body. This is the work of God, who places us into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. Each member of the body has a function to perform for the benefit of the whole body. When one part of the body suffers we all suffer. This shows us the care and respect that the members of the body are to have for each other.

## **B. Baptism in Water:**

This baptism is performed by the ministers (although it need not be a pastor necessarily but another believer) after one is saved, and is a symbol, and outward sign, of our identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

### **1. Facts concerning water Baptism:**

- a. It's a command:** Jesus commanded in **Matt. 28:19** that we are to "go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

**Mark 16:16 {He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.}**

- b.** Jesus Himself, submitted in obedience to the ordinance of water baptism in order to identify fully with mankind, and in order to "fulfill all righteousness," Jesus was setting an example for all believers.

**Matthew 3:13-17 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 3:14 But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 3:15 And Jesus answering said unto him, {Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.} Then he suffered him. 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

- c. Its an outward symbol of an inward work that has already taken place in the heart.** Baptism shows our union with Christ. Through faith we are identified with Christ in baptism, just as through our natural birth we are identified with Adam. As we fell into sin and became subject to death in Adam, so we now have died and been raised again with Christ - which water baptism symbolizes" (NIV SB):

**2. FOR THE BELIEVER:**

- a. We were co-crucified with Him.
- b. We co-died with Him.
- c. We have been co-buried with Him.
- d. We have been co-raised to newness of life in Him.

**3. Water Baptism, in itself, does not save you:** It is not essential to salvation.

You don't have to be baptized in water in order to go to heaven. This point needs to be clarified lest we place false hope in the mere act. Its by faith in Christ and His atoning work on the cross alone that saves us.

**Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

**4. Christ forgave sins without Baptism in water.**

Jesus told the thief on the cross, **"today thou shalt be with me in Paradise. Luke 23:43**

**5. What about infant Baptism?**

- a. We as a church do not practice infant Baptism because we find no Scriptural basis for this, neither is there a single instance in scripture where this ceremony was practiced.
- b. Infant Baptism gives a false assurance to parents that their children are saved without following through with it in later years.
- c. There is nothing wrong with bringing a child to an altar and dedicating them to God.

**6. The Method of Baptism:**

- a. There are currently 3 methods of baptism -
  - (I) Sprinkling
  - (II) Pouring or effusion
  - (III) Immersion
- b. There is general agreement that the word "baptism" means to dip or immerse. The same word in the Greek language was used when one would immerse a garment in order to dye it a different color. Further, history argues for immersion. Pouring and sprinkling came about because of water shortage and as a convenience of the aged and infirm. The Bible is pretty clear. In Acts 8:38 we see that Phillip and the Eunuch both went down into the water and were baptized.

**Acts 8:38-39 And he commanded the chariot to standstill: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 8:39 And when**

they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

**Matthew 3:16** And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.

### **C. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit:**

#### **1. An experience subsequent to salvation called the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.**

This act is done by Christ.

**Matthew 3:11** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

#### **2. All believers have the Holy Spirit**

**I Corinthians 6:19-20** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **6:20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

#### **3. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit distinguishes from conversion:**

**John 20:22** "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit;"

a. Here Jesus imparts the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to His disciples. Up to this point throughout the Old Testament the Holy Spirit did not indwell but came upon to empower and then would depart from the person when His work was finished.

b. Here Jesus imparted to them the presence of the Holy Spirit yet they now having received the Holy Spirit, were to wait for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and power some 50 days later at Pentecost.

**Luke 24:49** "Beloved, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem until ye be endued with Power from on High."

c. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is for power to serve. God does not call us to serve without enabling us.

#### **4. The Initial evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit:**

A life of intimacy with God and a walk of power in the Spirit are the best proofs that one is filled with the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost God provided an unmistakable proof of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit when the disciples all spoke with other tongues as they were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

#### **5. Tongues on the Day of Pentecost:**

a. In Acts 2 we read the account of the disciples as they were Baptized for the 1st time in the Holy Spirit and spake in Tongues. On this occasion the Holy

Spirit enabled them to speak in different languages that could be understood by the foreigners that were in Jerusalem, as a sign to everyone that the Holy Spirit had been given.

**Acts 2:5-8 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 2:6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. 2:7 And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?**

**b. At Cornelius' house Gentiles also received:**

**(I) Acts 10:44-47** - they were astonished for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Tongues is the initial evidence of the Spirit Baptism.

**(II) Acts 10:44-47 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 10:45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 10:46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 10:47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?**

I wish to point out that I teach this passage as the Gentiles being baptized in the Holy Spirit along with the receiving of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit even though it does not specifically refer to the event as the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I believe it is consistent with Paul's teaching on the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and because to view this account as the Gentiles receiving only the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is common to all believers, would also be saying that all believers should speak in tongues. Or to say it another way, if one does not speak in tongues he is not saved. This latter statement is not consistent with the book of Acts or the teaching of Paul. Therefore, it is my belief that this is a record of both events happening simultaneously. We must keep in mind that up to this point the Gentiles who were believers had not yet heard that the Holy Spirit had been given. Their act was a response of faith to the word of God delivered unto them.

**6. Purpose of Tongues:**

**a. The most important reason is the enduement of power to witness.**

**Luke 24:49 {And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.}**

**Acts 1:8 {But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.}**

**b. What Paul had to say about tongues**

**(I) First Paul did not want us to be ignorant**

**I Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual [gifts], brethren, I would not have you ignorant.**

**(II) Secondly he shared that God had set within the church "diversities of tongues"**

**I Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.**

The "diversities of tongues" may imply several different things:

**(A)** different uses such as: public, private, singing

**(B)** different languages 13:1 "of men and angels"

**(C)** for understanding on foreign fields (Justus du Plessis testimony)

**(III) Thirdly he shared that LOVE was most important**

**I Corinthians 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become [as] sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.**

**(IV) Fourthly, Paul stated that tongues, prophecy and knowledge would all cease when that which is perfect would come.**

**I Corinthians 13:8-10 Charity never faileth: but whether [there be] prophecies, they shall fail; whether [there be] tongues, they shall cease; whether [there be] knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.**

It seems apparent that Paul is speaking of yet a future time as tongues were very much a part of the church. The statement "that which is perfect" seems to be the key as to the time table for these to cease. We can look at the world today and see that tongues still operate, that people still prophesy in speaking forth the word of God to the edification of the body, and finally we are living in an age of increasing knowledge to the point that the average man can't even keep up with all the advances. Therefore, "that which is perfect" has not yet arrived. My own feeling concerning this is that it may speak of:

**(A)** The second advent of Christ when he establishes his earthly kingdom

**(B)** It may refer to the eternal kingdom of heaven when we will have all understanding and rule and reign with Christ

**(V) Fifthly, Paul admonishes us to desire spiritual gifts:**

**I Corinthians 14:1-5** Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. (14:2) For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. (14:3) But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. (14:4) He that speaketh in an [unknown] tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. (14:5) I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater [is] he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

(A) desire spiritual gifts

(B) prefer that you prophesy

(C) tongues involves the spirit of man speaking mysteries that are not understood

(D) this speaking is communication between man and God

(E) prophecy is in our normal language and is understood by everyone and thus builds everyone up

(F) tongues with interpretation is equal to prophecy

**(VI) Next Paul shares that praying in an unknown tongue involves**

**his human spirit praying even though his understanding is**

**unfruitful** and that we can choose to pray or sing either in the spirit (tongues) or with the understanding (our normal language).

**I Corinthians 14:14-15** For if I pray in an [unknown] tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. (14:15) What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

**(VII) Paul now turns his attention to the exercise of the gifts in the public service.**

**I Corinthians 14:23-33** If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? (14:24) But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all (14:25) And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. (14:26) How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. (14:27) If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. (14:28) But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. (14:29) Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. (14:30) If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. (14:31) For ye may all prophesy one by one,

**that all may learn, and all may be comforted. (14:32) And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. (14:33) For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.**

- (A) tongues to the unlearned or unbeliever are not understood and therefore deemed to be out of order (note the usage of unlearned which could mean those who were believers yet had not received teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit)
- (B) prophecy as it is in our native language is a stronger witness as everyone immediately understands.
- (C) vs 26 all of us are to come to the church service with a song, tongue or word from the Lord
- (D) not more than two or three should speak publicly in a service and make sure someone interprets
- (E) the same is true of prophecy, not more than three and they should be judged as to whether it is of God
- (F) remember the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet
- (VIII) Finally, Paul closes by stating that we who are spiritual should realize that what he has stated is from the Lord but if any man would choose to be ignorant of this fact don't argue over it just allow him to remain ignorant.**
- (A) Furthermore we should strongly desire to prophecy and don't forbid speaking in tongues remembering to keep everything in order.

**I Corinthians 14:37-40 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. (14:38) But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. (14:39) Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. (14:40) Let all things be done decently and in order.**