

A Bird's Eye View Of I Corinthians

Particularly important for Paul's argument regarding the res. chpt 15

Writer: Paul the founder of the Corinthian Church (Acts 18)

Date: 54-55 (about 20-25 years after the Lord ascended into heaven—about 15 years before Rome destroyed Jerusalem and began the first wave of persecution. Many eyewitness to the events of the Lord's life were still alive. Christianity was in its infancy)

Purpose: To deal with problems and answer questions that had arisen in the Cor. church.

Lesson for the Market-place: Stop Being Carnal—live in the reality of who you are in Christ! You are a Saint—so live like one!

Key Verse: I Cor 1:30 But by His (God's) doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. {NASV}

Key Truth: "Union With Christ" — the message of the Gospel!

Commentaries:

- Fee, Gordon *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (very technical—excellent information for those who seriously want to pursue the details of the text)
- Gromacki, Robert *Called to be Saints* (very brief and helpful—I highly recommend this commentary for a personal devotional study of the book—paperback about 6.95 at most Christian bookstores.)
- Hodge, Charles *I & II Corinthians* (An old classic—very good if you can wade through the wordiness)
- MacArthur, John *I Corinthians* (A very practical and helpful work—does a very good job of bringing practical exhortations to everyday life from the text. This is a rather lengthy work and can be obtained for about 17.95 at most Christian bookstores.)

Introductory notes on the City and Church at Corinth:

I. City:

- GUARDED A NARROW STRIP OF LAND CONNECTING PELOPONNESIAN ISLAND w/ GREECE | 2 Harbors - Controlling access to 2 seas
- destroyed in 146 B.C. by Romans but rebuilt by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C.
- Strategically located for sea and land trade—became a cosmopolitan center of commerce—population of 1 million. 2/3 were slaves
- Very wealthy and very sinful. (Much like our San Francisco or New York) (To "Corinthianize"—to fornicate)
- Temple of Posideon, Appolos, Aphrodite—over 1000 religious prostitutes—thousands of idol sacrifices, etc.
- City was rich in history but poor in morals—Excitement ran high in this city and the fear of God was very low!

II. Church:

- God sent the Apostle Paul and a church was born! What a place for a church! No greater opportunity—no greater need! Problem—Church was supposed to impact Corinth—but Corinth had impacted the Church! Christ had prayed in John 17 "not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." The Corinthian church had allowed the evils of their city to become a part of their church! Paul writes this letter to a struggling, growing Church that had become emersed in the tangle and filth of the city it was supposed to be reaching. In this epistle we see Christianity applied to the details of ordinary living! For relevance to the Church of the 90's—no book in the NT exceeds this letter to the Corinthians. It could be called the Epistle to the New Yorkers, Californians, or even the "South Carolinians"—or just simply to the Americans! Economically aggressive, athletically oriented, affluent, and increasingly amoral—that was the Corinth and that is the America that God's band of believers were supposed to minister to—What were they to do? Paul's answer sounds back—STOP BEING CARNAL!

III.

CORINTHIAN CORRESP.

- WRITTEN FROM Eph during 3rd journey
- CHLOE'S REPORT
- STEPHANUS, FORTUNATUS, ACHAEUS - CARRIED letter to Corinth 16:7

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or ability to please God - 3 areas

Righteousness, Love, Purity of Heart

Message of Cross

- ① VISIT - Acts 18
- ② Lost letter - *cabids them formatters I cov 5*
- ③ I 10th Annual Central Africa Baptist Leadership Conference
- ④ Quick visit - *Reported*
- ⑤ Lost letter - *Serious letter (I cov 2, 7)*
- ⑥ II cov
- ⑦ Third visit *planned*

Book Outline

- A. The basis of *SKINHEAD!*
- I. Confirmation of the Position of the Corinthian Church: 1:1-9 *(called to be holy)*
 - B. THE BOUNDARIES OF "SAINTHOOD" - HOLY LIVING
 - C. THE BENEFITS OF "SAINTHOOD": 1) GRACE 2) GIFTS 3) GUARANTEES!
 - D. THE BEDROCK OF "SAINTHOOD" - GOD'S FAITHFULNESS
 - II. Confrontation of the Problems in the Corinthian Church: 1:10-6:20
 - A. Confronting the Problem of Division in the Church: 1:10-4:21 *set eyes on Christ*
 1. A Wrong View of the Message of the Gospel: 1:10-2:15
 2. A Wrong View of the Ministers of the Gospel: 3-4
 - a. Ministers are to be pictured as spiritual Farmers
 - b. Ministers are to be pictured as spiritual Builders
 - c. Ministers are to be pictured as God's Stewards
 - d. Ministers are pictured as Fools in the eyes of lost men
 - e. Ministers are to be regarded as spiritual Fathers in the faith
 - B. Confronting the Problem of Discipline in the Church: 5 *cast out sin - discipline proper solution*
 - C. Confronting the Problem of Defrauding in the Church: 6:1-8 *(DISPUTES) to dealing w/ this problem*
 - D. Confronting the Problem of Defilement in the Church: 6:9-20 *cleanse yourselves - watch out - you are temple of God!*
 - III. Clarification of the Perplexities among the Corinthian Church: 7-15
 - A. Clarifying the Perplexities concerning Marriage: 7:1-40
 1. Concerning Marriage and Celibacy
 2. Concerning Marriage and Divorce
 3. Concerning Marriage and Christian Service
 4. Concerning Marriage and Remarriage (primarily of widows)
 - B. Clarifying the Perplexities of Christian Liberty: 8-10
 1. The Problem: 8
 2. The Personal example: 9
 3. The Picture from the OT: 10:1-13
 4. The Prohibition: 10:14-22
 5. The Principle presented: 10:23-33
 - C. Clarifying the Perplexities of Public Worship: 11
 1. Clarifying the issue of Head-coverings: 11:1-17
 2. Clarifying the issue of the Lord's table: 11:17-34
 - D. Clarifying the Perplexities of Spiritual Gifts: 12-14
 1. The Presentation of Spiritual Gifts: 12:1-11
 2. The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts: 12:12-31
 3. The Prerequisite for Spiritual Gifts: 13:1-13
 4. The Permanence of Spiritual Gifts: (supplemental sermon from chpt 13)
 5. The Perversion of Spiritual Gifts: 14:1-25
 6. The Practice of Spiritual Gifts: 14:26-40
 - E. Clarifying the Perplexities of the Resurrection: 15
 - F. Clarifying the Perplexities of Christian Giving: 16
- Settle the matter w/ Christian judges or allow yourself to be defrauded*

transforming
being from a
hurting church into
healthy church

I Corinthians 1:1-9

Theme: Paul confirms the Position of the Corinthian believers—Saints.

Text: 1:1-9

Introduction: Paul is writing to a Church that was established to be a light for truth in a city that was morally decadent! Instead of influencing her city—the city had influenced the church! Every vice or sin in Corinth had made its way into the Church. She was defiled and polluted—and her reputation was spreading about the empire until it finally reached the ears of the Apostle Paul. He wrote this book to restore the Church to purity and an effective ministry. This letter could be called the letter to the South Carolinians—to the Americans. Paul is going to Confront their Problems in chapters 1-6 and he will Clarify their Perplexities in chapters 7-16. But before he jumps in and gets down to business—he begins by reminding them of their Positions as Saints—His whole message is STOP BEING CARNAL—you are a saint—so live like one. He begins by laying a strong foundation—by Confirming their Position as Saints—He does this in 4 stages:

I. The Basis for Their Position: 1-3

- Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours; Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Paul—writing to this church that is so fraught with spiritual problems begins his epistle by establishing and confirming the fact that every believer in the Corinthian assembly was in fact a saint before God. Everything that follows in this epistle hinges and develops upon this shocking declaration—every last believer in this worldly, carnal assembly was a saint in God's sight!
- How in the world is such a shocking, amazing statement defensible—can it really be so?
- In the first 3 verses of this passage, we find three strong defenses for this startling statement.

A. Declared by Divine Commission: Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.

- Paul identifies himself at the very beginning of his letter as having the authority to say what he is about to say because of the office God has called him to—Apostle.
- Word apostle is a very specialized word that literally meant "sent one". It was used in a variety of ways in the NT world—It was used to describe official representatives who would speak on behalf of a monarch. It was used to describe the function of certain men who were sent out as delegates from the highest religious court known to the Jewish world—the Sanhedrin. When they rendered a verdict or a ruling on a matter—they would send out an official delegate to deliver

their verdict—His message was backed by all of the authority of the Sanhedrin which had sent him.

- Paul is stating that he is an official delegate from the court of heaven. The message he brings is not the words of another religious teacher or the thinking or opinion of a philosopher or wise rabbi—It was an official message from the One who sat on the throne of the Universe—and his messenger or apostle, Paul, had all of the authority of Heaven behind him!

- Paul stresses that he did not chose this office himself but he was officially called. He was not called by the will of men—he declares that his call and appointment to this sacred office was directed by the will of God!

- This was a very high, sacred, and authoritative office—Paul was not some backwood preacher giving an opinion—He was God's messenger! His message—You are Saints!

- Not only was their position as Saints confirmed by Divine Commission, it was defended by Divine ownership.

B. Defended by Divine Ownership: *to the church of God which is at Corinth*

- The word "Church" means called out ones. In the OT it is used to describe the nation that God had called out from all of the other nations of the world and chosen for Himself.

- Here Paul uses this word to declare that the believers at Corinth were different * from the rest of the inhabitants of that city—they were called out from all of the other inhabitants to become God's special assembly or "Church"

- Paul also points out that this Church or "called out" assembly belonged to someone—God!

- One of the great problems in the Corinthian church was an enfatuation for human leaders. Some followed Paul, others Apollos, some Peter—Paul destroys this type of thinking by declaring that the church does not belong to its leaders—doesn't belong to the Pastor—It belongs to God!

- They existed in a very special position that was declared by Divine Commission, defended by Divine ownership, and finally demonstrated by Divine Activity.

NOTE - often it is our thinking that to reach the world we must be identified w/ the world or in some measure like the world - God's Plan to reach the world is to call a group out of the world & identify himself with them.

C. Demonstrated by Divine Activity:

- Paul was saying that they were Saints. Word "Saint" literally means "holy" —

- * He is addressing one of the most carnal groups of believers in all of the NT.

Every type of sin and vice permeated their group. There was division, immorality, hatred, scandal, adultery and incest, divorce, perversion. In spite of all of the external filth—Paul looked beneath the surface and declared that they were holy! He goes on to demonstrate this by reminding them of three undeniable events in their past.

"marked out" set aside or apart

1. **Their Consecration to God:** *to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus*

* In the Bible sanctification can mean several different things. There are places where it refers to the process whereby you become more like Christ—living externally what you are internally. Here in this context however, the word has a different meaning. It is referring not to a process which the believer does but to a one time act which God does.

* Sanctification here is the act whereby God sets apart the believer as his holy possession and consecrates the believer for Himself.

• In the original text "to those who have been sanctified" is all one word.

• The grammar behind this word indicates two important truths about the believer.

* (1) • First: Sanctification here in this context is not something that you do—It is something that God does for you! (Passive and not active)

* (2) • Second: Sanctification in this context is something that happened one time in the past with permanent unchangeable results. (Perfect tense)

* Paul is saying that these believers (as well as all other believers) were consecrated or set apart to God in the past—and that holy consecration could never be revoked or altered—it was their permanent unalterable state!

• The second undeniable event that Paul reminds them about in order to confirm the fact that they were saints is their calling from God.

2. **Their Call from God:** *saints by calling,*

• Just like Paul did not become an Apostle because he chose that office but because God chose him for that office—so the believer did not become a saint because he chose to become a saint but because God chose them!

• No man chooses God unless God chooses him!

• The Lord reminded his apostles of this fact when He declared, *You have not chosen me but I have chosen you!*

• The fact that you are a believer tonight indicates that God has permanently set you apart for Himself and has called you to be holy!

• "Saint" literally means "holy"

• Regardless of what you may be like externally in the eyes of men (wicked, vile, sinful, hypocrite)—In the eyes of God you are pure, undefiled, blameless—in short—You are holy in your position before God!

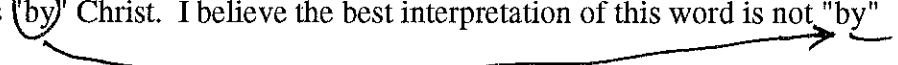

• How in the world can this be? I know that I have sin in my life—I know that I am not perfect—how can Paul be telling me that I am perfectly and permanently holy before God? The answer is found in the third undeniable event in your life.

3. **Their Call upon God:** *with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours;*

• You are holy because God chose you but that holiness became effective in your life when you chose Christ. The reason that God sees you as perfectly holy when He looks at you is that He does not see your own righteousness but the perfect righteousness of the one you have called upon—Christ!

- This phrase "call upon the name of our Lord" is a very significant phrase. Paul uses it elsewhere in the book of Romans to guarantee the fact that anyone who calls or cries out to Christ in faith will be saved.
- The fact that this is a present tense indicates that the idea behind salvation is a continual, present belief. Salvation is present-tense believing. It may have begun at a particular point in time when you cried out to God—but it should not have ended there—it is a continuous, every day trust and belief in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- You don't go to heaven on yesterdays faith or yesteryears faith—you go on today's faith. Every time you find a reference to "saving faith" it is always referring to present ongoing belief.
- Pastor—how do I know I'm saved? I prayed a prayer when I was 5 but I'm not sure I really understood—or I don't know that I really believed back then like I believe now—am I really saved? You don't get to heaven on yesterday's belief. It is not important what you did or didn't do or believe yesterday—what do you believe now? Salvation is not a prayer—it is a personal, on going relationship and belief in Christ's work!
- Paul looked at the Corinthian believers whose life was so full of carnality and reminded them of their calling from God—they were called to be holy because they had been permanently set apart by God! The fact that they were calling on Christ's name was proof that beneath the dirt and filth of their carnality was the sterling silver of their real nature—holiness!

II. The Boundaries around Their Position: 4

- I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus.* (Union with Christ)
- What were the boundaries that surrounded and guarded their position as Saints? What protected their call to holiness from being marred from the sin that had crept in to their earthly lives.
- How in the world could Paul say that they were holy in their position before God while it was so painfully obvious that they were anything but holy in their practice before men?
- Paul could declare that they were holy before God because of their position.
- Vs 4 tells us that Paul was thankful for the grace of God that had been given to them — the KJV has 'by' Christ. I believe the best interpretation of this word is not "by" but "in" Christ. 
- All of the enmity that we had with God when we were yet in our sin was removed when God chose us and we called on Christ. Verse 2 states that we were permanently sanctified "in" Christ and I believe that God can now exercise his grace toward us not because of what we are but because of where we are—"in Christ". 
- This phrase also occurs in 1:30 where we find out how we came to be in Christ—It was God's doing! (Of Him (God) are ye in Christ. . .)

•God views us as permanently holy because we are in Christ who is perfectly holy—when God sees you and me—He sees us covered and clothed in someone else's holiness—Christ's.

III. The Benefits of Their Position: 5-8

•*That in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

•The benefits of being in Christ and being permanently set apart to God extend to every area and aspect of life. To demonstrate that our position as saints benefits every area of life Paul lists three general benefits that we enjoy as Saints.

A. Past Benefits: Grace (4-6) *for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus...That in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you*

•God's entire dealing with mankind can be summed up on one word—grace.

•Grace here specifically refers to the undeserved salvation that God freely provided for you when you called on the name of Christ.

* { •The fact that Paul uses the past tense when describing the fact that God gave you grace indicates that this is something that you already possess. God is not going to give it to you—nor is he in the process of giving it to you—this is something that He gave to you in the past. It does not refer to the on going grace that God gives us every day — rather it refers to that aspect of salvation where God once and for all freely forgave your sin debt and liberated you from the penalty of death! This has already happened to you if you have been saved.

•There are two important things that happened to you when God gave you His grace in the past.

1. You were enriched.

•The idea here is an overwhelming provision—super abundance in everything!

•Paul goes on to list two specific areas of enrichment that the Corinthian believer's had received as a result of God's grace.

1. •First they had been enriched in all speech—or in the ability to deliver forth and sound out God's message and doctrine in the midst of a defiled city. They had been given an abundance of everything that they needed to proclaim God's truth!

•So have you!

2- •Second: not only were they enriched in their ability to declare God's truth—they had also been given everything they needed to understand good doctrine! They were enriched in "knowledge" or understanding.

•This is not something that was limited to one church that existed 2000 years ago—it is true about our church today! We have been given everything we

we get our word
plutocrat = wealthy
from this Greek word.

knowledge =
ability
to put
wisdom to
work in
daily life

need to declare God's message and understand God's truth. We have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit who will give us power and boldness to declare the message and who will guide us into all truth!

- How in the world did we get so rich? Paul answers that question by reminding us of the second thing that happened when God gave us His grace.

2. The Message or Testimony about Christ was established in us.

- There are two important words that we need to understand.

- "Testimony of Christ" refers to the message about Christ or the Gospel.

- "Confirmed" is a legal or monetary term meaning to establish or guarantee. *

- When you received God's grace and were saved—everything you heard about Christ was validated or established in your heart! When you got saved—the fact that Jesus Christ was the Son of God was established and confirmed in your heart. The fact that He saved you and keeps you was validated in your heart!

- This message that was so firmly established in your heart now motivates you to go out and share the gospel—and Paul has already told us that God has enriched us in all speech and understanding so that we can go and do this very thing!

- Not only does Paul talk about our past benefits—he discusses our present benefits.

B. Present Benefits: Gifts (7) so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ

- there are two important ideas here in this verse.

1. Paul describes the believer as "waiting" for Christ's return.

- This word does not mean to sit down and wait and do nothing.

- It means to eagerly look for the coming of the Lord—but it has the idea of preparing for His arrival. We are told to "watch" for His coming like we watch for a thief in the night. How do you watch for a thief in the night? Do you sit by the door with a loaded gun every moment of the day? NO! You don't know when he is coming so you go about the daily business of life but you prepare for the possibility—you lock your doors, you bar your windows, and you get ready! You don't know when Christ is coming—but you do know that He is coming! You can't sit on your housetop and practice jumping up and down so that you will be able to get a head start on the others—BUT you can go through the daily affairs of life expecting his coming at any moment.

- How should we live in the light of this truth? II Peter 3:14 *Therefore beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless!*

- Application: How do you eager wait for the coming of the Lord? By living a pure and holy life and carrying out the commission He left for you to do. He

did not leave you here to accumulate a great amount of earthly wealth—how sad it will be when He returns to find you engaged in that kind of pursuit.

•Peter tells us that we are to be diligent in holy living so that Christ can find us spotless and blameless when he comes! What goes on in the privacy of your home? What comes out of your mouth when you are away from other believers? What do you put in your mouth? Where do you go? What do you watch, hear, or read? If Christ were to come back and surprise you in your car or in your home at the times you have reserved for your little pet sin or "weakness"—would he find you blameless and spotless?

•Well preacher—you don't understand—I really want to live for the Lord and all—but I can't give up this habit or this sin! That is the same excuse the Corinthians were giving to Paul when he told them to stop being carnal! You don't understand—this idol meat is so cheap—this fornication is the accepted way of life—If I don't take my brother to court I will never get my money—I can never give up this habit—I'm just not strong enough!

* { •Paul expected this kind of an answer—I can't live a holy life, I can't give up this sin while I wait for Christ to come—so he reminds them that God has given them gifts to help them carry out their work for Christ while they wait for his coming.

2. Paul describes the believer as having every spiritual gift necessary for the job God has given him to accomplish!

key * { •Paul is not necessarily stating that every believer has every gift—he is addressing a group of believers collectively and he is stating that as a group (church) they have every gift necessary for carrying out the work of the ministry.

•Here is the point on an individual level. God has called you to a specific aspect of his work—some of you will do one thing while someone else does another and God has given each one of you the gifts that you need to carry out your task and live a holy life.

•Don't seek someone else's gift—develop your own!

* * * { •Point: Some people feel that the fact that spiritual gifts are present is the mark of a spiritual Church. Paul here is declaring that this Corinthian church in the depths of moral depravity has all the spiritual gifts—Before you buy the argument that your church is not spiritual or your life is not spiritual because you don't happen to have a certain gift—your remember that just because you seem to have a spiritual gift does not mean you are spiritual!

•You can offer excuses all day long as to why you can't live a holy life or why you can't give up a sinful habit—the point is Paul states that you have been given the gifts that enable you to do so—it is often not that you can't, it is that you are not willing to give up a certain sin or habit.

C. Promised Benefits: Guarantees (8) *who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*

same as in vs 6
confirm = used
in Papyri to
describe a
legal guarantee!

- Paul also reminds them of the future benefit of grace—the guarantee that God will establish or confirm every believer blameless in the Day of Judgement.
- Blameless here refers to the idea of no one being able to justly accuse you or point a finger at you—you will be established before the throne of God as blameless!

IV. The Bedrock beneath Their Position: 9

• *God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord!*

• Well preacher—I sure like what I am hearing—I like the fact that I am a saint, and that one day I will be established blameless before God—but how do I know its true? (Based on two unshakeable facts)

A. The Character of God who had called them: *God is faithful,*

- Paul was not depending on the faithfulness of the Corinthian believers—he was not depending on the sinlessness of their lives—he wasn't even depending on the strength of their convictions. He was basing his confidence in the character of God—God is Faithful! What He has started in you—He will complete!
- Your salvation does not depend on your holiness—it depends on God's faithfulness! From start to finish—your salvation depends on God's faithfulness!

B. Their Association with Christ who had bought them: *through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord!*

- The word “fellowship” here means more than friendship—is a communion or a partnership. You have entered into a special partnership with Christ—in fact—you are part of His body. God will guarantee you blameless before His throne because He is faithful and because you have entered into a special partnership with His Son, Jesus Christ—SO—stop offering excuses, stop whining about how hard it is to be holy, and stop playing around with spirituality—in short—STOP BEING CARNAL!

Conclusion: LESSONS FOR THE MARKETPLACE.

1. **You are a Saint—Live like One!**
2. **You claim to be waiting for the Lord to come—Live like He were coming today.**
3. **You have been enriched with every thing you need to live a holy life—stop making excuses!**
4. **You are “in” Christ—so stop living like you are still “in” the world!**

I Corinthians 1:10
“Dealing With Divisions”

Theme: Paul confronts the Problem of the Corinthian believers—Division.

Text: 1:10

Introduction: Paul is writing to a Church that was established to be a light for truth in a city that was morally decadent! Instead of influencing her city—the city had influenced the church! Every vice or sin in Corinth had made its way into the Church. She was defiled and polluted—and her reputation was spreading about the empire until it finally reached the ears of the Apostle Paul. He wrote this book to restore the Church to purity and an effective ministry. This letter could be called the letter to the South Carolinians—to the Americans. Paul is going to Confront their Problems in chapters 1-6 and he will Clarify their Perplexities in chapters 7-16. But before he jumps in and gets down to business—he begins by reminding them of their Positions as Saints—His whole message is STOP BEING CARNAL—you are a saint—so live like one. He begins by laying a strong foundation—by Confirming their Position as Saints—He does this in 4 stages:

- I. The Basis for Their Position: 1-3**
 - A. Declared by Divine Commission:**
 - B. Defended by Divine Ownership:**
 - C. Demonstrated by Divine Activity**
- II. The Boundaries around Their Position: 4**
- III. The Benefits of Their Position: 5-8**
 - A. Past Benefits: Grace (4-6)**
 - B. Present Benefits: Gifts (7)**
 - C. Promised Benefits: Guarantees (8)**
- IV. The Bedrock beneath Their Position: 9**
 - A. The Character of God who had called them: *God is faithful,***
 - B. Their Association with Christ who had bought them: *through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord!***

Conclusion: LESSONS FOR THE MARKETPLACE—Stop Being Carnal!

- Now—In light of your position—I am going to begin to confront the specific problems that plague your assembly—and the first problem that I am going to deal with is the problem that is tearing apart your assembly—a problem that is so rampant in your church that every one is hearing about it—I heard it from the House of Chloe—it is the problem of contention or division!
- Paul deals with this problem by telling the Corinthians why they had allowed themselves to be divided! {Because they had a wrong View of the message of God and a wrong View of the Ministers of God}
- Tonight we are going to set the background and show you what the message Paul is talking about here really contained. That message is nowhere better capsulized then in

Matthew's Gospel—So—if we are going to have a correct view of the message that Paul is going to discuss—if we are going to avoid misunderstanding and misjudging that message as the Corinthians had done—then we need to understand Matthew's gospel.

•We are going to take time tonight to survey Matthew's account.

•**Writer:** Matthew—Levi

We Know 3 things about him:

1. Jew—possibly connected to tribe of Levi
 2. Very familiar with OT law and prophets—75 allusions and 50 direct quotes
 3. Very disillusioned: a tax collector
 - Israel was a nation in desperation—400 years of silence
 - They had watched their glorious kingdom fracture and divide and be decimated by their enemies—for 400 years they had waited and hoped and longed for a deliverer—the promised messiah who could come and restore the broken and fractured kingdom to its former glory! But it seemed that they waited in vain!
 - Babylonian, Persian, Grecian {Alexander's four divisions} all squashed Israel beneath the heel of political oppression—Latest one was an empire of barbarians who ruled with a fist of iron—ROME!
 - Things didn't look very promising—Matthew decided enough is enough—I am tired of waiting—I'll make the best of things—I am a realist and I know that we are never going to be strong enough to defeat Rome—I'll become a tax collector! {explain why they were hated—traitors to their own country}
- It is significant that when God chose to write a book that would present the Messiah to a people who had rejected Him—He chose Matthew to write it—a man who in the eyes of his nation had rejected them!

Purpose: To convince this desperate longing nation that the one they were waiting for had already come! To convince them to receive Jesus as their king and Messiah!

Message: Submit to Jesus as your king—Matthew develops his book around three amazing declarations and offers support for each declaration—His entire message—Submit to Jesus as your King—HERE IS WHY!

1. He is the rightful heir to David's throne! Proof: genealogy—1:1
 - He is not just another heir to David's throne—not just another in a long line of ki
2. He is the promised Messiah who will restore Israel to her former glory!
 - Proof: 75 allusions and 50 direct quotes.
 - But Matthew does not end here—He goes on to make an unheard of claim—Jesus who you rejected was far more than the legal heir to the throne of a tiny insignificant kingdom halfway around the world—far more than even the long awaited Messiah—When you rejected him you didn't just reject your messiah and the Heir to David's throne—You

POINT
EVEN A
TRAITOR CAN
BE RESTORED!
NOT WHAT
YOU ARE
BUT WHAT
YOU ARE
WILLING
TO
BECOME!

rejected the Heir to the Throne of God—The Sovereign of the Universe!

3. Jesus is the Sovereign Ruler of the entire Universe!

- Proof: Miracles that no other earthly monarch could do
- Claims that no other earthly monarch could make
- Authority that no other earthly monarch ever possessed!

Peter recognized it in 16:16-19

- If Jesus were here and asked that question—most of us would answer as Peter answered.
- Jesus would give us the same response—Why do you not submit to my authority?

NOTE: Notice how Matthew ends the book: 28:18-20

- Then Jesus came and spake unto them saying—All power {authority} is given unto me in Heaven and in earth! Here Jesus is claiming something that far outshines even the claim made by Nebuchadnezzar and God approved it—Why? Because it was so! HE WAS THE SOVEREIGN KING OF THE UNIVERSE!
- Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost!
- This is how Matthew closes the Book—by leaving us with the final edict of the sovereign of the universe—Go and witness!
- Point—are you doing this? If not—then no matter what else you are doing you are not in submission to the one you claim is your king!

THIS WAS THE MESSAGE — The Gospel — That God had
ORDAINED AS HIS "WISDOM" — The CORINTHIAN
Church NOT only was NOT submitting to their
Monarch — They had misjudged + misunderstood
his message + had elevated His ministers
to a wrong position of exaltation →
All of this led to Division which
if left unchecked would destroy the church.

POINT:

- 1) Do you really UNDERSTAND The MESSAGE: JESUS IS your king (NOT men)
- 2) Have you really submitted to HIS Authority (ARE you fulfilling HIS

Dealing With Division Part 2 “Facing Up to Fractured Fellowship

Text: I Cor. 1:10-17

Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, that no man should say you were baptized in my name. Now I did baptize also the house of Stephanus; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in the cleverness of speech, that the cross of Christ should not be made void.

Introduction:

- Paul writing to a group of believers in the midst of a dark and depraved society!
- This church was established in the midst of one of the most corrupt and morally bankrupt cities in the entire Roman Empire! Corinth stood as a fortress for evil—A citadel of depravity—It was one of Satan's strongholds!
- But—Acts 18 tells us that when the Apostle Paul and his small band of missionary companions arrived at Corinth and unleashed the power of the Gospel—the gates of Hell in Corinth could not withstand the attack—many souls were liberated from the bondage and blindness of sin! Among them were two individuals—Crispus—the leader of the Jewish synagogue at Corinth, and Gaius—a Roman official who befriended Paul and became his host!
- This small beginning led to the establishment of a church whose reputation soon made its way around the empire! What a testimony to the awesome power of the Gospel!
- BUT—unfortunately—the church did not maintain her vigilance—she became careless and soon all of the vices of the city could be found in the Church!
- The Corinthian assembly was rapidly becoming an ecclesiastical corpse—as Samuel Coleridge in the Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner—“*Corpses man the ship; dead men pull the oars; dead men hoist the sails; dead men steer the vessel!*”
- Paul writes to this Church to restore them to purity and an effective ministry!
- Letter could be called the “Epistle to the South Carolinians”
- He starts by confirming their Position—You are Saints—so live like saints! {1:1-9}
- He will end by clarifying their Perplexities {7-16} But he spends the first half of the book Confronting their Problems {1:11-7}!

•Now—In light of your position—I am going to begin to confront the specific problems that plague your assembly—and the first problem that I am going to deal with is the problem that is tearing apart your assembly—a problem that is so rampant in your church that every one is hearing about it—I heard it from the House of Chloe—it is the problem of contention or division!

•Paul deals with this problem by telling the Corinthians why they had allowed themselves to be divided! {Because they had a wrong View of the message of God and a wrong View of the Ministers of God}

•Paul begins by dealing with the problem of divisions and he takes 4 whole chapters to settle this issue! IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT PAUL DEDICATED THIS AMOUNT OF SPACE TO THIS ISSUE!

•If I had been writing this letter—I would have probably focused on the immorality, on the fornication issues—but Paul begins here! The fundamental weakness that will ultimately destroy a Church and render it impotent—is an attack on her foundation—UNITY!

•We live in a “Christian Culture” that is oriented to division— “Fighting Fundamentalists!” “Fundamental, Independent, Bible-believing, Sin hating, Bible preaching, Soul-Winning, Missions Minded, SEPARATIST Local Church!”

* •We are all for separation—it is a vital part to NT Christianity—BUT—the primary characteristic of the NT church was not its separation from other believers but it UNITY!

•Paul is writing to a church whose unity structure was breaking down—and he addresses the problem in two specific ways:

First: He is going to confront them with the reality of the problem: 1:10-17

Second: He is going to show them the reasons for this problem: 1:18-4:21

•Tonight we are going to start where Paul Starts—Looking at the reality of Division.

•Can’t deny or ignore a problem—won’t heal itself—must deal with the reality!

•Facing up to Fractured Fellowship!

•Paul does this by setting forth 4 specific things in these 7 verses:

I. The Plea for Christian Agreement: 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**. {KJV}

•Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

•Paul does not come in with both guns blasting—he tenderly addresses the fractured assembly as brothers in Christ!

•He beseeches them—this word is used to describe the Holy Spirit—our helper or comforter! Paul is coming alongside this fractured assembly in order to comfort, help and restore them to unity! **He does so by making a Plea for agreement!**

Paul appeals that they unite
the phrase "The same"
1) say same thing
2) have same mind
3) be in the same opinion.

A. The Meaning of the Plea: *Unity of Speech*

- Paul's whole exhortation to this body is that they learn to agree!
- The translators of the KJV really hit the nail on the head when they translated this term as "speak the same thing"—that is exactly what it means!
- Were they to repeat the same words the the rest of the body was speaking? NO!
- Paul's point is simple—LEARN TO AGREE! LEARN TO GET ALONG!
- DON'T SEND OUT CONFLICTING MESSAGES!
- Nothing is more confusing and destructive to a new convert or to a visitor to enter in an assembly where there is no unity or no agreement!
- Every member has a different opinion and a different view—about doctrinal matters, about the way a church should be run, about the way the Pastor should preach, etc.—AND THEY VOCALIZE THEM!
- Paul is saying—settle your differences! Learn to agree! Be unified in your message to those who enter your assembly!
- WHY? Why could we go through the trouble? Why can't we just hold our own opinions and agree to disagree—Why should I surrender and adjust my view?

B. The Motive behind the Plea: *I beseech you by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!*

- Paul is making a very strong appeal!
- He is using the full title of the head of the Church!
- Here is his point! I am appealing to you as an apostle—an emissary of the One who is the Head of this Body! In His blessed name—for His dear sake—stop defiling and fracturing His body and His church with your carnal disagreements! For the Sake of the Lord Jesus Christ—learn to speak the same thing!
- Folks—are you willing to forego your particular opinion about the way this church should be run—about the way the offering should be taken—about what should be done with our funds—for the sake of Jesus Christ? For the sake of unity in His name?
- Am I asking you to compromise doctrine? NO! I am asking you to sacrifice preferences—to learn to get along and to speak the same thing!
- Maybe you would like a different kind of order of service—maybe you would like a different type of song-service—maybe you would like a different type of SS teaching style—BUT—don't divide the church over it!

C. The Manner for carrying out the Plea: How?

1. Eliminate Divisions:

- The word "divisions" is literally our word schisms.
- Used in NT world to describe a torn garment or a rent in a cloth
- Used in John 7:43 to describe the strong division that arose in the crowd

to furrow
up a field

when they were faced with deciding who Jesus really was! Some thought he was demon possessed, others thought he was a prophet, others Elijah—
BUT—they could not agree to speak the same thing about the Lord and as a result—strong division broke out in the group—and broke it up!

•Paul is saying—if you are going to speak the same thing and learn to agree—then it involves eliminating divisions from your midst! IF YOU DON'T—it will destroy your assembly!

2. Harmonize your Attitude: {that ye be perfectly joined together}

• “Perfectly Joined together” is a word used in NT times to describe the setting of a broken bone! It occurs in the NT in Matt. 4:21—mending of the fishing nets! It means to restore or repair something that is useless to usefulness!

• Well, what are they to restore or repair? Their assembly had become torn or rent by internal divisions—no one could agree to speak the same things! Paul is saying—be restoring or repairing the unity and fellowship of your assembly that has been broken by your strife! Here is how—be of the same mind and of the same judgment!

• Paul is talking about internal agreement as well as external unity!

• Not enough to just verbally swallow your pride and keep quiet so you don't break the harmony—there must be an internal harmony—don't harbor your gripes—don't let them eat away at you!

II. The Problem of Carnal Disagreement: 1:11-12

• *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. 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!*

• *For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.*

A. The Reality of the Problem: Admit it! {it hath been declared unto me of you}

• Like many of us—Corinthians did not want to admit their problem.

• Paul did not want to believe that things had gotten so bad at Corinth.

• BUT—finally he had to deal with the problem.

• Uses a word “declared” that indicates that irrefutable evidence had been presented that confirmed all of the rumors!

• Paul states his source—I heard it specifically from the house of Chloe!

• NOTE: Paul wants the Corinthian assembly to note that He was not just hearing a rumor—Remember how you behaved when Chloe was there—Well, that is who told me!

B. The Elaboration of the Problem: Define it! {Now this I say,}

- Here is the problem—here is what you can't agree over! Here is what is dividing and destroying your assembly! You have become divided over human teachers!
- You have become proud and arrogant over your loyalty to a human teacher!
- 4 groups in Corinthian assembly:
- Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ!
- Paul—probably founder of church
- Aplos—probably a reference to his oratorical skill
- Cephas—probably a reference to his ties to Judaism
- Christ—probably a reference to a group that thought that Christ had been given to them in a way that He had not been given to another! They had special privileges that no other member outside their group had!
- FOLKS—WE DO THE SAME THING WITH OUR TEACHERS TODAY!
- Nothing wrong with having a favorite teacher—or loving the way someone expounds the scripture—Problem is when you exalt them and allow them to draw you away from the unity of fellowship that you have with other believers!
- Your loyalty should not be to any man—but to Christ!

Illustr:
Charles
Dowben
"The
Paulite"

C. The Elimination of the Problem: Defeat it! {How??}

- By understanding the Principle of Union with Christ!

III. The Principle of Christlike Unity—Oneness in Christ:

- Paul presents this principle by asking three rhetorical questions—questions that every believer in the Corinthian church already knew the answer to:

A. Was Christ Divided? NO!

B. Was Paul Crucified for You? NO!

C. Were You Baptized in Paul's name? NO!

•Christ was not divided, Paul was not Crucified for me—Christ Was! Only one name that we can be baptized in—Jesus Christ! POINT: If Jesus Christ was not divided out to one particular group—If Jesus Christ was the Only one Crucified for You—If He is the only name in which you can be baptized—Then give your allegiance and your loyalty to HIM and not to these human teachers however helpful their teaching might be to your personal life!

- Purpose of Unity—To Glorify God—you can't glorify God with strife in you heart!
- Source of Unity—God himself! You can't create unity—you can protect it, develop it, enjoy it, and even destroy it—but you can't create it! It is something that God establishes in your heart when you are in complete fellowship and allegiance to Him!

1: 18-25 - 2:1-5 < Gospel a contradiction to human wisdom.
 A CALL TO BELIEGAL DISCERNMENT
 10th Annual Central Africa Baptist Leadership Conference
 2) Look AT The recipients - you of all people 18-25 26-31
 3) Remember my preaching in weakness 2:1-5

IV. The Priority—Commitment to Evangelize:

A. The Primacy of Preaching:

- Paul states bluntly—God did not send me to baptize!
- Some of you are exalting yourselves because you feel that you are special since I—the founder of your church—baptized you!
- Hey—I can't even remember who I baptized! You think it is such a great deal—such an honor that I baptized—I can't even remember all of you!
- Paul is not saying baptism is not important—He is stating that Human Baptizer was not the primary focus—you were baptized in Christ's name—not Paul's and that is what is important! That should unify all of you regardless of who administered the ordinance!
- WHAT—PAUL—HOW COULD YOU NOT REMEMBER SUCH AN IMPORTANT EVENT!
- God did not send me out to baptize and to create a following of "Paulites"
- God sent me out to do one thing—to unleash the awesome power of the Gospel!

B. The Pollution of Preaching:

- Not with the wisdom of words—not with clever speech or oratorical skill
- Folks—you live in a city that admires the rhetoric of Greek logic—you measure a man's message by the skill of his delivery and the cleverness of his reasoning—your standard is the wisdom of this world! BUT—that kind of wisdom pollutes the Gospel! When you preach with worldly wisdom—you preaching becomes powerless!

C. The Powerlessness of Preaching:

- It renders ineffective or it nullifies the cross of Christ—the gospel message!
- This is a direct statement that relates to much of modern day evangelism—we become so consumed about the Gospel message—that we try to dress it up in the words of our wisdom—to make it more palatable or understandable—to get a response!
- Pressure tactics—diagrams—emotional invitations {341st verse of Just as I come} etc!
- THAT RENDERS THE CROSS POWERLESS! The power of the Cross does not rest in your ability to deliver the message!

Conclusion: Lessons For the Market Place:

1. Unity Starts in your heart—What are you harboring?
2. Unity Centers around the Lord—Who are you exalting?
3. Unity Promotes Evangelism—What are you preaching? How are you preaching it?

United We Stand

Theme: Union with Christ

Text: I Cor 1:30

Speaker's Purpose: I want to motivate my audience to please God.

Proposition: Union with Christ gives us the ability to please God!

Interrogative: Why does "Union with Christ" give us the ability to please God?

Transition: Union with Christ gives us the ability to please God for the following reasons.

Introduction:

- Every great musical composition is bound by a single theme or melody upon which all the other themes, chords, and counter-melodies are built.
- The composer blends all else around this foundational melody so that the final product is a harmonious symphony.
- The conductor leads the orchestra through the different musical meadows and valleys—at times highlighting one theme and then another.
- The different instruments playing at different tempos and at different times all combine into one great harmonious whole united by that one foundational melody upon which the whole symphony rests.
- The conductor leads his orchestra through the symphony toward one ultimate goal—to produce a response in the heart of the listener.

•Our text stands before us as the foundational theme for the entire spiritual symphony that the Apostle Paul wrote for the believers of the Corinthian church.

•Every counter-melody, every instruction, every doctrinal truth is built upon the foundational truth presented in this verse.

•**This verse stands as the climax to the entire book and even to Paul's entire theology!**

•What is this truth? Simply stated, our "Union with Christ" gives us the ability to please God in every area of our Christian life!

•Our Union with Christ is the answer to our every need and the solution to our every problem.

•Paul is writing to a church that is living in the midst of a wicked, perverse city—besieged by the forces of darkness from without, corrupted by divisiveness, doctrinal instability, and moral defilement from within, this church desperately needed spiritual help.

•Paul writes to this struggling, wounded band of believers and instructs them that right thinking about the Gospel will produce right living for the Gospel.

•He reminds them that God placed them in Christ at the moment of salvation {of Him are you in Christ}, and as a result, Christ had become wisdom from God to their advantage {dative of advantage}.

•**Wisdom here means** far more than the accumulation of information, it refers to **the skill or the ability to use information to meet the needs of life.**

- Paul is saying that "Union with Christ" has given every believer the **ability** to please God.
- There are three words in the text that qualify and explain why this "wisdom" given to the believer makes it possible to please God. These words are righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.
- Union with Christ gives the believer the ability to please God because it brings freedom from the penalty, power, and presence of sin.**
- We are going to examine the benefits of our salvation—righteousness, sanctification, and redemption which give us the ability to please God.

I. Freedom from the Penalty of Sin: *Righteousness*

Explanation: Righteousness is a term that carries great theological weight for the believer. •This term can be used in an ethical sense referring to right conduct toward other men {Eph 4:24}.

- When Paul uses this term in this context he is referring to much more than our conduct with other men; he is referring to our legal standing before God.
- Righteousness has to do with our measuring up to God's absolute, unchangeable standard—perfect holiness!

A. Man's Need: Romans 3:10,23; Ps. 51:5

- God's standard demands perfect holiness or obedience to His law.
- According to Paul's argument in Romans 3, every man stands guilty of violating that law. In fact, **David reminds us that we were born in violation of God's law {Ps. 51:5}!**
- Explanation:** Ps. 51:5 is not teaching that it is a sin to conceive children, it is teaching that every child has a sin nature from the moment of conception that is in violation to God's absolute standard of perfect holiness!
- Application:** We were doomed from the moment we were conceived! Man entered this world at birth already condemned to God's wrath because he was not legally righteous before God. The Law that enshrined God's perfect standard could never make sinful men holy, all it could do was point out how sinful mankind really was!
- Illustration:** Trip to Six Flags last summer—sign at the entrance to every ride, "You must be at least this tall to be admitted to this ride."
A small boy standing beneath the sign was desperately trying to stretch upward to meet the requirement. That sign could do nothing to help him meet the standard, all it could do was demonstrate that he did not meet the standard. So with the Law.

B. God's Provision: Galatians 4:4-5

- God knew that we needed someone to make us holy so He sent His Son *made of a woman, made under the law to redeem those who were under the law.*
- Jesus Christ came and fulfilled the requirement of the Law for me. Having fulfilled the demands of the law, He went on to satisfy the penalty of the law for those who had fallen short. Romans 3:23 proclaims that Jesus Christ makes

freedom from the penalty of the Law a free gift to those who will believe on Him.

- Jesus Christ has made it possible for a sinful man to stand perfectly holy before God and thus free from the penalty of sin {Romans 6:23}.

- Well, how do I get this freedom from sin and a right standing before God?

C. Means of Appropriation: Romans 8:1

- This freedom and right standing is appropriated or accomplished for us by Christ's death on the Cross. We receive it at the moment of salvation when God imputes to us all of the righteousness of Christ.

- That is why Paul can proclaim that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ! It is one of the benefits of our union with Christ!

Transition: Well, I know that I am free from the penalty of sin, but I am still tempted to sin. How can I please God if I still sin from time to time? Not only does our union with Christ give us freedom from the penalty of sin, it also gives us freedom from the power of sin.

II. Freedom from the Power of Sin: *Sanctification*

Explanation: Sanctification is the practical aspect of our salvation. **It involves living in the reality of what we are positionally.** We are positionally holy before God, and we are instructed to manifest our positional holiness in our daily experience.

A. Man's Need: Romans 7:15-24

- Every Christian lives in the knowledge that God demands holy living from His children.

- Illustration:** 2 men talking to each other—one comments, "I sure am glad that God remembers that we are but dust." Second man responds, "Yes, but do you really think He wants us to be this dusty?"

- Most believers desire to live a holy life but are in the same condition that Paul describes in Romans 7:15 when he states, "For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate!"

- Many Christians live in the frustration of desiring to be holy but not finding the strength to resist sin. They cry with Paul, "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?"

B. God's Provision: Romans 8:25

- The answer to man's cry for deliverance is found in Jesus Christ.

- Jesus Christ is not only our pattern for holiness, **He is also the power** by which we can be holy in our experience.

- Outside of Jesus Christ, it is impossible for men to live in holiness!

C. Means of Appropriation: Romans 6:1-14

- This passage gives us secret to sanctification. Sanctification is not a divine zap or an instantaneous event, **it is a process** that God and the individual believer

participate in together.

- It involves 3 things: an **understanding** of doctrine {Romans 6:3-6}, a **reckoning** (an appropriating) of that doctrine to daily life {Romans 6:11}, and an **obeying** of those truths in practical Christian living {Romans 6:13}.

- In contrast to the act of justification, sanctification is a process where God and the believer work out holiness in daily living.

- Explanation:** From God's perspective, He has given the believer victory over sin when He placed him in Christ {Romans 6}. From the believer's perspective, sanctification is a process where he daily lives under the control of the Holy Spirit {Galatians 5}.

- Illustration:** God declared that He had already driven out the Canaanites from the land, therefore the people were to go in and possess the land—BUT—even though the victory had already been won, they still had to fight the battle.

- Application:** The victory over sin has already been won. Union with Christ guarantees us victory over sin, but we still have to fight the battle! {List sins}

Transition: Well, If the victory has already been won, when will I be able to stop fighting the battle against sin? Will I ever be free from the presence of sin?

III. Freedom from the Presence of Sin: *Redemption*

- Explanation:** The term "**redemption**" occurs 11 times in the New Testament. This word literally means to ransom by the payment of a price.

- In its most general sense the word can simply mean to release or loose. In this context, Paul is referring to the final outcome of Christ's redemptive work on the cross—the **glorification** of the believer.

A. Man's Need: Romans 8:23

- Paul describes all of creation, and especially the believer who has appropriated the righteousness of Christ, as groaning under the curse of sin. Ever since the fall, man has been under the influence of the fall. From the day of his birth until the day of his death, the consequences of that curse will be manifested in his life.

- Although man can progressively become more holy, his ultimate need is to be removed from the very presence of sin and the effects of the curse. He needs a perfect body, will, and environment!

B. God's Provision: Romans 8:28-39; Galatians 4:4-5

- God met this need by sending Christ to redeem us from the curse of the Law! Christ's work on the cross did more than procure our legal standing before God; His work assured our ultimate glorification {Romans 8:28-39}!

C. Means of Appropriation: Ephesians 1:7

- Redemption is appropriated just like righteousness and sanctification—through the blood of Christ! Paul's whole point is that all of the benefits of the cross are ours by virtue of our "Union with Christ!" We can obtain the ability to please God in Christ!

Conclusion: Examine your position—are you in Christ? Have you been washed in His blood? All of your efforts to please God outside of Christ are vain!

- I am convinced that at the heart of every man's longing — is a deep desire to somehow find a way to please God.
 - By good works
 - By Religion
 - By finding a worthy cause - humanitarian.
- When he discovers that they can't get "peace" and they can't seem to please God — they become disillusioned & resentful & either ignore & deny God or openly disobey & defy God.
- In Washington D.C. for International conference on world evangelism in 1990. I ~~was~~ stayed at a youth hostel — where I met two young men who were desperately seeking "wisdom" — or the skill or ability to please God.

- ① BARRY Haines — 24 years old — from Duncraig, west Australia
- traveled the world for 1 year.
 - on a search for something that would satisfy his longing for acceptance
 - had lost 16 full time jobs
 - had no close friends — parents were wealthy & ignored him.
 - came from Methodist background.
 - I met Barry at 11:00 Tuesday night — talking to a group of Australians about the Lord — they pointed to Barry & said — this bloke is one of you!
 - Next night Barry came & said — I need to talk to you! my life has no purpose — no direction!
 - I desperately want peace & a true friend —
 - I shared
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- 24
almost 2:00 AM

Understand Your Message!

Text: I Cor 2:1-16

Introduction: Paul is writing to this Assembly that is fraught with Problems. They had been established to impact their city for God and instead they had allowed their city to infiltrate and defile their assembly.

- Paul hears of the perversities and the defilement of this Church—and Church in reproach and he wrote I Corinthians to deal with Church Problems.

- He reminded them at the very beginning that in spite of all the pollution in their lives—they were Saints—therefore they needed to live like saints—stop being carnal.

- Then Paul jumps in and begins to deal with the most serious problem in their assembly—the problem of division {3-4}

- He begins by **confronting them with reality** of the division in their midst {1:10-18} and declares that they need to **face up to the reality of a fractured fellowship**.

- After confronting them with the reality of the problem of division—he begins in verse 18 of chapter 1 and goes all the way through chapter 4 **explaining the reasons** behind the division.

- Paul notes that there are **two basic reasons behind the division in the Corinthian church—a wrong view of their message and a wrong view of their messengers!**

- We will deal with the wrong view of the messenger when we get to chapter 3-4—but we are trying to understand what Paul means when he states the Corinthians had a wrong view of their message!

- We noted that the **first reason they misunderstood** their message is that they were **trying to dress it up in the garments of human wisdom** to make the gospel “respectable” (1:18-29). {Paul states that God does not use the “wisdom of men” but rather the “foolishness of the message” to save them that believe!}

- **Secondly, we noted that they had underestimated the benefits of “God’s Wisdom”**—found in Jesus Christ who became unto us the skill or ability to please God by providing righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to all that believe {1:30}

- **NOW in chapter 2 Paul is going to correct the third and final misunderstanding that caused this Church to have a wrong view of the message—He is going to deal with the nature of the message! He is telling them to Be Wise about Your Message!**

- Paul focuses in on three fundamental aspects of God’s Divine Wisdom found in the message of the Gospel and he reminds his readers to return to these basic facts if they are going to have a proper view of their message!

I. **God’s Wisdom—the Gospel centers on the Death of Christ! 2:1-5**

- One of the main problems behind the division at Corinth was a party spirit where every member exalted their favorite leader or teacher and lifted high his partical

Reasons for Division - messengers - message

①

②

③

THEY MISUNDERSTOOD THE NATURE OF THE MESSAGE

Person is work of Christ (2)

message.

- They had shifted their focus away from the central point of their message and placed it on the skill of the delivery or on the personality of the preacher—Paul reminds them that we are to be united at the central point of the Gospel—the Cross of Calvary!
- **It is so easy to lose sight of the cross and become focused in on the messenger and the skill and beauty of the teaching—Paul declares three things that should characterize every true messenger of the Gospel:**

And when I came to you brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

A. The Approach to the Gospel—head for Calvary: 1-2 *And when I came to you brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

- Paul came to Corinth with one goal on his mind—to preach the message of the Cross!
- He did not come to build a reputation as a great and skillful orator—He came to preach the cross!
- He did not come to compete with the “spellbinders” and philosophers—he came to preach the cross!
- He did not use clever words of human reasoning—He came as an ambassador and not a salesman—with one over-riding message—The Cross of Jesus Christ!
- The Mark of a True Preacher of the Gospel is his approach to the Cross—does he shy away from it? Does he skirt around it? Does he try to dress it up in the rags of theological respectability?
- **PAUL SAID—I ONLY WANT TO KNOW ONE THING ABOUT YOU—THAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CROSS OF CALVARY!**
- **Illust:** Large Church with a stained glass window of a picture of Jesus behind the pulpit—one day the preacher was gone and a shorter man filled the pulpit—after a while a little girl leaned over and whispered to her mother— “Where is the man that usually hides Jesus?”
- Are you hiding Jesus or are you making a beeline to the Cross.

B. The Attitude in the Gospel—dependence on the Spirit: 3-4 *And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my*

preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power

- Paul reminded them that a second mark of a true preacher of the Gospel is the attitude of his preaching—did he preach in his own power or did he depend on the power of the Spirit.
- Paul said—I came to you in weakness and fear and trembling—I was frightfully aware of my inability to preach this message in my own strength!
- Why was Paul so afraid? He was trained—he had oratorical skills—he had degrees—why the fear and the trembling? **BECAUSE HE REALIZED THAT SOULS HUNG IN THE BALANCE!**
- He realized that all the human skill and persuasive arguments were not enough to save a lost soul—only the Spirit of God could do that—the success of the message did not depend on his skill—he could preach till he was blue in the face and without the Spirit—he was worthless!
- The Holy Spirit could leave many of our assemblies and no one would ever miss Him!

C. The Aim of the Gospel—build the believer: 5 *that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.*

- Paul's whole aim was to build a secure faith in the believer's heart.
- This faith was to be built on one of 2 foundations—the carefully reasoned arguments of men's wisdom or on the demonstration of the power of God.
- Paul said—I am not interested in winning people and convincing them with carefully dressed up theological arguments—I want them to be built upon the demonstration of the power of God!
- In other words—I want God to do the building.
- OK—If this wisdom is not found in the arena of human wisdom—Then Where Did It Come From?

II. God's Wisdom—the Gospel is part of God's Eternal Plan! 2:6-9

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written; "the things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him!"

(same)

A. This Wisdom—the Gospel comes from God and not man: *Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom*

•Paul reminds them that this wisdom did not originate in the brilliant mind of some philosopher—this plan—the Gospel did not find its origin in the halls of logic of some famous Grecian school of rhetoric—The message of the Cross did not originate from the wisdom of ancient Rulers of days gone by—The Message of the Cross of Calvary originated in the council of the Godhead before the foundation of the world was laid!

•Before the universe was created—before the sun and the stars were hung in space—God had established the Cross! Before the mountains were thrust up from the surface of the earth—Mount. Calvary had emerged from the unfathomable mind of God!

•This was not the wisdom of mere, finite mortals—this was the wisdom of God!

B. This Wisdom—The Gospel is revealed by God and not man: *but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory;*

•Paul goes on to remind them that since this wisdom was conceived in the mind of God—it was “hidden wisdom” or a mystery.

•Mystery—something that is hidden and cannot be known unless it is revealed by the one who hid it!

•The Gospel is not something that man can discover on his own by careful and diligent search—It is something that can only be known by divine revelation!

•You and I cannot reveal the gospel to a lost man—we can present it, we can explain it—but until the Holy Spirit of God chooses to open that man's mind and reveal that truth—He will never understand it!

C. This Wisdom—The Gospel has been rejected by men: *the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;*

•God's wisdom in the eyes of the world was utter foolishness!

•How could the cross—a place of death—become the source of life?

•How could one man pay the debt of an entire world?

•How in the world is this message—the foolishness of the gospel be wisdom?

•That is why so many reject!

•Who are the rulers of this age? Probably a reference here to Satan and his kingdom—they did not understand God's plan—they thought that by crucifying Christ they would defeat God! Who could have imagined that this was the plan

all along? Had they realized what they were really doing—they would never have crucified the Lord.

- What a horrible realization it must have been when the Lord broke the bands of death and burst forth from the tomb—how the halls of hell must have reverberated with the shriek of anger from Satan as he finally understood the impact of the whispered cry from the parched lips of the Savior—*tetelesthai*—it is finished!

- Three days ago he had shouted in triumph—Yes—it is finished—and I have won! Now he realized that this was not a cry of defeat—but rather the shout of triumph—**TRULY THIS IS THE WISDOM OF GOD!**

D. This Wisdom—The Gospel has been ordained for our benefit: *but just as it is written; “the things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him!*

- Well—If this wisdom has been prepared to benefit me from before the foundations of the earth—and if this wisdom is hidden—a mystery that can only be known by the revelation of God—**THEN HOW IN THE WORLD CAN I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT?**

- POINT: This Divine wisdom cannot be known by human reason or rationale! It can only be understood by God’s revelation! How does God reveal this wisdom—the Gospel to men? Through the Holy Spirit!

III. God’s Wisdom—the Gospel is revealed by the H.S. through the Word! 2:10-16

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things even the depths of God. for who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ!

- 3 reason why the Holy Spirit is capable of revealing this Wisdom to men:

A. Holy Spirit instructs believers by Revelation: 10-11 *For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things even the depths of God. for who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man*

which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

- The only way that man can understand God's wisdom is if someone who knows and understands that wisdom will reveal it to them.
- Here is the illustration Paul uses to drive home the point—the only one that truly understands the thoughts of a man's heart is the spirit of that man himself. You don't really understand my thoughts—I am the only one who can fully understand my thoughts!
- Now—the only one who can fully understand the thoughts of God is the Spirit of God himself—and that Spirit—The Holy Spirit is the one who has been given to us to reveal God's truth about Himself!
- Well—How do I know what the Spirit is revealing?
- That brings us to the process of Inspiration—the revelation of the Spirit about God and the Gospel has been written down in the Bible—this is the process of Inspiration and I believe that this is what verses 12-13 are referring to.

B. Holy Spirit instructs believers by Inspiration: 12-13 *Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.*

- I believe that Paul is referring here to himself and the other Apostles who received revelation from God.
- This revelation was not received from some human source but directly from the Spirit of God who alone understands the very thoughts of God because He is God!
- He is the One who revealed these things to the Apostles who wrote down these spiritual thoughts in “spirit guided” words—the product is our Bible!
- The Holy Spirit has freely given us a dependable inspired record of the “things of God” and He did so by using the Apostles to combine spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.
- Well—I am not an apostle—How does this work for me?

C. Holy Spirit instructs believers by Illumination: 14-15 *But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ!*

- Paul points out that there are two types of men in the world.
- Natural men and Spiritual men and the difference between them is the presence of the Holy Spirit. In other words—there are only two groups in the world—saved and lost.
- There is only one true message of salvation—The cross of Jesus Christ—and that message is recorded and explained in a divinely inspired book called the Bible.
- When these two groups come to this message they do one of two things—They either accept or reject based on their understanding.
- Paul tells us why a lost man rejects the message and why a saved man understands its power by reminding us that these are truths that are a mystery—remember a mystery is something hidden that can only be understood when the Holy Spirit reveals it.
- A saved man comes to the bible and to the cross and he understands it and accepts it and rejoices in it!
- A lost man comes to the Bible and he may understand the gospel perfectly—in his head—but it makes absolutely no sense! He may be able to give a perfect explanation of the doctrine—but he has absolutely no faith. To him this is utter foolishness!
- Why would God only allow one way to salvation—Why the Cross? How can a man raise from the dead? How is it that God would condemn men to eternal hell just because they do not believe exactly the same thing? Why can't men worship God in their own way?
- The message of the Gospel is utter foolishness and he rejects.

POINT: Have a proper understanding of God's message!

1. **Realize that it is a mystery that can only be revealed by God!**
2. **Realize that this message will never be understood by the world because they do not have the Spirit of God.**
3. **Stop trying to dress up the Gospel and make it respectable—preach the simple message of the Cross!**
4. **Stop running around looking for the best preacher and the best delivery and start focusing in on the central figure of the Gospel—the Lord Jesus Christ and HIM CRUCIFIED!**

Understand Your Minister

Text: I Cor 3-4

Introduction:

- Corinthians written to deal with a church that was fraught with problems
- Had been established to be a strong witness and an influence in one of the most Godless cities of the empire—a stronghold or bastion of evil. Church was to function as a fortress for truth—but the walls of this church had been breached—the sin and decadence of the city had permeated the church.
- Paul writes to deal with the problems that were about to destroy the ministry.
- Starts by reminding them that they are saints—so live like one!
- Begins by dealing with the problem of DIVISION—you are divided for 2 reasons.
 1. You have misunderstood your message—human wisdom vs foolishness of preaching.
 2. You have misunderstood your ministers {3-4}
- Paul presents 5 pictures to help us understand our ministers! {look at 1st 2 tonight}

I. The Minister as a Farmer: Fruitfulness {3:1-9}

- Paul corrects and adjusts the wrong view that the Corinthians had by presenting the minister as a common farmer.
- They had exalted their ministers to high and lofty positions of luxury and honor—Paul tears down this facade of pious scholasticism and presents the minister as a man who is willing to get his hands into the soil of God's field.
- Vs 9—You are God's field and we are God's husbandmen {farmers}
- Many ministers are content to remain in their studies and hide behind their books and theological papers—Paul presents a true minister as a man whose hands bear the rich moist soil of God's harvest! {When was the last time you really worked in God's harvest—not talking about the last time you met with other believer's for fellowship, etc., When was the last time you went out to sow seed and to tend to the crop?}
- Note 3 characteristics about God's farmers working in God's field—They are:

A. Diverse in Ministry: 6

- One plants, another waters, and another reaps
- They are all different in ministry—but they are all working!
- Some of you never go out into the field—“well, pastor, evangelism is not my gift—I am more of a discipler—more of a teacher—more of an encourager!
- These men are all doing different things—but they are all working in the harvest!
- When was the last time you were in the harvest?
- They were diverse in ministry but—

B. United in Purpose: 7

- No one was more important than the other
- All working in the same field
- All working for the same master
- All looking for the same result—a harvest!

C. Individual in Responsibility: 8

- They were all working with the knowledge that they were going to give an account to God for their labor and not for another man's work!
- We get so interested in tearing down and criticizing another minister's work that we fail to remember that the only work that God is going to hold us accountable for is ours!
- How is your area of the field? Is it full of weeds? Has the seed been sown? Have the plants been tenderly cared for? Has the ripe fruit been harvested? Has the budding fruit been nurtured?
- Quit worrying about everybody else and start cleaning up and working in your area of the field!

•So, Paul presents a proper perspective of the ministry by presenting the minister as a farmer who is ardently laboring in the harvest to produce fruit for the master. But fruitfulness is only one aspect of the minister's responsibility—in addition to sowing and tending to the seed of the gospel, he is to be involved in building up God's work—and so Paul introduces a 2nd picture to help us understand our ministers—that of a builder.

II. The Minister as a Builder: Carefulness { 3:10-23 }

- The past section described the church as a field and the minister as a builder, this section describes the church as a building and the minister as the builder!
- Lot of nonsense about this section—Our works {Gold or hay} will be burned and only what is done for Christ will last—Movie Screen idea.
- In this context—the individual believer is not what is in focus—God is specifically dealing with the minister and he is reminding him that He is to build God's building—the Church in an extremely careful manner because one day he will be held accountable to God for how he builds! {4 instructions to the minister}

A. Build on the right foundation {10-11}

- Jesus Christ
- If you build the church or any ministry on any other foundation than Jesus Christ—it will collapse!

- A ministry may seem successful, prosperous, big, popular—but if it is not built on Jesus Christ—it will fail!
- NOTE: Jesus Christ is to be the foundation—not just a name that is tossed around as decoration! He is the bedrock!
- Many men build ministries on their personalities and “throw” the Lord’s name around to add credibility—but he really is not the foundation of the ministry.

B. Build with the right materials: 12-17

- 2 kinds of materials— precious and perishable
- Contrast here is not between good or bad “works” not referring to the individual life or the believer and the acts {good or bad} that make up that life.
- A reference to the building of God’s ministry. The minister is to be careful how He builds God’s church.
- He can choose to build it with the temporal materials of man’s wisdom—wood, hay, and stubble. Advantage—easy, less costly, quickly obtained and established.
- He can choose to build the church with the precious and permanent materials of Gold, silver, and precious stones—harder, more costly, hard to obtain—but lasting.
- Look at your ministry and evaluate it—are you taking the easy route or are you building it right?

C. Build according to the right plan: 18-20

- Men will look at you and ridicule you and lift up “their own earthly wisdom”
- You will be constrained to follow human logic and not be so hard nosed
- BUT remember, if you want to come out with the building described in God’s word—then you must build it God’s way!
- Follow His plan—not the wisdom of the world!
- World depends on promotion, prestige, money, position
- The Church must be built on prayer, power of the Spirit, humility, sacrifice, and service! {these are foreign to the world!}
- If we are ~~not~~ ^{to} meet the needs of the world—then we must shun the wisdom of the world!

D. Build with the right motives: 21-23

- Corinthians were encouraging their ministers to build large followings for themselves. They were exalting their ministers and fracturing their fellowship
- Paul cries out that the only motive for true building is to unite the building in Christ!
- If everyone sets out to build his individual house—then the entire structure becomes perverted—we are all building together—ONE HOUSE—GOD’S!

note - They were glorifying & exalting their ministries
- who is praising - The building or the man who mops & polishes?
- next Central Africa Baptist College & Seminary | Box 218914 | Kitwe, Zambia | +260977415011 | the polishing himself
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•You look at a beautiful house and you don't exalt the individual builders—You exalt the Architect—and the divine Architect of the Church is Christ—to him be all glory!

Conclusion A: Lessons for the Market-Place of Life

1. You are all ministers of Christ—you are all involved in harvesting souls and building the Church.
2. As a Farmer—how are laboring? Are you really working? Are you fruitful?
3. As a Builder—how are you building? Is your work the hard and careful work of a man who is building according to God's plan, using the best, permanent materials—or are you looking for quick results? Are you willing to use whatever is easiest and most convenient?
4. All must stand before God and account for their workmanship—what if you were to stand before him tonight? Would your work be rewarded or rejected?

2 Amazing liberating conclusions.
1) I am not responsible to judge others - Avoid critical spirit
2) I am not the ultimate judge of my own work - Avoid cruel cutting speculation

III. The Minister as a Steward: Faithfulness { 4:1-5 }

- A. His Master—God
- B. His Ministry—Steward of the Mysteries of God
- C. His Mandate—Be faithful
- D. His Motive—please God and not men!

IV. The Minister as a Spectacle: Humbleness { 4:6-13 }

- A. His Picture: Contrast
- B. His Practice: Consistency
- C. His Purpose: Correction

God is my judge!

V. The Minister as a Father: Tenderness { 4:14-21 }

- A. He Loves
- B. He Teaches
- C. He Admonishes

A. Second

1. Third

- a. fourth When we type in this level, everything will go to its place

“Evaluate your Minister”

Intro to Part II:

- Popular game played by many Christians today is the evaluating of their pastors.
- All kinds of things are used to determine the most successful, most influential, most gifted, and most effective.
- In my office I have an issue of *Leadership*, a magazine for pastors about the ministry, and it contains reviews of the most “successful ministers and their ministries” based on attendance, size of staff, conference and evangelistic ministry, how many missionaries, how much you give to missions each year, bus ministries, baptisms, etc.
- While this may be a very popular practice among God’s people—it is very offensive to God!
- This passage before us focuses on the true nature of the ministry and sets forth some valid criteria for evaluating your minister and his ministry.
- Last week we looked at understanding your Minister—we saw that he was described as a farmer and as a builder.
- Tonight, we are going to evaluate our minister—Paul goes on to give three additional pictures that detail qualities that should characterize each minister and his ministry—including yours!

III. The Minister as a Steward: Faithfulness { 4:1-5 }

- One of the problems in this assembly was the development of a “clique” spirit that had formed in the assembly. These “cliques” had formed around different spiritual ministers that God had given to the Church. These people had gathered around different individuals and were exalting them above their position.
- Well, I follow Apollos! Ha! I follow Cephas! So what!!—I follow our founder, Paul! etc.
- Paul presents a true picture of just who these ministers really are—they are servants or stewards! Note 4 interesting things:

A. His Master—God

- Here is how men are to consider us—Ministers of Christ and Stewards of God!
- We are not here to lift up ourselves—don’t give us the glory! We are here to serve and lift up our Master—God!
- Paul wanted every believer to understand that the minister is directly responsible to God for his actions—He is to be obedient and to bring glory to God and not to self!

B. His Ministry—Servant and Steward of the Mysteries of God

- Servant—word here means “under-rower” - slave on a Roman galley—not glamorous or prestigious! If you are a minister, you are not in it for glory or honor—you are in it to serve!
- Steward: very specialized word which referred to a chief servant who was in charge of all of the possessions of his owner’s household! He had authority and responsibility over the possessions and wealth of the Owner but he himself did not own anything!
- A pastor is described as an over-seer—one who administrates and has responsibility for the affairs of God!
- A very great responsibility! Exactly what is he responsible for?
- He is a “steward” over the “mysteries” of God.
- Mystery—something hidden until God specifically chooses to reveal it! Cannot be discovered by human intelligence or skill!
- In this context—it is referring to the Church! {Ephesians 3}
- So—every true minister is an assistant or a helper who has been given a tremendous responsibility over the personal possession of God Himself—the church!
- What kind of a man must he be? What is his mandate?

C. His Mandate—Be faithful

- More than any other quality that must be found in the life of a minister is the quality of faithfulness!
- God is not going to evaluate a minister by the size of his church, by his popularity, by his “success”—but by his faithfulness!
- Many of God’s greatest ministers would be considered failures by the world’s standards!
- Elijah—saw fire come down from heaven—killed 400 prophets of Baal—but the people still refused to repent and wholeheartedly turn to the Lord.
- Isaiah—preached and preached—and as far as we know—not a single convert.
- Jeremiah—preached, wept, was put in stocks—all in an effort to get God’s people to repent and turn from sin—HE WATCHED JERUSALEM BURN!
- HUMANLY SPEAKING THESE MEN WERE FAILURES—BUT IN GOD’S EYES THEY WERE HEROS BECAUSE THEY WERE FAITHFUL!
- That brings us to the fourth thing in this passage—his motive!

D. His Motive—please God and not men! {3-5}

- Paul said—it is a very small thing—it is very insignificant to me that some of you have judged my ministry. Some of you may think that my ministry is the best

ministry there is—a great success! Some of you may think that I am absolutely worthless as a minister! Your judgment is valuable and I appreciate it—BUT compared to my real motive—it is very insignificant! I am not trying to please you—I am trying to please the Lord!

•Paul also stated that his own personal opinion did not count—I may think that I am doing a terrible job! On the other hand—I may think that I am doing a fine job—God is not going to evaluate me on my personal opinion of my ministry—I am going to be evaluated by God’s opinion!

•SO—I am not going to rest on your opinion or my opinion—I am not going to try to please you or me—I am going to try to please the Lord!

•Greatest pressure on a minister is to please his people—everyone has their own personal idea as to what the minister should do—or how a ministry should function or be organized—Minister gets in a quandry—If I do it this way I’ll offend—if I don’t do it this way, I’ll offend. HE SOLVES HIS PROBLEM BY DOING IT ACCORDING TO WHAT THE LORD INSTRUCTS HIM!

3 Key lessons: For the Congregation at Corinth:

1. You are judging God’s servants at the wrong time: 5
 - The true judgment will take place when the Lord returns—not now!
 - First, it is not your place to pass judgment on your minister—he does not answer to you—He answers to the Lord!
 - Second, you do not have all the information available that you need to make a correct judgment. You are looking at the situation through your perspective—Let the Lord judge! When He comes he will bring all the things that are hidden from you—that you can’t know—and then He will make a true judgment.
2. You are judging God’s servants by the wrong standards: 6b
 - You are comparing them to other men!
 - You look at the ministry of Apollos and you judge Peter by Apollos’ ministry!
 - God has given each minister a unique personality and a unique ministry! You cannot expect your minister to do things just like another minister does them!
 - You don’t judge a minister by another minister—you judge him by the standard of the Word of God! {Is he in violation to God’s Word? Not— “Does he preach like so and so? Why doesn’t he do this or that? Well, in my old church we used to do . . . etc.
3. You are judging with the wrong motive: 6b
 - there are generally three wrong motives behind a person who judges his ministers:

- a. Manipulation: He judges a minister because that minister will not conform to his particular desire. The minister will not change a pattern or conform to what this particular individual desires.
 - This person feels that he has no “influence” over the minister—may be a big giver or someone who has been a leader in the church for years and years—and now this stubborn pastor won’t fall in line!
 - Pastor ought to stick to preaching and let us run the church!
- b. Dissatisfaction: Well—Pastor so and so does it differently! Why can’t our church be like this church? Why do we do these things this way? You ought to hear Pastor X. — Now there is a real preacher who loves his people and who has the power of the Spirit in his life!
 - Very early in our ministry—had a lady that was dissatisfied with what we were doing—came up after being out for a week or two— “I was at so and so’s church down the road—and I just want you to know—I really felt the presence of the Holy Spirit there!” {Words cut like a knife!}
- c. Rebellion: God convicts your heart—preaching is strong, personal, and it treads on your toes! It is not just about love, and salvation, and pants—it gets down to the nitty-gritty of your life!
 - Holy Spirit begins to convict your heart—preaching reaches deep into the corners and closets of your heart—and exposes what you have hidden away! IT DEMANDS A CHANGE IN YOUR BEHAVIOR!
 - Well, that is not how I interpret that passage! I wish preacher would be more loving! What business does he have putting that kind of pressure on me? Why does he always have invitations that I fight against?

POINT: There is only one valid standard by which to judge your preacher—and Paul presents it as this—Has he been faithful to teach and obey the word of God? Not—is he well liked? Is he educated? Does he do things and run the church the way I want him to? — BUT—is He faithful to the world of God? Does he do what God wants him to do—even if it means personal sacrifice? Even if it means facing a discontented church member? If you have a faithful preacher—then it God’s sight—you have a successful ministry!

Understand Your Minister {Part III} I Cor 4

Intro: Paul is dealing with the problem of division in the Corinthian church. There were two basic reasons for the division in the Corinthian assembly—a misunderstanding of their message {dealt with in chapters 1 & 2} and a misunderstanding of their ministers {dealt with in chapters 3 & 4}.

- I. The Minister as a Farmer: 3:1-9 — Fruitfulness**
 - Ministry is a field—How are your fields?
- II. The Minister as a Builder: 3:10-23 — Carefulness**
 - Ministry is a building—Are you a careful craftsman or a careless hireling?
- III. The Minister as a Steward: 4:1-5 — Faithfulness**
 - Ministry viewed as the estate of God—Are you a faithful administrator of God's affairs?

Transition: There are two additional pictures presented by the Apostle describing a minister.

- IV. The Minister as a Spectacle: 4:6-13 — Humbleness**
 - Paul has confronted the Corinthians with their need to re-evaluate their understanding of the ministry. They have evaluated the ministry according to human standards and as a result had elevated their ministers beyond the bounds of propriety.
 - Paul presents the ministry as a field to be labored in—demands fruitfulness. He presents it as a building—demands careful construction. He presents it as God's estate—demands faithful administration.
 - Now Paul presents the ministry from another perspective—He presents the ministry as an awesome responsibility to be performed—demands humility!
 - Three greatest needs in the ministry today—men with teachable spirits, humble confidence in God, and a servant's heart!
 - Paul looks at the arrogant nature of the Corinthian ministry and recognizes that they have totally misunderstood what the ministry is really about.
 - Does 3 things to correct this flaw.

A. His Picture: Contrast {6-11}

- 1. The Principle for Paul: 6 {selfless humility}**
 - Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to exceed what is written, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other!*
 - Paul deals with their pride by asking them three probing questions.

•**First**—For who regards you as superior? {What makes you think you are better than any other group of believers in your assembly?

•**Second**—What do you have that you did not receive? {You may have more abilities, a better job, a better economic status—BUT—who gave that to you? Did you get that yourself? NO—God gave it to you!

{There are some people who are constantly striving to manipulate themselves into a better position. God gives them a place of service—and at the drop of a hat—at the promise of more \$ etc. they are willing to jump around. etc.}

•**Third**—But if you did receive it {and you did}, then why do you boast as if you did not receive it? {Why are you acting like this was something that you did yourself?}

•Now—there were members of the Corinthian church who were pricked in their hearts who said—no, I am not guilty of this! Paul, I understand what you are saying—but this really is not a problem in our midst.

•Paul goes on to strip away their facade of righteousness and lay bare the real problem in their lives—arrogance. He does this through a series of contrasts.

2. The Problem in Corinth 8 - 10

•You say you are not arrogant—you say that you don't have a problem with pride! Let me show you—let me contrast several things in your life as church members and my life as an Apostle.

- a. You are living Like Kings—We are literally spectacles before the world!
- b. You think you are Prudent or Wise—we are fools!
- c. You think you are Strong—we are weak!
- d. You think you are distinguished and honored—we are humiliated and dishonored.

•After Paul describes their attitude he sets forth his practice:

B. His Practice: Consistency

1. A willingness to **Work**! *We are in need—and we work! {11-12b}*
 - are you willing to work or do you expect others to “give you”
2. A willingness to **Bless**! 12 *When we are reviled, we bless!*
 - Reviled is a strong word—means to cast in one's teeth!
 - How do you respond when others revile? A minister must bless!
3. A willingness to **Endure**! 12 *When we are persecuted, we endure!*
 - Are you a summer believer? A fairweather Christian?

4. A willingness to **Reconcile!** When we are slandered—we try to conciliate!
•Are you one who tries to make peace or are you one who stirs up?

•Why Does Paul do this? Why does he set forth this contrast between their practice and his? What is his purpose? It is the purpose of every good minister—the correction of the flock!

C. His Purpose: Correction 14 *I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you.*

- Very strong terminology—but very loving terminology. Admonish here means to correct or warn. It is a disciplinary term!
- You need to straighten out your thinking about the ministry! You think it is something to be lorded over the people—It is an opportunity to live your life before the people! You are to be HUMBLE! Learn to work, bless, endure, and reconcile those around you!

V. The Minister as a Father: 4:14-21 — Tenderness

- Paul's final picture of the ministry is that of a family—the minister is to be a spiritual father to the family of God—demands Tenderness!
- Vs 15 Paul reminds them that He became their spiritual father through the gospel!
- Vs 16 Paul exhorts them to become imitators {mimics} of him and he delineates **three** specific things a father does that the Corinthian believers are to imitate.
- God has set up Pastors as examples to the flock—It is my responsibility to be a good example and it is your responsibility to be a good imitator.
- Here is what we are to practice and imitate:

A. He Begets. 4:15 *I became your spiritual father through the gospel.*

- Where are your spiritual children?
- A father loves his child—Illust. with Dave Raught.
- What about your spiritual children—do you really love them or have you abandoned them to fend for themselves?

B. He Teaches. 16-17 *I exhort you therefore be imitators of me. For this reason I have sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ just as I teach everywhere in every church!*

- Note that Paul commands them to imitate his behavior—but he goes on to help them learn how! He does not just give a command and then expect them to do it—he provides a way for them to grow! He sends a teacher!
- This is called discipleship! What are you doing to disciple others? Are you quoting commands that they need to obey? GOOD! But not enough—send help!

C. He Admonishes. 4:21 *What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod or with love and a spirit of gentleness?*

- There are times when our earthly fathers must stop what they are doing—stop teaching with word of knowledge and start teaching with the board of education!
- There are times when as a spiritual father you must encourage another in a way that seems contrary to “love” — spiritual confrontation for discipline!
- When a child manifests wrong behavior you must teach that child—but if the behavior does not stop—at some point you must stop just speaking to the child and begin disciplining the child!
- So it is spiritually.
- Would be so great if we never had to worry about anyone else in church except us—but we are to love each other enough to confront if necessary!

•POINT: If your brother or sister really had a serious problem, you would be concerned enough to get involved and to help that person overcome that problem—You are part of a spiritual family—you need to get involved!

Conclusion: Two Lessons for the Market Place:

1. As a believer you are going to be regarded as the scum of the earth—the offscouring! Instead of lashing out in injured pride—serve in genuine humility!
2. As a believer you are part of a family—love each other enough to get beneath the surface and get involved in people's lives.

Dare To Discipline

“Understanding Church Discipline”

Text: I Cor 5:1-13

- Paul is writing to this assembly to deal with their problems and to answer their questions concerning spiritual matters. After reminding them of their position in Christ as “saints,” Paul spends the rest of the letter exhorting them to stop being carnal— “You are a Saint, so live like one!”
- In chapters 1-4 Paul deals with the basic problem in the Corinthian assembly—division. We have learned that division comes to a church because they misunderstand their message and they misjudge their ministers. As a result, these believers were divided and separated from one another.
- In chapter 5 Paul begins to deal with a second major problem—the lack of church discipline. The Corinthians were confused about Biblical discipline. They were dividing and separating over things that should unite them and they were not dividing and separating over things that should divide and separate them—a disobedient brother!
- This chapter is one of the key “deposits” of truth concerning Biblical separation. Paul discusses four specific aspects of a proper exercise of spiritual discipline.

I. The Need for Spiritual Discipline {5:1-2}

- It is actually reported that there is immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father’s wife. And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst!*
- News had reached the Apostle’s ears—very disturbing in nature! The entire Christian community was literally “buzzing” with the scandal that had developed at Corinth!
- This was a problem that was not going to simply go away quietly—it could not be covered over—it had to be dealt with.
- Paul does not beat around the bush—he comes right to the point!

A. The Act of Sin Condemned—immorality in the life of a believer who was a member at the Church of Corinth.

- What kind of sins merit the sever disciplinary measures taken in this passage?
- By the end of chapter 5—Paul is demanding that the Church cast out this member from their midst—excommunication!
- Very serious sentence—what kind of sin merits this kind of drastic measure?
- There were 3 qualities about this sin that I think merit our attention—give us an idea of what kind of sins merit church discipline.

1. **Well Known:** It is actually reported . . .
 - Not hearsay—idea here is that this is something that is well known and can be substantiated.
 - Legal terminology—this has been heard and has actually been verified!
2. **Specific in Nature:** There is immorality among you—that one should have his father's wife!
 - Not a general statement, not a fuzzy accusation!
 - Here are the facts—Here is one who is involved in immorality—specifically committing incest with his mother-in-law!
3. **Disgraceful before World:** And immorality of such a kind that does not exist even among the Gentiles!
 - Hey you live in a wicked and perverse city—but they don't even accept what you are accepting!
 - POINT—Your sin has disgraced not only the testimony of the individual but the testimony of the Body of Christ—YOU CAN'T IGNORE THIS ANY LONGER!

4. STATE of Being not Act (5:10-11)

B. The Attitude of the Saints Condemned

- Nowhere in this passage does Paul specifically condemn the individual—He is not passing judgment on the individual—that has already been done in his thinking! HE IS CONDEMNING THE CHURCH FOR NOT FULFILLING THEIR SPIRITUAL RESPONSIBILITY!
- Church discipline is not a pleasant task—very painful! BUT—it is a necessary task! One of the reasons the modern church has fallen into reproach and has lost her spiritual power is because she has surrendered her God given authority over the spiritual life of God's people!
- You are not an island — you are answerable for your spiritual behavior! YES PREACHER—but I am not answerable to you or to this church, I am answerable to God! Folks—That is not biblical!
- There are several reasons why a church does not carry out her responsibility to discipline unrepentant members:

1. Spiritual Arrogance:

- Instead of carrying out your responsibility in meekness and humility—you have become arrogant and puffed up!
- You are spiritually proud!

2. Lack of True Repentance—Sorrow

- Mourn is a very strong word—it is the grieving of a soul over a departed loved one!
- God states that this is to be our attitude toward sin! We are to grieve or mourn!
- Instead of mourning over the terrible stain in the life of one of their members, they had become spiritually arrogant!

2 kinds of
Disobedient
Brothers
I Cor 5:1) moral dis
II Thess 2) Theol dis
Rom 16:17
Tit 3:10-11

3. Spiritual Tolerance

- Because they were arrogant and had not mourned over this sin—they had become tolerant and had allowed this one to remain in their midst—unchallenged!

II. The Method for Spiritual Discipline {5:2-5}

A. The Principle of Spiritual Discipline—Separation

- Separation is the foundational basis of a pure and powerful walk with God!
- Bible speaks of three specific areas where a believer is to be separate!

1. Personal Separation {I John}

- From Sin and the World
- For the Love of the Father

2. Ecclesiastical Separation

- From False Teachers
- For the Love of the Truth and for the Protection of the Sheep

3. Disciplinary Separation {II Thess} 3

- From a Disobedient Brother
- For the Love of that Brother!

II Jn II Cor 6:14-7:1

MT 7 - Wolves
Acts 20:28-29
I Pet 5:1-4
Rom 16:17
II Cor 2:17
II Cor 11:3,4,13
Gal 1:6-9
Gal 3:18
Titus 3:10-11
Titus 1:10-14

B. The Practice of Spiritual Discipline

1. The Attitude—Compassionate Concern {Galatians 6:1}

2. The Action—Confrontation

- Matthew 18:15-20 gives us the formula
 - a. Personal Confrontation: 18:15
 - b. Plural Confrontation: 18:16
 - c. Public Confrontation: 18:17

FT II Peter 2:3-22
FT I Jn 2:24-26
4:1-3
FT II Jn 7-11
Jude 3
Tests
I Jn 4:2
I Jn 2:22
II Jn 7

Deliver over to Satan = Judicial aspect
reference to excommunication
From sphere of God to sphere
of SATAN.

III. The Reason for Spiritual Discipline {5:6-8}

A. Restoration of the Sinner: 5:5

- You are to deliver such a one over to Satan
- Personally believe that this is a reference to excommunication.
- WHY? For the destruction of his flesh that his spirit might be saved. . .
- The purpose of Church Discipline is not punitive! It is God's ordained method of restoring a disobedient brother!
- Well, I don't think that is very kind! That is God's ordained way!

Destruction of flesh = NOT USUAL TERM.
1) physical death - NOT in view in light of instruction to EAT
2) suffering affliction
3) Destruction of the "carnality" so he will learn... Remedial

B. Preservation of the Saints: 5:6 - 8

- Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?
- Leaven here symbolizes not "sin" specifically but the influence or permeating power that sin has!
- HEY—if you let this go it will pollute your whole church!

Keep the feast = present tense
FEAST OF (UNLEAVENED BREAD)
PASSOVER

IV. The Sphere for Spiritual Discipline {5:9-13}

A. Wrong Sphere—The World {9-10}

- I am not saying that you are to isolate yourself from the world—Hey—this type of behavior is what the world is typified by!
- I am not saying that you are to leave your sphere of influence and erect "Christian Bubbles"

B. Right Sphere—The Church {11-13}

- BUT—just because it goes on in the world does not justify it going on in the church! That kind of behavior has no business in the life of a believer!
- Don't make excuses, don't put it off! OBEY THE WORD—REMOVE THIS WICKED ONE FROM YOUR MIDST!

vs 11 = referring to a habitual
HARDENED UNREPENTANT "believer"
who PERSISTS IN HIS SIN.

Action in 5:13 = Disciplinary or excommunication formula used in Dt.

Lessons for the Market Place of Life: {3}

- Here is how you fit in the picture as an individual member!
- 3 things every member of CMBC must do when confronted with the sin of another brother or sister in Christ.

1. Mourn over the Sin in your midst!

- not a time for gossip {If you are not part of the problem or the solution—stay out!}
- not time for inner gloating—“Well, I knew that there was something. . .”
- not time for spiritual isolation—that person desperately needs your help!
- Genuinely get before God and “mourn” over this sin!

used in Dt. 17:7 = idolater
19:19 = False witness
21:21 = Adulterous woman
24:7 = one who enslaved an Israelite

2. Confront the Sin of Your brother!

- Don't run to pastor — "Hey, did you hear?"
- It is your responsibility to get involved in the restoration of your brother!
- Love enough to Confront!

3. Purge the Sin from your midst!

- If there is no repentance in your private confrontation then you must move on to a plural confrontation and then finally a public confrontation! If there is no repentance—purge out the sinner!
- MOTIVE—restoration and preservation!

sin lists calling for church discipline - MT 18:17, II COR 2:5-11, I COR 5:5, 11, I TIM 1:20, II THESS 3:14, TITUS 2:10

Permitter of Church Discipline

TED G. KITCHENS

BIB SAC 148 (April-June, 1991)

1 PASSAGES:

- 1) GOSPELS: MT 18:15-20, MT 5:20-22; MK 7:20-23
- 2) EPHRAIM: I COR 5:5, 11-13; 6:9-11
- 3) ROME: ROM 16:17
- 4) GALATIA: GALATIANS 6:1 (Based on 5:16-26)
- 5) CRETE: TITUS 3:10-11
- 6) EPHESUS: I TIM 1:19-20
- 7) EPHESUS: 3 JOHN 9-10

2 Categories of sins

- A. Private & Personal offenses that violate Christian love
- B. Divisiveness & Factions that destroy Christian unity
- C. MORAL & ETHICAL VIOLATIONS that break Christian standards
- D. Teaching False Doctrine & supporting

Rule your Spirit.

Text: I Cor 6

Intro: Paul writing to the Corinthians. Were a church that had been established to shine as a light in a very dark place.

- They were to infiltrate their city for God but instead, they had allowed the city to infiltrate their church. Every sin that was prevalent in the city was also present to some degree in the church.

- This was a church that had lost its purity, its power, its testimony, and its message!

- Paul writes to this church that has fallen into reproach and details within the pages of these two letters the steps they must take in order to be restored to righteousness.

- In this letter Paul does three basic things to help this church get back on the narrow way.

1. He starts by reminding them of their position—you are saints—so live like it!
2. He also deals with their problems. {Division, Discipline, Defrauding, and Defilement}
3. He answers their perplexities.

- We have seen Paul's answer to the problem of division in chapters 1-4 involved having a right understanding of the message of the Gospel and of the ministers of the Gospel.

- We noted in chapter five that Paul deals with the problem of discipline by giving them a right understanding of God's way of dealing with an unrepentant brother—church discipline.

- Tonight as we look at chapt. 6 Paul is addressing yet another problem—the problem of defrauding and defilement.

- In preparation for our study tonight, we looked at the requirement that God has for his people in order that He might pour out his blessing upon them {Josh 3} — Sanctification.

- We noted that there were 4 principles that had to be in place in the life of the believer if sanctification was going to be a reality.

- These 4 principles were sadly lacking in the life of the Corinthians and this flaw led them into reproach!

I. The Principles

A. Recognize that God's Love for me is Unchanging.

B. Recognize that God's Purpose for me is Christlikeness

C. Recognize that God's Word is the Final Right Answer

D. Recognize that God's Grace is Sufficient for me.

- These principles seem so simple and so basic—and they are. But it is often the simple things that confound us!

- Illust: Car problems—no brake light, no horn, etc. {just a small fuse}

- Some big problems crop up in our lives when we fail to practice these truths!

II. The Problems: I Cor 6

A. The Root—Selfishness

- Every believer is either selfless or selfish.
- Selfishness is an attitude which views each situation from the perspective of what is best or most advantageous to me!
- This attitude is usually expressed in some outward activity although that activity is not always recognizable.
- POINT: It is possible to do something for the “benefit or good” of another with a very selfish motive.
- NOW—Big Question—Why are we selfish? ANSWER: We have never learned to rule our spirit! {Prov 25:28 *He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls!*}
- OK pastor—What you are saying is that if I never learn to control my spirit or my desires—then I am a selfish person and therefore not measuring up to God’s plan for my life which is Christlikeness! EXACTLY!
- This is the root problem—let me show you how to recognize it in your life.
- * •There are two major ways in which selfishness demonstrates itself in the believer’s life.

B. The Ramifications

1. Defrauding Others: 6:1-8

- Here were believers with grievances against fellow believers dragging each other into court to “protect their rights!”
- 6:1 Literally— *Does any one of you when he has a case {matter} against his neighbor DARE to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?*
- Here is the situation:
 - a. **One believer has a matter against another and takes him to civil court.**
 - b. **He should have taken him before the saints! WHY DIDN’T HE?**
 - He knew that if he took him before the saints there was a good chance that the other party would not respect their decision and while he might win his case—he would lose the money. So—to make sure that he got his money he went to the civil authorities.
 - Now—there are times when you go to the civil authorities. God is not prohibiting believers from using civil authority or law when the case demands it. BUT—what is being condemned here is the motive.
 - If his motive had been right—he would have been concerned over the spiritual problem of his brother rather than the material loss to his pocket!

By taking his brother to the civil court rather than to the Church leadership—he betrayed his true motive and robbed his brother of a chance to be restored in the proper setting!

- c. **Paul declares that this is a spiritual defeat because they are defrauding one another in order to “protect and guarantee” their rights!**

- d. **Here is the mark of a selfless man— vs 7 — *Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?***

•NOTE: Paul is not saying let it go or forget about it—Paul is saying take the matter to the right place—The Church and let it be settled there and be willing to risk not getting your money!

•Why don't you do this? ANSWER—because you are selfish!

2. Defiling Self: 6:9-20

- a. **They had been washed from their prior behavior: 9-11**

•Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, or revilers, nor swindlers shall inherit the kingdom of God. AND—such were some of you! BUT—you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God!

- b. **They had returned to their former behavior! 13**

•They used a very “logical” argument to excuse and justify their behavior.

•Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food—so eat!

•POINT: There are things that satisfy the desires of the body and therefore the body must have been created for those pleasures—so enjoy them!

•Fallacy—The body is not like the stomach! God created the stomach to function as a digestive place for food. God did not create the body for immorality or sensual pleasure!

•THEN WHY DID HE CREATE THE BODY? Vs 13— Yet the body is not for immorality but for the Lord and the Lord is for the body!

- c. **They were defiling Christ! {vs 15-17}**

•Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ {YES—of course you know this!} Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a Harlot? GOD FORBID!

Paul:
a fundamental lack
of letting God take
care of the matter - I
lost it & I will make
sure I get it back!

Sin as guilt - justified
Sin as pollution - sanctified
Sin as filth - washed.

III. The Practices

A. Be committed to understanding God's word!

- 6 different times Paul asks them rhetorical questions.
- A rhetorical question is a question asked to the audience to which they already know the answer.
- How did they know the answer? **THE ANSWERS WERE IN THE BIBLE!**
 1. Vs 2 —Do you not know the saints will judge the world?
 - Daniel 7:18
 2. Vs 3 —Do you not know the saints will judge angels?
 3. Vs 9 —Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
 4. Vs 15 —Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?
 5. Vs 16 —Do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, "The two will become one flesh" {Gen 2:24}
 6. Vs 19 —Or do you not know that your body is a temple for the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own.

•The reason they had engaged in the wrong practice of taking matters to the civil court instead of to the church was because they had chosen to behave in a manner contrary to what they knew! **THEY CHOSE TO IGNORE THE SCRIPTURE** and it led to wrong behavior! **THIS ALWAYS HAPPENS!**

B. Be willing to Put others first—this will cost you.

C. Recognize that Your body belongs to the Lord

1. He created it
2. He purchased it.
3. He indwells it
you are temple (ναος vs ιερου)

So = flee fornication *Present tense*

D. Refuse to be mastered by your flesh—rule your desires or they will rule you!

- Vs 12 *All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything!*
- 4 truths to remember when learning to rule your desires!
 1. **All things are lawful:**
 - This does not include those things that are expressly forbidden in scripture.
 - Murder, drunkenness etc. {Those things are not lawful}
 - We are talking about desires like food, and sexual attraction, etc.

2. All things are not expedient:

- Expedient—to be profitable or advantageous.
- All things are lawful—that is they are not sinful in and of themselves—but they are not always to my advantage.
- There are certain circumstances or limitation that must be observed.
- Sexual fulfillment within and only within the bounds of marriage.

3. Slavery is to be avoided. *I will not be brought under the power {control} of any!*

- There is only one thing that should master or control the believer—the Word of God!
- My actions and reactions—my activities will not be determined by the desires of my flesh! {WHY NOT? Why should I not satisfy my desires?}

4. Desires are only temporary.

Marriage:

"Turning Battlefields into Homes"

Text: Gen 1:18 *Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him!"*

Introduction:

- Famous English war hero--Feild Marshall Montgomery quipped to his men one day, "Gentlemen, don't even think about marriage until you have mastered the art of warfare!"

- He certainly knew the art of war and his word reveal that he also had some knowledge of the art of marriage.

- There are many marriages (if not most) that indeed could be characterized as a battlefield with two generals marshalling their troops and armaments against the other.

- Basically 2 types of battle:

- 1. **Trench warfare**--bullets fly--etc.

- 2. **Cold war**--this is the most deadly of all

- Hey Preacher--what you are describing sounds like my house--I can't wait till I get my wife here or my husband here--they really need to hear this! NO--YOU REALLY NEED TO HEAR THIS!

- There is no such thing as a perfect marriage because there are no perfect people!

- The only kind of people that get married are flawed people--so how do you take flawed people involved in a flawed marriage and make it work?

- How do you turn a battlefield into a home? How do you take what for many of you is a living hell and make it into a literal heaven on earth (and that is what it was designed to be)?

- By understanding 3 truths:

I. The Institution of Marriage: Gen 2:18-25

A. The Purpose of Marriage: Gen 2:18-23

B. The Pattern of Marriage: Gen 2:24

For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

(God's pattern for marriage involves 3 things:)

- 1. **It involves a leaving:**

- 2. **It involves a cleaving:** literally a joining or a sealing

- 3. **It produces an indissoluble union:** They shall be one flesh!

C. The Pleasures of Marriage: Gen 2:25

- *And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed!*

II. The Foundation of Marriage:

A. An Honest Commitment to God: II Cor 2:14

- *Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

B. An Honest Commitment to Obedience (Bible):

C. An Honest Commitment to Each other:

III. The Duration of Marriage:

- Well--how long is this union supposed to last?
- Preacher--you don't understand--that woman/man that I married deceived me! You should see her without her makeup! HE CHANGED!
- Group of religious teachers came to Jesus with this very question--*Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?* (Matt 19:2-6)
- Jesus responds with some very insightful words!

A. God's Plan: permanent union (Mat. 19:3-6)

- He goes back to the very beginning (Genesis) and reveals what God meant when He said that man and wife shall be one flesh!
- *And He answered and said, "Have you not read (refers them to the Scriptures), that He who created them from the beginning (not man's words but God's) made them male and female and said, For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?"*
- *Consequently they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate!*
- God--the Creator and instigator of marriage--intended Marriage to be a permanent, abiding union dissolved only by death!

- Wait preacher--you didn't read far enough--what about vs 7-10 where God allows divorce?

B. Man's Perversion: divorce

- problem of divorce was rampant in Jesus day! It was happening right and left! (same problem exists today!)
- How is a Christian to deal with the problem of divorce?
- it touches every area of our lives--all of us have been touched with the problem--we can't ignore it, we can't hide from it, it won't go away on its own--How are believers to deal with divorce?
- 4 general teachings presented in the bible:

1. Pharisees teaching: Mat. 19:3

And some of the Pharisees came to Him testing Him and saying, Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?

- 2 general schools that had different views of divorce:
- Both agreed that divorce was permissible--differed on grounds
- **Shammai's** school very strict--only for adultery
- **Hillel's** school--for any reason whatsoever! This is the position most people hold today!
- They were teaching that if you were unhappy with your marriage--or if things didn't work out--then just get a divorce!
(Just like today)
- **NOTE:** Both parties assumed that remarriage was permissible if divorce was allowed.

• **NOTE:** Pharisees came with that same assumption.

- a. The standard practice of the day assumed remarriage.
 - b. Dt 24:2 tells us that remarriage took place after divorce. In fact, the bill of divorcement was given to put some controls on this practice.
 - c. Divorce itself implies remarriage--or else why get a divorce? Divorce took place in society (Israel) to legally terminate a marriage so that the next marriage would not be adulterous.
 - d. **Leviticus 24** is given to prevent an adulterous relationship from happening.
 - Woman would be married---find someone else that she liked and instead of having an affair she would get a divorce. Then if things didn't work out--she could always come back to the first husband and not be guilty of adultery because she had done so legally--divorce! D
 - Divorce became a legal way for men and women (usually men in OT and today) to commit adultery!
 - Very interested in keeping it technically legal because the penalty for adultery in the OT was death!
- Pharisees came to Jesus with this mindset---they assumed remarriage. If divorce is OK--then obviously remarriage is too!
- **NOW**--if remarriage is wrong then the Lord will have to correct this thinking.

- When Jesus challenged them--they came back and said--well this is what Moses taught us! (tried to base their sin on the Bible--just like some people try to do today!)
- What did Moses teach concerning divorce?

2. Moses' teaching: 19:7-8

*They said to Him, why then did Moses **command** to give her a certificate and divorce her? He said to them, Because of the **hardness** of your heart, Moses **permitted** you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not this way!*

- They had twisted the words of Scripture to their doctrine!
- Christ said--Moses never commanded you to divorce--he only permitted it!
- This was not God's perfect purpose--from beginning it was not this way--**God's perfect purpose was marriage for life**--but because of the hardness--wickedness, rebelliousness, unforgiving spirit--of your hearts--Moses permitted you to divorce! BUT I SAY UNTO YOU--(puts His words on same level as 10 commandments)
- what is Christ's teaching on divorce

3. Christ's teaching:

• **Mark 10:11** His disciples were asking him about divorce and this is what He said: *Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery!*

• **Luke 16:18** *Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery!*

• This is quite different from what the pharisees were teaching--they said--hey if you are having problems, or things aren't working out--GET DIVORCED! Jesus said--THIS IS ADULTERY!

• Jesus went on to **add** to this general, overall statement:

• **Matt 19:9--(also Mat 5:32)--** *And I say unto you that whoever divorces his wife (except for immorality) and marries another commits adultery!* **This is the only reason that Jesus allowed divorce to occur!**

• He did not command divorce--He permitted it on this one condition--adultery--breaking of the marriage bond!

- Well, what about Paul? Didn't he say something about divorce?
- Yes--and it is here that we gain the most knowledge about divorce that scripture teaches.

4. Paul's teaching: I Corinthians 7:8-15

- Corinthian church was a church full of problems
- in the middle of a very wicked, pagan city
- Jewish cities were externally moral--this city was very corrupt--immorality was considered an act of worship!
- Many Christians in the Corinthian church came from this type of background--they had all kinds of questions about how they were to handle certain things now that they were saved!
- So they sat down and wrote Paul a letter (7:1) to get some answers!
- They faced the same situations and problems that you and I face--divorce was common in the city, some had been divorced before they were saved, some had remarried, some wanted to be divorced--they needed help---Paul writes back with some answers concerning the problem of marriage: **(he writes to 4 groups; widows, unmarried, married and both christian, married and only one a christian)**

a. **Widows:** those who had lost a spouse through death

- it is better to remain unmarried--but if you can't control your desires--then get married! (vs 8-9)

b. **Unmarried (before salvation)**

- unmarried: general term: it can refer to someone who has never been married (an unclaimed blessing) or to someone who has been previously married and now for some reason (including divorce) is not in that condition. Anyone who is not married for any reason.
- In other words--Paul--when I got saved I was unmarried, either I was single, or I had already been divorced--what should I do?
- It is better for you to remain unmarried--but--if you can't control your desires--then get married!
- **In other words--Paul seems to be teaching that anyone in the Corinthian church who was unmarried (regardless of the reason) at the time of salvation had the option to get married if he/she desired to do so!**

c. Christian couple: vs 10-11

- what about 2 Christians who want a divorce? (a marriage where both are Christians)
- Paul said--The Lord already gave you the answer to that one! No Divorce! The wife is not to leave her husband and the husband is not to send his wife away (divorce). Unless adultery has taken place--DIVORCE IS NOT AN OPTION FOR THE BELIEVER!
- And--if you do separate or divorce--here are your options:
 - 1) stay single or 2) get reconciled! Why--because unless adultery is committed--God won't accept the divorce--remarriage is adultery!
- (only time divorce is recognized as an alternative for 2 Christians is when adultery has taken place--and then God desires forgiveness--but he permits divorce if one party is rebellious and refuses to forgive or to repent)
- Well, My situation is this: I'm in a mixed marriage:

d. Mixed marriage: vs 12-15

- I got married before I was saved and now I'm saved but my spouse is not--What should I do?
- Paul said--this is a good question--the Lord did not give you specific instructions--so let me give them to you know! (Paul is not just stating opinion--giving inspired doctrine)
- You (the saved partner) are not to leave! (if he/she is willing to stay and live with you--that is what you are to do!)
- You (the saved partner) are not to force him/her to stay!
- (If you spouse refuses to dwell with you because you are a Christian and he/she files for divorce against you--do not force him to stay! Let him go--God has called you to peace!)
- In this case--you are not under bondage--it is better for you to stay single but you are free to remarry! (my opinion).

5. Conclusions: let's sum up what we have discovered!

- a. God hates divorce! Malachi 3:16 I hate divorce!**
- Men were leaving older wives (who they had covenanted together before God to remain faithful) for younger women many of whom were pagans.
 - God said He hates this!

- b. Divorce was not God's divine plan: marriage until death do you part was and still is God's plan! (What God has joined--don't dare put assunder! A very stern warning)
- c. Improper divorce is adultery! We live in a society that is rampant with divorce--1 out of ever 2 marriage will end in divorce! This is even true of Christians! God hates it and He calls it adultery--regardless of what we call it!
- d. Divorce is an option in only 2 cases:
 - 1) adultery and 2) if an unsaved partner leaves!
 - Then it is only permitted it is not encouraged!
- e. What about remarriage?
 - Good men on both sides. (I read over 38 different books and commentaries and all kinds of answers from good men who are well equiped to study the Word!)
 - Good arguments as well as problems on both sides.
 - Guy Duty and Divorce and Remarriage are 2 good books.
 - After examining the evidence--here is my conclusion!
 - God hates divorce! Never was His plan! He always desires reconciliation--but when divorce occurs for adultery or for desertion by an unbeliever -- then the believer should remain single if possible--but if not then they are free to marry.
- e. **What if I am divorced and remarried and it wasn't for adultery or desertion by an unbeliever?**
 - I'm a Christian--divorced after I was saved--it wasn't because of adultery and I'm remarried! What should I do?
 - Should I leave my present wife or what?
 - I Cor 6:9-11 *Do not be deceived; neither **fornicators**, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers**, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God! and **such were some of you**; but you were **washed**, but you were **sanctified**, but you were **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God!*
 - 1. Recognize that no sin is to big for God to forgive!
 - 2. Don't let Satan defeat you by bringing up your past to haunt you--you are saved, washed in the blood--you are in the process of being sanctified, and you are justified in God's sight!

- Do not let Satan throw up your past--God has forgiven you--
forgive yourself! (Illust: boy digging up hid dead cat)
3. Realize that your present marriage is for life--divorce is not an option! The past mistakes may have been done in ignorance--but now divorce is not an option--you're in it for life!
 4. Be ready to deal with the consequences of your past mistake--
God has forgiven you--but just like any other sin--divorce leaves scars that must be dealt with! (Children--teach them that God intended marriage to be for life)
 5. Keep in close fellowship with the Lord--devotions, prayer, confession of sin daily, family altar.
 6. Participate in a local body of believers--be faithful!
•You are just as much a part of the Body of Christ as another--we are one in Christ! Forget the past--learn from it and go on!
 7. Reach out to others--treat other divorced couples with love--
God can forgive them and so can you--encourage those who are considering divorce that this is not God's plan!

Be honest w/ them!
-Don't try to justify your divorce - or your kids will justify theirs!
Tell them it was wrong etc.

Conclusion:

1. We cannot permit what God forbids no matter how it affects us emotionally! (You mean I am doomed to the single life? God would want me to be miserable with this situation and this partner for the rest of my life when all I have to do is get a divorce and start over?)
2. We cannot forbid what God permits no matter how it affects us emotionally!
•We may hate divorce--so does God!
•God permits it for 2 reasons--don't judge or forbid!
3. Let God deal with the sin--you deal with the disciple!
•A person is divorced/remarried--there is nothing you can do to change that!
•Instead of condemning them to a life of guilt and (second best mentality) reach out and let God use you to help transform their mistake into something that will bring God glory--help make a tragedy a triumph!
4. If you are divorced--3 things to transform tragedy into triumph:
•Accept forgiveness •Commit to marriage •Grow in grace! (God has called you to peace!)

What Kind of Meat Can I Eat?

Text: I Cor 8:1-13

Introduction:

- Paul has dealt with the position of the believers in this church—saints.
- He has confronted their problems—division, defrauding, and defilement
- He is now clearing up their perplexities—answering their questions!
 - questions about marriage and divorce
 - now questions about Christian liberty
- Christian liberty is a big issue—I am a Bible teacher—single biggest issue I deal with in counseling students—95% of questions relate to “Christian liberty”

A. The Clarification

•WHAT IS NOT INVOLVED IN CHRISTIAN LIBERTY!

1. Something that is expressly forbidden in Scripture is not in this realm.
 - HA! Preacher—show me a verse that states I can’t go here, or listen to this, or smoke, or drink a beer, etc.! If it is not in the Bible then I am free to do it “as long as I can do it with a clear conscience!”
2. There are some spiritual truths that are not specifically, expressly stated in scripture that eliminate certain practices from the realm of Christian liberty.
 - We love to talk about “gray areas” — Gray areas pretty much exist only in Christian circles. When you work and live around unsaved people—they have a pretty good idea of what a Christian should and should not do!
 - Christians don’t smoke, drink, listen to rock music, dance, etc. {Ask any unsaved person and these things will invariably be on his list!} Yes, but he is unsaved and his word is not on par with the Bible so he has no right to tell me what to do!
 - POINT: The whole reason you are here is to reach him—so to allow things in your life that hinder your witness is not a “gray area” it is wrong.
 - Well preacher—then just what is Christian liberty?

•WHAT CHRISTIAN LIBERTY INVOLVES:

1. Def: it is behavior that is not specifically or implicitly addressed in Scripture.
2. Example: Dr. Hand and Calvin and Hobbes comics. {Here was something I had to decide about}

B. The Situation in Corinth: Believers who came out of Judaism and others from paganism. Meat offered to idols was then taken to the stores and sold at bargain prices.

C. The Issue: What should I do? Should I buy this meat or not? How far does my

Christian liberty go in relation to behavior not forbidden by Scripture?

I. Key Principles or Truths:

A. Key Truth about Knowledge {1} {Knowledge alone = arrogance}

- We know that we all have knowledge!
- BUT understand that knowledge alone is not enough—it puffeth up!
- Puff up— to blow up or to inflate—became synonymous with arrogance!

B. Key Truth about Love {1}

- Love by itself is not enough—but Paul is not talking about love by itself. In verse one he mentions that everyone of us has knowledge to a certain degree.
- When we add love to our knowledge then we edify or build up.

C. Key Truth about God {3-6}

- There is one God.
- There is no such thing as an Idol—{there are human judges and demons}—but there is only one God.
- We exist for that God!
- There is one Lord—Jesus Christ!
- We exist for God the father—but we exist through Jesus Christ.

D. Key Truth about Others {11-13}

- Not everyone thinks like you think.
- I have a responsibility to look out for the wellbeing of my brother.
- When I sin against my brother I actually sin against Christ.

E. Key Truth about Offense {13}

- Key to this whole passage is a correct understanding of the word offend.
- A wrong understanding of this word leads to two wrong extremes:
 - legalism**: Dr. Hand—I am offended by these comics—pretty soon I will have to lock myself up in my house and never come out
 - liscence**: Well, since I am not willing to lock myself up--then I will just go ahead and do whatever I want.
- PROPER UNDERSTANDING—Offend does not mean to hurt someones feelings or make them upset. **It means to entice them into sin.**
- Vs 9—but take heed lest this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak. Vs. 10—shall not the conscience of him which is weak be embolden to eat those things which are offered to idols?
- Key Question is not will this make someone mad—but will this entice someone around me to violate his conscience and sin?

•Well—how do I then go about determining what I can and can't do?

II. Key Foundations:

•There are two foundations you can build the freedom of your Christianity upon.

A. Foundation of Knowledge

•This is what the Corinthians were doing. They were saying—Hey there are three things we know that give us the right to take advantage of this meat at bargain prices.

1. We know that we all have knowledge.
 2. We know that there is no such thing as an idol.
 3. We know that meat does not commend or condemn us before God.
- Therefore—we can eat this meat!

•BUT Paul comes along and states—WAIT—Yes, all those things are true—but if you build your life upon that basis alone you will and some of you already have become arrogant. HERE IS WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW!

1. Not everyone has this same knowledge to the extent that you have.
2. Some people's conscience is weaker than others—it is easily defiled.
3. Your freedom is causing your brother to fall back into sin and ruin!
4. When you are the cause of this then you have sin against your brother and Christ who died for him!

B. Foundation of Love {1}

- Love edifies—it builds up to righteousness!
- You approach Christian liberty with one of two perspectives:
 1. You defend your rights—Knowledge
 2. You defend your brother—love!

➤ See Romans 14:21
Here is Paul's
conclusion
about doing
something
questionable.

III. Key Warnings {9-12}

- A. Don't let your liberty be curtailed by legalism—understand offending.
- B. Don't let your liberty be a stumbling block to your brother.

V. Key Responses

- A. Defend Self—building on the foundation of knowledge
- B. Defend Others—building on the foundation of love. {13}

•Here is Paul's answer: If doing this will make my brother offend, then I will never in any way {double negation—very strong} do this while the world stands.

•Point: Paul's answer—I will never do anything that will cause my brother to be enticed into sinful activity.

Lessons for the Market Place: Laws for Limiting Liberty

- 1. Will It Hinder My Relationship to God?**
- 2. Will It Entice My Brother to Sin?**
- 3. Will It Hinder My Witness to a Lost Man?**

Running God's Race God's Way!

Text: I Cor 9:1-27

Introduction:

- Paul writing to a church in reproach—point of the letter is helping to restore them.
- Starts off by reminding them of their true position in Christ—Saints! So live like one!
- Then He deals with several problems that have arisen in the church {1-6}
 - Division (2-4)
 - Defilement & Discipline 5
 - Defrauding 6
- Then in chapter 7 to the end of the book he deals with their perplexities—Questions.
- He starts in chapter seven by dealing with their questions concerning marriage and divorce.
 - 11 - Church Behavior
 - 12 - 14 - Spiritual Gifts
 - 15 - Res.
 - 16 - Giving
- The very next thing that Paul deals with in 8-10 is the issue of “Christian Liberty”
- This is an issue that has faced the modern church almost 20 centuries later—we are still asking the same kind of question. What can or can't I do in areas where the Bible does not give specific revelation? 20 centuries ago the Corinthians asked the question like this— “What kind of meat can I eat?” We ask that same question today in different terms: What kind of _____ can I _____?
- So Paul takes 3 chapters of this epistle to give us some important guidelines to help us answer these kinds of questions— {Our children ask them, and we ask them!}

Chapter 8: Paul deals with their Enquiry {What Kind of meat can I eat} by giving them some ground rules.

1. Knowledge alone is not sufficient—it puffs up so don't base decision only on this knowledge that you have.
2. Love for your brother must mandate your decision. Point—what kind of meat can you eat? I don't know—Ask your brother! If it hinders his walk with God or causes him to stumble back into sin then you can't eat meat!

Chapter 10: Paul is going to give them some specific exhortations or warnings of what can happen to people when they abuse their Christian Liberty. But sandwiched between these two chapters Paul presents his personal example.

Chapter 9: Paul's Example

- You asked me “what kind of meat can you eat and I gave you a pretty strong answer—none if it hinders your brother's walk with God.
- Some of you probably didn't want to hear that answer—you don't like what I have said. LET ME SHOW YOU exactly what I mean in another area—My personal financial situation. I have some rights {Christian Liberties} that I have chosen to sacrifice that will help us better understand the issue of Christian liberty.

I. Our Perogatives: Rights {9:1-14} Am I not Free? {Vs 1}

- This question is asked in a series of questions that expect a positive answer—Yes! Of course you are free, Paul!
- How exactly does this question flow in the argument Paul is making?

A. Defined

- Free here means to have the liberty or the right to do something.
- In this context Paul mentions 3 key “freedoms” or rights that every one knew that he had—and then focuses in on the last freedom to make his point.
 1. Right to eat and drink like all the other apostles.
 2. Free to take a believing wife along on his missionary journeys just like some of the other Apostles and brothers of the Lord did.
 - * 3. Free to refrain from working and earning a living from the ministry of the gospel.
 - It is here that Paul makes his point.
 - You would all agree that I have the right to live off the proceeds of the gospel but in case any of you don’t agree—let me give you 5 strong arguments.

B. Defended: 5-14

1. Apostleship: 1-6

- I am an apostle—2 great proofs of this—I have seen the Lord and you are my work in the Lord—the seal which guarantees the authenticity of my claim.
- Now if I am an apostle which I have already proved to you—then all the rights which you accord to the other Apostles should be accorded to me.
- If you don’t have a problem with Peter and the others having their wives along, or living off the proceeds of the ministry—THEN WHY DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WHEN I DO IT?

2. Human Nature: 7

- 3 illustrations from human experience which back up Paul’s right to be able to live off the proceeds of the gospel.
 - a. Soldier—does not serve at his own expense but governments.
 - b. Farmer—lives off the fruit of his vineyard
 - c. Shepherd—lives of the milk of his flock.

3. O.T. Law: 8-11

- God made a provision for the ox—the beast of burden—to be allowed to eat of the grain he was threshing. Did God write that just for oxen? NO! He wrote it to remind us of a biblical principle—the worker is worthy of

partaking of the rewards of his work.

- If we worked a spiritual work in your lives—biblically we have a right to partake of the material benefits from your lives—your offerings.

4. Standard Religious practice: 12-13

- Others have enjoyed this privilege among you—so should we. {11}
- The Priests—whether they be Jewish or Pagan—all perform their duties at the altar and then have a share in the material remains of the meat from the altar.

5. Command of the Lord: 14

- Matt 10:10 & Luke 10:8

- Now, after having given you 5 compelling arguments as to why we have the right to exercise this freedom or this “Christian Liberty” — let me show you our practice.

II. Our Practice: Restraint {9:15, 19} But I have used none of these things!

- I have this freedom—I have even given you 5 irrefutable arguments to support it—BUT—I want you to see that just because I have the right doesn’t mean I should exercise it!

- POINT: There are some of you here who can defend to the last jot and tittle your “right” to do a certain thing. You can defend your Christian liberty as well if not better than Paul—but just being able to defend it does not mean you should practice it.

- Why in the world would Paul refrain from this right?

III. Our Purpose: Reason {9:16-23} For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all that I might win the more! {19}

- These verses give us three great reasons why Paul limited his liberty and why we should limit ours.

A. For the Gospel’s Sake: 15-18 {12: We endure all things that we may cause no hinderance to the gospel.}

- So that I won’t “hinder” the progress of the gospel in any way! {12}
- “Hinder” means to impede or to cause difficulty. Idea here is that of cutting away a section of the road so that the wheels of the chariots of the pursuing army would break and shatter on the rough terrain.
- Paul is saying that by accepting “money” from the preaching of the Gospel in the particular situation he was in might cause someone to question the gospel.

- ILLUST: Modern impression of TV Ministers today—lovers of money!

B. For the Sinner's Sake: 19 -21

- I have made myself a slave to all that I might win the more.*
- To the Jews who lived under the rigors of the Law—Paul gave up some of his freedoms from that Law so that he could win a hearing for the gospel from the Jews. {Note: Paul never compromised in a situation where by subjecting himself to the Law he might lead someone to think that the law was part of salvation.}
- To the Gentile he lived in their culture—ate what they ate, etc.—in an effort to gain a hearing for the gospel.

cf Acts 21:17-18

C. For the Weak's Sake: 22

- In chapter 8 Paul refused to eat meat for the weaker brother's sake!

POINT: Paul did all things for the sake of the Gospel! What are you doing for the Gospel? Are you paving the way for the Gospel to go forth to the people around you or are you digging up the road behind you in the name of "Christian Liberty" so that the "wheels" of the Gospel become entrenched in the rubble behind you!

- Smoking, social drinking, movies, music, dress—are all areas that fit in this category. Are you becoming all things to all men—are you willing to give up your "liberty" in this area so that the Gospel can have free course—or are you going to continue to dig trenches in the road around you?

IV. Our Picture: Reality {9:24-27}

- Paul states that this is not just a neat theological argument written down on parchment—it is vital information for the market place of life! To drive this point home he introduces two images from the Greek games into the passage.

A. The Images:

1. Runner: 24-25

- He is running with a specific objective—to win the prize. NO RUNNER ever runs with a desire to come in second. He is running to WIN!
- To accomplish this goal he exercises self control and discipline in his life.

2. Boxer: 26-27

- When a boxer boxes his goal is to strike the opponent with all of his strength and not to flail the air or to "shadow box"

B. The Implications

1. You are in a race—so run to win!

- Spiritually—you must discipline your life and exercise self control.
- If you want to win—then run like it!
- Illust: running a 1 mile race with a bucket of water in one hand and a bucket of whisky in the other. One is bad the other is not—but they are both hinderances.
- Some of you are running the spiritual race with hinderances!

2. You are in a battle—so fight to win!

- You are in a spiritual battle against your flesh—so fight to win!
- Buffet your body—very strong word—means to give a black eye!
- Why? To make your body your slave instead of your body making you its slave!

Lessons for the Market Place of Life:

1. What Kind of Meat can I eat? ^{① Ask your brother} It all depends on how you want to run the race! ^{③ ask the Israelites .}
2. Why Should I enslave my flesh? Because if you don't your flesh will enslave you!
 - Do you realize there are believers who are literally slaves to a particular habit or sin pattern! WHY? Because they refuse to go through the agony of bringing their body and flesh under control.
 - They refused to rule their desires and now their desires rule them.

• Well, Preacher—that is just your opinion! I don't have to do this—after all it is my Christian Liberty! That is exactly how Paul anticipated some of us would react and he is going to demonstrate how devastating this response really is in chapter 10. We are going to meet a group of people who refused to rule their desires and became slaves to their passions and we are going to witness first hand what happened to them.

What Kind of Meat Can I Eat Part III

Text: I Cor 10

Introduction: Paul writing to Corinthians—a church in reproach—trying to help restore them to righteousness.

Chapter 1:	Their Position: Saints—so live like one!
Chapter 2-6	Their Problems <ul style="list-style-type: none">•2-4—Division•5—Defilement and Discipline•6—Defrauding
Chapter 7-16	Their Perplexities—Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none">•7—Marriage•11—Church behavior•12-14—Spiritual Gifts•15—Resurrection•16—Giving

•In Chapter 8-10 Paul answers a question asked by the Corinthians that is still being asked 20 centuries later— “What Kind of Meat Can I Eat?” Christian liberty!

•In **Chapter 8** he deals with their **Enquiry:** and gives them principles

1. Knowledge is not enough!
2. Love for your brother must mandate your liberty!

•In **Chapter 9** he uses a personal **Example** to demonstrate this principle in a “non-contraversial area” — His personal finances. He proved that he had a “right” and then demonstrated that he did not use this right. Why? For the sake of the Gospel, the sinner, and the weak brother! Then He closed chapter 9 by reminding us that the Christian life is like a race—so run to win! It is like a fight—so fight to win!

•NOW—he has given some very specific and some very hard instruction. No doubt there were many Corinthians and maybe even some of us tonight—who would say— “Well, Paul—that is good and great for you! BUT—I just can’t accept that instruction. Why should I limit my freedom? What right do you have to give me this kind of instruction?

•Paul concludes this section by presenting them with some **very sobering Exhortations in chapter 10**. These exhortations came from the lives of the OT Israelites and were designed to show us what happens when God’s people take their liberty for granted and refuse to respond to God’s instruction.

- I. The Priviledges of God's People: 1-4** *For I do not want you to be unaware*
- Paul reminds the Corinthians of something they all knew extremely well but had chosen to ignore.
 - You are asking about your rights as God's children—let me remind you of the things that happened to another group of people who were just as privileged and free as you are—the OT Israelites!
 - Paul shows them three great freedoms that OT Israel had that the Corinthians also had and that we have today in Christ!

A. Spiritual Liberty: 1

- All were under the cloud and all passed through the sea!
- Draws us back to the story in Exodus about how God delivered His people from the slavery of Egypt and brought them into the promised land of blessing and freedom.
- Egypt is a symbol of the world and the bondage of sin—just as God had delivered OT Israel from physical bondage He had delivered the Corinthians and us from spiritual bondage!
- POINT: Just like Israel—we all enjoy spiritual freedom because GOD acted on our behalf and delivered us from bondage!

B. Spiritual Unity: 2

- Baptism here means identification—they were all identified with Moses.
- Word "ALL" occurs 5 times in these verses to demonstrate their unity.
- Not a bunch of individuals going in separate directions in the desert—they were a single group of people held together by a common bond in God!
- God's people today are not a bunch of independent spirits headed in different directions—we are all united in one spiritual body—CHRIST!

C. Spiritual Provision: 3-4

- They all drank of the water and ate of the food that God had provided for them.
- Spiritually Christ provided that food for His people in the OT and He provides the spiritual food for His people today!
- What a place of privilege—What blessings the OT Israelites enjoyed!
- What a place of privilege—What blessings the NT saints enjoy!
- BUT—notice that in spite of all the blessings—all was not well!

II. The Problem of God's People: 5-6

A. Condition: God was not well pleased

- In spite of all that God had given to His people—in spite of the spiritual liberty, the unity, and the provisions—God's people had responded in such a way as to displease the God that had provided this freedom!
- I wonder as God looks at your life—is He well pleased with what He sees?

B. Consequence: They were laid low in the Wilderness

- "Laid Low" means to scatter or to strew about—to spread out.
- As a result of their displeasing God—God literally scattered their bodies throughout the desert.
- What would cause God to bring this kind of evil and disaster upon a people that He had gone to so much trouble to deliver and provide for?

C. Cause: They craved evil things

- Lust here means to "crave"
- Instead of craving the things that God had set them free to enjoy—they craved the very things that God had freed and delivered them from.
- What are you craving? Are you craving the things that God has freed you to enjoy? OR—are you craving the very things that Jesus Christ delivered you from when he saved you?

sn?, Lust, satisfaction of flesh,
a habit that is not pleasing
to God?

III. The Practice of God's People: 7-10

- Notice where their cravings ended up!

A. Idolatry {7}

B. Immorality {8}

C. Insolence: {9} Tested God

- To push God to the limit—to see how far they could go!
- Instead of craving to get closer to God they craved to see how far they could walk away from God and still enjoy his blessing.

D. Ingratitude: {10} Complained

- Their discontent and ingratitude led them to rebel against the leadership God had given them—they were destroyed for this.

Are you discontent? Are you murmuring in your heart against the spiritual leadership that God has put in your life? Your husband, parents, pastor, etc.

- If you are not careful this will lead to spiritual rebellion.

- WHY—Why did Paul bring up this tragic situation that would seem better off forgotten? Why did God choose to preserve this sad account in Scripture?

IV. The Purpose for God's People: 11-13 To Instruct = admonish {warn or correct}

- 11 *Now all of these things happened unto them for ensamples and they are written for our admonition.*
- Why would God deal so drastically with the people He had delivered—snakes, plagues, swallowing them up in an earthquake, letting them perish in the wilderness? WHY? Paul states the reason here—to serve as an example for latter generation of how God feels about these sins.
- God does not send serpents, plagues, or earthquakes today—BUT—He still hates the sin just as much!
- These things were written to admonish—to instruct us by warning us and correcting us in certain areas.

A. To Warn us against Pride: 12

- Let him that think he stands {is invincible} take heed lest he fall!

B. To Correct our understanding about Temptation: 13

1. **Temptation is not unique**
2. **Temptation is not sinful:** —allowed by God.
 - It is not the temptation that is sin—it is our response to that temptation.
3. **Temptation is not irresistible:** God Provides a way of escape.
 - not around, not from, not away, but THROUGH the temptation.
 - The only way to gain victory over temptation is to overcome it—to go through it with God's strength!
 - How do you "endure" or withstand temptation? 3 ways:
 - a. **Use the Word of God.**
 - b. **Pray**
 - c. **Focus on the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- Paul closes this chapter on Christian liberty by reminding them of the principle for God's people—everything that you do must ultimately bring Glory to God!

V. The Principle for God's People: 23-32 Do All To the Glory of God {31}

- There are 4 principles that will insure that what we do brings glory to God.

A. Edification instead of Gratification {23}

- Expedient: profitable or advantageous
- Not everything that is lawful {knowledge} is always profitable.
- Remember Paul's example in chapter 9 — it is lawful for me to receive my living from the gospel but in my situation it was not profitable.

- Well how can I tell if something is advantageous and profitable or not?
 - It doesn't necessarily bother me! **THAT IS NOT THE RIGHT QUESTION!**
- The question should center around others—and that is the second principle.

B. Others before Self {24}

- We are to seek another man's "wealth" and not our own!
- What in the world does it mean to seek another man's wealth?
- Wealth here means profit or well-being. What Paul is saying is that in the area of Christian Liberty we are to seek the profit and well-being of others before we seek the profit and well-being of ourselves.
- 3 applications:
 1. Chapter 8—the question of meat. While it might profit you personally {cheaper} to eat the meat sold at the temple shops that had been offered to idols—you must seek the well-being and profit of your brother before you seek your own.
 2. Chapter 9—while it would have profited me to take my living from the gospel I had to seek the wellbeing and profit of those that I wanted to minister to and therefore I decided in my circumstance to give up that right.
 3. Some of you here are defending your "right" to do a certain thing because you claim in benefits you—music, movies, drinking, smoking, etc. Paul states—what about others? How is your music, smoking, etc profiting others?

- Well, then I am going to have to lock myself in my closet and never do anything!

C. Liberty instead of Legalism {25-27}

- Point—eat anything sold in the market place and in the homes set before you in good conscience and don't ask questions! If it doesn't offend you then enjoy it!
- BUT—if anyone should raise a question or should point out that this activity is questionable then understand how God expects you to respond.
- If you are in the home of an unbeliever who feeds you with meat that he purchased at the temple that had been offered to idols—eat and enjoy with no questions—BUT—the minute someone raises the question or points out that this meat has been offered to idols—HERE IS HOW YOU ARE TO RESPOND

D. Condescension instead of Condemnation {28-30}

- DON'T EAT!
- Not for your conscience's sake but for his!
- Don't condemn him or don't challenge him—just give up your liberty for his sake!
- WHY? Because you don't want to be a stumbling block to him {32}

VI. The Pattern for God's People: 33

A. Described:

- Please all men in all things
- Don't seek your own profit but the profit of others
- WHY—that they might be saved!

• POINT: Don't let your freedom become a hinderance {9:12} that will cut a trench in the road and hinder or obstruct the wheels of the chariot of the gospel.

B. Demonstrated: 11:1

- You imitate or pattern your life in the same way that I am patterning my life after Christ!

① Is your christian liberty hindering the Gospel?

② Is your christian liberty more important to you than the well being of your Christian Brother.

key Questions:

① what Does God think of my activity?

② what would others think if they knew I did this?

Concerning Communion

Text: Acts 2:42 *A continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers. . .*

Introduction: Paul is writing and dealing with the problems and abuses in the public worship of the Corinthian believers.

• Their services could be described in one word—chaos! Three major problems:

1. Misunderstanding about the Proper Place of women in public worship
2. Misunderstanding about the Proper Purpose of the Lord's Supper
3. Misunderstanding about the Proper Practice of Spiritual Gifts

• Paul in this passage corrects their thinking about the Lord's supper.

I. The Priority of the Lord's Supper:

• Acts 2:42 tells us that one of the things that the early believer's were very careful to observe in their public worship was something known as "breaking of bread". This was a direct reference to the Lord's supper. Why was it so important to them and why should it be so important to us? **2 reasons:**

A. Because it was commanded by the Lord:

- On the last night he was with his beloved followers, he left them with one final command—this do in remembrance of me!
- What were they to do?
- They were to observe and repeat the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup as a reminder of what the Lord had commanded

B. Because of its significance for the believer:

1. General Significance — Ordinance

- **Definition of Ordinance:** Something handed down by the Lord which contains a "**sensible**" (that which appeals to the senses) **sign and seal of the relationship** that exists between Christ and His people. **In other words, it is a picture or visible object lesson** depicting the relationship between Christ and His people.
- There are two such ordinances or "signs" that Christ left with his church.
- **Baptism**—the visible sign or object lesson which pictures the believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord.
- **Lord's Supper** which is a memorial or a living picture of our unity with the one who gave us spiritual life by the breaking of his body and the shedding of his blood.

2. Specific Significance — Memorial

- Well, What is so special or significant about the Lord's supper?
- That question has been the basis for entire denominations dividing!
- Trans .. 1)* • Rome believes that the bread and the wine "become" the actual physical body of Christ.
- Cons .. 2)* • Lutherans believe that the bread and the wine in some way "contain" the body and blood of Christ
- 3)* • Third view—the bread and wine represent the body and blood which was spilt once for us!
- 5 Specific observations about the significance of this ordinance
 - a. **Designed to exhibit the benefits of Christ's redemption.**
 - b. **Visible badge of membership in Christ**
 - c. **Places a visible difference between Christians and the World**
 - d. **It is a Memorial to Christ and points to his 1st and 2nd comings**
 - e. **It is a means of grace:**
 - not saving grace
 - it becomes a vehicle whereby Christ communicates to His people.

PROBLEM: This sacred ordinance was being perverted in the Corinthian assembly!

II. The Perversion of the Lord's Supper: 11:17-22

• But in giving this instruction I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse! For in the first place, when you come together as a church I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it! For there must also be factions {heresies} among you in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you. Therefore when you meet together it is not to eat the Lord's supper! For in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say unto you? Shall I praise you? IN THIS I WILL NOT PRAISE YOU!!

- Wow—preacher, Paul sounds hot! What was the problem? They don't seem to be observing the Lord's supper quite like we do here.
- In the early days of the first church, they would assemble themselves together and have a "love feast" or a supper and after that they would celebrate the communion.
- What was happening at Corinth was a travesty—a shame, a blight!

- They would gather together for their “love meal” and all the rich would sit down and feast on what they had brought—they would gorge themselves and actually become drunk on the excess while the poor were cast from their tables.
- Then, after this terrible scene had taken place they would take their places and partake in the Holy Communion which was designed to show them that in Christ they were all equal and one with each other.
- They were a bunch of hypocrites—there was envying and strife on both parts.
- The rich looked down their nose at the poor—and turned their back on their need
- The poor despised the rich and felt that they “owed” them something.
- Maybe you are here tonight and there is a brother or sister who is not as well off as you are—do you look down your nose?
- Maybe you are here tonight and you are bitter because someone else always seems to have the breaks—they always seem to have money, they never seem to have car trouble or difficulty.
- This is exactly what was happening at Corinth—division, bitterness, and strife, and then they would all get together and observe this communion—a bunch of hypocrites!

III. The Purpose of the Lord’s Supper: 23-26

- Paul begins by reminding them that this is not his personal opinion—*For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered unto you.*
- There are basically two purposes behind the Lord’s supper.

A. It is a Reminder for Believers: 24, 25 *This do in remembrance of me!*

- His Suffering*
1. It is a reminder of what Christ did to redeem us! (His body broken)
 - Just like the bread was broken so Christ’s body was given for us!
 - All of the agony, the suffering, the revilement, the shame, the innocent death were a vital part of the price of our salvation.
 - Every time we eat the bread it serves to remind us of the awful price Christ paid for our redemption.
 2. It is a reminder that Jesus paid it all—all to him we owe! (His blood shed)
 - His blood reminds us of the new and final covenant not based on the blood of bulls and goats—but on the precious blood of the lamb.
 - Not based on the repeated sacrifices offered daily upon the altar—during passover week over 1/2 million sacrifices every day!
 - His blood was the full and final sacrifice that put an end to the endless procession of death!
- His Atonement*

B. It is a Proclamation (announcement) By Believers: 26 *For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes.*

•You proclaim three things:

1. I belong to Christ and He belongs to me! (you eat this bread and drink this cup—unity and fellowship with the Lord)
2. He died for me! (you proclaim the Lord's death)
3. He is coming for me! (till he come)

POINT: Communion becomes a parenthesis around the life of the believer!

IV. The Preparation for the Lord's Supper

A. The Warning: 27 *Therefore 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.*

- What does it mean to be guilty of the "body and blood" of the Lord?
- Illust: What does it mean to be guilty of desecrating the flag? What is so bad about someone burning the flag or desecrating or deriding the flag?
- Problem is not that he is desecrating or defiling a piece of cloth—it is what that cloth represents.
- Problem here is that it is possible to defile or "despise the Lord's supper"
- nothing sacred in the bread or the wine itself—it is what it stands for!
- You need to be just as careful to guard the integrity and honor of the Lord's table as you are about guarding the integrity and honor of your country and flag!
- That is why we ask you to keep your children from running around the table.
- That is why we ask you to be in good standing with God's people.
- That is why one who has been excommunicated should not be allowed to take of this table.
- WELL—HOW DOES ONE AVOID BECOMING GUILTY OF THE LORD'S BODY AND BLOOD?

B. The Exhortation: 28 *But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.*

- Examine here is a word that means "scrutinize" or "take account"
- Look at your life—if we could see you like God sees you would we allow you to take the supper?
- Many of us take the supper even though we know there is unconfessed sin in our hearts—because we don't want to be embarrassed! We don't want people to say—hey, wonder why she didn't take it? What sin is she hiding?
- WELL—preacher, you don't have the right to tell me whether or not I should

take the Lord's supper! That is between me and the Lord! You may not think I am worthy but that is a private matter between me and the Lord—you have no right saying these things.

•That is exactly the reaction that Paul got and notice what he states in verse 29.

C. The Condemnation: *For he that eats and drinks eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick and a number sleep.*

* •Judgment— really means chastisement.

* •Judge— really means discerns.

•Here is Paul's point: There are some of you who are going to look at communion or "Christ's body" and you are not going to see it as such a big deal! It is something that all "religious" people do every so often at church.

•You are not going to be discerning about the Lord's communion and you are going to take it lightly! You are not going to be bothered enough by your sins to not take the Lord's supper—and you will do so unworthily!

•WHEN YOU DO THIS—YOU EAT AND DRINK CHASTISEMENT TO YOURSELF.

•Come on Paul—GET REAL!

* •Paul's response: That is why so many of you a spritually weak, physically sick, and some of you have even died! WHY? Because you are under the chastening of the Lord for defiling Christ's sacrifice for you!

Lessons for the Market Place:

When you take the Lord's supper tonight, you need to do four things:

1. Look Back—see the price that Christ paid for your sin! Don't excuse it—confess.
2. Look Ahead—see that Christ is coming back for you! Are you ready to meet him?
3. Look Within—what are you hiding? What are you ashamed for your brothers and sisters in Christ to know? What are you excusing? What are you justifying?
4. Look Around—who are you bitter at? Is there someone here that you are holding a grudge against? Is there someone here that you look down on? Is there someone here that you are envious of?

Order in the Church!

Key Verse for this section: 14:40 *But let all things be done properly and in an orderly fashion.*

Text: I Cor 11:2-15

Introduction: Paul writing to a church in reproach—desires to restore them. Sets about to accomplishing this by writing them for three specific purposes:

1. To remind them of their Position—Saints.
2. To rebuke them of their Problems—Sins
3. To relieve them of their Perplexities—Questions
 - question about marriage—chapter 7
 - questions about Christian Liberty—chapter 8-10

Now we come to the third question that Paul answers—how are we to conduct ourselves in public worship? Everybody had a different idea as to what was appropriate and what was not appropriate in public worship and as a result when you went to a service at the church of Corinth—you were liable to encounter anything.

- Some of the women felt that they could do anything that the men did and so they did!
- Some felt one way about the Lord's supper and others felt another way and what was meant to be a fest of love had been reduced to a common table fight.
- There were all kinds of different spiritual gifts that God had given this church to make them more effective in the accomplishing of God's work but instead of working together, they were competing with one another to see who had the best spiritual gift.
- They would all speak in tongues at the same time. They would interrupt each other and cut one another off. When you entered their assembly you might find one person teaching and at the same time several others speaking in tongues.
- Things had degenerated to the point that the only word to describe their services was the word **CHAOS!**
- In fact, it was so bad that the unbelievers who visited the church never came back—they thought the entire congregation was "mad" or crazy!
- The disagreement over how public worship was to be carried out was centered in three basic areas:

- a. What was the proper place of women in public worship?
- b. What was the proper purpose in celebrating the Lord's supper?
- c. What was the proper practice of Spiritual gifts?

- They had written the Apostle Paul to get his advice and this is what he said—let everything be done decently and in order!—He is now going to spend the next 4 chapters telling them what is decent and orderly in public worship.
- He begins in chapter 11 by dealing with the proper place of women in public worship. **Note 5 things Paul tells them in these verses.**

I. Praise: 2 *Now I praise you brethren*

- Notice that Paul does not immediately begin with a strong rebuke but with words of praise. He praises them for two specific things.
- As bad as this church was, they were doing at least two things correctly:

A. For Remembering their Teacher:

- In spite of all of their problems and confusion, they still were responsive to the man that God had set up as a spiritual authority in their life.
- As far down into reproach as they had fallen, there was still hope—why?—because they were still willing to listen to the authority and spiritual leadership God had placed into their life!
- What about you?

B. For Responding to the Tradition:

- Word “ordinance” means tradition or teaching that had been handed down orally.
- Paul is not referring to the vain traditions of their fathers—but rather to the authoritative teaching from the Word of God.
- He uses this same word in two other places which give us an idea of what he means:
 - II Thess 2:15 *So then, brethren stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.*
 - II Thess 3:6 *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.*

•POINT: The problem in the Corinthian church was not that they did not have good doctrine—They had good doctrine. The problem was that they did not practice the doctrine they believed! They had great theology but they never applied it to their daily lives!

•Some of you here believe all the right doctrines—there is not one thing wrong with your theology or what you believe! The problem is that you don’t apply your theology to your daily lives! You don’t practice what you say you believe!

•EXAMPLES: You say God is holy yet you live in sin! You say your body is the temple of a Holy God yet you defile it with what you allow in your life—habits, pornography, drinking, smoking, filth, music, etc.

•What exactly was the problem in this passage that the Corinthians were having?

II. Problems:

A. Disorder:

- services were a public mockery of the doctrine that God is a God of order and harmony! Instead of reflecting beauty and harmony—there was nothing but chaos and disharmony! Instead of reflecting God’s love and unity—bitterness and fights

B. Dishonor:

- One of the things that was bringing great shame to God's name in the city of Corinth was the fact that women had usurped their proper place in public worship.
- They were shamelessly doing something that was creating a great scandal in the city of Corinth and the shameful thing about it was they were defending it on the grounds of Christian doctrine!

* We look at chapter 11 and immediately we think of two things—Hats on women and long hair on men and we miss the entire point of the passage! *

- To understand what Paul was getting at we need to understand the culture of the day. Women in that society {pagan} were considered much inferior to men! They were nothing more than a burden on society.

• Baby girls often left to starve in wild elements.

• When a woman went outside her home she had to show deference to men—in this culture this was done by a woman wearing long hair and covering her head or face in public with some form of a veil. To refuse to wear a veil or to shave the head or wear short hair was considered a shameful act which no decent woman would engage in. The only women who went about with uncovered or shorn heads were the prostitutes of the city.

• Christianity had come along and had given women a place of honor and had lifted them up from this kind of a miserable existence. No longer were they to be treated as property, or inferior. They were to be given honor and deference as the weaker vessel. The husband was to tenderly love and care for his wife just like Christ loved and cared for him!

• NOW—here was the problem at Corinth. The women at the church had decided to throw off all restraint. They not only were doing things that in God's providence had been given to men—leading in public worship—but they were doing so in a scandalous manner. They had thrown off their veils and were in essence declaring their “equality” with their husbands!

* { They were doing in the public worship of God's church what not even the heathens would think about doing in their temples—in fact—they were bringing in to God's house what the rest of society considered shameful and perverted! } *

• IT IS THIS INPROPRIETY THAT PAUL IS CONFRONTING—He wants women to understand and assume their proper place in public worship.

III. Principle: 3

A. The Statement: A 3 fold principle

- Christ is the head {authority} of Man.
- Man is the head {authority} of Woman.
- God is the head {authority} of Christ.
- SO WHAT!!

B. The Significance:

- Here is the point—in God's wisdom he has ordained an authority structure for the universe that must be followed or else disaster and chaos will follow.
- Note: that structure is not saying that one party is better or less equal than the other.
- Jesus Christ is fully God—he is equal with God the Father! Prove it—Phil 2:5-6
"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God though it not robbery to be equal with God. . ."
- Although Jesus Christ was equal with God—He still submitted Himself to the authority of His Father! John 4:34 "My meat is to do the will of my father" John 5:30 "I seek not my own will by the will of My Father which sent me"
- If Christ had refused to submit to His Father's plan and will of redemption we would still be lost in sin!
- Just like Christ and God the Father exist in an authority structure, God has designed an authority structure for human society—the man has been given authority over the woman. That does not mean she is inferior to man but it does mean she is to submit to his authority.
- Now Paul is going to prove this a little bit later but first he is going to bring order and decency to their public worship by setting forth the policy that determines the proper place of women in public worship.

IV. Policy: 4-14

A. Declared: 4-6

- When a man or woman prays {talks to God for men} or prophecies {Talks to men for God} in PUBLIC worship {not referring here to private worship} here is how it is to be done.
- 1. The Man is not to cover his head—if he does he show disrespect and dishonors his authority—GOD!
- 2. The Woman is to cover her head—if she doesn't she shows disrespect and dishonors her head—her husband.
 - If she is not going to cover her head then let her be shaved!
 - Here is how a woman would respond to that — NO WAY! ONLY A PROSTITUTE WOULD SHAVE HER HEAD!
 - Paul is saying—EXACTLY! IF IT IS A DISGRACE TO SHAVE YOUR HEAD IN PUBLIC THEN IT IS JUST AS MUCH A DISGRACE TO PRAY OR PROPHECY IN PUBLIC WORSHIP WITH AN UNCOVERED HEAD! SO COVER YOUR HEAD!
 - TAKE YOUR PROPER PLACE AND DON'T USURP THE AUTHORITY GIVEN TO THE MAN IN PUBLIC WORSHIP! Every woman should speak to and for the Lord as a woman and every man as a man!

•NOW, Paul has ruffled some feathers and so he goes on to defend his policy.

B. Defended

— 2 great defenses . . .

1. From Creation: 7-12

•Paul points out 4 facts that support his conclusion and then a reminder.

a. Man is the Glory of God and Woman is the Glory of Man (7)

•What in the world does this mean?

•Man is the highest and best thing in God's creation.—He stands in as God's representative on earth! Just like God rules the universe—man was given the dominion or rulership over the earth!

•Woman is the highest and best thing that comes from man!

•Of all the things that have originated from man—nothing can compare to what God brought forth from his side—Woman!

b. Man did not originate from Woman but Woman originated from Man. (8)

•When God formed the first human he created him from the dust of the earth. When God saw that man needed woman He did not create her from the same dust that Adam was created from—he took a part of Adam and fashioned it into a perfect partner—Eve.

c. Man was not created for Woman but Woman for Man. (9)

•Man was not created to meet and complete the woman but rather the woman was created to meet and complete the man. Man could not replenish and rule the earth alone—he needed a helpmeet. God created Eve for Adam!

d. Woman should have the symbol of authority on her head because of angels (10) •*Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of angels!*

•What does this mean? Lots of different interps—here is mine:

•Angels were present during the creation of man—they saw the divine order that had been established and in light of this fact—because the very Angels of heaven had witnessed God's order and plan—Women should assume their proper place in worship. As an external symbol of their submissiveness to their husbands they should cover their heads rather than act like the shameless women of their pagan city.

* e. NOTE: God reminds the men that just because they have authority over the women does not give them the right to think themselves superior to women. {11-12}

•*However, in the Lord, neither is the woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God!*

•Woman came into existence from Man but man continues his existence

through woman.

•POINT—if you don't like this and you think that I am being too harsh—you need to realize that this whole thing was set up by the same God who created all the ordered Universe!

•So Paul argues that Women should take their proper place in Public Worship and not usurp the authority of the Man and his first argument is the order in which Man and Woman were created. Now he brings in a second argument to prove his point.

2. From Nature: 13-14

•You Judge for yourselves whether it is right for a woman to usurp the authority of a man in public worship and pray with an uncovered head.

* Nature—or the natural instincts of life themselves—teach you that it is a shame or disgrace for a man to have long hair but it is the glory or honor of a woman!

•WHAT IS LONG HAIR?? Favorite verse of the fundamentalist camp—you should have tapered haircut and God forbid it touch your ears!

•POINT—word “long” does not occur in the text.

•Two words for hair in NT. One word “Thrix” means a hair in general—strand of hair, human hair, camel hair, etc. The other word “Koma” means styled hair—it does not necessarily refer to length.

* { POINT: Everyone knows that a carefully styled, braided, and done up head of hair is the glory of a woman—it exalts her! BUT you take that same head of hair and put it on a man and instead of exalting him it dishonors him! }

•Paul is saying—your natural human instincts tell you that there should be a difference in the hair styles of a woman and a man and your spiritual instincts should tell you that that same difference exists in public worship.

* { Just like it is a shameful thing for a woman to try to eradicate the physical distinctions between the male and female it is a shameful thing for her to erradiacte them spiritually! }

•God gave her the beautiful hair that she has in the place of a covering.

•That is why some people today feel that a woman should wear a hat in public worship. {In older days a woman would never go to church without her hat}

•POINT: God has created a definite order in the Universe—a definite authority structure. Christ submitted Himself under the Authority of His father. Man is to submit to the Authority of Christ. And Woman is to submit to the authority of her Husband. *

•Paul concludes by saying if anyone tries to argue against this—he has no grounds to argue from—we {apostles and churches} have no other practice!

Lessons for the Market Place:

1. Public Worship is a very serious Matter:
 - The very angels of heaven are witness to what occurs when God's people meet together in public worship to the God of the Universe!
 - They see all the externals——and they see the internal attitudes of our hearts.
2. Public Submission in worship must be predicated by personal submission in the privacy of your home!

Understand Your Gift I Cor 12

Intro: Church at Corinth was in reproach and Paul was writing to help restore them to Righteousness. He sets about to accomplish this by reminding them of three things.

- First—He reminds them of their spiritual position in Christ—Saints
- Second—He rebukes them for their spiritual problems
- Third—He removes their spiritual perplexities
 - Marriage 7, Christian Liberty 8-10, Public worship in 11
- Now he addresses something else in their public worship—their misuse of spiritual gifts.
- Problem in Corinth--gifts were creating division. Very competitive.
 - Some of the “spectacular” gifts were viewed as evidence that an individual had the Holy Spirit.
 - The individual members were all competing with each other to publically display their “spirituality” by demonstrating these “spectacular” gifts—particularly tongues.
 - What ended up happening to their services was — CHAOS instead of order.
 - Instead of unbelievers being impressed by the mutual love of the members and being drawn to Christ—they were shocked by the confusion and ended up leaving the service rejecting the message.
- Proper Purpose--to create and enhance spiritual unity.
- Apparently, there were some very disturbed people at Corinth who were wondering if all of this was really what God intended for the Church—So they have written Paul and asked about spiritual gifts.
- From the Context of Chapter 14 it seems apparent that the major problem existed around one particular gift—tongues. Before Paul can deal with the gift of tongues he must lay some groundwork. He talks about—

- 1. Proper Purpose for Spiritual Gifts 12 Progressive Spiritual Unity
- 2. Proper Practice of Spiritual Gifts 13 Selfless Love
- 3. Proper Priority of Spiritual Gifts 14 Spiritual Edification of Others (Prophecy vs Tongues)

•Tonight we are going to see what Paul has to say about the Proper Purpose for Spiritual Gifts. In this passage Paul rebukes them for using the tools that God had given them to build the church as toys to be flaunted. He sets about to rectify this problem by establishing three things in this chapter.

I. The Spiritual Truth: 12:1-11

- Very key to understand how verses 1-3 fit together.
- Paul's great concern for the Corinthian believers is that they do not remain ignorant about spiritual gifts.
- Hey Paul, we are not ignorant---Well, you remember when you were unsaved pagans? You were certainly ignorant then.
- Now, since I don't want you to be ignorant about spiritual gifts, therefore, I make known to you {Well Paul, What are you going to make known to us?}
- Paul makes known to them the spiritual truth about three things:

A. The Truth About Spiritual Unity: 3

- No one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed", and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.*
- Note how Paul sets up the argument.
- POINT 1 — No one whose speech is influenced, controlled, and directed by the Holy Spirit will ever state that Jesus is to be cursed of God.
- Corinthian's response—Sure Paul, that goes without saying! We never would say that! Why in fact we would state exactly the opposite—Jesus is Lord!
- POINT 2 — O.K. You are arguing that the possession of a spiritual gift {probably tongues} is what demonstrates that a person possesses the Holy Spirit. BUT—no one can say that Jesus is Lord {as you are claiming to say} unless He possesses the Holy Spirit.
- HERE IS PAUL'S POINT: All of you at the Church of Corinth who have claimed that Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life are on the same spiritual footing—you all have the same Holy Spirit!
- The evidence that you have the Holy Spirit is not the possession of some spiritual gift like tongues but rather the fact that you have all claimed that Jesus is Lord!

JESUS IS LORD
"K"
SALVATION

- Now that we have established the fact that we are all on the same spiritual footing regarding the Holy Spirit—lets talk about the issue of spiritual gifts:

B. The Truth About Spiritual Gifts: 4-10

1. There are Different Kinds of Spiritual Gifts: 4-6

- There are 5 different words used in this passage to describe spiritual gifts. I want to point out three of them that I believe give us a general breakdown of the kinds of spiritual gifts that God gives.

a. Gift: Charismata

χαρίσματα

- this word literally means grace gift or free gift. I believe that this emphasizes God as the giver and the gift as something that man in and of himself would not have.
- Some feel that spiritual gifts are natural talents or abilities that God can use or enhance.
- I personally feel that these gifts are something in addition to natural talent that God gives the believer when he is saved. I believe that your natural talents may help you carry out your gift—but your gift is different than your talent. It is something that God graciously gives.
- There is a word we will look at in a moment that will give additional support.

b. Administration: Literally “ministries”

διακονίαι

- This word is the same word that means “deacon” or to serve or minister.
- The emphasis here is not on the graciousness of God’s free gifts, but on how we are to utilize them.
- These free gifts are not to be used to exalt self {as the Corinthians were doing} but rather to minister to or serve others.

c. Operations: Literally “effects” or energizings

ἐνεργήματα

- This word focuses on the results or effects of our spiritual gifts that are produced in others.
- These gifts are not something that we provide the energy to operate, they are something that God does through us. This is another reason why I believe that these gifts are more than just natural talent. I believe that natural talent can be used by God and should be used for God—but here I believe that God energizes and operates through us in a special way—a gift of grace that is to be used to serve or minister to others.

2. There is a Common Source for Spiritual Gifts: 7

- Paul points out that these are all “manifestations” of the Spirit.
- These are all things that the Holy Spirit manifests in the heart of every believer—not just to some! NOW—not every believer will have the same kind of gift {list of gifts verses 8-10} But every believer will be given by the Holy Spirit some manifestation of these gifts.
- Why did God design it this way?

3. There is a Common Purpose for Spiritual Gifts: 7

- For the Common Good!

- The word literally means “to bring together” *6000000 (symphony?)*
- These gifts were specifically designed for the benefit of the church—to develop and edify the body of Christ!
- IN SHORT—THESE GIFTS WERE DESIGNED TO BRING THE BODY OF CHRIST TOGETHER IN UNITY! BUT At Corinth—instead of bringing the body together, they were being misused and dividing the body!

C. The Truth About the Holy Spirit: 11

1. He is the power behind every gift:

- He is the energizing source behind the gift so exalt Him instead of lifting up yourself!

2. He is the distributor of every gift

- You do not pick and choose what gift you want
- The Holy Spirit gives you the gift that He want's you to have

3. He has sovereign dominion over all the gifts.

- He does not give you the gift based on what you have earned or what you deserve. He does not give you a gift based on what you are. . .
- He distributes the gifts as He sees fit!

POINT: Some of you who speak in tongues look at the rest of the people in Corinth and lift yourself up as more spiritual. You tell others that they need to obtain this gift to be spiritual. YOU HAVE MISSED THE BOAT! Spiritual gifts are not things you gain—they are things that are given by the Spirit! They are not given on the basis of anything that you are—they are graciously given by the sovereign pleasure of the Holy Spirit—SO STOP BOASTING IN YOUR GIFT! WHAT DO YOU HAVE THAT YOU WERE NOT GIVEN?

- These gifts were given to bring you together {vs 7} but you are using them to divide yourselves.
- To drive his point home about the true purpose behind spiritual gifts—Paul uses a human illustration.

II. The Human Illustration: 12:12-26

A. Unified in One Body: 12-13

- A human body consists of many different kinds of members—feet, hands, arms, fingers, eyes, etc.
- A body is incomplete without the individual parts.
- The individual parts themselves do not make up a body. {Arm is not a body}
- BUT—when you put all the individual members together you have a completed, unified body. SAME WAY SPIRITUALLY with the Body of Christ!

well when & how did this happen

•**Baptized by One Spirit into One Body** 13

- When you were saved the Holy Spirit Placed you, an individual member, into one great body—the Body of Christ! When you became a part of that Body, you were literally flooded or innundated with the Holy Spirit.
- “Drink” here can mean to flood or innundate with water. That is a great picture of what happens when we get saved. We don’t just get a little bit of the Holy Spirit—WE ARE LITERALLY FLOODED! We get all the Holy Spirit there is to get!

•Now, just like a human body has distinct, individual parts so it is with the body of Christ! The Body of Christ is as diversified as our human bodies!

B. Diversified in One Body: 14-18

- Just like a human body does not have parts that all look exactly alike and do exactly the same thing but rather unique parts that all work together for the whole so with the body of Christ.
- Not everyone in the body of Christ is the same. We do not all have the same function or same characteristics!
- Just because you don’t have the same spiritual gift that another member has does not mean you are any less a part of the body!
- It would be ridiculous for the foot to say—I am not like the hand, so—I must not be part of this body! Or the ear to say the same thing about the eye! It is just as ridiculous for you to say that because you don’t have the gift of tongues you are not as important to the body of Christ.
- WELL—who determines where I fit in the body of Christ?
- ANSWER: The same one who determines the place of the individual members of our bodies—God!

•**Placed in the Body by God** 18

- When you disparage your spiritual gift—or when you judge another man’s spirituality or importance based on his “spiritual gift” you are really passing judgment on what God has done—God is the one who placed that individual where he happens to be in the body!

C. Mutually Interdependent in One Body : 19-26

- We tend to exalt certain portions of our body and consider them more important than others.
- Illustration: We will often praise someone for their eyes or their voice or their face—but how many of you have praised your little toe? {Ugly, curled up, smelly, but very very very important to the rest of the body!}
- Stub your little toe and rest of body hurts! Cut off your little toe and rest of body

is affected!

•**POINT:** You may consider some of the believers around you as “less important” than others. Or you may look at someone else and say—boy, look at his gift! I wish I had his gift or position in the body of Christ!

•Paul addresses this wrong desire by reminding them that they are just as much a part of the Body of Christ and they all play an individual role!

•**You are Christ’s body and individually members of it 27**

•**POINT:** Hey Paul—Its not fair! He gets to be the honored member of the body and here I have to be the “little toe”! Who set this dumb system up anyway?

•This was exactly what was going on in Corinth—everyone looked at the “spectacular” gifts and were all competing with eachother to show how important their spiritual gift was. Paul closes this chapter by making a vital application!

III. The Vital Application: 12:28-31

•You want to know who set up this system? GOD DID! (vs 28)

A. God’s Perfect Provision {28-29}

1. He established the order {28}

•Notice that God has set forth a priority of importance in spiritual gifts. First, apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then -----

•OK—then how can I get the prominent gift? How can I get the most important gift?

•Paul answers that in verse 29

2. He determined the position: 29

•Not everyone is an apostle, or a prophet, or a teacher, etc. ARE THEY? No!

•Point: God is the one who set up the priority or order of spiritual gifts and He is the one who appoints those who will fulfill those roles.

•Here is how you are to respond to this.

B. The Believer’s Poper Response: 30

•Great controversy here.

•Basically 2 ideas:

1. Paul is commanding them to earnestly desire or seek after spiritual gifts. I have a problem with that because all through the passage he has been emphasizing that God is the one who gives the gifts, He is the one who ordains each member to his role in the Body, and all the roles are vitally important to the whole.

•All of a sudden Paul is shifting gears and stating—Hey, even though God is the one who decides what gift you are to have—you go out and seek the best

gift anyway.

2. Paul is not commanding them to seek, but rather he is telling them what they are doing.
 - The greek verb for “be seeking or desiring” {imperative} and for “you are seeking or desiring” {present} is spelled exactly the same way. Only context can determine which one the writer intends to use.
 - Here is what I believe Paul is stating—God is the one who set up the priorities of Gifts in the body, and He is the one who placed you where you are in the body with the gift that you have.
 - Instead of being content and excersing the gift God has given you, you are competeing and seeking out for what you think are the “best” gifts”
 - not competition but contentment.**
 - NOW—let me show you what you should be earnestly seeking or desiring—a better or more prominent way.

C. Paul’s Prominent Way: 31

- This is going to lead into Paul’s next point.
- He has discussed the proper purpose of Spiritual Gifts—mutual benefit for the body.
- Now He is going to discuss how these gifts are to be practiced—not in the spirit of competition as the Corinthians were doing but rather in the spirit of love.

Conclusion:

1. **The Proper Evidence for The Holy Spirit’s presence in your life is not you Spiritual Gift—It is your confession that Jesus Christ is Lord.**
 - You don’t judge a man’s spirituality by his gift but rather by his commitment and submission to the Lord.
2. **Spritual Gifts are gracious gifts from God given to us strictly by the will of the Holy Spirit.**
 - For someone to say that we need to “get” the gift of tongues or healing or prophecy is biblically unsound. We don’t get these gifts—these are things that the Holy Spirit gives according to His sovereign pleasure.
3. **Spiritual gifts are given for the primary benefit of others, not for yourself.**
{vs.7}
 - The idea of a “private gift” for private edification seems to be a wrong emphasis according to this verse. These gifts were given so that you could better serve and minister to others—not so that you could enjoy them privately.
 - Are you using your spiritual gift?

Lift Up Love

Text: I Corinthians 13

Introduction: Paul writing to answer their question about the issue of spiritual gifts.

•They were basically asking Paul about the issue of Tongues—was it really “the spiritual gift” that functioned as the sign of spiritual maturity? In other words—was the gift of tongues the best spiritual gift?

•Before Paul can answer this question (chpt 14) he had to lay some groundwork (12-13)

1. He teaches them the proper purpose for Spiritual Gifts—edification to unity. {12}

-He points out to them that spiritual gifts were not given for private use but for ministering to others.

-He points out that the Holy Spirit which they all received gives the gifts sovereignly.

-He points out that any results that come from a spiritual gift are because God chose to work and bring about the result!

*POINT: God chose the spiritual gift that you have and He gave it to you to help you minister to others and He is the one who is bringing about any results! SO—stop lifting up the gift as a mark of “spirituality”!

*Instead of being content with the place God has given you in the Body—you are like an ear grumbling because it has not been given the same gifts that the eye possesses!

*Paul ends the chapter by rebuking them for what they were doing—you are coveting what you consider to be the “best” gifts! NOW—let me show you a more excellent way! You want to seek after something—seek after love!

2. Paul writes chapter 13 to show them how to practice Spiritual gifts—in love.

•Note 4 things in this chapter about love:

I. The Priority {Prominence} of Love: 1-3

•In these first verses of this great chapter Paul establishes the fact that Love is the most prominent thing a Christian can seek after!

•The Corinthians were convinced that certain gifts—like tongues—were more prominent or more important than others. They were constantly competing with one another and “showing off” their spirituality because they had the “best” spiritual gifts.

•Paul is going to show them something far more important and prominent than any spiritual gift—Love!

•In these verses Paul points out that Love has priority over several things that man tends to lift up.

A. Priority over Ability: 1-2

•Paul selects several spiritual gifts that the Corinthians would consider as absolutely spectacular to point out that Love really is more prominent!

2.

1. Gift of Tongues—or languages Vs. Love.
 - Paul points out that even if he could speak with the languages of angels—even if he could have the eloquence of heaven—if love were absent—then all of his eloquence would amount to nothing more than the noise of a gong or the clatter and clanging of a cymbal.
2. Gifts of Revelation Vs Love
 - Prophecy—revelation from God to be declared to man
 - Mysteries and Knowledge—direct revelation—visions like Paul had, etc.
 - Special Faith—faith that could effect miraculous results
 - All of these things without love were worthless!

B. Priority over Activity: 3

- Paul goes on to show that ability—even ability that produces activity is empty without love!
- He uses 2 specific illustrations:
 1. Benevolence—Giving up possessions for the poor: {Long term process}
 2. Martyrdom—Giving up life to be burned!

POINT: All of these things are good things but they are completely worthless if Love is missing!

- Some of you have great ability—without love it is worthless!
- Some of you are involved in much activity—without love it is worthless!

POINT = spirituality
w/out Love = worthless

WELL—WHAT EXACTLY IS LOVE LIKE?

II. The Perfections {Practice} of Love: 4-7

A. The Positive Qualities Practiced by Love: 4a

1. **It suffers long:** Literally—it is long in suffering. It is patient!
 - This is the ability to be inconvenienced and even abused or taken advantage of by other people without becoming “angry”
 - It is the word used to describe a man who has been wronged and has the power to avenge himself but does not use it!
 - This quality was completely foreign to Corinthian philosophy. Aristotle the Great Greek philosopher had taught that to allow oneself to be taken advantage of was a sign of weakness—vengeance was a virtue!
 - Paul states that one of the primary activities of true Biblical love is patience!
 - Best illustration is God’s patience with us! {Are we this way with others?}

2. It is Kind:

- Where patience is passive—love is active! Just like patience will take any thing from others kindness is willing to give anything to others! *
- Active goodwill toward another!
- Problem: Well—no one is kind to me! Look at my needs—I need this and all I ever hear is “well, we love you and we will pray for you!” Where is the kindness? When you are thinking like this you have missed the whole point—Kindness is you acting in goodness toward another—not expecting or * desiring anything in return!

B. The Negative Qualities Put off by Love: 4b

1. Envieth Not: Literally is not Jealous — *wanting what others have*
 - Envy or Jealousy has two forms
 - I want what you have
 - I don't want you to have what you have.
2. Vanteth not itself: Literally—does not brag!
 - Jealousy is wanting what others have—Bragging is making others want what we have.
 - Showing off!
 - In contrast—love is meek and quiet!
3. Is not puffed up: Literally—is not arrogant!
 - An arrogant man is unteachable—he is always right and no matter how sweet your spirit or how reasonable your argument or point—he always has to get his two cents in—he always has to make his point and make sure that you know he made his point—He always has to have the last word!
 - Illust: William Carey—father of modern missions—gave his life to translating the word of God into 34 languages and dialects. Was raised in a humble home in England where he worked as a cobbler. At a dinner party one snob turned and said, “I understand, Mr. Carey, that you once worked as a shoemaker”. “Oh no, your Lordship, I was not a shoemaker, only a shoerepairman!”
 - Arrogance is bigheaded—love is bighearted
4. Does not behave itself unseemingly: Literally—is not graceless
 - Love is not rude or inconsiderate of others!
 - Have you ever met someone who is rude and inconsiderate—insensitive? That person does have a true spirit of Biblical love.

5. Seeketh not her own—Is not Selfish!

- Love never desires to better self at the expense of another!

- Illust: Tombstone in small English village:

Here lies a miser who lived for himself
and cared for nothing but gathering wealth
Now where he is or how he fares
nobody know and nobody cares!

Contrast this with the tombstone of General Charles George Gordon at St. Paul's Cathedral in London: "Sacred to the memory of General Charles George Gordon, who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God!

6. Is not easily provoked—Is not hot tempered!

- The surest sign of a lack of true biblical love in the heart of a man is a regular repeated explosion of anger. Being hot tempered.

- I am not talking about the once and a while loss of temper—I am talking about a man who is a hot-head—one who is known as explosive!

- Lady once said to Spurgeon—I know I have a problem with my temper—but I look at it this way! I am like a shotgun—I make a big explosion and then it is all out of my system and is over! Spurgeon replied—Yes—but look at all the damage that can come from one shotgun blast!

7. Thinketh no evil:

- What does this mean? Literally—does not reckon or take accounts of wrong suffered! He does not hold grudges!

- An accounting term used to describe the recording of a debt.

- A person who is characterized by love will not hold grudges!

- No secret blackbooks!

8. Does not rejoice in evil but in truth!

- What does it mean to rejoice in evil? —Literally to justify it!

- * True biblical love will not attempt to justify or excuse evil!

- * What are you justifying in your life? In the lives of others?

- * Problem—we often end up justifying things in the lives of others because we allow or excuse things in our lives that prohibit us from confrontation! *

- * It is hard for you to confront someone about lying when you steal—about drinking when you smoke—about adultery when you allow pornographic material into your life through movies, TV, radio, reading, etc. *

C. The Personal Qualities Presented by Love: 7

1. Bears all things:

- Literally is willing to endure all things to help support another!
- Illust: During Oliver Cromwell's reign a young soldier was sentenced to die. His fiancée pleaded with Cromwell to spare his life but to no avail. The young man was to be executed when the curfew bell sounded that evening. But—when the sexton pulled the rope the bell made no sound. The young girl had climbed up into the belfrey and wrapped herself around the clapper so that it could not ring the bell. Her body was horribly bruised but she did not let go until the sexton stopped pulling the rope. She was brought before Cromwell who after hearing what she had done—commuted his sentence.
- A poet recorded the story as follows:

At his feet she told her story,
showed her hands all bruised and torn.
And her sweet young face still haggard
with the anguish it had worn,
touched his heart with sudden pity,
lit his eyes with misty light.
Go! Your lover lives, said Cromwell;
Curfew will not ring tonight.

2. Believes all things:

- Love refuses to believe evil about another! Always wants to believe the good until all else forces it to believe otherwise!
- How quick we are to believe the rumors—how quick we are to believe that tale about another!
- What do you honestly feel when you hear things about another? How would you want others to react if they heard that about you?

3. Hopes all things—even when another has fallen—love refuses to give up! Love always is willing to give a second chance or the benefit of the doubt.

4. Endures all things: Literally—stands up or holds up at all costs! It stands against overwhelming odds and refuses to stop believing or hoping! •POINT—Love will not stop loving!

III. The Permanence of Love: 8-12

A. Gifts are temporary—Love is Permanent: 8

- Love never fails—idea here is that of decaying or withering. In other words—love will never end--it is permanent!

• Illust - petals falling to ground - decay

•On the other hand—spiritual gifts are not permanent! There will come a time when spiritual gifts have accomplished the purpose for which they were given—then they will cease!

•POINT—stop seeking after that which is temporal and focus in on that which is permanent—LOVE!

Perfect:
- Scripture
- Rapture
- mature church
- 2nd coming
- ETERNAL
STATE

B. Gifts are partial—Love is complete: 9

•The Spiritual gifts that you are so zealously seeking are at best partial—we know in part, we prophecy in part—But there is coming a time when perfect knowledge will come. When that happens—there will be no more need for these spiritual gifts. {Knowledge and Prophecy here are specific gifts not general actions}

•Stop focusing on what will one day stop—focus on love which will abide forever.

C. Gifts are elementary—Love is mature: 11-12

•Just like a child speaks, thinks, and acts as a child while he matures—and after he matures he leaves those elementary things behind—so spiritual gifts will one day be left behind after they have matured the body! {Illust—tools at school to help educate us! We don't hang on to the tools—we use the education!}

•Right now we look through a glass and all we can see is riddlesome—One day we will see face to face—we will know as God knows us! When that happens there is no need for the glass! {Illust: Picture of Beth—but—when I am face to face I don't need the picture! SAME WITH SPIRITUAL GIFTS!!}

IV. The Preeminence of Love: 13

•BUT—there is something that will continue beyond spiritual gifts—Love!

•The greatest of these is LOVE!

* Point 1 Peter 4:8 Love covers a multitude
of sin -
But - Lack of Love causes a
multitude of sin.

Instead of church christianizing Corinth - Corinth
was paganizing the church!

I Corinthians 14 “The Priority of Spiritual Gifts”

Introduction: Paul writing to a church in reproach to help restore them to righteousness.

- Confirms their Position: Saints
- Confronts their Problems: Sin
- Clears up their Perplexities: Questions.

Beginning in chapter 11 he deals with their questions about public worship.

- Issue of women’s place in public worship
- Issue of proper practice of Lord’s supper
- Issue of proper place of gift of tongues—devotes 3 whole chapters to this.

•Before he can answer their specific question about tongues he has to give them a proper understanding of spiritual gifts as a whole.

Chapter 12—Proper Purpose of Spiritual Gifts—common good of body.

Chapter 13—Proper Practice of Spiritual Gifts—love.

Chapter 14—Proper Priority of Spiritual Gifts—Edification rather than Exaltation.

He starts off in verse one by bringing them face to face with their responsibility. *Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.*

•2 key instructions found in these verses that reveal much about the Corinthians.

1. Pursue Love—literally, hunt or ardently run after love. {Continual action not one time event!}. **Problem:** The Corinthians were pursuing self-glory when they should have been ardently seeking love! If they had been pursuing love as ardently as they had pursued after self glory then most of their problems would have been solved.
2. Desire spiritual gifts—especially prophecy! **Problem:** The main gift everyone was pursuing at Corinth was the gift of tongues!
 - Yes, you (as a church) are desiring spiritual gifts—but there are **two basic problems**, **first**—you are desiring the wrong gift (tongues) and **second**—you are desiring it for the wrong reason {self-glory}!
 - You (as a church—note he is addressing the whole body and not individual members) should be seeking after prophecy because it better serves the common good!

Wait Paul—Tongues is a legitimate gift—why even the Apostles at Pentecost used it! We just don’t understand how you can say that one gift is superior to another!

•In chpt 14 Paul sets forth **3 principles** to help this church understand why the gift of prophecy is superior to the gift of Tongues. He is going to contrast the two all through this chapter and show why Prophecy is superior to Tongues.

I. The Principle of Edification: 2-10

- We need a clear understanding of terms to be able to grasp Paul's message.

- Edify**: a term Paul borrows from the architectural language of the day. It means to build up or strengthen. Paul is going to stress all throughout this passage that everything that happens within the arena of public worship is to be directly involved in the edification—building up or strengthening—of the entire body!

POINT: Anything that does not directly involve itself in the building up of the entire body has no place in public worship!

NOW—in this chapter Paul points out two separate activities taking place in the public worship of the Corinthian assembly and points out that one of them has no place in their public worship because it did not build up the body!

- Tongues**: Paul refers here to that spiritual gift whereby a believer empowered by the Spirit of God spoke a message from God in a real language previously unknown to the speaker. {NOT the empty and meaningless babblings of sounds that do not constitute a language}

Problem: in the Corinthian church there were some believers who did have the real gift of tongues—but there were a great many who apparently were “manufacturing” this gift and claiming that this was of God. Since they were speaking an “unknown” language no one could effectively dispute their claim!

- Prophecy**: Prophecy is that spiritual gift whereby an individual authorized and empowered by the Holy Spirit speaks forth divine revelation relevant to God's people of his day. The **content** of this revelation may be **predictive** (future events) as in the case of Agabus, **Revelatory** as in the case of the Apostles, or **didactic** as in the case of Apollos and others. **Key**: This individual was speaking directly for God to God's people and his message was directly relevant to their lives.

Now Paul is going to point out that in their **public worship** they are to seek after those gifts that will best benefit and build up the whole assembly—hence in this case they were to lift up prophecy and downplay tongues! **WHY?**

A. Because Prophecy speaks to men and Tongues speaks to God. {1-3}

- Note the Contrast that Paul makes to drive his point home.

1. The Tongues speaker:

- Does not speak to men but only to God {Remember this is **public worship**}
- No one understands
- In his spirit {not Holy Spirit} he speaks mysteries {unknowable things}

2. The Speaker of Prophecy:

- Speaks to men.
- He edifies: builds up
- He exhorts: encourages
- He comforts: consoles

•NOW—Corinthians—you judge! Tell me which gift is superior in the public worship of the church? Tongues or Prophecy?

•There might be one or two who had the legitimate gift who would say to Paul, wait a minute—That is not quite how my gift works! I get edified when I speak in tongues! So Paul points out a 2nd reason why the gift of prophecy is superior in public worship than even the true gift of tongues.

B. Because Prophecy edifies the whole church and Tongues only edifies the speaker (sometimes). {4-5}

•Paul points out in verse 4 that the one who speaks in tongues may edify himself but if his tongue is not interpreted then there is absolutely not edification for the rest of the body. How can this be profitable in public worship?

•He points out on the other hand—that the one who prophesies will always edify the body even if there is no interpreter!

•Paul's whole point is that in Public Worship the gift of tongues has limited value at best! If the church were going to seek after spiritual gifts—let them desire the superior gift of prophecy rather than the gift of tongues! **HERE IS WHY!** The whole purpose for spiritual gifts in public worship is the edification or building up of the body. With this in mind—the gift of tongues is at a distinct disadvantage because of the issue of intelligibility. {This is the next principle that Paul points out.}

II. The Principle of Understanding: 6-25

•Paul has discussed the principle of edification in public worship and has contrasted the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues.

•Now he discusses the second principle in public worship—understanding. One cannot be edified or built up in public worship if he does not understand what is being communicated.

•Paul points out the issue of understanding and contrasts the gift of tongues against the gift of prophecy.

•Here is Paul's argument: Vs 6 *But now brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or knowledge, or prophecy, or teaching?* {He goes on to illustrate and apply this}

A. The Illustrations:

•Paul uses three illustrations to point out the vital importance of understanding the message in Public Worship.

1. Musical Instrument: Vs 7

- Unless the instrument plays clear and distinct notes there can be no music—only noise.
- Simply blowing air through a horn may produce notes—but if the player does not consciously arrange those notes and play sensibly then there can be no understanding in music—no song!

2. Bugle: Vs 8

- Bugles in ancient armies were used to send out commands to the soldiers on the field.
- A certain call would get them up. Another would sound the call to battle. Another would sound the charge! Another would call them to retreat.
- If the trumpeter simply blew the horn and there were no distinct call—it would be impossible for the soldiers to prepare himself for battle!

3. Convesation: 10-11

- There are many different kinds of languages in the world and they all have meaning! If you go to Latin America and hear Spanish—it is not just someone babbling away—it is a real language that can be understood! Every human language has meaning to those who understand.
- Now—If I don't understand the language being spoken then the one s peaking to me sounds just like a babbler! I can sit for hours and listen to his babbling and walk away totally ignorant and unchanged by his message!
- **vs 9 THAT IS EXACLY WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SPEAK IN TONGUES!** If you don't speak in a clear speech that is understood—how will anyone know what is spoken? You will be just like that person who speaks in a foreign language that I don't understand—speaking into the air!
- Now with this in mind—let me make some applications from these illustrations concerning the gifts of tongues and prophecy.

B. The Applications: 12-25

1. To the Speaker: 12-15

- Since you are zealous of spiritual gifts—seek those gifts that edify the church!
- If you pray and you don't understand what you are saying—your mind is totally unfruitful! {Public Worship in focus here}
- What is the outcome—Pray with your spirit and your mind! Sing with your

spirit and your mind! In public worship there is no place for that which is empty and unintelligible! Seek those gifts that will edify!

•Well Paul—you can't say that I shouldn't pray in Tongues—Prayer is talking to God and God understands!

•Yes, that is true—but in public worship when you pray you are praying in the presence of the entire body! Here is the second application Paul makes.

2. To other Believers: 16-20

•If you pray in tongues and no one understands what you have said—sometimes not even you yourself—then how can the person who does not have that gift or the gift of interpretation say Amen to your prayer since he doesn't know what you have prayed?

•How can this man who you are representing in public prayer lift up his heart in agreement with you if he can't even understand what you are praying?

•You pray well enough for yourself—but this other individual is not in the least bit edified! **AND EDIFICATION IS ONE THE CHIEF PURPOSES IN PUBLIC WORSHIP!**

•Instead of edifying others — tongues will only serve to exalt you!

•**WAIT A MINUTE PAUL!** The Apostles spoke in tongues on the day of pentecost and look what happened! 3000 people got saved! What about evangelism? We can't limit God using tongues to save the lost!

•Paul anticipates this objection with his next application.

3. To the Unsaved: 21-25

•Paul reminds them of the true purpose for tongues!

•In the Scriptures there were three basic reasons for the gift of tongues.

a. **Mark of Authentication:** God granted the gift of tongues to demonstrate that the men who first bore the Gospel message really were speaking under the Authority of God. {Mark 16:17—by the way that has already been fulfilled}

b. **Mark of Confirmation:** Specifically in the book of Acts to confirm that the gospel which was spread abroad was the same identical gospel preached on the day of Pentecost.

•When Gospel went to Judea—spoke in tongues just like at pentecost.

•When Gospel went to Samaria—spoke in tongues just like at pentecost.

•When Gospel went to Gentiles—spoke in tongues just like at pentecost.

•When Gospel went to OT disciples of John—tongues just like pentecost.

•**POINT:** This sign was to confirm to Jewish believers that these were real converts! {Not a sign to the converts—but to the Christians at Jerusalem}

• specific References
in acts
2: 1-13 - Pentecost
10: 44-48 - Cornelius
19: 1-7 - Paul ephesus
Implied
8: 5-19 - Samaria (Philip)

Heb 2:4

- c. Mark of Judgment: {Here is where Paul focuses in in chapter 14}
- Tongues was not given as a sign to believers but to unbelievers—and it was not given for evangelism but for judgment!
 - Tongues was not given so that the Gospel could be communicated to people who had never heard before—but rather to demonstrate to those who had heard it for 3 1/2 years {Jews} that just like God had used men of other tongues to destroy their city in judgment in the OT, once again these men of other tongues were the sign that God would bring judgement upon this unbelieving nation again!
 - This judgment finally came in A.D. 70 when the Romans totally destroyed Jerusalem.
- Paul's point—tongues was never designed as an evangelistic tool! It was designed to confront an unbelieving nation with their unbelief and to declare to them that if they would not respond to God's clear and plain message—then He would teach them with the babbling lips of a strange army that would bring down His awesome judgment!
- NOW—on the other hand—prophecy is a sign to believers!
- If an ubeliever comes into your assembly and hears you speak in tongues—he will go away shaking his head thinking that you are mad!
- INSTEAD OF DRAWING HIM TO CHRIST YOU WILL DRIVE HIM FROM CHRIST!
- BUT—if you focus on the gift of prophecy—God's message will pierce through the hardness of his hear {Peter's sermon in Acts 2} and will disclose the secrets of his heart and he will fall on his face and worhsip God!
- POINT—when it comes to understanding—the gift of prophecy is far superior to the gift of tongues.

III. The Principle of Order: 26-40

•Paul closes this chapter by bringing up one final principle—orderliness. *Let all things be done for edification—But let all things be done decently and in an orderly manner.* {vs 26 & 40)

A. Speaking, Interpreting, and Evaluating must be done in an orderly manner! {27-33}

1. Rules for Tongues:
 - 2 or at the most three per service
 - ONE AT A TIME
 - Must have an interpreter

no women

2. Rules for Prophecy:

- 2 or 3 per service
- Other prophets must evaluate the content of the message
- New revelation has priority over old {30}
- Never out of control—each prophet must control himself.

POINT: God is not a God of confusion {your services are mass chaos} but of peace {something which is lacking in your church!}

B. Women are to Keep Silent in the Church {34-35}

C. Submit yourself to the Word of God {36-40}

- You are not the only ones who received the Word of God—so quit lifting yourselves up and submit to the same word that other churches have recieved.
- You were not even the first ones to receive the Word of God—so get in line with the practice of the rest of the body!

I Cor 15
“The Necessity of the Resurrection”

Text: I Corinthians 15:1-34

15:12-13 *Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised!*

Proposition: Be Wise About the Resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Intro: The Importance of the Resurrection

•Paul writes to this fractured assembly that is about to be destroyed by the forces of the world to restore them to righteousness.

•He does three things in this letter:

1. Confirms their Position—You are Saints
2. Confronts their Problems
3. Clarifies their Perplexities
 - Divorce {7}
 - Christian Liberty {8-11}
 - Spiritual Gifts {12-14}
 - Resurrection {15}
 - Christian Giving {16}

•Corinthians had become confused about many things—a multitude of questions. One of the things they had started to question was the doctrine of the Resurrection.

•Paul devotes an entire chapter—58 verses—to clarify and correct their thinking about the resurrection!

A. The Necessity of Christ's Resurrection 1-34

B. The Nature of Our Resurrection 35-58

•At the heart of Christianity stands the Doctrine of the Resurrection—if this doctrine can be disproved—then Christianity crumbles as an empty shell of a dream!

•John Locke—British Theologian— *“Our Saviour's resurrection is truly of great importance in Christianity—so great that His being or not being the Messiah stands or falls with it!”*

•Resurrection is the Cornerstone of the Gospel—without believing the Resurrection of Jesus Christ there can be no salvation! Rom 10:9 *If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead—thou shall be saved!*

•Paul devotes the first 34 verses of this chapter to establishing the Necessity of the Resurrection—and he does so by setting forth the evidence, importance, and benefits of the doctrine of the Resurrection of Christ. {Starts with doctrine—produces right living}

I. The Evidence for the Resurrection of Christ: 1-11

- Paul presents 5 irrefutable proofs for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ!

A. The Testimony of the Early Church: 1-2

- Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.*
- Paul is saying—“Think back to the beginning of your faith!”
- Remember what I preached to you? Remember what you accepted and believed—the very gospel in which you are right now standing?
- I have called you saints—and you are—because you have accepted the Gospel!
- UNLESS—you believed in vain!**
- Grammar in this verse indicates something very interesting—3rd class conditional statement—What Paul is really saying is this—“You have already accepted this unless you believed in vain {Which you did not!}!”
- Here is the proof—the very fact that they had continued to exist as a church in the face of persecution, poverty, and even death indicates that there had to be a resurrection! Folks—people don’t usually die like the first century Christians were willing to die for a lie!
- The single greatest evidence for Christ’s Resurrection that cannot be explained away is the existence of the Church!

B. The Testimony of Scripture: 3-4

- For I delivered unto you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the 3rd day according to the Scriptures!*
- Paul reminds them that the most important message he ever preached was the message of the Gospel—it consisted of two truths followed by irrefutable proof!
- TRUTH #1: Christ Died according to the Scriptures—proof: He was buried
- TRUTH #2: Christ Rose according to the Scriptures—proof: He was seen

C. The Testimony of Eye witnesses: 5-7

- Throughout legal history the testimony of reliable and honest witnesses has been considered one of the most reliable forms of evidence in a court of law!
- The Corinthians had put the Resurrection on “Trial” and Paul is going to introduce 4 eyewitnesses to support his case!
- 1. **Peter**
- 2. **The 12**
- 3. **The 500 at one time** {Most who are still alive when Paul is writing}

4. James!

D. The Testimony of a Special Witness: 15:8-10

- If you are still not convinced—He even appeared to me! One who is the last of the Apostles and the least worthy of that office! I persecuted—ravaged the church of God—and yet Jesus Christ the Resurrected Lord appeared to me!

E. The Testimony of a Common Message: 15:11

- Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed!*
- Paul's point—there are just too many people involved in this thing who saw the Lord for this to have been a cleverly devised fable!
- ASK ANY OF THEM—Ask Peter or James. Ask the 12! Ask any of the 500 hundred who still are living—It doesn't matter who you ask—the answer will be the same!
- We have a common message—Jesus Christ rose from the Dead to Save sinners! That is the Gospel and that is what you believed when you were saved!

- Pretty Strong stuff Paul—why is the Resurrection so important anyway? I mean I got saved by the death of Christ on the Cross! Are you trying to tell me that if Christ hadn't risen that I could not be saved? **THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT PAUL IS GOING TO SAY!**

II. The Importance of the Resurrection of Christ: 12-19

- Paul in this section is reminding them that there will be some drastic consequences to the preaching of the Gospel if they conclude that Christ did not rise from the dead.
- 7 horrible conclusions that are produced by denying the Resurrection!

A. Christ is still dead: 13

- He said he would rise from the Dead on the 3rd day—he is a liar!
- He said He was the resurrection and the Life—he is a liar!
- He said He would go and prepare a place for us—he is a liar!
- He said He would come again and receive us unto himself—he is a liar!

B. Gospel Message would be meaningless: 14

- If He is a liar—then He can't be God!
- If He isn't God—then He can't forgive sins! If He can't forgive sins then there is no gospel!

C. Faith in Christ would be worthless: 14b

- Vain here means worthless or useless!

D. All the witnesses would be liars: 15

- If you deny the Resurrection—then you also have to call all of us who preach this doctrine Liars!
- Do you really think that I would go about and do what I am doing—for a lie?
- listen to what has happened to Paul—suffered afflictions, beaten, shipwrecked—and eventually martyred! Would he do this for a lie?
- Well, he could have been fooled—What about all the other eyewitnesses!
- Well, they could have been fooled too!
- Folks—it takes more faith to believe that you can keep a secret from that many people than it does to believe in the Resurrection itself!

E. All men would still be dead in their sin: 17

- And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless—you are still in your sins!*
- Folks—if you deny the Resurrection—then you have nothing left! You have a worthless and empty faith—here is why—YOU ARE STILL IN YOUR SINS!
- Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay our sin debt!
- He did not pay this debt to Satan—He paid it to God the Father!
- The proof that Christ's payment was sufficient is the fact that God raised Him from the dead!

F. Former believers who have died would have eternally perished: 18

- Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished!*
- Perished here is a very strong word—not just a reference to decay in the grave—a reference to the perishing of a lost soul in the torments and agonies of Hell!
- If you deny the resurrection—then you have just lost more than hope—you have lost your comfort!
- If you don't believe in the resurrection—then you can't believe or take comfort in the fact that your loved ones who have died in the Lord are in heaven!
- If that is true—then God pity you!

G. Christians would be the most pitiable people on earth!

- We as believers have the hope of heaven! We endure the affliction on earth and the suffering because we have a hope of heaven—that makes it bearable!
- BUT—no resurrection means no heaven—and if that is true—if there really is no heaven we are of all men most miserable.

III. The Benefits Provided by the Resurrection of Christ: 20-34

A. Provides a Guarantee: 20-28

- *But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.*
- “Firstfruits” — idea here is that of a guarantee. Farme would plant his crops and wait until the the first fruits began to appear. He would then know that the rest of the harvest would soon follow. He would take those firstfruits and present them to God as a sign of faith and thanksgiving for what was to come!
- Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection harvest—He is how we know that we will rise from the dead!

(He had to go & present himself to (Father))

B. Provides Incentives: 29-34

1. For Salvation: 29

- *Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them.*
- Very difficult verse—several options. {Key is the little word “for”}
- a. Baptized on behalf of the dead—Mormons {in their place}
- b. Baptized over the dead—or an unknown custom.
- c. **Baptized because of the dead.** {“for can also mean “because”}
- Baptism here taken as a reference to the entire salvation process.
- What Paul would be asking is this— If there isn’t any resurrection—they why are people still being saved because of the “testimony” of those who have died before them?

2. For Service: 30-32

- *Why are we also in danger every hour? I protest, brethren, by the boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily! If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die!*
- Hey—if there really is no resurrection {which there is}—then I have served the Lord and been in danger of my life all for human motives {which I really did for the Resseded Lord}. SO—If the dead are not raised {but they are} then let us eat and dring for tommorrow we die!
- NOW—on the other hand—if there really is a resurrection—then stop eating and drinking as if there were no tommorrow and get busy serving the Lord!

3. For Sanctification: 33-34

- *Become sober minded as you ought and stop sinning! For some have no knowledge of God! I speak this to your shame!*

① Look up - Resurrection is coming

② Clean up

③ Talk out

- Children always fear the ~~monster~~ ^{MONSTER} ~~monster~~ ^{MONSTER} Monsters
- Adults take the child through house

(Timothy - stomping through the house clearing out the monsters)

Understand the Resurrection

Part II

Introduction:

Ecc 3:11 "He hath set eternity in their hearts"

- Solomon, the wisest man on earth records something about man that is true of no other aspect of God's creation. He has set the concept of eternity—foreverness—eternal life—in their hearts.

- What Solomon is stating is very simply this—Man knows that he is going to live somewhere forever.

- Ever since Adam and Eve stood and wept bitter tears that soaked into the freshly turned earth of the first grave that held the human remains of their beloved son Abel—Man has wondered, what happens to us when we die?

- Sigmund Freud—Father of Modern Psychiatry—wrote concerning death— "And finally there is the painful riddle of death, for which no remedy at all has yet been found, nor probably ever will be!

- Contrast this school of thinking with the words of another man who lived thousands of years before Sigmund Freud: Job—Patriarch and Friend of God. This is what he wrote concerning death in 19:25-26 "And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the las He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I will see God!

- The Corinthian Church was right in the middle of this conflict—what happens when we die?

- Some had arrived at a very deadly answer—nothing! When you die its over! And they were swaying members of the church by their arguments.

- I remember talking recently with a close friend who has abandoned his traditional beliefs— "When you die, they put you in the ground and it is over!" There is no such thing as resurrection! What about people who were eaten by sharks? Blown to bits by atomic bombs, etc.

- Paul addresses this issue in the 15th chapter in two parts:

1. The Necessity of the Resurrection: Here is what happens when you come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a resurrection.

2. The Nature of the Resurrection: Here are the details. He answers 5 questions:

I. How are the Dead Raised? 35-41

•NOTE: This question was not asked by one who was really wanting to know but by someone who wanted to mock or scoff at the foolishness of such an idea that the dead would rise from the grave.

•Oh really? Well—How are the dead raised and with what kind of a Body do they come? *points to the foolishness of the questioner — one who thought he was "wise"*

•Paul's answer—You Fool! Think about life as you know it and you will have your answer. That which you sow doesn't grow until it dies! (36) *Point = Death is a pre-requisite to Resurrection*

•Paul gives them an illustration from agriculture to help them understand how this works. (37-38)

•When you plant wheat in the ground you don't plant the entire stalk of wheat that you hope to reap {you do not sow the body which is to be} — NO, you sow a small bare grain of wheat which must first die. THEN—God gives it a body just as He wishes.

•NOR does he give the same body or form to every seed that is put in the ground—every seed has its own body. A tomato seed after it dies and then grows is not given the same kind of body that a tulip seed is given. Each seed is given its own body.

•God has not just done this with seeds but with animals, and even the heavenly bodies. (40-41)

•So—How are the dead raised? By the Power and Wish of God! The same God who takes a seed that is put in the ground and dies and brings it back to life and gives it a new and unique body will raise up our bodies! Our dead bodies are just like seeds planted in the earth—they don't look like the final product that God has in mind any more than a seed of grain looks like a full grown stalk of wheat! BUT Just like God raised up the stalk of Wheat from the earth, in the same way He will raise up our new bodies from the earth where they have been buried!

II. What Kind of Bodies Do they Get?

•What will they be like? I know a seed of grain does not look anything like a stalk of wheat—What will my body be like? Answer—vs 49—And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly!

•What is the image of the heavenly?

•To answer this question, Paul uses a series of contrasts to show the difference between our earthy and our heavenly body!

1. Perishable/Imperishable (corrupt/incorrupt) vs 42

•First contrast has to do with **DURABILITY**

•Word used here means to decay or to wither or waste away.

*our future bodies
exist now but
only in "seed"
form! God
will transform
them just like
he transforms a seed
How? — through death!*

- Our earthly bodies are in the process of “corrupting” or decaying from birth.
- Someone once said, “The day you were born was the day you started to die!”
- Instead of getting stronger, we get weaker. Instead of getting better as time goes on and we age, we get weaker—we deteriorate.
- WHY? Because our earthly bodies are built of perishable material.
- BUT—Our heavenly bodies will be vastly different! They will be incorruptible or imperishable!
- When our earthly body is placed in the ground—it is like a seed! It is a body built of corruptible and perishable material—BUT—When God raises it up it will not be corruptible—it will literally be indestructible!
- That is why we will be able to praise the Lord with the angels of heaven throughout eternity!

2. Dishonor/Honor: 43

- Second contrast has to do with **VALUE** and **POTENTIAL**—Man’s Worth!
- Man’s Body in and of itself is relatively valueless! Its potential is very limited!
- God has chosen to indwell these limited, valueless bodies with His Holy Spirit and that is what gives us our value!
- A man will take his body and by the time that he is through with it — it has devaluated.
- Illust: Car—you buy it new—and 15 years later depending on the care you get rid of it for another—but it is never as valuable as when you bought it!
- Here is a body that has been riddled with cancer, or broken and ravaged by disease—who would want to spend eternity in that kind of a body? Who would want to buy a 15 year old car that is falling apart?
- POINT: Some of you are taking the frail body that God has given you now are because of sinful habits you are even making it more dishonored! What a terrible thing it would be for God to make you go through eternity with that kind of a body!
- By the time you are through with your body and it is planted in this earth—God will raise up from that broken ravaged worthless body—a valuable body that will never devalue! A body that will never be dishonored by abuse—A body that can truly bring honor to God on an increasing basis!

3. Weakness/Power: 43

- Third Contrast deals with **Ability**
- Our earthly bodies can be described at best as limited and weak. Even the fittest and strongest individual is limited in ability.
- Our earthly bodies are vulnerable to all kinds of diseases and afflictions—they are “inescapably temporal and fragile”

in NT writing
word "dishonor"
sometimes
refused to
a citizen who had
lost his rights!
we have no "rights"
spiritually — NOT — as
we will have them.
A corpse has no rights.
who would
want a 60-75 year
old worn out
body? —

X

•Every aspect of the society we live in is designed to point out the frailty of our human bodies.

- Auto industry—all safety gadgets to “preserve our fragile bodies”
- Work force—all safety procedures to “preserve our fragile bodies”
- Health industry
- Sports—protective gear

•We are inescapably human trapped in frail and vulnerable bodies—and one day those bodies will quit! When those frail bodies so limited in ability are planted in the earth and raised again to new life—THEY WILL BE CHARACTERIZED BY THE WORD POWER! LITERALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE! CAPABLE OF ANYTHING!

- Never again will we say— “The Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak!”
- Truly “nothing will be impossible to them that love Him!”

4. Natural/Spiritual ⁴⁴

•Fourth contrast has to do with the **sphere of our existence**.

•Illust: A fish has a different body than we do because it lives in a different sphere of existence than we do—its needs are different.

•Its activities are different. If a fish had our kind of body—it would perish.

•By the same token, if we had the same kind of body that a fish has, we would perish—because our needs in our sphere of existence are different.

- We breathe differently so need different kind of lungs
- We need to communicate so need different kind of vocal / audial structure
- Eat differently
- Move differently—hands and feet, etc.

•POINT: We are living on a different sphere than we will be living in when we get to heaven and therefore our needs are different for each sphere. If you were to take our bodies that were designed for a natural sphere—they would be a hinderance to us in a spiritual sphere.

•When God calls us out of the natural sphere and into the spiritual sphere here is what happens to our bodies. As we leave this natural sphere—the body designed to meet our needs on this earthly/natural sphere {eating, sleeping, reproduction} are buried in the ground. When God raises them up for our use in the heavenly or spiritual sphere they will be uniquely suited to meet the needs we will have there!

•WELL—When will all this happen? Does it happen immediately after death?

What ~~of~~ sphere are you talking about?
Not Adam's sphere - earth
but Christ's sphere
(45 - 49)

1996
1726
270

III. When Will this happen? What will it be like? 51-52

•Illust: Walking around the grave yard in Charleston Saturday afternoon. Saw all kinds of graves—saw new graves, graves of small children, -- saw a grave that was so old it was unreadable except for the date—1726.

•Almost three centuries ago a group of people took a body that had been used for a lifetime and buried it in the earth in a cementary across from First Baptist Church in Charleston SC.

270 •265 years later, that body or its remains is still there—Paul—when will this awesome transformation take place?

•WHEN? At the Last Trump! When God returns to the earth the 2nd time to rapture His Church

•WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE? In the moment, in the twinkling of an eye, it will be done and the dead will be raised incorruptible—and we who are living at that time will immediately be changed—transformed. {Word used to describe the process a catapillar goes through to become a butterfly}

Thuss 4

•Instant transformation!

•Illust: During Civil war a group of soldiers was forced to sleep out side in the snow. When the bugler went out to rouse the soldiers—he saw mounds of snow that look like freshly covered graves! BUT—at the sound of his trumpet—out of those “mounds of snow” leapt living men! So will it be with us!

V. Why Must This Happen? 53-57

•3 reasons

A. We must be equipped for a new Sphere of Service!

- Perishable — Imperishable
- Mortal — Immortal

B. Scripture Must Be Fulfilled {54}

•Then will come about that saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in Victory! {Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death for all time and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces!}

C. Death Must Be Fully Defeated {55}

- Death is not merely destroyed so that it can do no further harm while all of the harm it has already wrought remains.
- Not like stopping a tornado from wrecking havoc on additional homes while those that it has already destroyed remain ruined!
- WHAT GOD IS SAYING HERE FOR THE BELIEVER IS THIS—Not only

not just a venomous snake that has merely been "defanged" — someone bitten by a snake will want to be killed!

will Death no longer be able to harm you or touch you—but all of the harm that it has inflicted on your body will be reversed if you know the Lord!

•What looked at first like a victory for Death—the ruin and decay of our earthly body—will be utterly reversed so that death lies in absolute defeat and our bodies live again in absolute victory! {Lenski}

V. What Should We Do While We Wait? 58

A. Be Steadfast or Courageous:

- Don't be fearful or wavering in your faith!
- Be Stable—don't be wondering about the resurrection or about whether you are doing the right thing in serving Christ—Be Stable!

B. Be Unmovable or Consistent

- Word means to be entrenched or immobile!
- In light of what God will finally do—be imovable in your stand against sin!
- Don't vacillate here and there in your commitment to the Lord—Be a Consistant Christian!

C. Be Abounding in the Work of the Lord or Committed.

- Abounding—to exceed the requirement!
- Don't just sit on the fringe or edge—don't just go halfway with God—BE COMMITTED!

WHY——BECAUSE YOU KNOW YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN! One day your earthly body will be planted and when He comes it will be raised and Death will be utterly defeated! So live in the light of that victory now!

*Children always fear the unknown — dark, monsters, etc.
-Timothy Chorbajian - stomping through house on monster patrol
adults try to reassure the youngsters that there is nothing to fear —
But - * words & rational arguments are not enough.*

** I will go with you sometimes is not enough.
Some times — the parent must go through first — clear
away the danger — then come back and
go with the child.*

That is what Christ DID for us !

** He is the First fruits — the first born from the dead — promise of more*

Table of Biblical Principles for the Practice of Christian Liberty

	Protecting Christian Liberty	Galatians / Colossians
1.	External submission to religious ceremonialism is of no benefit regarding an individual's standing before God	Gal. 3:1-5; 5:6; 6:15 Col. 2:8
2.	External submission to religious ceremonialism is powerless to quench fleshly desires	Col. 2:22-23
3.	Any teaching that undermines the nature of the Gospel must be rejected	Gal. 1:6-9; 4:17-31; 5:1-12
4.	The incorrect application of liberty may result in undue opportunity for the exercise of the flesh	Gal. 5:13
5.	Christian liberty is designed to be used in loving service to others	Gal. 5:13
	Practicing Christian Liberty	I Corinthians 8-10
1.	Theological knowledge and legitimate liberty can never, by themselves, determine the permissibility of an action	I Cor. 8:1-3, 7, 9-13
2.	Liberty must be strategically exercised with a view to profitability rather than self-gratification	I Cor. 8:9; 9:19-22; 10:23-24, 33
3.	The relationship between what is seemingly amoral and the moral consequences of its use must be considered in determining the exercise of Christian liberty	I Cor. 8:8-10; 10:25
4.	Individual actions must be evaluated from a corporate perspective	I Cor. 10:14-22; 24
5.	The effect of an action on the work of the Gospel must regulate the exercise of liberty	I Cor. 9:15-23; 10:32-33
6.	The effect of an action on the spiritual well-being of the individual must regulate the exercise of liberty	I Cor. 9:25-26; 10:1-13
7.	The effect of an action on the honor of God must regulate that action	I Cor. 10:31
8.	The legitimate interpretation of an action by other believers at times must regulate the exercise of liberty	I Cor. 8:10-13; 9:12; 10:28-30
	Preserving Peace and Christian Liberty	Romans 14-15
1.	Each believer must determine his religious duty regarding the use of the created resources	Rom. 14:4, 5-6, 14, 20
2.	Each believer must operate within the parameters of his conscience	Rom. 14:1, 22-23
3.	Each believer must highly regard the conviction of his differing brother	Rom. 14:1-4, 10-13, 22-23; 15:5-6
4.	The "strong" believer must protect the well-being of his "weaker" brother	Rom. 14:13, 15, 20-21; 15:1-3
5.	Each believer must fulfill his duty in preserving biblical unity	Rom. 14:1, 3-4, 7-13, 19; 15:5-7; 8-13

Foundational Observations . . .

Every major instruction relating to the practical side of the Christian life is deeply rooted in doctrine. For instance, before Paul tells the Roman believers to give their lives to God as a living sacrifice and before he tells them to submit to their earthly authorities or pay taxes to the Roman government—before he tells them how they are to practice the Christian life—he lays 11 chapters of heavy doctrine before them. In fact, at least 50 percent of Romans is nothing more than doctrine. Right practice or behavior always comes out of a right understanding of doctrine. Before a believer can come to some definite conclusions about setting personal standards in these “gray areas” there are some foundational doctrinal truths that must be considered!

1. All sin is clearly defined in Scripture and is to be radically avoided at all costs and at all times.
 - God has **clearly identified** these issues and has set very clear and **very defined boundaries**. He has not left these things vague or questionable.
 - These things are wrong for all people, in all cultures, in all ages, under all circumstances.
 - Illust: 10 commandments (Exodus 20), works of the flesh in Galatians 5, etc.
2. All things were created by God for the enjoyment or benefit of His creation and they are to be received with thanksgiving and used for God’s glory.
Romans 14:14 *I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him, it is unclean!*
 - First, all things are clean in and of themselves! (Peter learned this when it came to food)
 - Second, some people are going to think that some things are unclean!
 - Third, if a Christian thinks (is convinced) that a particular thing is unclean then that thing is unclean for him!
3. Every believer has a universal but unique sin nature.
 - **Universal Sin Nature** — Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God!*
 - **Personal Sin Nature** — Ps 51:5 *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me!*
 - **Distinct/Unique Sin Nature** — James 1:13-15 *Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He himself does not tempt any man. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by **his own lust**. Then, when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.*
4. Our sin nature expresses itself through the arousal and exercise of our strong desires or “lusts.”
 - James 1:13-15 *Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He himself does not tempt any man.*

But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then, when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

- Remember, your strong desires may be different than the strong desires of your brother in Christ. You may be led into sin by an uncontrollable urge to do something that is not a strong desire in his life.
5. Satan will often use legitimate objects that God created for our benefit or enjoyment and attempt to use them against us by perverting their purpose or polluting their context. Examples of legitimate things Satan used in Scripture to destroy God's people are:
- Fruit — in the garden
 - Harvested Crops — Cain's sacrifice
 - Sex — God created it for good, yet over and over we find God's people engaged in immorality
 - Beauty — God created it for our enjoyment and benefit, yet David was ensnared by beauty and it ended up in adultery, deceit, and murder
 - Money — Joseph used it for good, Achan used it in a horrible way
 - Bread — God provided it for his people in the wilderness, yet Satan tried to get Jesus to sin by tempting him with the promise of "bread"
 - Weapons — God instructed his people to arm themselves for defense, yet at times they used these weapons to murder and destroy one another (Saul hurling his javelin at David)
 - Wine — Paul tells Timothy to take some for his stomach's sake, yet we see Lot's daughters using wine to intoxicate their father for the purpose of immorality
 - Religious Objects — Brazen serpent was provided for the healing of the people, yet in time this same object became an idol that destroyed the people
 - The Word of God — God gave this word to direct his people — yet it was the word of God that Satan used to try to destroy God's Son in the temptation
6. Satan designs unique temptations that are personalized to our particular weakness in order to destroy us.
- James 1:13-15 *Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He himself does not tempt any man. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then, when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.*
 - Satan is a master fisherman, he knows just what bait or lure to use to catch the particular fish he is fishing for.
7. God has promised to provide a way of escape from every temptation that Satan brings across our path—however, it is up to us to utilize that way of escape.
- I Cor 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you but such is as common to man; and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also that you may be able to endure it!*

8. God has provided us with a weapon to defend us from Satan's attack and to direct our steps in righteous behavior.
 - This weapon is the Word of God! (Ephesians 6:17)
9. Ultimately, we are going to have to answer to God for our decisions and not men—in other words, we are directly responsible to God! In theological terms we call this the individual priesthood of the believer. (Romans 14:4-12)
10. Making decisions about where to establish a personal standard demands personal honesty about our temptations and it demands a commitment to pleasing God in every area of life. In other words, we must be committed to walking in the Spirit.

Five Primary Areas of Consideration . . .

I. Personal Considerations — Me

A. Does my conscience condemn me?

- Romans 14:22-23 *The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatsoever is not from faith is sin!*
- I John 3:21 *Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.*
- I Cor 10:30 *If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered for that which I give thanks?*

B. Does it arouse desires in me that God has forbidden?

- Does it make me want to do or engage in the activities of the flesh?
- Romans 13:14 *But put on the Lord Jesus and make no provision to fulfill the lusts (desires) of the flesh.*
- What exactly are those desires that I am not to fulfill? (Galatians 5:19-21)
 - Immorality Idolatry sorcery enmity
 - Impurity strife jealousy outbursts of anger
 - Sensuality disputes dissension envying
 - drunkenness carousing things like this. . .

C. Does it hinder the development and exercise of the fruit of the Spirit in my life? {Galatians 5:22-23}

- Does my engaging in this activity in some way prohibit me from practicing these qualities in my life?
 - Exhibiting biblical love
 - Exhibiting joy
 - Exhibiting peace
 - Exhibiting patience
 - Exhibiting kindness
 - Exhibiting goodness
 - Exhibiting self-control

- D. Will it bring me under its “bondage?” Will it control me in a wrong way?
- I Cor 6:12b *All things are lawful, but I will not be mastered by anything!*
 - Will this become something that I personally am addicted to?
- E. Will it prohibit my mind from dwelling on : (Phil. 4:8)
- Whatsoever is honorable
 - Whatsoever is right
 - Whatsoever is pure
 - Whatsoever is lovely
 - Whatsoever is of good repute
 - Whatsoever is excellent and worthy of praise
 - Since your mind is in some ways different than my mind, this may mean that some activities which would be fine and acceptable for your would be off limits for me.
- F. Will it prohibit me from being a wise steward of the talents and responsibilities God has given me?
- I Cor 4:2 {I am to be trustworthy}
 - Eph 5:15-17 {I am to be a wise manager of my time}
 - Luke 16:10 {I am to be diligent in the small areas of my life}
- G. Will I make others think that I am involved in what is clearly defined as the works of the flesh or sin?
- I Thess 5:22 — I am to avoid every kind (or manifestation) of sin. In other words, every time sin shows up, no matter what the context, I am to avoid it.
 - Is this activity going to give others a legitimate ground for thinking that I am involved in something that the Bible clearly forbids?
 - Example: The Bible clearly forbids adultery — however, it does not say anything at all about giving another woman who is not my wife or family a kiss on the lips. There is nothing wrong with it, I don’t mean anything by it and it is all pure and upright—in fact, the Bible even tells us to greet one another with a “holy” kiss. However, it does give legitimate grounds for a person to think I am involved in something the Bible expressly forbids. This is totally different from someone deciding it is OK to have a pool table at home. The average normal person is not going to legitimately conclude that you are involved in gambling or drinking because you allow a pool table in your home.

II. Brotherly Considerations — Other Believers

- A. Will it entice my brother to sin? (offend means to entice)
- Romans 14:13, 21 *Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather let us determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way . . . It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.*
 - I Cor 8:12-13; 10:23

- B. Will this prohibit me from building my brother's spiritual life by leading him into a clear violation of God's word?
- Romans 14:19-20 *So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food.*
 - Romans 15:2 *Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.*
 - I Cor 10:23-24 *All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.*
 - Paul is talking about going to the market place and buying meat that had been offered to idols. Some believers were really having a problem with other believers who bought this meat. Paul basically is stating "let no one seek his own good but that of his neighbor." Therefore the natural conclusion would then be, I should never go down and buy meat at the market place — BUT — look at the next verse (10:25). *Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience sake for the earth is the Lord's and all it contains.* The basic rule of thumb is this: if your conscience does not disallow it, then eat it with thanksgiving. However, there are two provisions to this basic rule:
 - **First**, if an unbeliever invites you to a meal and feeds you meat which you know was at one time an idol offering — eat the meat without asking any questions (I personally believe this instruction was given to the whole church—even to those who were putting up a fuss about their conscience.)
 - **Second**, if another man (I personally believe that Paul is shifting gears here and is talking here about another believer who has a problem with idol meat) points out to you that this is meat offered to idols, then don't eat the meat for his conscience sake. In other words — if another believer comes to you and tells you that this activity in your life is something he always believed was wrong — and you sense that your liberty is going to cause him to violate his conscience—then stop! His conscience is more important than your freedom.
 - Remember, it is our responsibility to be sensitive toward the weakness of our brothers in Christ. It is never right to defend your liberty at the expense of your brother. For instance, if you wear a particular dress or outfit and you become aware that there is an individual who is really struggling with his thought life when he sees you in that outfit — then you have a biblical obligation to stop wearing that outfit. Now—if you are the individual who is struggling in that area, then you have a biblical obligation to confess your faults one to another and let that person know that you are struggling in that area. Remember, this is not just a preference — (well, I just don't think its right that a Christian wear those kind of clothes)— you have no right to ask another person to limit their freedom just because you happen to have a certain personal opinion. However, if you are finding yourself struggling with legitimate sin — if you are being tempted to think

adulterous or illicit thoughts — then you need to go in love to that brother and tactfully explain your spiritual weakness in that area and ask him to help you overcome that area. {**Suggestion**—you may want to approach a spiritual leader that God has placed in your life and seek help or advice before doing this. The worst thing you could do is to go and “demand” that this brother change. (Every time I see you in that dress—I lust after you and have illicit thoughts) — this approach could be absolutely devastating. However, if you were to honestly approach this tactfully and say, I really struggle in this area, would you make this a matter of prayer — quite possibly the Lord would work in that believer’s heart and he/she would limit their liberty and chances are that your admission will help you become accountable for the problem.} **Illustration** — Recently I went on a no-fat diet. I made this known to certain individuals. Beth and I were invited over for dinner to a home of one of the families in the church. They had fixed a lovely desert and because they knew of my problem, they had taken the trouble to fix a special kind of desert which I could eat. They did not tempt me to eat something that I was not supposed to eat. By the same token just because I had a problem in my life I did not expect them to continue to eat that kind of desert from that time on even when I was not present. That would be unreasonable. And yet, we expect this of our brothers in Christ. It is not enough that they limit the behavior in our presence — we expect them to limit the particular behavior that is off limits in our lives all the time — and— when they don’t, we judge them as unloving and unspiritual.

III. Societal Considerations — The World or society in general.

- Will this activity ruin my testimony before the particular lost community I am trying to reach by making them think I am doing something which:
 - A. They know is morally wrong (even though they do it themselves)
 - **I Peter 3:15-16** *But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence, and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.*
 - B. They think a Christian should not do
 - **I Cor 10:31-32** *Whether therefore you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God; Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*
 - **I Peter 2:12** *Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

IV. Authoritative Considerations — Legitimate Authorities God has placed over me.

- Will this activity hinder me from a right relationship with my authorities.
- A. Parents
 - Ephesians 6:1 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.*
- B. Legitimate Spiritual Authorities {Husbands, Church Leaders, Employers, Government}
 - In considering a particular activity you need to ask yourself what the following Biblical authorities in your life would say:
 - **Husbands:** Ephesians 5:22 *Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord.*
 - **Church Leaders:** Hebrews 13:7,17 *Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and consider the result of their conduct, imitate their faith . . . obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account.*
 - **Employers:** I Peter 2:18 *Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle but also to those who are unreasonable.*
 - **Government:** I Peter 2:13 *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.*

V. Divine Considerations — God

- This is the bottom line. You may have come all the way through the other four areas and you may be able to justify a certain thing in your life. However — here is the bottom line — do you sense that God is in some way not pleased with this activity? Here are four things to consider.
- A. Do you sense that the activity grieves the Holy Spirit? *Ephesians 4:30*
- B. Do you feel that this activity will hinder you from bringing glory to God's name? Will it cause **you** to sin in some way or to disgrace God's name?
 - *I Cor 10:31 — do all to the glory of God?*
- C. Will this cause you to enter into an unbiblical union with an unbeliever?
 - *II Corinthians 6:14-7:1 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. . .*
- D. Is this something which will lead you into an activity or a position which God states in his word that he cannot bless?
 - *Flee youthful lusts*

- *He who covers his sin will not prosper*
- *Make no provision to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.*

Conclusion:

- Well, this seems like a whole lot of stuff to consider when making a decision about “gray areas!” There is a modern mindset that basically argues that if you can’t show me chapter and verse then don’t tell me I can’t do it! On the surface this sounds very spiritual and very Biblical but in reality when you get beneath the surface you find that under this “spiritual response” is a very immature and unskilled believer. God has not left us in the dark in these areas. In fact, He has given principle after principle to guide us in these decisions. The problem is not that we lack the proper principles but rather that we are unskilled in handling the Word of God.