WORD OF LIFE STUDY GUIDES

By John Paul Miller

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15
John Miller has been the Pastor of Calvary Chapel San Bernardino since 1972. He is married to Kristy and has four children. John’s teaching is always based on an exposition of the Biblical text with a clear outline and application for daily living.
The Apostle Paul taught in Corinth and established a church there during his second missionary journey. After he left them, the Corinthians began disputing doctrine. One of the members of the church wrote to Paul for help and advice. Though written over 1900 years ago, this letter is as relevant today as if it were written yesterday for it touches on many issues we face today including:

- Church splits and cliques
- Sexual immorality in the church
- The role of women in the church
- Spiritual gifts, their use and abuse
- Forgiveness
- Marriage, divorce, and singleness
- False doctrines
- How to live for Jesus in a corrupt world

This helpful study guide, by Pastor John, takes you through this epistle verse by verse; thought-by-thought, presenting a clear outline and helping you discover God's practical answers and solutions to many of life's questions, dilemmas and issues.
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Thanksgiving for a Troubled Church
1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9

"A portrait should include all the warts" - Oliver Cromwell

In first Corinthians Paul paints a portrait of a church with 'all the warts'

a) It was a divided church. 1:10-12
b) It was a defiled church 5:1
c) It was a disgraced church 6:1

How could this have happened?

Answer - the church was not only in Corinth, Corinth was in the church.

The city of Corinth was a very wicked city!

The same as our cities today!

Ray Stedman, said, 'this letter might well be titled "First Californians".

So Paul having received the report from 'the house of Chloe' (1:11) of the problems in the fellowship writes to 'reprove' them (Chapters 1-6)

The church also had questions . . . . . .

Paul is writing to answer them, with their letter perhaps before him, Paul logically moved from one issue to another.

1. Marriage - Chapter 7
2. Food offered to idols - Chapter 8-10
3. Church ordinances - Chapter 11
4. Spiritual gifts - Chapter 12-14
5. The resurrection - Chapter 15
6. The offering - Chapter 16

There are two main divisions in our text today!

1. Paul's greeting to the Corinthians (vs. 1-3)
2. Paul's gratitude for the Corinthians (vs. 4-9)
1. **PAUL'S GREETING TO THE CORINTHIANS (vs. 1-3)**

A. Paul says three thing about himself (vs.1)

   1. He's an 'Apostle' why? Not one of the twelve! Under attack!

   2. He was 'called' - he was not self-appointed (story in Acts 9)

   3. He's an Apostle by the will of God!

B. Paul included the name of 'Sosthenes' (vs.1)

   He was the chief ruler of the synagogue in Corinth who was beaten by the Greeks before Gallio's judgment seat. (Acts 18:17)

   He's now a 'brother' with Paul in Ephesus on his 3rd missionary journey where he wrote - 1 Corinthians in A.D. 57.

C. Paul greets the church (vs. 2-3) 'unto the church of God which is at Corinth'

   In the wicked city of Corinth God 'called out' a people for His name sake!

   Light in the darkness!

   It happened on Paul's 2nd missionary journey (Acts 18)

   Paul says - three things about them.

   1. They were sanctified in Christ Jesus (vs. 2) It's their position!

   "The word 'sanctify' applies to four different stages of the believer's salvation. It refers to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the person's life before conversion (Gal. 1:15; II Thess 2:13); the time of regeneration (1:2; 6:11; cf. Heb 10:14) the present cleansing and edifying ministry of the Christian by the Spirit through the Word of God (John 17:17); and the total separation from the effects of sin when the believer receives the incorruptible, immortal body (Eph 5:26-27)."

   - R. G. Gromacki
NOTE! The church 'visible' and 'invisible' (only saved in the 'invisible' church)

2. "Called Saints" (vs. 2) not some further 'destiny' but a present 'reality'.

It's there "practice"

3. They shared the same position and Lord as believers in every place (vs. 2)

(true of all Christians)

How does one become a saint?

By calling upon the name of Christ.

1. Have you been born again? 'Sanctified'?

2. Are you living a saintly life?

3. Is Jesus Lord of your life?

II. PAUL'S GRATITUDE FOR THE CORINTHIANS (vs. 4-9)

Having concluded his greeting Paul now turns to thanksgiving for the Corinthians and for the wonderful work of God in their lives!

Lesson - Remember the church in Corinth was filled with problems!

Yet Paul sought to find something thankworthy in the lives of his fellow believers

So - us too!

Paul focused on their blessings 'in' Christ!

No perfect church - yet be thankful!

PAUL IS THANKFUL FOR SIX THINGS!

1. Grace (vs. 4)

Paul is thinking of their conversion when they were saved by 'Grace'

He was thankful for their salvation.

Love that reaches up is adoration.
Love that reaches across is affection.
Love that reaches down is grace.

- Donald Gray Barnhouse

How about you?

"Although there were problems still they were saved people and though carnal, their living was better than they're previous pagan behavior."

– Robert G. Gromacki

Three things that cannot coexist with Grace!

1. Guilt
2. Human obligation
3. Human merit

Grace Illustrated:

Grace is more than unmerited favor. If you feed a tramp who calls on you, that is unmerited favor, but it is scarcely grace. But suppose that after robbing you, you then feed him. That would be grace. Grace, then, is favor shown where there is positive demerit in the one receiving it.

A friend called on John Newton, author of the beloved hymn "Amazing Grace," in the later years of his life. A portion of Scripture was read, including the verse, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10). Newton then commented, "I am not what I ought to be. How imperfect and deficient! I am not what I wish to be. I abhor what is evil and I would cleave to what is good. I am not what I hope to be. Soon I shall put off immortality, all sin, And imperfection. Yet though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, or what I hope to be, I can truly say that I am not what I once was - a slave to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle and acknowledge, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'"

2. ENRICHMENT (vs. 5) 'enriched - we get 'plutocrat'

'in every thing' or in every way'

Lit: 'you were made rich'

When?

At the moment of conversion!
How? - Two ways!

1. "In all utterance' or 'In all your speaking'

   As Christians we have something to talk about!
   
   1. Pray!
   2. Praise!
   3. Proclaim!

   Some Christians are like an arctic river in deep winter, our mouths are frozen.

   Ask the Holy Spirit to fill your heart and mouth!

2. 'In all knowledge" (vs. 5)

   With the enriched speech comes also the enriched knowledge - so we know what we were talking about!

   We don't know everything 1 Cor.13:12 But we are given everything we need to know to speak effectively for the Lord!

   Where do we get this knowledge!

   From the word of God and by the Spirit of God!

3. CONFIRMATION (vs. 6)

   The truths that Paul preached about Christ they found true in their lives!

4. GIFTS (vs. 7)

   Every Christian has been given a 'gift' of the Spirit. It's no sign of spirituality.

   It should be
   
   1. Used in love!
   2. For the good of others!
   3. For the Glory of God!
   4. Till - Jesus comes back!

5. PRESERVATION (vs. 8)

   Paul was also thankful that God would confirm or guarantee the unblamable position of the Corinthians until Christ's return. The word
'blameless' does not mean that the believers were without sin or blame in their practice. The epistle clearly shows their faults. Rather, it is a legal term. No charge of condemnation nor sentencing to eternal death would ever be brought against them in the court of divine justice. Literally, the word here translated 'blameless' means 'not called in' (anegkletous). It is the answer to Paul's rhetorical questions: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died. . . . " Rom. 8:33-34

Jude 24 and Romans 8

6. FAITHFULNESS (vs. 9)

In times of suffering 1 Pet 4:12

(vs. 9) "called into the fellowship of His son Jesus Christ"

KEY: "fellowship"

Jesus is named in the first 10 verses, 9 times!

And He's mentioned in all the first 10 verses

"Lord" 6 times in 10 verses!

The believers in Corinth were blessed with.

1. Grace
2. Enrichment
3. Conformation
4. Gifts
5. Preservation
6. Faithfulness

All true of us too!

How could they have so many problems?
They forgot 'the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord'
INTRODUCTION:

To dwell above with the saints in love well certainly be glory!
To live below, with the saints we know
Well, that’s another story!

1. The church at Corinth had problems!
2. It was divided... it was defiled...
3. It was disgraced. - It was the problem of Division that Paul believed need to be dealt with first!
4. And it takes up the largest part of this letter (1:10-4:21)

It's sad to say it but division has always been a problem among God's people
Almost every New Testament epistle deals with this topic or mentions it in one way or another.

Even the 12 apostles didn't always get along with each other.

Jesus prayed in John 17:21 'that they all may be one:... that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.'

Thus for us, it's a very important subject!

We need to heed Paul's instruction!

1. PAUL'S APPEAL FOR UNITY (vs. 10)

   a) Paul "beeches" them! - Lovingly urging! Not commanding!

   b) Paul calls them 'brothers"

By doing so Paul does two things.

1. He softens the rebuke - contrast with Gal 1

   The very use of the word should have shown them how wrong their dissensions and divisions were. They were brothers and should be living in brotherly love. (Psa 133:1)

2. He gives us the ground for unity! (vs.10) - "The name of our Lord Jesus Christ"
there is no other name big enough, great enough, glorious enough and powerful enough to gather everybody together, despite the diversity of viewpoints and the differences of background or status in life, that the name of Jesus (‘He alone is the ground of our unity’)

- Ray Stedman

2. THE GOALS OF UNITY (vs.10)

A. Unity of Speech 'that you all speak the same thing' (vs. 10)

What does Paul mean 'that we all speak the same thing?' It’s not - that every Christian must or will agree with every other believer on event the minutest point. But it does mean that those who agree on the essential doctrines of the Christian faith should give a united testimony to the unbelieving world.

Paul's appeal was for harmony not the elimination of diversity.

He's saying that we need to present to the watching world a united front.

B. The Elimination of Schisms (vs. 10)

That there be no divisions among you.

The Greek word for 'divisions' is 'schismata' In English 'schisms' used for rent garment, torn but not yet separated into two pieces. (picture it)

In the church conflict there was internal strife, but it was not split into two churches!

Illustration: Church splits - We need each other.

The article "What Good Is a Tree?" in Reader's Digest explained that when the roots of trees touch, there is a substance present that reduces competition. In fact, this unknown fungus helps like roots of different trees - even of dissimilar species. A whole forest may be linked together. If one tree has access to water, another to nutrients, and a third to sunlight, the trees have the means to share with one another. Like trees
in a forest, Christians in the church need and support one another.

- Blair F. Rorabaugh

C. Unity of Attitude (vs. 10)

'be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.'

'joined' Greek Katavtizo - (kat-ar-tid-zo)

"to mend" 'restore' it's a medical word used of knitting together bones that have been broken! Gal. 6:1

So the body of Christ is broken!

Used for pieces of a puzzle

Also used for nets lets go fishing.

Paul's saying lets get this problem solved once and for all.

How? Phil 2:15 'let this mind be in you . . .'

the mind of Christ!

Also see vs.17; vs. 20-21; vs. 30

II. THE REASON FOR PAUL'S APPEAL (vs.11-12)

1. 'it has been declared' - Paul had received a report which he regarded as fact and not rumor!

The words Paul used were used of official, legal evidence.

Note: the danger of rumors in the church!

Notice Paul didn't say 'someone said' or 'I heard', he names his source!

2. 'there were 'contentions' among them (vs. 11)

'Contentious' means there were open quarrels!

Why?
Answer - The root cause 'carnality' (see 3:1-3)

This is the same today in the church!

The Need - 'walk in the Spirit'...

3. Their eye's were on men not Jesus Christ (vs.12)

Paul moves from the general to the specific when he states: 'now this I say' or 'this is what I mean'

The contentions were over 'personalities' nor over 'principles' (same as today)

NOTE - also 'everyone of you' - the whole church.

1. The loyalists party: 'I am of Paul' (vs.12)

   He started this church, we came to faith through him! No? mostly Gentiles!

2. The stylists party: ' and I of Apollos'

   The great preacher and orator!

   He was a Jew form Alexandria the center of intellectual activity

   'the intellectuals ?'

3. The traditionalists: 'I m of Cepas'

   Peter our man he's one of the original twelve!

   Perhaps Jew's who were 'legalist'

4. The Jesus only party: 'and I'm of Christ'

   Were so spiritual we don't follow any man!

   The self-righteous - deeper life club!

Now! Certainly these three men would not have condoned this party spirit!

Note: the dangers of exalting man!
     Illustration: Things Christians divide over today!
1. Leaders
2. King James only
3. Music
4. Dress - women and hair
5. Holy Spirit's gifts
6. Baptism

III. PAULS CORRECTION (vs. 13-17 [really 1:13-4:21])

Note: three questions, no answers!

1. Christ cannot be divided (vs.13a) - 'is Christ divided?' No!
   The church is the body of Christ it cannot be divided (Eph 4:4: 'one body')

2. Faith in Paul cannot save (vs.13b) - 'was Paul crucified for you?' No!
   Paul a sinful man can save no one!
   But Jesus can save!

3. Men cannot be baptized in the name of Paul (vs.13-16)
   Perhaps they grouped themselves behind the man who baptized them?

4. Paul came to preach Christ (vs.17)
   If the church is focused on preaching Christ and winning the lost they won't be fighting among them selves!

The cure is "Christ" - His Cross!

What's is the gospel? - I Cor 15:1-4

CHURCH

Four purposes of the local church:

1. Exaltation of Jesus Christ
2. Evangelism of the lost
3. Edification of believers
4. Expression of service
INTRODUCTION:
Paul is writing to a church that was divided – (1:11)

'contentions'

Why?
1. Carnality - (3:1)
2. Following personalities - (1:12)
3. Loving philosophy - (1:17)

Verse 17 serves as a fitting introduction to this next section of 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16

In verse 17 Paul referred to 'wisdom of words' which he will now contrast with the 'preaching of the cross' or 'the word of the cross' (vs.18)

Paul is contrasting 'the wisdom of man' with 'the wisdom of God'

And the wisdom of God is seen in the cross of Christ - (see vs. 25)

"It is interesting to see how Paul approached this problem of division in the Church. First, he pointed to the unity of Christ: there is one Savior and one Body. Then he reminded them of their baptism, a picture of their spiritual baptism into Christ's body (12:13).

Now, he takes them to the cross."

– Warren W. Wiersbe

If we focus on the cross of Christ it brings - unity.

Ray Stedman said, 'the word of the cross is the cure for all human division.'

Paul wanted them to understand two things

I. PAUL WANTED THEM TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WISDOM OF GOD SEEN IN THE CROSS AND THE WISDOM OF MAN. (vs. 18-25)

1. "Human wisdom is foolish" (VS. 18-20)
   What's "the word of the cross?"
It's the announcement of the crucifixion of Jesus as a fact of history!

(not philosophical concepts)

a) The incarnation of Jesus  
b) The crucifixion of Jesus  
c) The resurrection of Jesus  
d) The ascension of Jesus  
e) The exhalation of Jesus

2. "Human wisdom cannot save" (vs. 21-23) (teach it)

3. "Divine wisdom can save" (vs. 24-25)

Isa. 55:8-9:  
For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

In A.D.178 the philosopher Celsus mockingly wrote of Christians:  
Let no cultured person draw near, none wise and none sensible, for all that kind of thing we count evil; but if any man is ignorant, if any man is wanting in sense and culture, if anybody is a fool, let him come boldly (to become a Christian). . . We see them in their own houses, wool dresses, cobblers, the worst, the vulgarest, the most uneducated persons. . . They are like a swarm of bats or ants creeping out of their nest, or frogs holding a symposium around a swamp, or worms convening in the mud.

II. PAUL WANTED THEM TO UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF GOD'S CALLING (vs. 26-31)

Paul's illustration of God's wisdom and power in the cross!

Note: four things about - God's calling!

1. It is not based on man's position (vs. 26)

   … Jesus said - "He was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor".

   Acts 4:13 "unlearned and ignorant men"
2. It manifests divine grace and love (vs.27)

"chosen" - for His own interest!

Remember how Jesus once put it, "I thank thee, O Father . . . that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to babes" (Luke 10:21, KJV).

3. It is contrary to the expectations of men (vs. 27-28)

Biblical Examples:

Gideon – 32,000 TO 300 - Judges 7:1-25

The calling of David as King of Israel - 1 Sam 16:1-13

Illustration: D. L. Moody!

One of the greatest awakenings of the nineteenth century began in Cambridge University in England when D.L. Moody and his singer, Ira B. Sankey, came to that center of learning. In 1950 when I was traveling with Dr. H. A. Ironside, I met an Episcopal rector in Virginia who had been a member of that class in Cambridge when D.L. Moody came. He told us the whole University was outraged that this backwoods American preacher would dare to appear and speak in the center of culture of the English world. They well knew that he "murdered" the king's English. (Somebody once said that D.L. Moody was the only man he ever heard who could pronounce Jerusalem in one syllable!) So this rector said that he and others of his classmates who were not Christians determined that when Moody spoke in the chapel at Cambridge they would hoot him off the platform. Moody began by asking Sankey to sing. (Sankey must have had a wonderful voice, because whenever he sang audiences quieted and listened to him.) As soon as he finished, Moody stepped to the edge of the platform and, looking directly at the students who were gathered there, he said these remarkable words, "Young gentleman, don't ever think God don't love you, for He do!" This young man said that he and his classmates were dumbfounded by that beginning. Moody went on and in a few minutes he again said, "Don't ever think God don't love you, for He do!" Something about the very ungrammatical structure of these words captured them. The intense earnestness of this man
spoke right to their hearts, beyond all the superficial, external things. That man said he later sought out Moody for a private interview, and Moody led him to Christ. A great awakening came to Cambridge University at the hands of that humble servant of God.

4. It removes the basis for human boasting - (vs. 29)

Illustrations:

Eph 1 when Paul was describing God's plain of salvation three times he used the phrase "to the praise of His glory."

II Cor 4:7 'but we have this treasure in earth vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.'

5. It results in the glorification of God (vs. 30-31)

Note - the contrast - 'But'

Jer. 9:23-24
"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches."

Three responses to the cross!

1. Stumble at it!

2. Laugh at it!

3. Believe in it and experience it's power and wisdom.
The Wisdom of God
1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-13

INTRODUCTION:
The apostle Paul did not go to Corinth to contribute to the culture of the city, for they had plenty of that. Nor did he go to add to their wealth of philosophy, for Corinth was not far from Athens, one of the great philosophical centers of Paul's day. He went with one ambition and desire, which is expressed in 1 Corinthians 2:1-1: "And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." The people of Corinth did not need another philosophy: they need Christ. Thus Paul in verse 2 stated his creed: Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

The Corinthians love of human wisdom (same today!) had caused division in the fellowship so Paul was seeking to call them back to the wisdom of God!

Paul wanted them to understand their need of divine wisdom, which is communicated to men only by the Spirit of God through the word of God!

Paul described the nature of God's wisdom in three basic areas.

I. GOD'S WISDOM SEEN IN PAUL'S PREACHING (vs. 1-5)

"When I came to you" - refers to Paul's second missionary journey when he alone entered into the city of Corinth. . . . .

Notice five things about Paul's preaching in Corinth!

1. His method (vs. 1)

Illustration - Paul's preaching in Athens!

Paul recognized the difference between ministry that is soulish and that, which is spiritual!

Do you?

2. His message (vs. 2) (the person and work of Christ)

'for' so the reason behind his method!

Paul did not want to get in the way of Christ!
Illustration:

A certain church had a beautiful stained-glass window just behind the pulpit. It depicted Jesus Christ on the cross. One Sunday there was a guest minister who was much smaller than the regular pastor. A little girl listened to the guest for a time, then turned to her mother and asked, "Where is the man who usually stands there so we can't see Jesus?"

3. His Manner (vs. 3)

It was:

1. Physical - 'weakness'
2. Internal - 'fears' & 'much trembling'

Remember - Paul was beaten in Philippi

Paul in Corinth is in Acts 18:9-10

Lesson - 11 Cor 12, "when I am weak".

Illustrated 1:26-31 weak thing!

4. His Means (vs. 4)

The power of the Holy Spirit to change lives!

5. His Motive (vs. 5)

Paul wanted them to experience the power of God!

True Conversion!

II. GOD'S WISDOM SEEN IN PAUL'S TEACHING (vs. 6-9)

Paul in order to show that he was not against wisdom per-se, began verse six by saying lit "but wisdom we do speak"

Paul is now talking about teaching the wisdom of God to mature believers.

Notice what Paul says about God's wisdom:

1. It's only known by the perfect. (vs. 6)
It's imperative for pastors to teach the word of God to the mature believers!

2. The wisdom Paul taught was not the wisdom of this world, lit age. (vs. 6)

   It comes to nothing!

3. God's wisdom is a mystery. (vs. 7)

   What are the mysteries?

4. God's wisdom was unknown to the rulers of this world. (vs. 8)

5. God's wisdom is contrary to man's experience. (vs. 9)

   Eye, ear, heart.

6. God's wisdom is for those who love God. (vs. 9)

   It's not Heaven! It's Rom 8:28

   'true wisdom is divinely revealed'

   1. By revelation (vs.10-11)
   2. By inspiration (vs.12-13)
   3. By illumination (vs.14-16)
      - John MacArthur

III. GOD'S WISDOM IS CENTERED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT (vs.10-13)

We all know that the Holy Spirit is needed for power (Acts 1:8). But The Holy Spirit is also needed for God's wisdom!

   1. The Holy Spirit is essential in revelation (vs.10-11)

      The Spirit of God use's the word of God to reveal God's wisdom to us!

   2. The Holy Spirit is essential in Illumination (vs.12)

      The Bible

   3. The Holy Spirit is essential in instruction (vs.13)

      The Holy Spirit teaches us all truth; He's the Spirit of Truth!

      Illustration the Bible:
KJV: "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual"
NASB: "Combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words"
Clarke: "Explaining spiritual things to spiritual persons."

1. Revelation!
2. Illumination!
3. Instruction
4. Transformation!

Ye must be born again!
Preach the gospel!
The Three Categories of Man
I CORINTHIANS 2:14-3:4

INTRODUCTION:
"Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief. Doctor, Lawyer, merchant chief." Man is always trying to put himself and others into various categories.

Our world is divided by race, religion, wealth, education, age, geography, and nationality.

But, God divides all mankind into three categories. These divisions are not according to the measure of our possessions or the color of our skin. God's divisions of mankind are based entirely upon the spiritual condition of the human heart!

Paul in our text is describing three responses to divine wisdom in doing this we discover there are three divisions of mankind!

I. THE NATURAL MAN (vs.14)

Who is the natural man?

It's not a hippy! or a ?

It's - the "unsaved man". . . . (not un-churched)

He's not a Christian!

He's the person who has only been born once!

He's alive physically but dead spiritually

You can be religious (also good person, 'all have sinned') but still be a natural man

Illustration: Nicodemus! – John 3

The natural man is governed and controlled by his body! What shall we eat, drink.

Notice how Paul describes him in our text! (vs.14)
1. He does not 'receive the things of the Spirit of God' (vs. 14)

The colorful Vance Havner advises:

The wise Christian wastes no time trying to explain God's program to unregenerate man; it would be casting pearls before swine. He might as well try to describe a sunset to a blind man or discuss nuclear physics with a monument in the city park. The natural man cannot receive such things. One might as well try to catch sunbeams with a fishhook as to lay hold of God's revelation unassisted by the Holy Spirit. Unless one is born of the Spirit and taught by Him, all this is utterly foreign to him. Being a Ph.D does not help, for in this realm it could mean 'Phenomenal Dud!'

His life is empty! "God shaped vacuum"

2. The things of God are foolishness to Him" (vs. 14)

Illustration: Paul preaching before King Agrippa – (Acts 26)

Paul preached - Jesus and His resurrection from the dead!

Festus cried out "Paul your much learning has made you mad!"

3. The natural man cannot know the things of God's wisdom (vs.14)

Because they are spiritually understood!

He's "Mr. Worldly wise men"

The natural man is lost he needs salvation!

II. THE SPIRITUAL MAN (vs.15-16)

Note - The contrast "but" he that is spiritual.

Who is the spiritual man?

Answer - He is 'saved'- born again, indwelt by the Spirit of God and yielded to him. He is no longer blinded by Satan, he has been enlightened by God, He is spiritually alive.

Three things Paul says about Him!

1. The spiritual man judges all things (vs.15)
He has the Holy Spirit to teach him all things!

He understands the natural man!

2. The spiritual man is not understood by the natural man (vs.15)

   Your joy, your peace, your love! your faith, your hope!

3. The spiritual man has the mind of Christ (vs.16)

   Illustration: So - why? - go to the unsaved for counsel

III. THE CARNAL MAN (3:1-4)

What does Paul mean by "carnal?"

   According to the Greek dictionary, it means 'to have the nature and characteristics of the flesh," or more simply, it means 'fleshly'.

Here it's referring to man's sinful, or 'fleshly' nature received from Adam!

The really big question is, is the carnal man saved? Is he a Christian?

The answer - is YES! ' he has been born physically and spiritually"

How do we know?

   Answer:

   1. "Brethren' (VS. 1)

   2. 'Babes in Christ' (VS. 1)

   The carnal man is saved, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, But is controlled by 'the flesh'.

   This does not mean that they never bore any spiritual fruit of any kind. A Christian’s carnality will not be life long or total. Jesus made it clear that true believers will bear fruit 'some thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred,' (Matt 13:8).

   John Calvin recognized the difference between the natural man, the spiritual man, and the carnal man, of the carnal man he wrote: “But Paul does not mean that they were completely carnal, without even a spark of the Spirit of God, but that they were still much too full of the mind of the flesh, so that the flesh prevailed over the Spirit, and, as it were
extinguished His light. Although they were not entirely without grace, yet they had more of the flesh than the Spirit in their lives, and that is why he calls them carnal. That is plain enough from his adding immediately, that they were 'babes in Christ' for they would not have been babes, if they had not been begotten, and this begetting is the work of the Spirit of God."

HOW ABOUT YOU?

1. The carnal man is controlled by the flesh not the Spirit.

He's a Christian yet, lives for self!

A saved soul yet a wasted life!

Wood, hay, stubble: at the Bema seat!

He's more interested:

in - 'movies then ministry'

In - 'pleasure than prayer'

in - buying things than bible study,

in - serving self than serving the Savior.

They have just enough of the Lord that they are unhappy in the world, yet enough of the world so they are unhappy in the Lord!

Illustration: "the farmer who had an apple tree on the border of his orchard".

2. The carnal man is a spiritual baby (vs. 1)

Before salvation we where 'Natural Men' then we were "born Spiritually". But if we fail to grow! We become 'carnal'.

Illustration: As a father watching his children grow!

NOTE: (vs. 2) their diet was 'milk' not 'meat'

NOTE: remember they had all the sign Gifts of the Spirit, but not fruit!

HOW TO GROW?
G - go to God in Prayer daily.
R - read God's word daily.
O - Obey God daily.
W - witness to someone daily.

3. The carnal man acts like the natural man or unsaved man (vs. 3-4)

Carnal Christians are marked by!

A. "Envying" or "jealousy" - its 'rivalry' - the dislike of seeing someone else getting ahead (Feelings):

  Don't forget we are members of the same body!

  Rom 12:15 "rejoice with them that do rejoice"

  Do you have bitterness toward another believer because God has blessed them and is using them?

B. "Strife" - fighting with others, anger, unkind words ex. . . .

Words - Actions
C. Divisions see (vs. 4)

Ask yourself - do I live any different than the world?

If the answer is NO! then perhaps you're a natural man, you've never been saved! You need to be born of the Spirit!

Or if there's a battle going on, the flesh, the 'flesh against the spirit' perhaps you are a carnal Christian.

The cure for carnality is total surrender to the Holy Spirit! and Lordship of Christ!

And living in obedience to God's word!

It's dying to self! and serving Jesus with all your heart, your strength, and soul. Rom 12:1-2

It's becoming "the spiritual man"
INTRODUCTION:
The British Bible teacher Dr. G. Campbell Morgan had four sons; all became ministers. Someone asked one of the grandsons if he also would become a minister, and he replied, "No, I plan to work for a living."

There is a lot of misunderstanding about the work of the ministry! (vs. 5)
Haddon Robinson, “Biblical Preaching”

“My minister is a lot like God - I don't see him all week, and I don't understand him on Sunday.”

What is the work of the ministry?

How should the church evaluate the pastor's ministry?

How do we know when he's doing his job?

After hundreds of years, a model preacher has been found to suit everyone. He preaches exactly twenty minutes and then sits down. He condemns sin, but never hurts anyone's feelings. He works from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. in every type of work from preaching to custodial service. He tithes weekly to the church and stands ready to contribute to every good work that comes along. He is twenty-six years old and had been preaching thirty years. He is tall and short, thin and heavyset, and handsome. He has one brown eye and one blue, hair parted down the middle, left side dark and straight, the right brown and wavy. He has a burning desire to work with teenagers and spends all his time with old folks. He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his work. He makes fifteen calls a day on church members, spends all his time evangelizing the unchurched, and is never out of the office.

Christian Beacon, quoted in Paul Lee Tan, “The Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations”

The Christians in Corinth were divided!

Why?

1. A misunderstanding of the message.

2. A misunderstanding of the ministry.
The Corinthians had focused on men when in fact God alone was the source of blessing.

The ministers were divided over only servants accountable to God! (see vs. 5) Paul wanted them to have the proper understanding of their ministers and their work!

He paints three pictures of the ministry and the church.

In these pictures Paul points out what the ministry is supposed to accomplish:

1. The Minister is a Father (vs. 1-4)

   The Church is a Family and the Goal is Maturity (vs. 1-4)

There are two kinds of people:

(a) saved

(b) unsaved

There are two kinds of saved people:

(a) mature

(b) immature, or 'carnal'

Warren W. Wiersbe says, "A Christian matures by allowing the Spirit to teach him and direct him by feeding on the Word. The immature Christian lives for the things of the flesh (carnal means 'flesh') and has little interest in the things of the Spirit."

Paul was their spiritual father See 4:15

Paul’s job as their father in the faith was to bring them to maturity.

What are the marks of maturity?

1. You can tell a mature person by "his diet" (vs. 2)

   What's milk?

   It's not the easy things of the word.

   What's meat?
it's not hard doctrines.

Answer - based on Heb 5:10-14 the meat is an understanding of what Jesus is doing now in heaven! It's understanding His ministry as our high priest!

They are not looking to be entertained they are looking to be edified. By feeding on the word of God

2. A mature Christian practices love and seeks to get along with others (vs. 3)

They use their gifts to build with, not fight over!

3. The Minister is a Farmer (vs. 5-9)

The Church is a Field and the Goal is Quantity or ‘fruit’ (vs. 5-9) Jesus in His parable of the sower compared the human heart to soil and the word of God to seed. Paul now uses the image of a field for the church. As the minister sows the seeds of God's word the church is to bear fruit! more fruit, much fruit!

Lessons from this picture:

1. The diversity of ministry (vs. 6) "Paul planted, Apollos watered."

2. The need for humility (vs. 6b-7) "God gives the increase"

3. The unity of purpose (vs. 8-9a)

4. The Minister is a Builder (vs. 9-23)

The Church is a Temple and the Goal is Quality.

Remember the context, it's not our lives that we're building!

it's the church!

It's important that we build with quality!

HOW?

1. We must build on the right foundation (vs. 10-11)

   It's not . . . . . . men, programs, ex. . . .
It's Jesus Christ and God's Word

2. We must build with the right materials (vs. 12-17)

It's God's word! (we find God's wisdom)

The Book of Proverbs presents the wisdom of the Word of God as treasure to be sought, protected, and invested in daily life.

Consider these passages Proverbs 3:13-15a:

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies:

3. We must build according to the right plan (vs. 18-20)

You can't manage the church on man's wisdom!

Warren W. Wiersbe

The world depends on promotion, prestige, and the influence of money, and important people. The church depends on prayer, the power of the Spirit, humility, sacrifice, and service. The church that imitates the world may seem to succeed in time, but it will turn to ashes in eternity. The church in the Book of Acts had none of the "secrets of success" that seem to be important today. They owned no property; they had no influence in government; they had no treasury ("silver and gold have I none," said Peter); their leaders were ordinary men without special education in the accepted schools; they held no attendance contests: they brought in no celebrities; and yet turned the world upside down!
4. Finally, we must build with the right motive (vs. 21-23)

The motive is the glory of God!

REVIEW:

1. As a father - The word of God! Grow!

2. As a farmer - The word of God! Fruit!

3. As a builder - The word of God! Glory!
INTRODUCTION:
“A mother had watched her son through the week begin to drain in energy. And by the end of the week he had simply lost the desire to get up and get with the day. She heard the alarm go off through the door. She listened as nine minutes passed the alarm went of again. Apparently he just kept punching the little snooze button on top of the alarm. Finally, after three or four extra rings, she decided to take charge so she walked in and said, "Son, it's time to get up. You've got to get up." He peeked out from under the covers and said, "Can you give me three good reasons I have to get up?" She said, "Well, yes. First of all, it's Sunday, and you need to get dressed for church. Second, you're forty-three years old and you know better than to lie there. Third, you're the pastor of the church and they expect you to be there!"

-James Hewett, “Illustrations Unlimited”

In I Corinthians 3 Paul presented three pictures of the pastor:

The Father
The Farmer
The Builder

Also the church and the goal of ministry!

In chapter 4 Paul points out three characteristics that should be found in every true minister! And also in every child of God!

I. FAITHFULNESS (vs. 1-6)

Note – (vs. 2) Key 'faithful'

Not - eloquence, or intelligence, or cleverness

Faithfulness - to God, to His word, to God's calling, and to God’s people.

Faithfulness - involves doing all that the master has commanded, doing it His way in His time.

How about you?

There were two areas that Paul wanted to be found faithful in:

1. As a servant (vs. 1) NASB "Let a man regard us in this man, as
servants of Christ."

The word 'minister' or 'servants' is not the typical word for minister (diakonos) but rather (hoop-ay-ret-ace) literally meaning "under-rower" - It was used of a slave who rowed in the lower bank of oars on a large ancient ship.

Paul did not want to be seen as a man of high spiritual status, but rather as Christ's helper or slave willing to do the lowest task.

Are you a faithful servant?

2. As a steward (vs. 1-2)

The word "steward" lit means "house law" a steward was an administrator, or overseer of his master's estate. He managed everything for his master!

Illustration: Joseph was a chief steward in the house of Potiphar.

The church is the "household of faith" So ministers are stewards who are to share God's wealth with God's household!

Note - Paul called this spiritual wealth "the mysteries of Christ"

John R. W. Stott says, "The mysteries of Christ are God's open secrets, the sum total of His self-revelation which is not embodied in the scriptures. Of these revealed mysteries" the Christian preacher is the steward. Charged to make them further known to the household."

So I must be 'faithful!' (vs. 2)

John Stott: points out in his book, "The Preachers Portrait", that we can learn four important lesson which are different aspects of the 'faithfulness' required of stewards.

Let me just point out one of them.
1. It's the preacher's incentive and message.

Incentive

a) Because God has entrusted the preacher with His word the preacher should be motivated to be trustworthy!

The steward has received a trust! So he must show himself worthy of that trust. The householder, God's people, depend on Him and the household (other slaves and children) are looking to him for provisions so he must not fail.

John R W Stott "The Preacher's Portrait" Page 25

Illustration: "The Englishman's favorite breakfast dish is eggs and bacon. We will suppose that a certain householder issued his steward or housekeeper eggs and bacon, with instructions to dispense them to the household for breakfast on four successive mornings. On Monday morning the steward threw them into the garbage can and give them fish instead. This is contradiction and his master was angry. On Tuesday morning he gave them eggs only, but not bacon. That is subtraction, and his master was again angry. On Wednesday morning he gave them eggs and bacon and sausages. That is addition, and his master was still angry. But in the end, on Thursday morning, he gave them eggs and bacon - nothing else, nothing less, nothing more, and his master was well pleased with him at last! The household of God urgently needs faithful stewards who will dispense to it systematically the whole Word of God, not the New Testament only but the Old as well, not the best known texts only, but also the less known, not just the passages which
favor the preacher's particular prejudices, but those which do not!"

The Message

b) “The steward was not expected to feed the household out of his own pocket, so also the preacher is not to provide his own message by his own ingenuity.

The steward was to simply dispense the goods, the master provides!” In the preachers case it's the whole word of God!

Note - preaching should be an exposition of God's word!

II Tim 4:2 "Preach the word!"

The main issue is not, "is the preacher popular? But rather is he "faithful?"

As servants of Jesus Christ we are constantly being judged. Somebody will always be criticizing our ministries!

The faithfulness that is required in stewards is a difficult thing for people to evaluate - note (vs. 2) 'required' and 'found'.

Who determines whether a steward has been faithful? (vs. 2)

Paul points out that there are three judgments in the life of the steward.

1. There is "man's judgment' (vs. 3a)

Paul didn't get upset when people criticized him. He realized how impossible it was for man to form a competent judgment of true faithfulness to God.

How do you respond to criticism?
2. Self-judgment (vs. 3b -4a)

(vs. 3) Paul said- I don't even try to judge myself!

(vs. 4) Paul said - he was not conscious of any faithfulness in his service for Christ, yet he pointed out that he was not the one to judge!

3. God's judgment (vs. 4b)

A. God judges us today through His Word (Heb 4:12)

B. By the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

C. Some times through a loving friend (Matt 18:15-17)

(live to please God!)

Paul is thinking of the final salvation when each of us as God's servants will stand before the "judgment seat of Christ" (See II Cor 5:10)

Note the application (vs. 5) "therefore".

1. Stop judging God's servants, it's the wrong time (vs. 5)

At the right time "the Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness"

Only God knows the heart!

Don't play God!

2. You are judging by the wrong standard (vs. 6)

Illustration: Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14) - They were comparing ministers with one another. The only true basis for evaluation is "that which is written in the word of God!"

Have they been faithful to obey and to teach the word of God?

Illustration - The testimonies of:

Samuel (I Sam 12:1-5)

Paul (Acts 20:1)
"Live to please God and don't focus on men"

II. Humbleness (vs. 7-13)

In (vs. 7) Paul asks three questions to make us stop and think!

1. Who makes you differ from another?

   NASB: "Who regards you as superior?"

   We should not in self-conceit, think we are superior to others.

2. What do you have that you did not receive?

   Illustration: Story of John the Baptist "A man can receive. . ."

3. If you received it, why do you glory, as if" . . .

   The division in Corinth was the result of pride. So Paul presents a series of contrasts for the purpose of trying to humble them:

1. Kings and prisoners (vs. 8-9)

2. Wise men and fools (vs. 10a)

   Paul was a fool according to the standards of men.

   Imagine if Paul had remained a Jewish rabbi?

3. Strong and weak (vs. 10b)

   Illustration: Paul’s thorn in the flesh (II Cor 12:7-10)

4. Honorable and despised (vs.10c-13)

   Father (vs.14-21)

   a. In conception (vs.14-16)

   b. In instruction (vs.17)

   c. In correction (vs.18-21)

III. TENDERNESS (vs. 14-21)
Remember in (3:1-4) Paul compared the local church to a family.

Now Paul reminds the Corinthians of the ministry he had among them as their spiritual father!

1. He had founded the family (vs. 14-15)

   So it is with us when we lead a person to Christ!

   How? "through the gospel"

2. He was an example to the family (vs. 16-17)

   Spiritual leaders like parents need to be good examples!

3. He disciplined the family (vs.18-21)

   A faithful parent must discipline his children. It is not enough to teach them and be an example before them, they must also discipline them.

REVIEW:

1. Faithfulness (vs.12)

2. Humbleness (vs. 7)

3. Tenderness (vs. 21)

Comments on 1 Corinthians 4 by Warren W. Wiersbe:

“Life is a stewardship, so be faithful ( vs 1-5). We judge ourselves, and others judge us; but the Final Judge is the Lord. Live to please Him alone. Life if a gift, so be humble (vs. 6-9). Your abilities and blessings came from God; you cannot take credit for them. They are God's gift to you, and your use of them is your gift to God. It is sinful to contrast various Christian workers (1:12) because only God knows their hearts. Life is a battle, so be courageous (vs. 9-13). If the apostles were the greatest Christians who ever lived, and they were filth and the scum of the earth, where did that leave the boasting Corinthians? Life is a school, so be teachable (vs.14-21). Paul saw himself as a father in the Lord who had to instruct and discipline his children. Our Father in heaven uses many hands and voices to teach us, and we must be willing pupils as we go through life.”
INTRODUCTION:
Vance Havner - the most quoted preacher In America: "People used to blush when they were ashamed. Now they are ashamed if they blush. Modesty has disappeared and a brazen generation with no fear of God before its eyes mocks at sin. We are so fond of being called tolerant and broadminded that we wink at sin when we out to weep."

Paul has now dealt with the problem of division in the church at Corinth. But sad to say the church was also defiled - some of its members were guilty of sexual immorality. And instead of weeping at the sin they were winking at it. Everybody knew about it, but nobody seemed to want to do anything about it. (sin and complacency)

So Paul now seeks to deal with their tolerant attitude toward sexual sin.

He comes as it were with a rod (see 4:21)

He gives three reasons why the church should exercise loving but firm discipline and deal with the offending member.

I. FOR THE GOOD OF THE OFFENDER (vs. 1-5)

(vs. 2) Billy Sunday
"One reason sin flourishes is that it's treated like a cream puff instead of a rattlesnake"

Paul’s chief concern was there total lack of concern!

What about Matt 7 ? (the danger of self-righteous condemnation)

The purpose of discipline!

Gal 6 ? May God give us the right attitude!

Reasons congregations don't practice church discipline:

1. Don't believe it's wrong or sinful!
2. They think it's unloving - tolerance!
3. Lack of commitment to obey God’s word the Bible.
4. Lack of genuine fellowship with other believers.
II. FOR THE GOOD OF THE CHURCH (vs. 6-8)

Illustration: Acts 5 Ananias and Sapphira

God wants holiness!

III. FOR THE GOOD OF THE WORLD (vs. 9-13)

The church can't win the world if it's like the world!

Gal 6 - The danger of being complacent about sin!
INTRODUCTION:
In 1 Corinthians 6 Paul deals with another problem among the believers in Corinth!

"Lawsuits"

The Corinthians were "divided, defiled," But also Disgraced"

Why?

Corinth was in the church!

It may seem strange to the casual reader that Paul inserted the litigation matter between the sections on the sexual abuse (Ch 5:1-13 & 6:12-20) followed by the chapters on marriage.

Ray Stedman gives us the answer: “We might well ask, "What has lawsuits to do with lust?" The answer is that the greed which prompts lawsuits is a form of lust. Lawsuits usually arise out of greed, or covetousness. A lawsuit is an attempt to force another person to yield to you what you regard as your right. The dictionary defines lust as 'obsessive craving or desire,' so it is apparent that someone who is greedy, especially regarding material matters, is guilty of a form of lust, of making things more important than people."

"Making your gain more important than God's glory"

1. The Problem (vs. 1)

Paul’s concern was not that the believers were having disagreements for they are bound to come! But what concerned Paul was their method of resolving the conflict!

But what about Paul's use of the civil legal system!

He used it only as a last resort and never in a dispute with professing Christian!

Paul is not saying that the courts were corrupt, but rather, he’s saying that Christians should not parade any of their differences before the world!
2. Their Ignorance (vs. 2-6)

(vs. 2) "do you not know" remember the Corinthians boasted about their wisdom.

Paul asked them six rhetorical questions that suggest an affirmative answer (see vs. 2,3,9,15,16,19)

There were three things the believers in Corinth were forgetting!:

1. The saints will judge the world (vs. 2)
   When? - Answer Dan 7:22 - at the second coming
   It's during the kingdom age!
   Paul's argument is obvious!

2. The saints will judge angels (vs. 3)
   The Bible teaches that evil angels are to be judge!
   (II Pet 2:4, & Jude 6)
   And we will share in that judgment!
   When? It doesn't say!
   Answer ? At the beginning of the kingdom age? Or at the end of the millennial age?!
   Never the less, the application is plain!

3. The saints should judge themselves (vs. 4-6)
   The legal action had already taken place!
   Paul knew there were some lessons that the Corinthians needed to learn!
   1. Learn to admit their sin (vs. 7-8)
      Illustration:
      Jesus said - Matt 5:39
Jesus - on the cross! I Pet 2:23
(vs. 8) Don't render evil for evil (Rom 12:17-21)

2. Learn to recognize the position of the unsaved (vs. 9-10)

In this passage, Paul affirmed twice that the unsaved would "not inherit the kingdom of God." This judgment is based both on the unbeliever's position (6:9a) and practice (6:10b). The inference is evident. Why should Christians who are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17; Gal. 4:7), submit themselves to those whose character and conduct will prevent them from entering into the kingdom? (The term 'unrighteous' is the same word translated ("unjust") (6:1). It refers to the unjustified standing of the lost, although it also could include their sinful behavior. Regardless of his religious profession (cf. 5:11) a person whose life-style is habitually marked by any of these catalogued sins is not saved (cf.1John 3:6-10). A Christian is "deceived" if he thinks that there is no correlation between spiritual position and practice (James 2:14,18). Since the term ('idolater') falls within the group dealing with physical immorality, it is apparently points out those who had sexual relations with temple priests and priestesses. The 'effeminate' (based upon a word meaning 'soft') refers to homosexuals, whereas the 'abusers of themselves with mankind' could refer to sadistic, sexual perverts. Thieves are those who steal secretly, rather than by force.

3. Learn to rejoice in their salvation (vs.11)
INTRODUCTION: In I Corinthians 6:12-20 we have some important teaching on the subject of the believer's body and sexual desires!

Why?

Many of the gentile Christians living in the wicked city of Corinth had brought into their new experience in Christ pagan concepts about the body and sexuality.

The Greeks - looked down on the body - there was a proverbial saying "the body is a tomb"

This view issued in one of two attitudes:

1. Asceticism

2. License - do with it as you please!

They said - "Sex is a normal physical function so why not use it as you please?"

They said – (vs. 12) "All things are lawful"

(vs. 13) "Food for the belly and the belly for food"

Paul says NO!

(vs. 13) "the body is not for fornication" but "it's for the Lord."

(vs. 20) "Glorify God in your body"

Note four basic truths about your body!

1. Principles for the body (vs. 12-13a)

   Principles are given so we as believers can fulfill the desires of the body according to divine standards.

   1. "All things are lawful unto me" (vs. 12)

      Of course Paul does not mean all things in an absolute sense.
"All things" would not include activities expressly forbidden in Scripture!

Illustration: (6:9-10) and the Ten Commandments (Ex 20-1-7)

Paul meant that the satisfaction of God given physical desires was within the will of God for every believer. God implanted within the bodies of men and women certain functions and drives which in themselves are proper and good.

Like - Craving for food
   The need for drink
   Sexual attraction

2. "All things are not profitable" (vs. 12)

Is it beneficial?

These God given desires have limitations!

Satisfaction cannot take place at any time, in any place, and under all circumstances. Gluttony, drunkenness, and premarital and extra marital sex are violations of these desires.

Is it profitable?

3. Slavery is to be avoided (vs. 12)

Will it bring me under its power?

Illustration: Man is reduced to an animal level!

4. Desires are only temporary (vs.13a)

God created food so that it would satisfy the needs of the physical stomach. He also designed the stomach so that it could use the food for its satisfaction and health. However, the purposes of both food and the natural stomach will be rendered inoperative at death and in the subsequent resurrection body. There will be no sexual relations in eternity (Matt 22:30), and although the resurrection body will have the ability to eat (Luke 24:41-43), there is no indication
that is will need to eat. It is "the belly," and not "the body," that "God shall destroy."

2. The Purpose of the body (vs. 13b-14)

God's redemptive purpose involves your physical body!

Note: "the Lord for the body" (vs. 13)

So - you cannot separate your body from your soul if you are to grow spiritually. Christianity involves the commitment of the total being! (Rom 12:1)

3. Perversion of the body (vs. 15-18)

Paul's questions showed their ignorance over sexual matters!

Paul points out three things they needed to know!

A. They should recognize their union with Christ (vs. 14)

B. They should avoid union with harlots (vs.16-17)

C. They should flee sexual sin (vs. 18)

Note in Greek it's a command and in the present tense so it's "Keep on fleeing"

Illustration: Joseph (Gen 39), contrast with David (II Sam 11)

Paul's reason for fleeing sexual sin! (vs.18)

It's a sin against your own body!

Remember:

1. Sexual sin is not profitable (vs. 12)
2. Sexual sin is enslaving (vs. 12)
3. Sexual sin perverts (vs.13)

Warren W. Wiersbe

“There is certainly excitement and enjoyment in sexual experience outside of marriage, but there is not enrichment. Sex outside of marriage is like a man robbing a bank: he gets something, but it is not his
and he will one day pay for it. Sex within marriage can be like a person putting money into a bank: there is safety, security, and he will collect dividends. Sex within marriage can build a relationship that brings joys in the future; but sex apart from marriage has a way of weakening future relationships.”

4. The possession of the body (vs. 19-20)

Paul’s clinching argument for sexual purity is the ownership of the believers body.

1. Your body is indwelt by God the Holy Spirit (vs. 19)

   The Holy Spirit is the divine occupant of every believer!

2. Your body is bought by God the son (vs. 20)

   Slaves to sin but now slaves to righteousness. We are the Lord's by creation and redemption.

   The price - His blood!

   WOW! what Love!

3. Your body is to glorify God the Father (vs. 20)

Illustration: His body broken for you!

   God - created - you
   Son - redeemed - you
   Spirit - indwells - you
Questions about Marriage
I Corinthians 7:1-16

INTRODUCTION:

“When William Jennings Bryan went to call on the father of his prospective wife to seek the hand of his daughter in marriage, knowing the strong religious feeling of the father, he thought to strengthen his case by quoting the proverb of Solomon: "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing" (Prov. 18:22) To his surprise the father replied with a citation from the apostle Paul (1 Cor 7:38) to the effect that he that marrieth doeth well, but that he that marrieth not doeth better. The young suitor was for a moment confused. Then with a happy inspiration he replied that Paul had no wife and Solomon had seven hundred, and Solomon, therefore, ought to be the better judge as to marriage.”

C. Reuben Anderson

“Sad to say Paul's words in the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians have been grossly misunderstood. Because of certain statements contained in it. Paul has been pictured by His critic's as 'a narrow ascetic, a warped and twisted man who hated women and despised marriage’.”

C. Coleman Luk

Such a conclusion is utterly ridiculous!

As we study this chapter we need to keep two facts in mind.

1. Paul is not here dealing with the subject of marriage in general, but is answering specific questions the Corinthians had asked him.

The questions they asked about:

- Marital problems (7:1-24)
- Virgins (7:25)
- Food offered to idols (8:1)
- Responsibilities of women within the church (11:2)
- The communion service (11:17)
- Spiritual gifts (12:1)
- The doctrine of physical resurrection (15:1)
- And a special relief collection (16:1)
"No attempt is made to state the Christian doctrine of marriage in its fullness and completeness. That must be sought elsewhere, and will be found if we study his Ephesian and Colossian letters, and those to Timothy. There we have specific instructions on the marriage relationship. Here it looks as though Paul considered the marriage state a little lower than the state of celibacy. However, he cannot be interpreted in that way, for do not forget that when he was writing to Timothy he spoke of 'forbidding to marry' as a 'doctrine of demons'."

G. Campbell Morgan

2. We need to remember that the instructions Paul gives in this chapter were in light of special conditions existing at that time and place. (see vs. 26)

In answering the questions Paul addressed his counsel to seven different groups of people.

1. Married (vs. 1-7)
2. Unmarried and widows (vs. 8-9)
3. Christian couples (vs. 10-11)
4. Mixed couples (vs. 12-24)
5. Singles (vs. 25-35)
6. The parents of singles (vs. 36-38)
7. Widows (vs. 39-40)

I. THE MARRIED (vs. 1-7)

1. Singleness is good (vs. 1) "it is good for a man not to touch a woman"

Paul did not say it's better or necessary only that it's 'good'.

Paul saying 'sex is bad' or 'evil'.

2. Marriage is commended (vs. 2) not commanded
   a. Because of the sinfulness of their city!

   But don't get married for sexual reason only?

   It's not the purpose of marriage.

   b. Marriage is a 'man' and 'woman' so God's design is monogamy

   Note: "own" not 'another's'.

   "The two become one flesh"
c. This verse shows that the fulfillment of sexual needs within the Marriage relationship is right, and fidelity to that relationship is enjoined upon each partner.

3. Married people should meet the sexual needs of each other (vs. 3)

If your not willing to do that don't get married!

(vs. 1) If you’re single it’s good not to touch a woman! But if you’re married it's not good to withhold sexual intimacy from your spouse!

The word "benevolence" refers to the conjugal or sexual rights.

The word "render" is a command in the present tense!

Sexual intimacy should be a constant part of the marital union.

The New Living Translation: (Prov 5:15-19)

Drink water from your own well - share your love only with your wife. Why spill the water of your springs in public, having sex with just any one? You should reserve it for yourselves. Don't share it with strangers. Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you. Rejoice in the wife of your youth. She is a loving doe, a graceful deer. Let her breasts satisfy you always. May you always be captivated by her love.

4. Marital partners belong to each other. (vs. 4)

Both the husband and the wife are to lovingly give themselves to each other.

5. Married persons should not 'rob' or defraud each other. (vs. 5)

Or "cheat" them (don't use as a weapon)

a. Sexual abstinence in marriage must be a mutual consent.

b. For the purpose of fasting and prayers!

c. And intimacies should be resumed so Satan does not tempt you to fulfill your desires outside of your marriage!

Be careful you don't drive your mate into the arms of another!

Satan's work! to destroy your marriage!
"Let the wife make the husband glad to come home, and let him make her sorry to see him leave." Martin Luther (vs. 6-7) Paul quickly points out that both the single life and the married life are permitted and not commanded.

It's a question of God's gift! (vs. 7)

II. UNMARRIED AND WIDOWS (vs. 8-9)

III. CHRISTIAN COUPLES (vs. 10-11)

Background Note: the Corinthian Christians thought it might be more spiritual to be single! So they were breaking up their existing marriages

Paul says - - 'the Lord said' 'no way!

1. The wife or husband are not to depart (divorce)
   Divorce is not God's will
2. If you do divorce you cannot get married again!
3. You should seek to be reconciled.
   "the myth of the greener grass!

IV. CHRISTIANS MARRIED TO NON-CHRISTIANS (vs. 12-16) (Remember 1 Pet 3)

1. The marriage should continue (vs. 12-13)
   In the Old Testament book of Ezra (Ezra 9) the Jew's were permitted to put away their gentile wives, but this is not for Christians today.
   Many got saved after they were married!
   Jesus said I've come to bring a sword!
   Why should the marriage continue?
   The answer (vs. 14)
   a. The sanctification of the unsaved partner (vs. 14)
      Not saved
Someone to pray! ex. . .
I Pet 3:1-6

b. The sanctification of the children (vs. 14)

Not saved 'holy' set-a-part!

prayer, word of God, your life ex. . .

Sometimes the unsaved partner wants to leave (vs. 15)

Remember God's will is to save them (vs. 16)

II Pet 3:9 "the Lord is not slack" . . . .

Are You Saved?
Questions About Singleness
I Corinthians 7:17-40

INTRODUCTION:
We have come to the section in our study of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians where he answers specific questions.

They had asked:

1. Stay married?
2. Sex in marriage?
3. Singleness?

We now focus on singleness!

Barbara Hughes in her new book "Disciplines of a Godly Woman" states: “Everything in our culture - books, movies, recreational pastimes - tend to push the idea that sex and romance are the ultimate pursuit. Even our evangelical churches- (though in reaction to the demise of family life and the alarming escalation of divorce in our country)- have overemphasized family life to the point that singles feel out of place. Many single Christian women have received from the church what feels like a loud and clear message that their singleness is "something to be fixed."

As a result many single people feel unhappy, unfulfilled, and some go on a mad search, looking for that right person to bring them happiness!

But contrary to what many may think Paul says singleness can be a Blessed gift from God! (See vs.1 and vs. 40)

The first thing Paul points out is that being married or single is an assignment from God.

I. GOD’S ASSIGNMENT (vs. 17-24)

Paul is giving us a guiding rule that he had given in all the churches, that each believer should retain the place in life that the Lord has assigned or called him to!

Where you are is not an accident it's an assignment, God put you where you are!

the word "distributed" (vs. 17) is "assigned"
Paul is saying "Abide in your calling" or "grow where you are planted" (vs. 17-20)

Paul is not saying that a believer should never change their status or occupation or sinful lifestyle, rather he's saying that they should seek to know how God has called them and abide there!

Singleness is a gift - Jesus (Matt 19)

You say it's a gift I don't want!

A. Married or single is not the key to happiness! It's walking with Jesus!

B. The gift of singleness is not always a permanent state.

But for now it's God's will for your life! So be obedient and find your fulfillment in God!

Some may ask didn't God Himself say, "it is not good for man to be alone"?

Yes! But that was before the fall!

John Piper speaks on this point:
“... Genesis 2:18 was a statement about man before the Fall. Perhaps, if there had been no Fall, there would have been no singleness. Everyone would have had a perfectly compatible personality type for someone else; people and situations would have matched up perfectly; no sin would have made us blind or gullible or hasty; and no great commission - no lostness, no famine, no sickness, no misery - would call for extraordinary measures of sacrifice in marriage and singleness. But that is not our world. So sometimes - many times - it is good for a person to be alone.”

The New Testament gives a new dignity to singleness: it's a valid gift of God and a great way to serve God.

What are some of the reason for singleness?

II. THE ADVANTAGES TO SINGLENES (vs. 25-35)

(vs. 25) There are advantages to being single, ask a married person!

Four reasons:

1. The present distress or 'crisis' (vs. 26-27)
2. The problems of the flesh (vs. 28)

John MacArthur:

“Trouble (thlipsis) literally means 'pressed together, or under pressure'. Marriage presses two people together in the closest possible ways. The two become one, but they are still two personalities, two distinct people with their own likes and dislikes,

their own characteristics, emotions, temperaments, and wills. Each partner has some degree of anger, selfishness, dishonesty, pride, forgetfulness, and thoughtlessness. That is true even of the best marriages. when one partner is an unbeliever, or is immature, self-centered, temperamental, or domineering, every conflict is magnified. Marriage involves conflicts, demands, hardships, sacrifices, and adjustments that singleness does not. Marriage is ordained of God, good, holy, and fulfilling; but does not solve all problems. Marriages never should be used as a way of escape, even from loneliness. Many people carry their loneliness right into marriage, and end up making another person lonely. And although it is God's means for normal sexual fulfillment, marriage does not end temptation to lust and immorality. Paul tells those who do not have sexual self-control to 'marry'; for it is better to marry than to burn" (7:9) But even though there is the satisfaction of physical desire, the mind may be drawn to illicit fulfillment. Sexual sins will not be corrected by marriage. they may only be worsened by adding another person to their list of afflicted people. Through repentance and forgiveness they can, of course, be removed after a person is married - but they will not be removed by the marriage. Nor is marriage a guarantee that sexual sin will not return. There are troubles unique to singleness, but they may be exceeded by those in marriage.

3. The passing the is world (vs. 29-31)

Speaking in hyperbole - Paul in a series of five comparisons, points out that believers should not permit this earthly life determine or control their spiritual life or growth. Life is short, time is short.

H. A. Ironside on (vs. 29):
“Everyone is to act in view of the fact that the time is indeed fleeting, the Lord's return is nearing, and no consideration of personal comfort is to be allowed to hinder devotions to the will of God.”

W. E. Vines says:

“The meaning is not, of course, that a married man is to refrain from behaving as a husband should, but that his relationship to his wife should be entirely subservient to his higher relationship with the Lord. . . who is to have the first place in the heart; he is not to permit a natural relation to obstruct his obedience to Christ.”

1. Marriage (vs. 29) as though you went married.

2. Weep (vs. 30) sorrow or mourners - don't get engrossed in your sorrow and self-pity.

3. Rejoice (vs. 30) caught up in your - pleasures and happiness!

4. Buy (vs. 30) Business commerce ! or possessions

Illustration: new house, new car! ex. . .

5. Use this world (vs. 31) but don't worship it!

"Let your contact with this world be as light as possible"

Why? (vs. 31) "For" it's passing away!

Illustration: D.L. Moody's favorite verse 1 John 2:15-17

Paul is saying is that we should use our short time (vs. 29) in this life for eternal purposes!

The single life makes it easier to do that!

4. The preoccupations of marriage (vs. 32-35)

Robert G. Gromacki: “Paul's major concern was that the Corinthians Christians would not take on new responsibilities that would increase their anxiety in this life.”

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He wanted them to serve the Lord without distraction!

Illustration:

John R. W. Stott,
Henrettea Mears
C. S. Lewis married in his 60's.

Illustration: John Wesley

Remember the sower and the seed!

Barbara Hughes in a chapter from her book "Disciplines of a Godly Woman" "Disciplines of singleness" a single friend Lois Hagger:

1. I can change plans at a moment's notice. It would be common courtesy to let a roommate know my whereabouts, but I don't need her approval.

2. My personal time is my own. I have more time to do things I want to do than my married friends do.

3. I, and I alone, decide how I will use my money. I only have to consult the Lord about my budget. I also generally have greater amounts of discretionary money at my disposal that most of my married friends, so I can be quite generous with it.

4. Because I am single, I can give my undivided devotion to the Lord. Because I am in ministry. I am able to use the majority of my time serving the Lord while my married friends must spend a majority of their time caring for the needs of family and children. But even if I were not in ministry, my free time is still more available to use for the Lord that my married friends' time, for the same reason.

(A check list from Lois Hagger)

1. Have you fallen into the habit of considering singleness a disability?

2. Have you taken a passive role rather than expanding your interests and contacts.

3. Have you been so busily on the lookout for a life partner that you've missed enriching friendships?
4. Are you tempted to date unbelievers?

5. Do you indulge yourself in any secret or hidden life you wouldn't want others to see?

III. SOME FINAL ADVISE (vs. 36-40)

Advice to singles:

1. Focus on being the right person!
   Your character, your walk with God (let god have His way)

2. Don't date stop-look-listen
   Be friends- look for red lights - or green lights
   Remember 'only in the Lord'

3. Get godly counsel

4. Trust God to provide

5. Be willing to wait for God's timing.

"The only place you'll be truly happy is in the will of God!"
Principles of Christian Liberty (Pt 1)
I Corinthians 8:1-13

INTRODUCTION:
(vs. 1) Beginning with chapter 7, Paul is answering questions he was asked by the Christians in Corinth!

The first question was about marriage!

In chapters 8-10 Paul answers questions asked him about "meat offered to idols."

So what's the problem?

What does all this have to do with us today?

It's the question of "Christian Liberty"

One of the big debates among Christians has centered around questionable practices that many believers feel to be wrong but are not specifically forbidden in Scriptures.

Illustration: drinking alcohol, smoking, dancing, card playing, wearing makeup, Sunday sports, styles of music, the theater or movies, dress, amusement parks!

Because these issues are not dealt with in black and white in the Bible, it has caused great problems!

Like many Christians today the Corinthians wanted a yes or no answer from Paul!

There are two common extremes when it comes to "doubtful things" that need to be avoided!

1. Legalism - John MacArthur

"Legalism believes that every act, every habit, every type of behavior is either black or white. Legalist live by rules rather than be the Spirit. They classify everything as either good or bad, whether the Bible mentions it or not. They develop exhaustive lists of dos and don'ts. Doing the things on the good list or avoiding the things on the bad list is their idea of spirituality, no matter what the inner person is like. Their lives are law controlled, not Spirit controlled. But refraining from doing things is not spiritually; walking in the Spirit is spirituality."
2. License - everything is acceptable as long as it's not forbidden in Scripture.

3. The balance is liberty! (free in Jesus)

   But a liberty, balanced by "love".

   Robert G. Gromacki

   "The 'meat' question, however, belongs to the area of Christian liberty. The rightness or wrongness in eating such meat is not found in the meat itself or in the eating of it. Both of these are morally neutral. The question of sin is introduced by the motivation behind the eating and by the consequences produced by the eating. Thus is was that Paul had to present the principles of grace that stood in marked contrast both to a firm legalism, "Do" or "Don't") and to a selfish individualism ("Nobody can tell me what to do")."

In answering the specific question about eating food offered to idols, Paul laid down a general and universal principle. (See 8:9)

In giving this principle in chapter 8 Paul responds to three reasons some of the Corinthians gave for acting as they pleased in regard to practices not specifically forbidden by God.

I. WE KNOW THAT WE ALL HAVE KNOWLEDGE (vs.1-3)
"Things offered unto idols" is one word in Greek and can be translated "idol sacrifices"

Illustration: Food sacrifices - why?

1. The first reason that was given was summarized by Paul (vs. 1) "We know that we all have knowledge"

   The problem is that knowledge alone is not sufficient!

   Knowledge alone can lead to a feeling of superiority and pride!

2. Knowledge must be combined with love (vs. 1)

   Why? Because it builds up!

   The purpose of Christian fellowship is edification. (See 14:12)
3. No one has complete knowledge (vs. 2)
   There is always room for growth!

4. If we know and love God! We will also love our brothers
   (1 John 5:1)
   Love will set limits on Christian liberty!
   We will give up for others (Phil 2:4)
   How about you? Knowledge only? no love? (1 Cor 13)

II. WE KNOW THAT AN IDOL IS NOTHING (vs. 4-7)

1. An idol is nothing (vs. 4)
   An idol is a non-entity it's not a living personality.
   Psalms 115:4-7
   Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have
   mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They
   have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:
   They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk
   not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them
   are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.

2. Only one God exists (vs. 4b)
   It's the God who created the world and who has revealed Himself
   through the Scriptures.

3. Names and reality are different (vs. 5)

4. The one true God is the source of all things, both physical and
   immaterial and His is the goal and purpose for our living (vs. 6).

5. There is one Lord (vs. 6b)
   a. It's Jesus Christ
   b. He is the source of all things! Col 1:16
   c. Through Him we are saved.

   Paul points out one more truth in verse seven. One, they no doubt knew
   yet had forgotten in the exercising of liberty. (See vs. 7)
We need to remember not all Christians are mature in their knowledge!

Love says "How will it effect others?"

III. WE KNOW THAT FOOD IS NOT AN ISSUE WITH GOD (vs. 8-12)

Robert G. Gromacki

“This reckless use of liberty actually violates the purpose for which Christ died (8:11b). If Christ died to deliver men from sin, why should Christians use their freedom to lead others into sin? Also, since Christ gave up His right when He become man. (Phil 2:5-11), should not Christians also give up their rights to help their brothers?”

(vs. 13) "Wherefore"

Paul restates the principle! (vs.13)

Checklist:

1. Will it stumble a weaker brother or sister? (I Cor 8:9)
2. It is beneficial? (I Cor 6:12)
3. Is it enslaving? (I Cor 6:12)
4. Will it build me and others up? (I Cor 10:23)
5. Will it glorify Christ? (I Cor 10:31)
6. Will it help or hinder in winning the lost? (I Cor 10:33)
7. Is it Christ like? (I Cor 11:1)
INTRODUCTION:
One of the most sacred words for us as Americans is 'freedom'. We sing of letting 'freedom ring' and that we are the 'land of the free'.

As Christians we are also "free", free in Christ!

If we exercise our freedoms in a way that is harmful to others we are sinning!

In chapter 9 Paul seeks to encourage the Corinthians to forfeit their liberties/rights for the sake of others.

They were not to use their rights or privileges but were to surrender them for the good of others! This is true of us too!

To encourage them in this direction Paul used himself as an illustration of giving up his rights for the benefit of others.

Note 8:13 "I will eat no flesh". . .

I. PAUL TALKED ABOUT HIS UNCLAIMED RIGHTS OR FREEDOMS. (vs. 1-14)

1. As an apostle (vs. 1-6)

   Notice that all of questions expect a yes answer!

2. As a human being (vs. 7-10)

3. As a minister (vs. 11-14)

   (vs. 12) Paul didn't use his power!

   How about you?

II. THE REASONS PAUL DID NOT USE HIS RIGHT (vs. 15-23)

Paul outlines the whole conception of his ministry.

1. He regarded it as a privilege (vs.15)

   It is a privilege to serve others.
2. He regarded it as a responsibility (vs. 16-17)

  It's a calling - God had chosen him!

3. He knew he would be rewarded (vs. 18)

  The blessing of seeing lives changed!

4. He really loved sinners and wanted to win them to Christ.

  Notice (vs. 23) "for the gospel sake!"

  How about you!?

  "it's getting alongside people (vs. 19-23)

  Like - Jesus - John 4

  It's a readiness to throw yourself into the interests of others.

  Do we really care?? Do we ever try?

  Lost souls are more important than our rights!"

III. PAUL CLOSES WITH AN EXHORTATION FOR THOSE WHO WANTED TO USE THEIR LIBERTIES OR RIGHTS THAT LIKE ATHLETES, WE MUST PRACTICE SELF-DISCIPLINE LEST WE BE DISQUALIFIED. (vs. 24-27)

  1. We are all running a race!

  2. We must run to win!

  3. We must discipline ourselves

      Our bodies
      Our minds
      Our souls.
INTRODUCTION:
The famous Harvard philosophy professor George Santayana wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." History can teach us where other people have made mistakes as they met the challenges of life. If we fail to learn from their examples, we too may fall when circumstances present us with similar challenges.

Paul judged that the history of Israel provided many important lessons for the church. In this chapter he drew from history to alert the Corinthians that their knowledge regarding meat sacrificed to idols might cause them to become arrogant. Calling their attention to Israel's wilderness wanderings in the days of Moses, Paul warned that the Corinthians church risked repeating Israel's idolatries.

Paul is warning the overconfident (vs. 12) don't misuse your liberty!

The possession and awareness of Christian liberty must be balanced by caution. (See 9:27)

Knowing this Paul uses Israel's history as an illustration of the danger of overconfidence.

There are three main lessons:

I. BLESSINGS ARE NO GUARANTEE OF SUCCESS (vs. 1-4)

(vs. 1) Don't be ignorant"

Warren W. Wiersbe: "there are dangers to maturity as well as to immaturity"

Paul used the word "all" five times, he was showing us that all in Israel had the same blessings yet all did not succeed!

It's the same in the church!

What were the blessings that all Israel enjoyed?

1. They all were under the cloud (vs. 1b; Ex 13:21-22)

" And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by
day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the
pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

2. They all passed through the sea (vs. 1c)

   The Exodus! (Ex 14)

   For us - redemption from the bondage of sin!

   How?

   The Blood of the Lamb!

   Illustration: We can't save ourselves it was a supernatural
   redemption!

3. They all were baptized (vs. 2)

   Old Testament: 'baptized'? It's 'Identification'

   New Testament: us too - by the Holy Spirit

   Gal 3:27

4. They all ate the spiritual food (vs. 3)

   Old Testament: Ps 78:25 called the manna "angel food" forty years-
everyday but the Sabbath!

   It was 'spiritual' because of it's heavenly origin and it's spiritual
   significance

   For us - It's Jesus

   John 6:35 (Jesus said)
   "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth
   you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which
   cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. John
   6:32-33; "I am the bread of life"

   Robert G. Gromacki: "Just as the eating of manna gave temporary
   physical life, so the eating of Christ (believing and receiving Him)
   brings eternal life"

   And feeding on the word!

5. They all drank the water (vs. 4)
Old Testament: Ex 17:1 at Rephidin

New Testament: It's "Christ" We drink by faith!

The danger of falling into sin when - experiencing your liberty!

Spiritual, privileges never give us license to sin.

From Israel's history we learn
II. THAT A GOOD BEGINNING DOES NOT GUARANTEE A GOOD ENDING (vs. 5-10)

We see Israel's fall (vs. 5)

(vs. 5-6) Num 14 - Story of "Kadesh Barnea"

Why? "fear and unbelief"

(vs. 6) Paul saw a clear analogy between the experience of Israel and the Christian!

"Examples or Types"

As we read the stories of Israel's sins in the Old Testament we should learn to avoid them!

(vs. 6) 'we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted'.

What were some of their sins?

1. Idolatry (vs. 7)

Old Testament: Ex 32

For us! Anything that takes God's place!

Illustration: Money!

2. Fornication (vs. 8)

Moses wrote. "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. (Numbers 25:1-2).
*This fornication included intermarriage with the pagans and also premarital and extramarital sexual relationships with them. The apostle had earlier warned against this misused of the believer's body (6:9-10). Such sexual sin, both real and imagined, is a direct result of intimate involvement in the practices of a pagan society. In fact, it was Balaam' . . . who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." Rev 2:14 cf

Notice: it brought the judgment of God (vs. 8)

So also for us!

William Barkley : "only a passionate love of purity can save a man from impurity"

"A fear of God"

3. Tempting the Lord (vs. 9)

Old Testament (Ex 17 & Num 21) - The Israelites complained about their lack of food and water. They thought that life was better back in Egypt So God sent poisonous snakes!

Remember the cure! It's looking to Jesus in faith (John 3:14-15)

Lesson - we should look to Jesus when we are tempted to complain.

4. "Murmuring" (vs. 10)

Old Testament: (Num 16) The rebellion by Korah & Dathan

Robert G. Gromacki: "The application of this admonition to the Corinthians is not entirely clear. In the area of Christian liberty, however, there are many who do not want to listen to the counsel of the church's leaders; they want to guide own lives. This can only bring ruin."

III. WE LEARN THAT: GOD CAN HELP US OVERCOME TEMPTATION (vs. 11-13):

1. Israel's history is an admonition to us! (vs. 11)

Definition: "A warning - designed to change past behavior and to introduce new patterns of life."

2. The warnings in verse 12 see it! (vs. 12)
Remember - Prov 16:18 "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall"

Illustration: Peter! Steps to his falling:

1. Overconfidence
2. Prayerlessness
3. Following far off
4. Wrong company

"I will never fall!" (See 1 Pet 1:3-11)

We should pray 'Lord keep me humble, trusting You!'

3. Remember (vs. 13)

1. "Temptations" or 'test' of believers are common human experiences

   God permits them - but He's not the source!

   Illustration: Job

2. The source of temptation is our lust! (also devil, & world)

3. But God is faithful!

   Lam. 3:22-23

   It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

   Notice He will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability to resist!

4. Will make a way for victory! (vs. 13)

   Illustration: used of sailor lighting a ship in storm! us too!

   Illustration: The way?

   1. Look to Jesus - prayer – (Heb 2) High Priest
2. Obey His word

3. Man - Illustration: Joseph!

Several years ago I read in Time magazine of sixty-four-year old Grace Wylie and her roomful of snakes. Best of all she loved the cobras, declaring that they were the most intelligent and the most easily tamed. On one occasion she agreed to pose with her newest pet, a five-foot cobra she had recently received from India. To get into position for the picture, she patted its head, stroked its back, and quietly coaxed it to extend its hood. As the cobra's head began to bob rhythmically back and forth, Mrs. Wylie felt suddenly that is was not responding well. "It's getting nervous," she said, I had better put it away." But as she reached for it, the cobra struck. For a full thirty seconds she struggled to get the needle-sharp fangs out of her middle finger, pressing with all her strength against the cobra's locked jaws. When she had torn the snake loose, she carefully returned it to its cage. Then she calmly instructed the photographer to apply tourniquets to her wrist and elbow and told him where to find stimulants and needles. But the needles were rusty and vials broke in the photographer's hands. "Take me to the hospital at once," she ordered, "this is serious." But all the medical help and serums at the Long Beach Municipal Hospital were of no avail to save the life of Grace Wylie. Exactly one hour and forty minutes after she had been bitten, her body suddenly stiffened and she lay dead on her hospital bed.
INTRODUCTION:
(vs. 14-15) The apostle Paul is concerned that some of the Corinthian believers were in danger.

The danger of overconfidence!

If they were not careful, in the exercising of their liberty in Christ, three things could happen!

1. They could fall into sin (vs. 1-13)
2. They could fellowship with demons (vs. 14-22)
3. They could stumble another believer (vs. 23-11:1)

The same thing is true of us also!

How could this happen?

Note: for the Corinthians - saved from the worship of idols in the pagan temples - but now the danger of going back

Why? Their knowledge and liberty (see 8:1)

The warning (vs. 14) "flee from idolatry"

You say thank God we don't have to worry about that today!

O Yes we do!

1 John 5:21 "Little children keep yourselves from idols"

Illustration: Like the Corinthians we have been set free from the old life with all of its idols

So be careful you don't go back! (to the temples)


Charles Hodge - The danger is that, "by going to the verge of the allowable, they might be drawn in the sinful".
Paul wanted us to have discernment (see vs. 15)

I. THE DANGER OF FELLOWSHIPPING WITH DEMONS (vs. 16-22)

Robert G. Gromecki: “Now Paul shows them that participation in the pagan feast within the temple actually was a misuse of Christian liberty and really involved them in fellowship with the evil world of demons”.

In II Cor 6:14-7:1 Paul called for absolute separation from any involvement in pagan idolatry. And he gave five reasons in the form of rhetorical questions.

Paul says eating involves fellowship and he illustrated this in three ways.

1. The ordinance of the Lord’s supper (vs. 16-17)
   Notice the contrast "we many" with "one Bread" (vs. 17)

2. The Old Testament priest and the sacrifices (vs. 18)

3. Pagans and their sacrifices to idols (vs. 19-20)
   The conclusion - "Mutual fellowship with God and demons is impossible" (vs. 21-22)

II. THE DANGER OF STUMBLING ANOTHER (vs. 23-11:1)

Paul repeats the principles of Christian liberty in vs. 23-24

1. Edification over gratification (vs. 23)

2. Others over self (vs. 24)
   Illustration: Phil 2
   Note: true love 13:5 "seeketh not its own"

The principle illustrated (vs. 25-30)

1. The meat market (vs. 25-26)

2. The private dinner (vs. 27)
   It’s ok to have dinner with the unsaved
   Illustration: Jesus and Zaccheus!

3. The religious dinner (vs. 28-30)
Don't be a legalist!

II. THE DANGER OF STUMBLING ANOTHER (vs. 23 - 11:1)

In concluding the long section on Christian Liberty 8:1-11:1

Paul issued three simple commands!

1. Do everything for the glory of God (vs. 31)
   
   everything?
   
   Is there anything in your life that doesn't glorify Him?

2. Give no offense (vs. 32-33)
   
   How about you?
   
   If Christians were more concerned about winning the lost we wouldn't be fighting over our liberties! or how far into the world they can go!

3. Be followers of me (11:1)
   
   Paul followed Christ!
   
   Notice how many of us can say this? Because there are many things in our lives that we don't want others to follow.

Warren W. Wiersbe

"Out of these chapters come several "test" we may apply to our own decisions and activities. "All things are lawful" BUT-

1. Will they lead to freedom or slavery? (6:12)
2. Will they make me a stumbling block or a stepping-stone? (8:13)
3. Will they build me up or tear me down? (10:23)
4. Will they only please me, or will they glorify Christ? (10:31)
5. Will they help to win the lost to Christ or turn them away? (10:33)"

1. Knowledge - balanced by love.
2. Experience - balanced by caution.
3. Freedom - balanced by responsibility
INTRODUCTION:
This passage is "The most complex controversial, and opaque of any text of comparable length in the new testament".

Chapter's 11-14 bring us to a new division in 1 Corinthians

Paul moves from the subject of personal liberties to the problems of public worship.

The problems Paul dealt with were:

1. The question of head coverings for women and their demeanor in public worship.
2. The disorder in the Lord's Supper.
3. Their ignorance of spiritual gifts.

We look at the first problem. . . .

What was the problem? - Answer!

Paul was concerned that their actions were:

1. Dishonoring to God.
2. Dishonoring to their husbands.
3. Distorting their testimony to unbelievers!

Because of their lack of submission to God's authority in the church and home.

Paul points out five things he wants them to know (vs. 3)

1. The Order of Authority (vs. 2-3)

Illustration: J. Vernon McGee - speaking about a pastor having trouble in his church. "I asked him what the problem was. He said it was that he had too many chiefs and not enough Indians; everyone wanted to be a leader. Every ordered society is built on two pillars authority and subjection to that authority. It is impossible to have a well functioning community where these two principles are not observed."
If the church, and the home, and society are to function smoothly we need to understand the order of authority. Paul mentions three relationships involving authority (or headship) and subjection (vs. 3)

a) Christ was subject to God.

You say I thought Jesus was God?

He is but within the Godhead submission exist!

"A clear distinction must be made between the equality of essence, and the headship of function." The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are equally God.

One is not more divine than the other!

a) The Father is God Eph 1:3

b) The Son is God Heb 1:8

c) The Spirit is God Acts 5:3-4

But - There is headship for function! (Note for husbands & wives) Jesus Christ who is equal in every way with God the Father nevertheless willingly submitted to the Father and carried out His plan of salvation for mankind.

Illustration: Phil 2

b) Man is subject to Christ (vs. 3)

Eph 1:22

Question? have you submitted to Christ headship?

NOTE: The head gives direction, it leads!

What is it that has mastered you?

I Christ is your head you must be obedient to Christ you must follow His commands.

Like Eph 5:25 "Husbands love your wife"
Like Ph 2:3 "esteem others more important than yourself"

c) Woman is subject to man or (vs. 3)

"the head of the woman is man"

Headship does not mean superiority, and subjection does not mean inferiority. Remember Christ is subject to God the Father but He is not inferior to Him. So also the woman is subject to man but she is not inferior to him.

Both the man and the woman are equally human and in Christ there is spiritual oneness (Gal 3:28) "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond or free, there is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus.

So - In Christ there is not Race, Rank, or Sex.

Elizabeth George: “. . . also remember! All Christians are called to a life of submission, a life of graciously yielding to others for the good of all. In fact, the Christian life is a life of submission! Every single one of us who names Jesus as Lord is called to be subject to other people. We are to submit to the government and to our employers (1 Peter 2:13-25), we are to submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21), and of course we are to submit to God (1 Peter 5:6)."

To carry out God's divine will for the family and for the church. "the man" has been established as "the head of the woman"

The wife's role or function is to willingly submit to her husband for the sake of their marriage and the glory of God (Eph 5:22)

Elizabeth George, "Women Who Loved God"

“Sometimes following our husband comes easily, but no one will dispute the fact that sometimes it's difficult. But when you submit to God and to His guidelines for headship and submission, you'll be on the path to greater godliness in your marriage and home. This godly submission will also make you more like Jesus and work for the good of all."
In this passage the headship of Christ, husbands, and God have one thing in common, each head should be honored!

Notice the word "dishonorable" in verses 4 & 5.

The big idea is:

Christ honored the Father,
Men should honor Christ
Wives should honor their husbands!
In the home and in the church!

Wives do you?

2. The volition of Authority (vs. 4-6)

   a) By the man (vs. 4)

      Robert G. Gromacki
      "The man should not seek to hide his male status by attempting to manifest his spiritual equality with the woman through outward appearance and actions"

   b) By the woman (vs. 5-6)

      It's O.K. for a woman to 'pray' or 'prophesy' in the church!

      Illustration: (Acts 21) Philip the evangelist - four daughters.

      But a woman cannot fill the position of a pastor or deacon - this would place Her in an authoritative position over the (husband) man which is forbidden in Scripture (1 Tim 2:12)

      The problem in Corinth was in the church there was a women's liberation movement going on!

      It was the mark of a sinful woman!

      Robert G. Gromacki:
      "The 'veil' was a cultural sign of subordination. By removing it, the woman admitted that her
husband was her head in the family but not in the church. In a sense, she was trying to manifest her spiritual sameness with the man ("for that is even all one as if she were shaven")

Today - take off your wedding ring! or your dress!

The problem was - the heart - it was in rebellion to God's authority!

A woman should be consistent - she must act and look like a woman at home and at church"

Note - for Christian wives with unsaved husbands – (1 Pet 3)

So - your- Conversation!
Closes!
Conduct!

3. The Basis of Authority (vs. 7-10)

The basis of authority within the home and the church can be found in the creative purposes of God for both man and woman.

a) The glory of creation (vs. 7)

Both men and women are made in the image of God! It means that as human beings we are basically spirit beings, possessing Intellect, emotion, and will. Paul point here is that man was the pinnacle of God's creative work and because of his priority in creation he also has dominion over the woman. (Gen 3:16)

Paul says "The woman is the glory of the man".

1Cor 11:9

All was finished. Creations was complete. Yet sad words described the condition of Adam, the first man: "For Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him" (Gen 2:20). Every beast of the field, every bird of the air, and every fish in the sea had a mate, a counterpart, but Adam had none. No sooner did God assess the situation ("It is not good that man should
be along. . . ") than He offered a solution ("I will make him a helper comparable to him"
(verse 18).

Have you ever wondered what your purpose is as a wife?

In His creation of Eve we have God's answer: God created her, the first, for the man, to be man's helper. Therefore, any woman who loves God and who is married is on assignment from God to help her husband.

So what can a wife do so that God can grow in her a heart committed to helping her husband and fulfilling her God-given assignment? Consider these suggestion:

1. Make a commitment to help your husband--The decision to serve is yours, beloved. No one can decide for you, and no one can force you to decide. You must make the decision to help your husband.

And as a woman who loves God, you'll undoubtedly want to follow through on His assignment for you to be a helper to your man.

2. Focus on your husband--God wants us wives to focus our energy and efforts on our husbands--on his tasks, his goals, his responsibilities. But beware! Our sin nature cries out all too freely, "Me first!" But God wants us to say to our husband, "You first!"

3. Ask of your actions, "Will this help or hinder my husband?"—By asking this simple question of ourselves before we act, we have a better chance of choosing conduct that will help our husband.

Helping. It's a simple yet noble assignment--and one that reaps rice rewards. Not only does our husband benefit, but we benefit as well as we learn to serve as Christ Himself did!

Elizabeth George:
“It is our privilege as wives to bring goodness to our husband and glory to his name. As the Bible says of our great model, the Proverbs 31 woman, "Her husband is known in the gates" (Proverbs 31:23). With the Lord's help we too will live in a way that brings honor to our husband and helps his reputation.”

b) The priority of creation (vs. 8)

Genesis 2:21-22
"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. Later, Adam called her "woman, because she was taken out of Man". (Gen 2:23)

c) The purpose of creation (vs. 9)

The woman as created "for" the man to meet his needs of companionship and work.

Illustration:

- God as Above Man
- The animals were below man
- The woman was from his side!

"Man finds in woman a divinely made ally"

"If a married woman abandoned her complementary role, she also abandons her glory' and to Paul the uncovered woman's head gave symbolic expression to that spirit"

d) Because of the angels (vs. 10)

J. Vernon McGee: "I don't understand this verse"

4. The Equality Within Authority (vs. 11-12)
Key "nevertheless"

Paul wanted to balance the teaching on headship with that of equality and that of mutual need of both sexes for each other.

In two areas.

a) In the spiritual realm (vs. 11)

Both sexes must admit their spiritual oneness (Gal 3:28), the loving headship of the man, and the willing submission of the woman. To carry out the divine mandate of bringing up children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, both parents must execute their respective responsibilities (Eph 6:4; Titus 2:4-5). Women can have a responsible, authoritative, teaching position in the home and in the church to other women and to children. (1 Tim 2:15)

Note a wife's role in the spiritual training and teaching of the children!

b) In the physical realm (vs. 12)

For both the man and the woman God is the source of both their physical and spiritual life! "All things of God"

J. Vernon McGee: "It is nonsense for either men or women to talk about liberation they need each other"

True liberation comes from God!

Principles:

Don't blur all distinctions between the sexes.

A Christian's clothing, hairstyles, and behavior, should be "comely" or fitting for the customs of the times!

5. The Proper Behavior With Authority (vs. 13-16)

Lesson - we should not blur all distinctions between sexes

Principles:
Don't blur all distinction between the sexes. A Christian's clothing, hairstyles, and behavior, should be "comely" or fitting for the customs of the times!

Principles for us today!

a) "as cultural customs change, the expression of subordination whatever it is, within the church must remain constant.

b) The root problem in Corinth was the pursuit of self-interest which was unwilling to subordinate itself to the needs of others or the glory of God. (See 10:24 and 10:31)

c) We must seek to honor Christ, and others in our worship!

By submission to Christ headship over our lives!
INTRODUCTION:
Since the beginning of the church, it was customary for the believers to eat together - Acts 2:42 "Then they continued steadfastly in the apostles . . ."

No doubt the meal or "Agape feast" was climaxed by the observing of "the Lord's Supper"

Also called 'the communion' (10:16)

And 'the Eucharist' which means 'the giving of thanks'.

But the problem was that in the Corinthian fellowship selfishness and sinful behavior had crept into the love feast and Lord's supper!

There was no love in the love feast and there was sin at the Lord's Supper!

Paul does two things

1. He gives them some constructive criticism (vs.17-22)
2. He gave them corrective counsel (vs. 23-24)

1. Paul's Constructive Criticism (vs.17-22)
   a) The church had 'cliques' (vs.17-19)
   b) The church was selfish (vs.20-21)
   c) The church was shameful (vs. 22)

   Key lesson "that ye come together, not for the better, but for the worse" (vs.17)

   "It is possible to go away from a church being harmed rather than helped!"

2. Paul's corrective counsel (vs. 23-34)

   How are we to observe the Lord's supper?
1. We should look back (vs. 23-25)

   Jesus wants us to remember His death never His birth!
   Because everything we have as Christians centers in Christ death.

   Warren W. Wiersbe:

   “However, this "remembering" is not simply the recalling of historical facts. It is a participation in spiritual realities. At the Lord's Table, we do not walk around a monument and admire it. We have fellowship with a living Savior as our hearts reach out by faith.”

2. We should look ahead (vs. 26)

   (John 14) Our blessed hope

3. We should look within (vs. 27-32)

   "unworthy" is an adverb - so it's not and unworthy person it's an unworthy manner!

   They were sinning in remembering the one who died to take away sins.

   (vs. 28) "Self-examination should precede participation"

   What should you look for? (Ps 139)

4. We should look around (vs. 33-34)

   "The only thing that can keep you from the Lord's Table is that you have never come as a sinner to the cross and received His forgiveness! . . .

87
Concerning Spiritual Gifts (Pt 1)
I Corinthians 12:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

Billy Graham, "The Holy Spirit"

"When our children were growing up, Christmas morning would find the Christmas tree surrounded by gifts. They had been selected lovingly according to each child's enjoyment and need. Each would be opened with anticipation and excitement accepted with expressions of love and appreciation – enjoyed and used (depending on age) all day. Alas, however, (again depending on age) by evening jealousy and squabbling had begun.”

Is this not somewhat true of spiritual gifts, the spiritually immature wind up eyeing with a bit of jealousy gifts, which they have not received?

The public worship in the church of Corinth was plagued with problems:

1. Women were worshipping without their heads covered.
2. There was disorder at the Lord's Supper.
3. They were abusing spiritual gifts, especially the gift of tongues! (same today)

Paul now seeks to correct their misuse of spiritual gifts in Chapters 12-14

Outline:

Chapter 12 - The relationship of the gifts to each other within the body of Christ.

Chapter 13 - Their relationship to love.

Chapter 14 - The contrast between tongues and prophecy.

I. PROBLEMS WITH THE GIFTS (vs. 1-2)

Three problems:

a) The problem of spiritual ignorance (vs. 1)

1. "Lit "now concerning spiritual matters"
2. People are ignorant of who the Holy Spirit is!

3. People also think that spiritual gifts are a mark of spirituality.

Illustration: 1 Cor 3:1

b) The problem of their pagan past (vs. 2)

In their past they had been dominated by Satan and demons, Notice "carried away"

c) The Problem of Professing Christians (vs. 3)

Paul informed them that no person 'speaking' under the influence of the Holy Spirit would proclaim a heretical doctrine about Jesus Christ.

Illustration: 'Oneness Pentecostal' or 'Apostolics' and the 'Jesus Only Doctrine'.

No one but a true Christian can properly proclaim the deity of Jesus Christ Jesus is Lord!

The Jesus test! - The Spirit has come to glorify Jesus

II. THE SOURCE AND PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS (vs. 4-7)

In this passage Paul explains that the Spirit gives a variety of gifts to be used in a variety of ministries that have a variety of effects, but they all have a common purpose, and a common source the triune God.

1. Varieties of gifts (vs. 4)

How many gifts are there? Nineteen

We don't know for sure but 19 is close.

The List - Rom 12, I Cor 12, Eph 4, 1 Pet 4

Notice four different categories:

a) Special gifts - apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers

b) Speaking gifts - prophecy, teaching,
exhortation, the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge.

c) Serving gifts - serving, helps, leadership, administration, giving, showing mercy, discerning of spirits, faith, and hospitality.

d) Sign gifts - tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles, and healings.

But note 'all these varieties of gifts yet they all come from the same source "The Holy Spirit"'

2. Varieties of ministries (vs.5)

KJV 'administrations' (we get the word deacon)

Paul is saying that the same gift can work in different ways in different people! Use it faithfully for God's glory, (1 Pet 4:10)

The source is the 'same Lord;

3. Varieties of effects )vs. 6)

KJV 'operations' is lit what is worked out or energized', so 'effects'.

The source of the power or work it's "God".

The gifts are energized by God!

Notice the Trinity!

(vs. 4) Spirit'

(vs. 5) Lord

(vs. 6) God the Father.

Notice the one source and one purpose (vs. 7)

1. "Grace" (vs. 7) Note: "given" The most common Greek word for gift is "charisma" - the word is related to 'grace'.

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Spiritual gifts are the unmerited, gracious provision of the Lord

NOT a reward for our goodness!

2. Every believer has at least one gift. "To every man"

In the Greek text 'to every man' is in the emphatic first position of the verse.

No Christian is excluded!

3. The gifts are given for the common good of all (vs. 7)

KJV "to profit with all"

Not Candy ! - your blessing

Not Jewelry - to show off

Not Toys - to fight over.

But TOOLS to build up!

Every believer must use their gifts to build up the church!

Are You? You can't if you don't come to fellowship!

Are others profiting from your gift?

Poem:

There's a clever young fellow named Somebody Else.  
There's nothing this fellow can't do. 
He's busy from morning till way late at night 
Just substituting for you. 
When asked to do this or asked to do that 
So often you are set to reply
"Get Somebody Else, Mr. Chairman, 
He'll do it much better than I."
There's so much to do in our parish, 
So much, and the workers are few. 
Somebody Else gets worried and worn
III. THE SPECIFIC SPIRITUAL GIFTS (vs. 8-11)

The Spiritual Gifts

The word of wisdom referred to the revelation of the mind of God in doctrinal, redemptive areas (cf. 2: 6-7). This was not learned or acquired wisdom, but divinely imparted. Paul both received and communicated this wisdom (II Peter 3:15). The word of knowledge could have referred to the revelation of exhortations in the practical areas of life (cf Eph 4-6). All Christians are justified by faith and should walk by faith (Heb. 11) but the gift of faith is a special faith to attempt great tasks for God (cf. 13:2). It seems to be connected with outward demonstrations of God's power (12:9-10; cf. 13:2). The gifts of healings (plural in Greek) relate to the ability to heal the sick of various diseases (e.g., palsy, leprosy, blindness). The working of miracles involved power over nature (cf. Acts 5:1-10; 13:11; Gal. 3:5; Heb 2:4). These miracles were designed to authenticate divine spokesmen (cf. II Cor. 12:12). The gift of prophecy involved both foretelling and forth-telling, the communication of a message direct from God to men (cf. 14:3). The foundation of the church was laid by the apostles and the prophets (Eph 2:20; cf. Acts 11:28; 19:6; 21:11). The gift of discerning of spirits (cf. 1John 4:1) was the ability to "discern the true from the false sources of supernatural revelation given in oral form." The gift of tongues was the Spirit-given ability to speak in known, foreign languages (unknown and unlearned by the speaker). The content involved the revelation of divine mysteries (cf. 14:2) marked by magnifying God. The gift of interpretation was the translation of the tongues-utterance into the common language by one who did not know the language of the tongues-speaker.

Notice vs.11

The Holy Spirit decides which gift to give.

His choices are sovereign!

Don't complain! It's His grace!

Don't be jealous of others gifts.

How do you discover you gift?
1. Make sure you’re a Christian, salvation grace!

2. Surrender to the Holy Spirit.

3. Start serving in the body, other's will see it.

Spiritual gifts are God's grace in action.

Get busy

But remember, Salvation is of grace!
INTRODUCTION:
I am told that the popular television program "Candid Camera" tried a unique experiment. As a practical joke a young lady at the wheel of a beautiful automobile was instructed to drive it down a hill and into a gas station and ask for an oil and water check. The car was deluxe and complete in every detail, with but one exception - it had no engine. The young lady coasted into the filling station, and when the attendant arrived she asked casually, "Please check my oil and water." Quickly he lifted the hood, and with a pause and a look of consternation on his face he exclaimed, "Madam, you ain't got no motor!"

An automobile can have everything you would expect in a car. . . but if it 'ain't go no motor', it ain't got NO POWER!

The same is true for many churches today! We have attractive buildings, well planned and arranged programs, good music, and good preaching everything you would expect in a church but there is no power!

Why?

Because the people of God in the body of Christ are not yielded to the control of the Holy Spirit, and using their spiritual gifts in love, for the building up of the body and the glory of God.

That was the problem in the church at Corinth!

Paul is writing to correct their ignorance of spiritual gifts. In our last study we saw - three things:

1. The problems (vs. 1-3)
2. The source and purpose of the gifts (vs. 4-7)
3. The specific gifts (vs. 8-11)

Now beginning with verse eleven Paul wanted the Corinthians to recognize their oneness within the body of Christ, and yet at the same time to see their functional diversity within that one body.

The focus in these verses is unity and diversity.

I. THE ONENESS OF THE BODY (vs. 12-13)

Paul wanted them to understand three things:
1. There is only one body (vs. 12)

Paul used the human body with its unity and diversity to illustrate the body of Christ. There is only one true church!

Eph 4:4 - 'there is one body'.

2. We have all been baptized by one Spirit into one body, (vs. 13)

Eph 4:4,5 - "one spirit", & "one baptism"

Paul is telling us how we got into the body.

The believing sinner becomes a member of the church the body of Christ through the baptism 'in' better than 'by' the Spirit.

The Greek word for 'by' is 'en' most often translated 'in'.

When Paul said in Eph 4:5 that there is "one baptism" he is not talking about water baptism nor its mode because all believers have not been water baptized nor have they all been immersed or sprinkled.

Paul is talking about the baptism "in" the spirit that happens at the moment of conversion, and makes a person a part of Christ's body.

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.
38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)


Note - The evidence of the Spirit's baptism is not "speaking in tongues". It's the witness of the Spirit within (Rom 8:14-16)

The Corinthians assemble had all been baptized in the Spirit, but not all of them spoke in tongues (vs. 30).

Note also - the confusion over the baptism verses the filling!
Believers are never commanded to be baptized in the Spirit, but we are commanded to be "filled" (Eph 5:18).

The evidences of the Spirits filling are:

- Power to witness
- Producing Christ likeness
- fruit Gal 5:22-24

3. We were all given the one Spirit to drink (vs.13)

All Christians have received the indwelling presence of the Spirit. (Rom 8:9)

John 7:37-39

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.
38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus said "you in Me" and "I in you".

II. THE DIVERSITY OF THE BODY MEMBERS (vs. 14-18)

In this section, Paul wanted them to recognize their diversity within the one body.

There are four principles stated:

1. The body performs many functions vs. 14)

One member does not constitute a body, an arm by itself is not a body!

Lesson 1 - Christian who do not join a body

Lesson 2 - All Christians should not expect to have the same gift.

2. Each function is important (vs.15-16)

Some feel unimportant in the body, it's not true!
Don’t belittle your importance, just because you don’t have another’s gift.

Don’t covet the gifts of another.

3. Each function must be performed (vs.17)

If all the members performed only one function then other necessary functions would go undone.

A body consisting only of an eye would be a monstrosity.

Ray Stedman in an illustration of youth pastor, football and a girlfriend said this:

What a ridiculous body it would be if everyone did the same thing, or if the work of the church only consisted of a handful of things that people did on Sunday morning. Our high school pastor once was attempting to teach the young people truth about the body. One day he painted a football white and then painted an eyeball, with iris and pupil on it. He wrapped the "eye" in a blanket, cradled in on his arm, and went into the high school group meeting. As he walked around he would say to the kids, "How do you like my baby?" They would look and see this big "eye" staring at them, and they would say, "Oh gross! That's terrible." Then he said to them, "What if your girlfriend was nothing but a big eye and you took her out for a milk shake and propped her up in the booth opposite you and tried to carry on a conversation with all she could do was stare at you with this one big unblinking eye?" They got the point and began to take seriously their part in the body of Christ.

4. God assigns each function (vs.18 also vs. 28)

When, at the moment of conversion! "As it has pleased Him"

Be content, it's God's grace.

Do what God has called you to do!

III. THE MUTUAL NEED OF THE BODY’S MEMBERS (vs.19-21)

We need each other, we can't be independent of one other!
A Story to illustrate:

A famous preacher was speaking at a ministers' meeting, and he took time before and after the meeting to shake hands with the pastors and chat with them. A friend asked him, "why take time for a group of men you may never see again?"

The world-renowned preacher smiled and said, "well, I may be where I am because of them! Anyway, if I didn't need them on the way up, I might need them on the way down!" No Christian servant can say to any other servant, "My ministry can get along without you!"

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF ALL THE MEMBER'S IN THE BODY (vs. 22-26)

Paul now moves from the conspicuous members of the human body: foot, hand, ear, eye, and nose, to the inconspicuous.

Note: two things

1. Importance is not based on appearance (vs. 22-23)

"Feeble" or "weak"

Illustration: your little toe or big toe! or your liver or kidneys. They all are important!

2. Importance is equally distributed (vs. 24-26)

Note - reasons (vs. 25) "that"

1. No schisms or divisions!

2. So we will care for one another! (vs. 25)

Illustration: the Olympics gold metal placed on the athlete's feet!

V. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE MEMBERS (vs. 27-31)

1. God chose the members (vs. 27)

2. God established the order of the members (vs. 28)

Ray Stedman - Not rank, it's historic order?

3. God determined the number of members (vs. 29-31)
Greek best literal "more useful" or advantageous!

"A more excellent way" Love!

Fruit or Character!

Christ coming through us.

Diversity leads to disunity when we compete with one another, but if we care for one another diversity leads to unity
Concerning Spiritual Gifts (Pt 3)
I Corinthians 13:1-13

INTRODUCTION:
We come to one of the greatest chapters in the Bible. It’s the love chapter!

Ray Stedman called 1 Corinthians 13 "the most beautiful chapter in the New Testament."

Yet few chapters in the Bible have suffered more misinterpretation and misapplication than 1 Corinthians 13.

Why?
It's divorced from its context!

We must remember that Paul is dealing with problems concerning spiritual gifts!

Paul is seeking to show the Corinthians that "unity" and "diversity" must be balanced by "maturity" and that maturity comes with love. It's not enough to have the 'gifts' of the Spirit; we must also have the 'graces' of the Spirit. (The Corinthians were carnal)

Analyzing the words of 1 Corinthians 13 is like tearing apart a beautiful flower. Yet it's important that we study it, understand it, and put into practice its message.

Three things to look at:

I. The preeminence of love or loves value.
II. The practice of love or loves virtue.
III. The permanence of love or loves victory.

I. THE PREEMINENCE OF LOVE - ITS VALUE (vs.1-3)

Paul is teaching about the supreme importance of love!

The Greeks elevated what a man knows - intellect.

The Romans worshiped what a man could do - power.

But Paul stressed what a man is - Character.
For the Christian the pinnacle of spiritual development is to love God with the total being and to love one's neighbor as himself.

Note - there are three words in the Greek, which are all translated by our one word "love". or in my KJV "charity"

1. Eros - not in the New Testament
2. Phileo - It means affection; philadelphis and philanthropist
3. Agape – (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8) God is love

Paul gives three hypothetical illustrations to demonstrate the preeminence or necessity of love in Christian service.

1. In speaking (vs. 1)
2. In knowing (vs. 2) - A full head with an empty heart is worth nothing.
3. In giving (vs. 3) Caring (Matt 6 - to be seen by men)

Illustration: the church of Ephesus without love is nothing (Rev. 2)

II. THE PRACTICE OF LOVE - IT'S VIRTUE (vs. 4-7)

Paul lists fifteen properties of love and unless all fifteen are seen simultaneously in our lives we can't claim to be Christ like in our character.

(Note we see Jesus, so check yourself. Also your marriage)

1. Suffereth long or is patient (vs. 4)

   It's patience with people not with circumstances. When wronged it goes on loving regardless of the response from the other person.

2. Kind or it's not inconsiderate, but benevolent or constructive.

   It's always looking out for ways in which it can offer practical help.

   It's anticipates a persons need in advance.

   Love shows considerations and thoughtfulness.
You can no more have love without kindness than you can have Springtime without flowers.

Remember God is both patient and kind toward us!

3. Enveith not or it's not jealous (vs. 4)

It doesn't mind when someone else has the limelight.

Illustration: Jonathan and David!

4. Vaunteth not itself or is not boastful (vs. 4)

Love does not brag about one's abilities or achievements, and it's not inflated with its own importance.

Moffatt translates it, that love "makes no parade", it's modest.

5. Not puffed up or arrogant (vs. 4)

Love is humble, it does not see itself as superior to others.

6. Not behave unseemly or it's not rude (vs. 5)

Love is courteous or polite!

We need this in our marriages and at home.

7. Seeketh not her own or love does not insist upon its rights (vs. 5)

8. Is not provoked (vs. 5) in KJV 'easily' is not there!

Some have 'irritable' or 'touchy'.

W. Barclay says, "love never flies into a temper"

Illustration: Little boy in car with mother, "Mom, where are all the idiots?"

9. Thinketh no evil or it's not resentful or vindictive (vs. 5)

W. Barclay "Love does not store up the memory of any wrong it has received."

Love does not nurse its wrath to keep it warm.

Love forgives and forgets.

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10. Rejoiceth not in inequity (vs. 6)
   It does not rejoice in the sins or misfortunes of others.

11. Rejoiceth in the truth (vs. 6)
   Love looks for the best in people not the blemishes.
   Love also "speaks the truth" and 'walks in the truth'.

12. Beareth all things (vs. 7)
   Love conceals what is displeasing in others!
   Love accepts without grumbling the trials and difficulties of life.
   Illustration: Jesus on the cross.

13. Believes all things (vs. 7)
   It is not suspicious of the deeds and motivations of others.
   It’s trusting.
   It trusts in God even when there is nothing but darkness all around.

14. Hopes all things (vs. 7)
   Love anticipates the spiritual good that will result even from wrongdoing.
   Love always hopes the best for people.

15. Endureth all things (vs. 7)
   Love is not shaken even in the worst of storms.
   It's steadfast and unmoved to the end.

Wow - for your marriage!

How did you do? How far did you get?
The fruit of the Spirit is: LOVE
III. THE PERMANENCE OF LOVE (vs. 8-13)

Song of Solomon 5:7 "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it."

Paul contrasts the permanence of love with the transitory character of the gifts.

1. Gifts are temporary (vs. 8)

2. Gifts are partial (vs. 9)
   
   Not God's truth, not revealed to one man, and progressive
   (Heb 1:1-2)

3. Gifts will end (vs. 10)

4. Gifts are infantile (vs. 11)

5. Knowledge is not complete (vs. 12)

6. Love is eternal (vs. 13)
   
   Faith will become sight - faith will vanish into sight
   Hope will become reality - Hope be emptied in delight
   But love last forever - Love in heaven will shine more bright

Chapter 14:1 "Follow after love"

Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples"

"Love of God, eternal love, shed thy love through me.
   Nothing less than Calvary's love
   Would I ask of Thee
   Fill me, flood me, overflow me,
   Love of God, eternal love
   Shed Thy love through me."

- Amy Carmichael -
Concerning Spiritual Gifts (Pt. 4)  
I Corinthians 14:1-40  
(Note taken by Dave Card from the Sermon given by Pastor John Paul Miller)

INTRODUCTION:
As this chapter unfolds we find Paul still speaking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Earlier we learned that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are:

a) designed to bring unity to the body of Christ

b) diverse in their operation and function.

Chapter 13 points out that diversity comes with maturity!

Paul now deals with the gifts of tongues and prophecy in the public assembly.

He tells us that the gift of prophecy is superior to that of the gift of tongues.

This is seen by the nature of the two gifts.

There are three key points:

1. Edification (vs. 3) - mutual edification
2. Instruction (vs. 19) - an intelligent worship
3. Order – everything we do must be done decently and in order

I. The importance of Prophecy over Tongues (vs. 1-25)

The word prophecy means literally, to “speak forth”, though to most people, it has the idea of the forth telling of future events. Paul though, is referring to the speaking forth of the Word of God!

Note: The Bible was not complied at this time so they weren't able to “search out the scriptures”. The “prophets” were speaking forth God’s Word as He “quickened them.

Prophecy was basically, "to speak forth the Word of God" (vs. 1) “For” The reason why we should prophecy instead of speak in tongues (vs. 2).

NOTE: The term: "unknown" tongues is not in the Greek! This implies that they spoke known languages.

Fundamental truths regarding speaking in tongues:
1. Tongues are directed to God not man! (vs. 2)

2. The Contrast: prophecy – speaking to man (vs. 3)

There are three things that you are doing when you prophecy:

(a) edify – build up
(b) encourage – to stir up, exhortation
(c) comfort.

Someone said, “You’re building up, you’re stirring up, and you’re binding up”

When the Word of God is taught you are doing these three things!

God’s Word brings encouragement, comfort, and hope to our hearts.

(vs. 4) There is self-edification when you speak in tongues but the church is not edified!

The preference is “mutual edification”.

(vs. 5) The exception: the tongue is interpreted thus causing the church to be edified.

When Paul says, “I wish you all spoke with tongues” he’s probably thinking in terms of, “I’d like you all to be blessed”. It really is a blessing!

When you speak in tongues you’re edified, you are built up in the inner man. Paul would wish that for them.

Remember, Paul’s focus is their public assembly!

The reason why Paul is saying all of this is because they were abusing the gift of tongues in the public assembly.

They were having disorderly services’ – they were not practicing mutual edification.
(vs. 6) Paul's rational – “if I come to you speaking with tongues”, am I going to get up and speak to you in tongues?

Of course not!

It’s more important that when I come, I speak with understanding, knowledge, revelation, and doctrine. That I share with you the Word of God!

(vs. 7-12) Paul's illustrates his point by using life giving sound (musical instruments):

flute; harp; trumpet - if they are not used correctly there will be no distinction of the sounds

When we talk to one another it is best that we speak a language that all can understand.

(vs. 13-18) in a public assembly – if you’re going to speak in tongues, in a public assembly, you need to pray that you will be able to interpret it so others can be edified or you MUST be silent!

(vs. 15) When you speak in tongues you are praising and giving thanks to God; you are doing it well, but no one else is edified because they cannot understand what you are saying.

“I will” – indicates that you have freewill and choice in the exercising of your gift of tongues.

The Holy Spirit never takes away your self-control; He gives you self-control!

(vs. 17) “You are giving thanks well”

(vs. 18) When Paul say’s he “speaks in tongues more than you all”, Where does he do it? The implication from scripture is that he does it in his private prayer time!

(vs. 19) Notice the key: "yet in the church" - it's okay to use tongues in your private prayer time

(vs. 20) Paul wants us to have understanding.

We need to be mature in our understanding
One of the hardest sections to understand!

Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11-12 - God uses a wicked nation (Assyria) to judge the unbelieving Israelites. When Israel heard them speak in their own tongue (language) it was a sign to them (the unbelieving Jews) of God's impending judgment.

In a sense, on the day of Pentecost, the same thing was true when they all spoke with tongues it was a sign of God’s judgment soon to come upon Israel who had rejected (and continued to reject) their Messiah!

Judgment came in 70 A.D. when Titus and the Roman armies came in and destroyed Jerusalem.

When Paul says tongues are a sign; the sign is there to the unbelieving Jews, that judgment is coming!

Prophecy serves to those who believe.

Paul gives a hypothetical situation: “If”

In the public assembly there must be an interpretation or people will think you are out of your mind.

We should seek to prophecy so there can be understanding.

NOTE: It is unscriptural for church congregations to all speak with tongues at the same time without interpretation!

There is an order to follow (see below)

II. The Importance of order in the service (public assembly) (vs. 26-40)

Their services must have been something else!

Rules of order:

1. Let all things be done unto edifying. (vs. 26)

2. Let all things be done decently and in order. (vs. 40)

The rules for Tongues:
1) Two or three times at the most followed by interpretation

2) No interpretation? Keep silent!

(vs. 29-33) The rules for Prophecy:

1) Two or three times at the most.

2) Judge their words by God's Word

(the Bible is the FINAL authority!)

NOTE: (vs. 32-33) “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”

(vs. 33) “For God is not the author of confusion…”

(vs. 34-35) “Let the women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. . .”

This was a cultural instruction for the day:

During their service’ men and women (husbands & wives) were separated from each other (seated on either side of the assembly). Apparently when the women didn’t understand something they would call out to their husbands with questions, thus causing a distraction. Paul tells them to save their questions until they get home ("let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." - a shame because they are distracting others)

(vs. 36-40) Paul tells us that we need to be under the authority of the scriptures!

The Word of God didn’t come from us; we are NOT the authority. The Word of God came to us; it’s THE authority!

The mentality of our lives must be that we are under the authority of the scriptures!
Our feelings, emotions, and experiences are not the authority. The Bible is the authority. We must be obedient to it.

(vs. 37) Paul, in closing, says, “If you consider yourself to be spiritual acknowledge that what I am saying is from the Lord”.

(vs. 40) The Spirit of God will never contradict the Word of God.
All experience must be judged in the light of scripture (experience is not the authority the Bible is!)

The gift of tongues is a wonderful gift but, what is more important, when we gather at church, is that we are all edified.

This happens when we are instructed thru the Bible and submitted to the authority of scripture.

We are then changed by the power of the Spirit of God using the Word of God to make us into the image of the Son of God.

The principle: When we come together may we be thinking of others.

May there be (1) edification, (2) instruction and, (3) order, to the glory of God
INTRODUCTION:
In the oldest book of the Bible, the book of Job, the question is asked,

"If a man dies will he live again?" or "What happens after death?"

Human speculation or "Diving revelation"

In I Corinthians 15 the apostle Paul deals with the subject of "the resurrection of the body."

It's one of the great chapters in the Bible.

It's a whole chapter devoted to the doctrine of the believers resurrection hope!

Heb 11 - Faith
I Cor 13 - Love
I Cor 15 - Hope

What was the problem in Corinth that prompted Paul to write this remarkable chapter?

The answer is found in verse 12.

Corinth was a Greek city, and the Greeks did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.

Illustration: when Paul preached in Athens...his listeners actually laughed at him.

Greek thought accepted the immortality of the soul, but rejected the resurrection of the body. To them the human body was a prison, a tomb, so they welcomed death as deliverance from bondage.

In Corinth many of the Christians believed in Christ resurrection yet they rejected the idea of their own resurrection.

There is a danger when Christians today adopt the Greek philosophy about the body.

"Throughout this chapter he expands the principle and the fact of resurrection as being the heart of the gospel. Christianity is concerned, not with mere immortality, nor with sheer survival, nor with the transmigration of the soul, nor with reincarnation, but with resurrection from the dead. For Paul, as for all the
New Testament writers, this necessarily meant the raising of the whole person from the dead, not just his soul or his body or even his personality. Resurrection is consistently seen in the New Testament as a demonstration of God's power over death."

David Prior, The Message of 1 Corinthians, page 258

To correct their thinking Paul does two things:

1. He deals with the fact or the reality of resurrection. (vs.1-34)
2. He deals with its mode or nature. (vs. 35-58)

As we look at the fact of resurrection we will see two things:

1. The fact of Christ resurrection (vs.1-11)
2. The fact that Christ resurrection makes the denial of our resurrection impossible. (vs. 12-19)

1. The fact of Christ resurrection (vs.1-11)

Some of the Corinthian Christians separated the past resurrection of Christ from the further resurrection of believers so Paul points out the two are inseparable joined. So, he presented three proofs that Jesus had indeed been raised from the dead.

Proof 1 - Their salvation (vs. 1-2)

The gospel "good news" not "good views"
Good news about what? . . . .(not do, it's done)
It's an essential part of the gospel.

Proof 2 - The Old Testament scriptures (vs. 3-4)

Proof 3 - Jesus was seen by witnesses (vs. 5-11)

There are many proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The empty tomb - 'He is not here' "behold the place.

Some say Jesus didn't really die he only swooned.

Illustration:
A woman wrote J. Vernon McGee: "Our preacher said that on Easter Jesus just swooned on the cross and that the disciples nursed Him back to health. What do you think?" McGee replied, "Dear Sister, beat your preacher with a leather whip for thirty-nine heavy strokes. Nail him to a cross. Hang him in the sun for six hours. Run a spear through his heart. Embalm him. Put him in an airless tomb for three days. Then see what happens." But not only was His tomb empty, Jesus was seen by witnesses!

Witness No. 1 - Peter (vs. 5) after his fall. (if Peter - us too! there's hope)

Witnesses No 2 - The twelve (vs.5) (not Judas)

Witnesses No 3 - Five hundred at once (vs.6)

Witness No 4 - James (vs.7)

Witnesses No 5 - "All the apostles" Acts 1

Witness No. 6 - Paul (vs.8-11) proof of the resurrection changes lives

Note - Saul the self-righteous Pharisee and persecutor of the church became the proclaimer of the gospel he had sought to destroy!

How? By grace! (vs.10) Us to!

For Paul that grace was not in vain.

Is it for you? (God can use you)

How do you respond to God's grace in your life?

"Therefore' 

Do you believe?
INTRODUCTION:
Thomas Jefferson culled out all moral teaching of the first three Gospels and gathered them into a book called The life and Moral Teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. The book ends, "And they laid Jesus in the tomb and departed."

What if Christ had not risen from the dead?

Does it really matter?

It has been said that, "the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men, or it is the most fantastic fact of history."

I believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most fantastic fact of history!

And, it's also the most important fact of history.

For if Christ be not risen Paul says, in verse 9, we as Christians "are to be pitied more than all others."

The problem in the Corinthian congregation was that they were denying the doctrine of resurrection of the dead (vs. 12)

Not Christ’s resurrection but the believer’s resurrection

Why?

Paul points out where their denial of the resurrection of the dead logically leads.

1. Christ is not risen (vs.13)

It's possible that the disbelieving Corinthians got around the problem by claiming that Jesus was not fully a man. Remember their dualistic orientation.

But in the incarnation Christ became fully man and as a man, He cannot be separated from the rest of the human race. Heb 2:14-15 Jesus was born, lived, and died as a man, He rose again as men one day will.
Christ past resurrection and out further resurrection are two sides of the same coin. Jesus said in Rev. 1:17-18 "I am He that liveith and became dead. . . ."

2. Our preaching is vain or useless (vs.14)

Take the resurrection out of the gospel and there is not gospel.

Illustration:

A Christian woman sought to lead a Chinese man to Christ several years ago. Because of his lack of interest, she used peculiar method to point him to the Saviour. Somewhere she had heard that the Chinese were known for their prodigious feats of memory. (great ability to memorize). Also realizing that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God: (Romans 10:17), she got him to promise to memorize the first three chapters of John's gospel.

Before the week was over, he appeared at her door, his face radiating. Said he," I knocked one day at the door of Confucius and cried, 'Explain to me the dynamic of your teachings that I might obey them..' But there was no answer save the echo of an empty tomb. It was the same with Buddha, and the whole world knows where Mohammed lies buried. But as I read this Book, I was suddenly seized by the overwhelming conviction that its Author was not dead but alive." And then he declared, "I have taken Him as my Savior."

Jesus is alive so the message is not vain or empty.

Remember the great commission, go ye. . .

Illustration of William Carey:

Dr. William Carey, the pioneer missionary, was a shoemaker, or rather, as he himself put it, a cobbler, before he left England in 1793 to go to India. He used to go about from village to village preaching, for his soul was filled with the truth of a resurrected, living Christ. One day a friend came to him.

"Mr. Carey, I want to speak to you very seriously," "well," said Carey, "what is it?" "By your going about preaching as
you do, you are neglecting your business. If only you would attend to your business better, you would get along and prosper. But as it is, you are simply neglecting your business."

"Neglecting my business!" exclaimed Carey. "My business is to extend the kingdom of God. I only cobble shoes to pay expenses."

3. Your faith is vain (vs. 14)

Why? - Because faith is only as good as its object.

Would you put your faith in a decomposing corpse?

If Jesus were not raised then, Heb 11, the hall of faith, would be the hall of the foolish.

David Prior

Paul underlines the truth that faith is produced by looking to Jesus Christ, crucified, and risen. Faith is not created sustained or increased by looking at ourselves or at others, but only be absorbing the reality and the implications of the resurrection of Jesus.

Illustration: the unbeliever has no place to put his faith.

We all have faith.

Where have you placed your faith?

4. We are false witnesses (vs. 15)

Paul and the other apostles are liars.

Jesus also lied! He said He would rise!

Note: everything Jesus said stands or falls on His resurrection.

5. We are sill in our sins (vs.17)

Why?
The Bible teaches that Jesus died for our sins. So if Jesus did not rise then His attempt to atone for sin did not meet with divine approval. We would have to pay the penalty, wages for our sin! Death!

We would go to hell

We would still be under sins power!

6. Dead believers have perished (vs. 18)

Your loved ones are lost forever!

Illustration: I Thess 4:13-18

'. . comfort one another. . .''

7. We as Christian are to be pitied more than all others (vs. 19)

Why?

Because for Christ Paul, and others, had given up everything, (position, in life, prestige, sensual pleasures, conveniences, passions, status) to travel all over the Roman world to proclaim a falsehood. They had gambled everything on Christ and lost! Illustration: Sometimes Christians fell they are missing out! or life is passing them by. The sacrifice is too great.

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Jim Eliott

Notice vs. 20, "But now is Christ risen from the dead. . . "

So:
1. Our preaching is not vain -- Lets preach the good news, not views!
2. Our faith is not vain -- Jesus can be trusted.
3. The apostle’s witness is true!
4. Our sins can be forgiven.
5. Our loved one's who have died in Christ have not perished.
6. All our sacrifices in this life is worth it all! -- He who lives only for this life is to be pitied. If all they get, eat, drink, and be merry.
The Consequences of Christ’s Resurrection
I Corinthians 15:20-34

INTRODUCTION:
Theologian Erich Sauer has written, "The present age is Easter time. It begins with the resurrection of the Redeemer and ends with the resurrection of the redeemed. Between lies the spiritual resurrection of those called into life through Christ. So we live between two Easters, and in the power of the first Easter we go to meet the last Easter.

We are looking together on Sunday morning at the important doctrine of the believers resurrection.

Will the believers body be resurrected after death?

Some in Corinth were saying NO! (vs.12)

But, Paul is writing in this 15th chapter of I Corinthians to say YES!

First he deals with the fact of the believers resurrection in (vs. 1-34)

Paul presents four arguments:

1. The historical argument (vs. 1-11)
2. The logical argument (vs. 12-19)
3. The theological argument (vs. 20-28)
4. The practical argument (vs. 29-24)

We see the consequences of Christ’s resurrection for both the future and the present.

I. The Consequences of Christ Resurrection for the Future (vs. 20-28)

Our future consequences:

1. The dead in Christ will rise (vs. 20-22)

a) vs. 20 - 'but now is Christ risen from the dead'.

The negative tone of verses 12-19 are now offset by the positive assurance, "Christ is risen from the dead'.

What did Paul mean by ‘first fruits?’
(Lev. 23 at the feast of unleavened bread, a sheaf, one day after Sabbath priest wave)
It was a 'first installment of the harvest' 'A sample and surety' of the coming harvest.

Jesus was the first human being to be 'resurrected from the dead.

Others?

Resurrected?

b) vs. 21-22 - Contrast Adam and Christ

Adam - made from the earth

Christ - came from heaven

Adam - disobeyed God and brought sin and death into the world

Christ - obeyed the Father and brought righteousness and life

'By man (Adam) came the breakout from Eden; by man (Jesus) came also the breakthrough back into paradise by means of resurrection.'

Ray Stedman

Paul is saying that resurrection is a certain as death.

2. The resurrection will be in stages (vs. 23-24)

Where will this happen?

Not all at once!

1. Jesus the first fruits

2. I Thess 4

(Note same won't die vs. 51-52)

3. At the 2nd coming

Rev 20 tribulation saints and O.T.
saints. Millennium 1000 years, Satan bound,

4. At end of millennium.

Wicked dead Rev 20 great white throne.

3. The resurrection eliminates the enemy death (vs. 25-26)

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychiatry, wrote; "And finally there is the painful riddle of death, for which no remedy at all has yet been found, nor probably ever will be."

Rev 20:14 "and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire" . . .

4. The resurrection results in total subjection (vs. 27-28)

When He took the assignment of salvation from His Father, Christ came to earth as a baby, and lived and grew up as a man among men. He taught, preached, healed, and did miraculous works. He died, was buried, was raised and ascended to His Father, where He now intercedes for those who are His. When He returns He will fight, conquer, rule, judge, and then, as His last work on the Father's behalf, forever subdue and finally judge all the enemies of God (Rev. 20:11-15), re-create the earth and heavens (Rev. 21:1-2), and finally delivers the kingdom to the God and Father.

The kingdom that Christ delivers up will be a redeemed environment indwelt by His redeemed people, those who have become eternal subjects of the everlasting kingdom through faith in Him. In light of Paul's major argument in this chapter it is obvious that his point here is that, if there were no resurrection, there would be no subjects for God's eternal kingdom; and there would be no Lord to rule. Unless He and they were raised, all of God's people eventually would die, and that would be the end - the end of them and the end of the kingdom. But Scripture assures us that "His kingdom will have no end" (Luke 1:33), and He and His subjects will have no end.
During the Finnish-Russian war seven captured Russian soldiers were sentenced to death by the Finnish army. The evening before they were to be shot one of the soldiers began singing, "Safe in the Arms of Jesus." Asked why he was singing such a song, he answered tearfully that he had heard it sung by a group of Salvation Army, "soldiers" just three weeks earlier. As a boy he had heard his mother talk and sing of Jesus many times, but would not accept her Savior. The previous night, as he lay contemplating his execution, he had a vision of his mother's face, which reminded him of the hymn he had recently heard. The words of the song and verses from the Bible that he had heard long ago came to his mind. He testified before his fellow prisoners and his captors that he had prayed for Christ to forgive his sins and cleanse his soul and make him ready to stand before God. All the men, prisoners and guards alike, were deeply moved, and most spent the night praying, weeping, talking about spiritual things, and singing hymns. In the morning, just before the seven were shot they asked to be able to sing once more "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," which they were allowed to do.

At least one other of the Russian soldiers had confessed Christ during the night. In addition, the Finnish officer in charge said, "What happened in the hearts of the others I don't know but. . .I was a new man from the houd I had met Christ in one of His loveliest and youngest disciples, and I had seen enough to realize that I too could be His."

It may be that first seeds a faith were planted in Paul's own heart by the testimony of Stephen, whose death the young Paul (then Saul) witnessed and whose confident and loving dying testimony he heard (Acts &:59-8:1).

John MacArthur

II. Paul's Practical Argument "The Consequences of Christ resurrection for the present" (vs. 29-34)

Key thought - Paul is saying if you deny this crucial and important doctrine of the resurrection you lose three great spiritual motivations.

1. Salvation and evangelism (vs. 29)
A very d?????? verse 200 views! We can't be dogmatic about what it is, but we can be???. It isn't Mormons.

What does it mean?

Two views. "For the dead' or in the place of."

The point is baptism is foolish if there is no resurrection of the dead.

Lesson: Belief in the resurrection tightens our ties with believers who have died.

2. Suffering and service (vs. 30-32)

3. Some have said even if there were no heaven I would still be a Christian.

Paul says NO!

4. Illustration:

The Greek historian Herodotus tells of an interesting custom of the Egyptians. "In social meetings among the rich, when the banquet was ended, a servant would often carry around among the guests a coffin, in which was a wooden image of a corpse cared and painted to resemble a dead person as nearly as possible. These servant would show it to each of the guests and would say, 'Gaze here and drink and be merry, for when you die such you shall be.'"

Belief in the resurrection makes today's trials bearable! As you face your wild beast.

Illustration story, Lazarus and the rich man!

Separation from sin (vs. 33-34)

Some of the Corinthians had no doubt rejected the idea of the resurrection in order to rationalize their sin. Saying what we do with our bodies has no bearing on our future. (vs. 34) It's time to wake up and clean up!
Shame on you

Today! No life after death. So live how you want, no fear of God. . .
INTRODUCTION:
Paul has made the necessity and the reality of the believer’s resurrection very clear. Yet when it comes to the resurrection of our bodies. It seems we have more questions than we do answers.

Questions like:
1) Why do babies die?
2) Why are there violent deaths?
3) Why did God allow September 11th to happen?
4) Why do people died at sea?
5) Is cremation okay?

How will God resurrect these people?
What kind of body will they have?

These are the very questions Paul now addresses in verses 35-58.

Paul's moves from the necessity of the resurrection to the nature of the resurrection.

Paul opens his discussion by anticipating two questions from his opponents who very possibly were not wanting an answer but we’ve simply mocking and taunting Paul (vs. 35).

Paul's answer is found in verse 36, "you fool!"

There are three things we want to look at in closing this chapter.

Joni Eareckson Tada in her book "Heaven Your Real Home", (Chapter 2 "Who are we in heaven?") says,

“Trying to understand what our bodies will be like in heaven is much like expecting an acorn to understand his destiny of roots, bark, branches, and leaves. Or asking a caterpillar to appreciate flying. Or a peach pit to fathom being fragrant. Or a coconut to grasp what it means to sway in the ocean breeze. Our eternal bodies will be so grand, so glorious, that we can only catch a fleeting glimpse of Lima beans, kernels of wheat. Peach pits. Acorns and oak trees. Examples in nature are what the Bible invites us to use since. "what we will be has not yet been made known" (1 John 3:2). One of the best ways to understand the resurrection is to take a field trip after the apostle Paul's lesson in nature: Go find an acorn on the...
ground, look up into the billowy skirts of the tree from which it fell, and then praise God that 'so it will be with the resurrection of the dead.'

I. The Resurrection Body - It's Nature (vs. 35-44)

Paul knew that the how and the what of the believers resurrection was not easily explained so he used three analogies to try and make this doctrine clear.

1. A Seed (vs. 36-38) - The foolishness of Paul's critics was caused by a failure to observe some underlying principles seen in nature!

   a). Nature teaches that life (a living plant) comes out of the death of the seed in the ground (vs. 36)
   Jesus said it like this in John 12:24 "truly, truly, I say unto you, unless a grain of wheat fall". . .

   Illustration: a lima bean seen through time-lapse photography!

   b) What comes out of the ground is not the same as what went into the earth. (vs. 37)

   Illustration: an acorn to an oak. Tulip bulb, - seed to wheat.

   "the golden head of wheat is fairer than the little brown seed cast into the furrow".

   F.B. Meyer

   So also us!

   c) There is a continuation from the seed to the plant! (vs. 38)
   Caterpillar to a butterfly.

   Illustration: watermelon seeds produce watermelons.

2. Flesh (vs. 39) - Evolution!

3. Plants or heavenly bodies (vs. 40-41)

Paul in speaking of the resurrection body makes a series of contrasts. (vs. 42-49)
II. The Resurrection Body - Its' Translation (vs. 50-53)

1. The mystery of the translation (vs. 50-51)

"Mystery" - Paul's whispered sacred secret! - The Rapture (John 14, Phil 3)

2. The quickness of the translation (vs. 52a)

a) "Moment" - Greek “atomi” - it's that part of time which cannot be divided. We get our word 'atom' from this word.

b) "Twinkling of an eye" - It's not the same as blinking of an eye; it's the time it takes to cast a glance.

c) The Last Trump – Is not the same as the seventh trumpet of the Revelation judgments (cf Rev. 11:5); rather, it is a military term. In the Roman army encampments, trumpets were sounded to cause the soldiers to wake up, to pack up gear, to fall into line, and to march away. The "Last Trump" for Christians is their call to come up into heaven.

Illustration: During the Civil War a group of soldiers had to spend a winter night without tents in an open field. During the night it snowed several inches, and at dawn the chaplain reported a strange sight. The snow-covered soldiers looked like the mounds of new graves, and when the bugle sounded reveille a man immediately rose from each mound of snow, dramatically reminding the chaplain of this passage from 1 Corinthians.

3. The order of the translation (vs. 52b)

a) The trump shall sound (1 Thess 4:16)
b) The dead raised to incorruptibility
c) The living translated "caught up", raptured. (1 Thess)

Note in verse 52 "we" shall be changed. Paul was looking for it

The righteous are put into their graves all weary and worn; but such they will not rise. They go there with the furrowed brown, the hollowed cheek, the wrinkled skin: they shall wake up in beauty and glory. The old man
totters thither, leaning on his staff. The palsied comes, there, trembling all the way. The halt, the lame, the withered, the blind,

journey in doleful pilgrimage to the common dormitory. But they shall not rise decrepit, deformed, or diseased, but strong, vigorous, active, glorious, immortal. The winter of the grave shall soon give way to the spring of resurrection and the summer of glory. Blessed is death, since it answers all the ends of medicine to this mortal frame and through the divine power disrobes us of the leprous rags of flesh, to clothe us with the weeding parchment of incorruption!

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

4. The necessity for the translation (vs. 53)

The hope of the Christian is expressed by the epitaph Benjamin Franklin wrote for himself, engraved on his tombstone in the cemetery of Christ's Church in Philadelphia. "The body of Franklin, printer, like the corner of an old book, its contents torn out the stripped of its lettering and gilding, lies here food for worms. But the work will not be lost, for it will appear once more in a new and more elegant edition, revised and corrected by the Author.

III. The Resurrection Bodies - Victory (vs. 54-58)

1. It fulfills prophecy (vs. 54)

God's Promise Isaiah 25:8: "He will swallow up death in victory: and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces"

2. It brings victory over death (vs. 55)

Death is not merely destroyed so that it cannot do further harm, while all of the harm which it has wrought on God's children remains. Not, the tornado is not merely checked so that no additional homes are wrecked, while those that were wrecked still lie in ruin . . . Death and all of its apparent victories are undone for God's children. What looks like a victory for death and like a defeat for us when our bodies die and decay shall be utterly reversed so that death dies in absolute defeat and our bodies live again in absolute victory.

R. C. H. Lenski
Death will not win!

3. It brings victory over sin and the law (vs. 56)

4. It's a victory through Jesus Christ (vs. 57)

5. This further victory should promote faithful, holy living for the Present (vs. 58)

   a) "Steadfast" is stable purposefulness in living and service in suffering.

   b) "Unmovable" is not vacillating between carnality and Spirituality.

   c) "always abounding in the Lord's work"

   What is it for you?

   Because our labor is not in vain!

   Notice the contrast of verse 58 in the answer to Ecclesiastes "vanity of vanities"

   Paul says, there is "victory" through Jesus Christ

   If we could just keep this perspective it would help us.

   **Alive Forevermore: The Future Resurrection**

Dr. W. B. Hinson was a firm believer in the resurrection of Christ. After a long and fruitful life of serving God, there came a time when he found himself face to face with his convictions on this crucial doctrine. He became terminally ill. One year after the doctor gave him the diagnosis, he spoke the following words from a church pulpit: "I remember a year ago when a man in this city said, 'You have got to go to your death.' I walked out to where I live five miles out of this city, and I looked across at that mountain that I love, and I looked at the river in which I rejoice, and I looked at the stately trees that are always God's own poetry to my soul. "Then in the evening I looked up into the great sky where God was lighting His lamps, and I said, 'I may not see you many more times, but, Mountain, I shall be alive when you are gone; and River I shall be alive when you cease running toward the sea; and, Stars I shall be alive when you have fallen from your sockets in the great down-pulling of the material universe."
INTRODUCTION:
One of the reasons Paul wrote 1 Corinthians was to answer some questions asked by the Corinthian believers:

1. Marriage - Chapter 7
2. Food offered to idols - Chapters 8-10
3. The Lord's Supper - Chapter 11
4. Spiritual Gifts - Chapters 12-14
5. The resurrection - Chapter 15

One last question, "concerning the collection for the saints" (vs. 1)

To the credit of the believers at Corinth they had actually asked Paul about the money he was collecting. It's sad that money and giving have been preached on so much today that many no longer want to hear what the Bible truly has to say about giving.

In his closing comments Paul gives instruction on:

1. How to give - money
2. How to plan - opportunities
3. How to work for others - people

These are three great resources that the church has today. We must not waste them!

We must be good stewards of money, opportunities, and people

I. How to give (vs. 1-4)

Note: the contrast and conviction between chapters 15-16,

Key: vs. 58.

Giving is one of the ways we can 'abound in the Lord's work'

What collection is Paul talking about?

The poor and persecuted believers in Jerusalem

In vs. 1, the N.I.V. 'do what I told the Galatian churches to do' (2 Cor 8-9)
Some of the principles we learn from Paul's instructions on giving are:

1. Giving should be an act of worship.
   "upon the first day of the week' (vs. 2)
   
   Note: the Christians gathered to worship on Sunday!

   Why?

   It was resurrection day! (I Cor 15)

   Giving was part of the worship
   We too worship in giving'

   Note: key to being a generous giver
   (II Cor 8:5)

   "they first gave them self's to the Lord"
   It should be from the heart, willing and joyful see (II Cor 9:7)

2. Giving should be centered in the church.
   (vs. 2) 'upon the first day of the week'

   T.V. preachers, missions, people?

3. Giving should be done by every member of the congregation
   (vs. 2) 'let every one of you'

   Rich or poor.

   Remember the widow's mite?

   Even children in Sunday School!

4. Giving should be consistent and systematic
   (vs. 2) "lay by him in store'
   Lit "keep putting aside and saving"
Thoughtful and planned out

5. Giving should be proportionate

"as God hath prospered him"

What about "tithing" (we think the rest is mine! We must take our hands off what belongs to Him)

It's grace giving.

"The proportion is to be based on your awareness of how much God has given to you and how much your heart has been stirred by the gifts and grace of God."

Ray Stedman

6. Giving should not be done under pressure

(vs. 2) "that there be no gatherings when I come"

No high pressure gimmicks!

Also Matt 6, to be seen of men or to get money back!

It's between you and God.

7. Gifts given must be handled honestly (vs. 3-4)

Remember God gives us the opportunity to give

"We can give without loving, but we cannot love without giving"
II. How to plan the schedule (vs. 5-9)

In these verses Paul discussed his travel plans

1. Paul's goals were short-ranged (vs. 5-6)
   
   It was less than a year

   Why?

   God's Spirit may want to go a different direction

2. Paul was flexible in his plans and commitments (vs. 6-7)

   'It may' or 'ye may' - 'I trust', 'if the Lord wills'

   Ray Stedman, "How gloriously indefinite'

   Don't forget we are the Lord's servants

3. Paul believed that God would provide as he journeyed (vs. 6)

   'that ye may bring me on my journey'

   NIV 'help me on my journey'

   We need to venture in faith

   Gods provision doesn't always come all at once

4. Paul used wisdom in his planning a 'common sense' (vs. 8)

   Until Pentecost?

5. Paul also took advantage of open doors (vs. 9)

   Acts 19 - God allows "adversaries" along with opportunities

   Beware of open doors with no "adversaries"

   Beware of "adversaries" but no open door
"Paul is suggesting here that both of these factors will be present if you have a true opportunity. There will be a "wide door" but there will also be "many adversaries". Beware the wide door where there are not adversaries! That would be a trick of the devil to uplift you in pride and make you so confident in yourself that you are thereby destroyed. Beware also heavy opposition and many adversaries when there is no open door for ministry. Jesus himself told his disciples," If they will not hear you, shake off the dust from your feet and go to the next city." Where there is not opportunity for ministry and oppression is heavy avoid it, but where there is an open door and my adversaries, then by all means stay, because you will have one of the most exciting adventures of your life, seeing God at work in the midst of great opposition and great pressure."

Ray Stedman

III. How to work with People (vs. 10-24)

1. Timothy (vs. 10-11)

Don't cause him any 'fear' or anxiety'

Remember he was 'timid' (1 Tim 4:12)

Also remember he was doing the Lord's work (vs. 10b)

a) Don't despise him (vs. 11a)

He was young

"Some carnal Corinthians could take advantage of Timothy's youthful sincerity and deep humility and lack of experience."

Robert G. Gromecki

b) Give him a peaceful farewell (vs. 11b)

2. Apollo's (vs. 12-14)

Paul didn't tell people what to do

There was no division between Paul and Apollo's
Paul put the unity of the church and the interests of his coworkers ahead his own personal desires
3. The house of Stephanas (vs. 15-16)

4. The messengers of the church (vs. 17-18)

   Their presence and gift brought refreshment to Paul

5. Aquila and Prisella (vs. 19)

   A word to husbands and wives

Paul’s closing remarks (vs. 20-24)

1. Greetings (vs. 20-21)

2. Warning (vs. 22)

3. Blessing (vs. 23-24)

Paul had a love for these carnal Corinthians.

   a) We too must love the brethren

   b) Take advantage of open doors

   c) Give to further the kingdom of God