1 Corinthians

Lesson notes on the First Epistle to the Corinthians

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Contents

Lesson 1 **It's Wonderful to be a Christian!** **5**
1 Corinthians 1:1-9 · January 8, 2023

Lesson 2 **Unite! Don't Divide!** **16**
1 Corinthians 1:10-17 · January 15, 2023

Lesson 3 **How to Tell the Gospel** **27**
1 Corinthians 1:17-25 · January 22, 2023

Lesson 4 **To GOD be the GLORY!** **39**
1 Corinthians 1:26-31 · January 29, 2023

Lesson 5 **A Gospel Witness God Empowers** **51**
1 Corinthians 2:1-5 · February 5, 2023

Lesson 6 **The Source of True Wisdom** **63**
1 Corinthians 2:6-16 · February 12, 2023

Lesson 7 **What is a Carnal Christian?** **75**
1 Corinthians 3:1-4 · February 26, 2023

Lesson 8 **The Attitude of the Laborer in God's Harvest Field** **85**
1 Corinthians 3:5-9 · March 5, 2023

Lesson 9 **How to Build for Eternity** **94**
1 Corinthians 3:10-17 · March 12, 2023

Lesson 10 **A Word to the Wise** **105**
1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5 · March 19, 2023

Lesson 11 **Deflating a BIG HEAD** **116**
1 Corinthians 4:6-21 · March 26, 2023

Lesson 12 **Remove the Cancer** **127**
1 Corinthians 5:1-13 · April 2, 2023

Lesson 13 **How to Handle Disputes between Brethren** **139**
1 Corinthians 6:1-8 · April 30, 2023

Lesson 14 **Sexual Purity: Why?** **151**
1 Corinthians 6:9-20 · May 7, 2023

Lesson 15 **The Physical Relationship of Marriage** **166**
1 Corinthians 7:1-9 · June 4, 2023

Lesson 16 **Remaining Married through Thick & Thin** **177**
1 Corinthians 7:10-17 · June 11, 2023

Lesson 17 **Be Content** **188**
1 Corinthians 7:17-28 · June 25, 2023

Lesson 18 **Beware of Distractions** **204**
1 Corinthians 7:29-35 · July 2, 2023

Lesson 19 **Spiritual Advice for Marriage** **216**
1 Corinthians 7:36-40 · July 9, 2023

Lesson 20 **Don't be a Stumbling Block** **227**
1 Corinthians 8:1-13 · July 16, 2023

Lesson 21 **For the GOSPEL's Sake** **238**
1 Corinthians 9:1-27 · July 30, 2023

Lesson 22 **Take Heed Lest You Fall!** **249**
1 Corinthians 10:1-13 · August 6, 2023

Lesson 23 **Should I or Shouldn't I ?** **258**
1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1 · August 20, 2023

Lesson 24 **A Sign of Submission** **269**
1 Corinthians 11:2-16 · September 10, 2023

Lesson 25 **The Lord's Supper** **279**
1 Corinthians 11:17-34 · September 17, 2023

Lesson 26 **How the HOLY SPIRIT Works** **290**
1 Corinthians 12:1-31 · September 24, 2023

Lesson 27 **A Diversified - UNIFIED Church Body** **304**
1 Corinthians 12:12-31 · October 8, 2023

Lesson 28 **LOVE: Our # 1 Pursuit** **313**
1 Corinthians 13 · October 22, 2023

Lesson 29 **Do Your Words Edify** **328**
1 Corinthians 14:1-19 · November 5, 2023

Lesson 30 **The Biblical Purpose for TONGUES** **338**
1 Corinthians 14:20-22 · December 10, 2023

Lesson 31 **Order in the Church!** **351**
1 Corinthians 14:23-40 · January 7, 2024

Lesson 32 **The Gospel** **365**
1 Corinthians 15:1-4 · January 21, 2023

Lesson 33 **What If Christ Never Arose?** **379**
1 Corinthians 15:5-20 · January 28, 2024

Lesson 34 DEATH will be DESTROYED **391**
1 Corinthians 15:20-34 · February 4, 2024

Lesson 35 A New You! **400**
1 Corinthians 15:35-57 · February 18, 2024

Lesson 36 Your Labor is Not in Vain! **412**
1 Corinthians 15:58 · March 3, 2024

Lesson 37 Giving to the Lord's Work **419**
1 Corinthians 16:1-4 · March 10, 2024

Lesson 38 SERVING in the Lord's Work **429**
1 Corinthians 16:5-24 · March 17, 2024

It's Wonderful to be a Christian!

I Corinthians 1:1-9

1-8-2023

Introduction - v.1

**** The most wonderful privilege in life is to be a true Christian!***
Why is it so wonderful? Answer: Because of all God has done for us in Christ Jesus!

I. He has given us a Church Family (v.2a)

II. He has set us apart from the world (v.2b)

III. He has renamed us "saints" (v.2c)

IV. He has freely showered us with grace (v.4)

V. He has enriched us with talents & abilities (v.5)

VI. He has given us a testimony for Christ (v.6)

VII. He has equipped up with all we need for life & ministry (v.7a)

VIII. He has promised us a blessed hope to look forward to (v.7b)

IX. He will keep us firmly secure in our salvation right to the end (v.8-9)

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III. He has renamed us "_____" (v.2c)

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I Corinthians 1:1-9

1-8-2023

Introduction - v.1

Corinth, located west of Athens Greece, was a major cosmopolitan city, a huge seaport and a major trade center. It was loaded with money, prosperity, jobs, idolatry, lust, worldliness, pagan religions, and immorality.

Wine, women, and wealth was what the average man of Corinth lived for.

To worship, for a male citizen of Corinth, usually meant going to the Temple of Aphrodite and having sexual relations with one of the 1,000 prostitutes who served Satan there.

The city had such a bad reputation that the term *"Korinthiazoma"* meant to "practice sexual immorality."

Corinth's reputation was such that prostitutes in other cities began to be called "Corinthian girls" (Life Applic. Bible note, p. 2,088).

It was to such a city, filled with sin and sensuality and crime and corruption, that the Apostle Paul went to minister the life-changing Gospel on his second missionary journey (SEE: Acts 18:1-11).

A miracle took place at Corinth! Actually, many miracles took place as men, women, boys and girls heard the Good News of Jesus Christ's substitutionary death, His bodily resurrection and His free gift of eternal life. Many were gloriously saved through the testimony of Paul and others. They became Christians. They went from being Corinthians to being Christians.

It is to these Christians (and, as 1:2 teaches, to Christians everywhere) that this Epistle was penned.

The Corinthians at Corinth were sinners saved by the grace of God! After professing faith in Christ, they formed a church - a church, which like ours, existed in one of the largest, wealthiest, and most godless cities in the world.

The faith of those believers would be tested. The pressures of the world's ways, philosophies, customs and morals would force the professing believers either closer to the Lord or away from the Lord.

This church had problems. Christians are not exempt from them. They had conflicts which came in various shapes and sizes. We know of some of them by the issues Paul deals with in I and II Corinthians. Satan attacked that church like he attempts to do to every church today. Many in that church were proud, divisive, self-centered, immoral, confused, jealous, and doctrinally unstable. It is these and other issues which Paul providentially addresses.

Paul writes from Ephesus (approx. 56 A.D.) to correct problems he had heard about (1:11) and to answer the questions church members had (7:1).

V. 1

"Paul" - Formerly a Pharisee sold out to Judaism, but converted to Christianity by a direct confrontation from Jesus Christ (Acts 9).

"An apostle" - An official "sent one." (the last official apostle whom the Lord called to that unique, foundational office - I Cor. 15:8-10).

Paul states his apostleship to establish his authority to correct and guide that ailing church.

"Through the will of God" - He was not a self-appointed apostle, nor did he receive his office of apostleship from men (Gal. 1:1).

"Sosthenes" - Perhaps the Sosthenes who was the former ruler of a Jewish synagogue at Corinth and who became a Christian (Acts 18:17). This man wrote this letter as Paul dictated it to him.

Verses 1 - 9 are some of the few positive things Paul had to say to the carnal Corinthians before he began to attempt to bring order out of the chaos that church slumped into.

Paul wanted to remind the Corinthians of who they were before rebuking them for not living up to who they were.

With all of the tests, trials, pressures, difficulties, yes at times inconsistencies, etc. that Christians face, one could ask: "Is it good to be a Christian?"

To that question I would answer: "Absolutely!"

**** The most wonderful privilege in life is to be a true Christian!***
Why is it so wonderful? Answer: Because of all God has done for us in Christ Jesus!

I. He has given us a Church Family (v.2a)

"The church" - Not a building but people professing personal faith in Jesus Christ.

There is the universal church of all truly saved people who will one day assemble in Heaven, and there is the local church of professing Christians who gather at a specific location. Here, Paul addresses a local church.

"Each church has two addresses: a geographic address (***"at Corinth"***) and a spiritual address (***"in Christ Jesus"***) (Wiersbe, p. 568).

"The church of God" - This church did not have a denominational label (Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc.). [Unfortunately, today there are so many wolves in sheep's clothing claiming to be "Christian," that labels sometimes help. The infant Corinthian church existed at a time when distinguishing labels were not necessary.]

"Of God" - It was a church (*ekklesia*) of called-out-from-the-world people who belonged to God.

Any Biblical church is God's church, not man's! God had property in Corinth. That property was His people (Acts 18:10).

These Christians wee not lone rangers, scattered all over Corinth. They were a team, a family, an assembly that got together (5:4) every week, particularly on the first day of the week (16:2) to be mutually edified by the Word (14:26).

Song: "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God."

II. He has <u>set us apart</u> from the world (v.2b)

"Sanctified" - To set apart from <u>profane</u> (common) use to be specially kept for a special purpose (EX: expensive china and silverware).

We are sanctified for God's possession and use. If you are saved, you have been sanctified. Are you living like it? (II Tim. 2:20-21 - *"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."*)

We have been set apart for Christ alone (WEDDING ILLUS - Wiersbe, p. 568).

"In Christ Jesus" - It is our position in Christ (our oneness with Him) that makes us sanctified.

Our positional sanctity comes only from Christ, not works and self-effort.

Don't be ashamed of being distinctly different from the world; this is a privilege to be uniquely set apart (separated) for God!

III. He has renamed us "<u>saints</u>" (v.2c)

"Called to be <u>saints</u>" - Every blood-bought child of God is a saint (a holy, set-apart one).

There is not a select, few canonized patron saints. Saint Sosthenes was just as much a saint as Saint Paul!

Our sainthood comes from God by His grace! Not from the Vatican.

Sainthood was a <u>present</u> reality for the believers at Corinth, not merely a future reality.

Being a "saint" does <u>not</u> imply "sinless perfection." The Corinthian church was living proof of that.

However, in God's eyes, and in our relationship with Christ, we are just as if we had never sinned (Rom. 5:1).

The Corinthians shared "sainthood" with all Christians *"<u>in every place</u>"* who have called upon Christ for salvation (Rom. 10:13) and call upon Him for daily strength and needed blessing.

Our practice should match our position; our lifestyle should match our label (*"saints")*, but unfortunately such is not always the case (ILLUS: MacArthur, p. 6).

EX: Alexander the Great to a soldier named Alexander: "Either change your ways or change your name."

IV. He has freely showered us with <u>grace</u> (v.4)

Although ***"grace"*** (v. 4) had already been ***"<u>given</u>"*** to the Corinthians at salvation, they still needed God's grace and peace to successfully live the Christian life (v. 3).

The hymnwriter said, "I need Thee every hour!"

Hence, Paul's wish for the Corinthians is that they would continue to experience grace and peace for daily living.

Note: The source of grace coming from both the Father and Son proves the equality and oneness of these Persons in the Godhead.

"I thank my God" - God gets the credit because God is the source of <u>grace</u>. It is not manufactured by human effort.

God's
Riches
At
Christ's
Expense

"By Jesus Christ" - Christ is the channel through which God's grace flows. If you are not connected to Christ, you are not connected to God's saving grace.

V. He has enriched us with talents & abilities (v.5)

Not only did God give them saving grace, but in Christ they were enriched (made extremely rich) when it came to ***"utterance"*** (speaking ability) and ***"knowledge"*** (spiritual understanding).

They knew the truth and could with verbosity and eloquence express it.

"Ye come behind in no gift" - They did not lack any gift that God intended for them to have. It was utterly foolish for the Corinthians to seek more spiritual gifts (EX: tongues); they already had been given a rich supply of what God wanted them to have.

They had no problem communicating the truth and no problem knowing it (as we will see, however, some did have a problem in living it).

VI. He has given us a testimony for Christ (v.6)

Both the spiritual utterance (v. 5) and the spiritual knowledge that was manifested by the Corinthian Christians bore testimony to their salvation.

Their faith was witnessed by the truths they knew and spoke, truths which unsaved people have no insight (illumination) to express.

What you know about Christ and what you say about Christ gives testimony that you are a child of God. What is your testimony?

VII. He has <u>equipped</u> up with <u>all we need</u> for life & ministry (v.7a)

"Come behind" - (*hystereo* - hysterectomy) - to be missing, to be lacking.

We are *"complete in Him"* (Col. 2:10).

"Gift" - (*charisma)* - the result of grace

Spiritual gifts are talents and abilities that God gives of His own choosing (12:11). Every believer has at least one gift (12:7) and believers have differing gifts (12:4-6), not to be selfishly shown off but to be used for God's glory and service.

Many times what a gift amounts to is a "crucified talent." A talent or skill that you had prior to salvation, which now gets energized, re-directed and utilized in a manner which glorifies God!

Instead of using the gifts God gave them, they began arguing over which gifts were more important. They also began coveting each others' gifts when they should have been content.

VIII. He has promised us a <u>blessed hope</u> to look forward to (v.7b)

"Waiting" - to patiently wait with eager and earnest expectation.

Paul expected that Christ could come back in his lifetime.

"Coming" - (*apokalupsis)* - unveiling, revelation, uncovering.

When Christ comes, He will be visibly manifested both to the eyes of the ones raptured as well as to the unraptured world (Rev. 6).

The long phrase ***"our Lord Jesus Christ"*** points to the fact that our coming Lord is:

1. personal (*"our"*)
2. mighty (*"Lord")*
3. Savior (*"Jesus")*
4. Messiah (*"Christ")*

No other religion has a *"blessed hope"* (Ti. 2:13) -- but Christianity does!

IX. He will keep us <u>firmly secure</u> in our salvation right to the end (v.8-9)

"Confirm" - to establish something so that it is firm, stable and secure.

Our security rests not in our ability to safeguard our souls, but in Jesus Christ's ability! (Jn. 10:27-28)

"Blameless" - Lit. To not be called into account; To have nothing laid to one's charge (as the result of public investigation). The word "implies <u>not</u> merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person" (Vine P.131)

"When we enter Heaven we will not have all our sins and shortcoming flashed before us for everyone to see" (MacArthur, p. 21).

If even one sin appeared on our account, we would be banished from God's holy presence.

"The day of our Lord Jesus Christ" - that day is the day of the <u>Rapture</u> (cp. v. 7) (which will be followed by Christ's wrath upon the godless world).

"God is faithful" - to re-emphasize our eternal security, Paul bases this blessed doctrine on the faithfulness (trustworthiness) of God!

Paul assured the Philippians of a similar promise: *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* (Phil. 1:6).

"Fellowship" - to <u>share</u> (a partnership relationship) with Christ.

What I share in with Christ as a *"joint heir"* (Rom. 8) will never be taken away.

"UNITE! DON'T DIVIDE!"

("Division is good in math, but bad in a church")
I Corinthians 1:10-17
1-15-2023

INTRODUCTION:

***A church needs to unite with each other, not fight with each other.**

I. The EXHORTATION for Church Unity (v. 10a)
(Paul's appeal offers the basis for church unity)

A. We should be united because of our oneness as *"brethren"*

B. We should be united because of our oneness in *"our Lord Jesus Christ"*

II. The ESSENTIALS for Church Unity (v. 10b)

A. A Singular Message
(The Gospel we proclaim gives us unity)

B. A Team Spirit
(The Cohesion we protect gives us unity)

C. A Common Conviction
(The Dogmas we believe give us unity)

III. The ENEMIES of Church Unity (v. 11-17)

A. Contention involving competitive strife (v. 11)

B. Cliques around human personalities (v. 12-17)

CONCLUSION:

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A. A _____ _____
(The <u>Gospel</u> we proclaim gives us unity)

B. A _____ _____
(The <u>Cohesion</u> we protect gives us unity)

C. A _____ _____
(The <u>Dogmas</u> we believe give us unity)

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A. _____ involving competitive strife (v. 11)

B. _____ around human personalities (v. 12-17)

CONCLUSION:

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INTRODUCTION:

Ecc. 4:12 - A 3 fold cord is not quickly broken.

Ill. Aesop's fable - A father gave one stick to each of his 7 sons. they could break that stick easily. Then he tied 7 sticks together & they could not break it no matter how hard they tried.

What is always at the heart of disunity? Selfish pride.

Perhaps Paul deals first with this problem because if this one is resolved, all the rest are a piece of cake!

***A church needs to unite with each other, not fight with each other.**

I. The <u>EXHORTATION</u> for Church Unity (v. 10a)
(Paul's <u>appeal</u> offers the basis for church unity)

A. We should be united because of our oneness as *"<u>brethren</u>"*

"Beseech" - A rousing encouragement (Note: the spirit of this message should correspond to the tone, attitude, and appeal of Paul).

"Brethren" - We are family via our adoption into the family of God.

--We have received the same <u>re-birth</u>.

--We have the same <u>Father</u>.

--We have received the same <u>Spirit</u>.

--We share the same name - <u>Christian</u>.

--We have the same <u>inheritance</u> (*"heirs together of the grace of life"*)

"Brethren" - It is impossible for God's people to have total spiritual unity with those who are not in the family of God. But for ***"brethren"*** not to get along is really a shame and disgrace to our heavenly Father.

SEE: Psalm 133:1-3

Satan will often sow *"tares"* among the wheat to create disunity. *"Wolves in sheep's clothing."*

B. We should be united because of our oneness in *"our Lord Jesus Christ"*

Paul's appeal to us to be united is based on ***"the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."*** Paul does appeal for unity based on His name--not the name of a denomination or of any man or movement--but our unity should be around our common Lord and Savior.

We should be a united force with Jesus Christ along being the cohesive center and focus.

Do you name the name of Christ? Then join hands with us. United we stand, divided we fall.

When the world looks at us, do they see a people who honor the ***"name"*** of Christ by our unity with each other? It was our Lord's last request of the Father that we be one - John 17:17-23.

"Our Lord" - We have the same Lord. . . faith. . . spirit baptism (Eph. 4:3-6 - *"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all,a nd through all, and in you all."*).

I Corinthians uses several word pictures to depict the unity of the church:

1. Building (I Cor. 3:9)

2. Temple (I Cor. 3:16)

3. Body (I Cor. 12)

II. The ESSENTIALS for Church Unity (v. 10b)

A. A Singular Message

(The Gospel we proclaim gives us unity)

"Ye all" - None excluded. All it takes is one disgruntled, self-serving, egotistical, divisive, sectarian-spirited individual to create disunity. (All it takes is one Korah [Num. 16], one Absolum, one Judas, one Diotrephes [III Jn. 9])

"Speak the same thing" - Have a single message. Share a common rallying point. This common message should surround allegiance to Jesus Christ (not to man - cp. v. 12, cp. v. 23, 2:2).

On some fine points of interpretation, believers will have differences of opinion, yet in the cardinal doctrines there must be unity.

"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity" (Augustine)

B. A Team Spirit

(The Cohesion we protect gives us unity)

"Divisions" - "to tear or rip apart"; to separate by dissension.

"Divisions" - *schismata* = schisms, splits, parties, different camps and loyalties.

"Among you" - among the Corinthian church. Among the world, expect divisions (*..."a sword"* - Mt. 10:34). It should not be so in the church.

Satan's method of destroying a church of family is "divide and conquer."

He seeks to use any method necessary (hurt feelings, bitterness, misunderstandings, inconsiderations, etc.) to separate and isolate a person from the protection of the group, so as to attack that segregated victim who is alone without the support of the group.

In Romans 16:17-18, God admonishes us to watch out for those who are the cause of divisions and to keep away from such divisive people (SEE: Rom. 16:17-18).

When we are all in the same work, serving the same Lord, pursuing the same goals, we will have unity. "A team that sweats together, gets together."

C. A Common Conviction
(The Dogmas we believe give us unity)

"Perfectly joined" - passive participle.

Who does the joining? The Holy Spirit of God.

The "perfect tense" suggests a unity that occurred in the past that is to have permanent results.

"Perfectly joined together" - To be put back in order; to be restored to a proper former condition.
The word was used by Herodotus (V, 28) for composing civil order (Rienecker, p. 386).

The term is "a medical term that describes the unity of the human body knit together." (Wiersbe, p. 569).

"Same mind" - Thoughts (about principles that really matter) What Paul is encouraging is that all believers have *"the mind of Christ"* (Morgan) (cp. 2:16), i.e. to be concerned about those matters that Jesus Christ is concerned about.

To have the same mind is to be compelled by the same aims and objectives. (Ill. On my first date with Terri I discovered that we share similar goals and ambitions)

"Same judgment" - conclusions (applications of principles; convictions) Believers should all share the same cardinal convictions, the same essential doctrines and moral dogmas.

A "conviction" is a belief you would be willing to die for.

What are fundamental doctrines? Clearly-taught Bible dogmas, apart from which one cannot be saved:

1) Inspiration and authority of Scripture

2) Virgin birth of Christ

3) Deity of Christ

4) Substitutionary death of Christ

5) Bodily resurrection of Christ

6) Salvation by grace through faith alone

A church cannot offer a doctrinal smorgasbord (on clearly-taught Bible theological truths or moral absolutes) from which members can pick and choose what they like best (MacArthur, p. 26).

There must always be a basis for unity. In Christianity, it is adherence to fundamental convictions: It is doctrine and duty; beliefs and practices; Biblical truth and moral purity; love of God's truth and God's people.

God is not calling for all of us to be spiritual clones (where we all look alike, dress alike, smell alike, do the same functions, etc.).

Unity is not uniformity:

--Unity comes by God changing a man internally, in the heart.
--Uniformity comes by man forcing others to externally conform to a legalistic standard.

Unity does not mean uniformity. Rather, it means oneness of purpose and a cooperative spirit (EX: team sports).

A Printing Press or Copier - Many different types of parts, but all working in harmony to produce a quality printed sheet.

III. The ENEMIES of Church Unity (v. 11-17)

A. Contention involving competitive strife (v. 11)

"It hath been declared unto me" - This was not gossip with the intention to destroy; it was truthful information with he intention to aid and correct the problem. (always examine your motive, your method of what you say about other believers) (note: Chloe family went to the authority)

"Contentions" - (plural) selfishly motivated strifes or quarrels (a spirit of competition)

Such contentions resulted in:

--lawsuits (6:6-7)
--divorces (7:10-14)
--jealousy over each other's gifts (12-14)
--disorder in the church (14)
--doctrinal confusion over the resurrection (15)
We are not to be competitors with each other, but cooperators with each

other (James 3:14-16 - *"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."*)

I heard about a quarrelsome church which had a sign outside that read: "Jesus First." One day storm winds blew off the "Jes" - leaving a more accurate description of that church: "Us First"!

B. Cliques around human personalities (v. 12-17)

V. 12

Some were exclusively loyal:

--to Paul (no doubt because he planted their church and was a theological genius)

--Others to Apollos (because he had great oratory skill, a stunning pulpiteer; a master of the Greek language, a homoletical genius - Acts 18:24)

--Others to Cephas (Peter) (because he was an apostle of notoriety, who was of the inner circle [Peter, James, John] who walked with Jesus; he was a big-name apostle)

Others had it right - they were loyal to Christ. If they had any problem, it might be a holier-than-thou spirit, which looked down their noses at those who were mixed up with other allegiances. Perhaps the *"Christ only"* groups felt they had no need for human instructors (Note, however: I Cor. 1:1, 12:28; Eph. 4:11; II Tim. 1:1, etc.) (MacArthur, p. 31).

Whenever a people divide over a person and form a party split, they have become cultic!

One distinguishing mark of a cult is that a cult will surround itself around a

human personality and be loyal to that person no matter what.

Who do cults pledge allegiance to?

--To the Jonestown cult - Jim Jones

--To the Jehovah's Witnesses cult - Joseph B. Rutherford and the Elite officers of the Watchtower Society

--To the Mormon cult - Joseph Smith and his successor Brigham Young

--To the Unification cult - Sung Yung Moon

--To the 7th Day Adventist cult - Ellen G. White

--To the Waco, Texas cult - David Koresh

--To the Christian Science cult - Mary Baker Eddy

--To the Muslim cult - Muhammad

--To the Roman Catholic cult - the Pope of the Vatican

There exists the danger of "personality cults" within Christianity today. Preachers with a certain charisma or dogmatic personality on large TV ministries or radio networks are (if they are not humble) in positions of danger - the danger of drawing *"away disciples after them"* (Acts 20:30).

V. 13

"Has Christ been divided up?" - Paul asks, Do some in your church have one brand of Christ and others have a different brand?

If we all have the same one and only Christ, shouldn't we have unity around Him?

"'Has Christ been divided and different parts handed out to different people?' The very idea is grotesque and must be rejected. Paul did not preach one Christ, Apollos another and Peter another. There is but one Savior and one Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9)." (Wiersbe, p. 569).

Paul says: "Don't be partially loyal to me, I was not crucified for you, was I?"

We are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19).

V. 17

Just as Jesus did not baptize people (Jn. 4:1-2), so both Peter (Acts 10:48) and Paul allowed their associates to baptize new converts (Wiersbe, p. 570).

Paul wasn't against baptism. He was against people's wrong assumptions that he baptized in his own name. Christ did not send Paul to baptize in his own name but to evangelize.

"Christ sent me not to baptize" - If baptism saved people, Paul certainly would have been sent to do it.

To diffuse the Corinthians' carnal, over-inflated view of men, Paul straightens them out by referring to himself and other spiritual leaders as mere:

1.Ministers (*diakonoi* - servants - 3:5-7)
2.Laborers (3:9)
3.Managers (attendants & stewards - 4:1)

Paul says, don't limit yourself to one man when you can benefit from all - I Cor. 3:21-22 - READ 4:6.

CONCLUSION:

--Division is good in math. . . but bad in a church.

--Banana splits are enjoyable. . . church splits are not.

Four attitudes that promote unity:

1. **Unselfishness**(Acts 4:32 - "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.)

2. **Humility**(Phil. 2:2 - "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.)

3. **Compassion & love**(I Pet. 3:8 - "Finally, be ye all of one mind,
having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous")

4. **Peace**(Eph. 4:3 - "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace")

"HOW TO TELL THE GOSPEL"

I Corinthians 1:17-25

1-22-2023

INTRODUCTION:

***Let God give you true wisdom about how to share the Gospel with unsaved people!**

Tell the Gospel. . .

I. <u>SIMPLY</u>, Not worrying about <u>big vocabulary</u> or <u>clever, human arguments</u> (v. 17)

Tell the Gospel. . .

II. <u>COURAGEOUSLY</u>, not worrying about being considered <u>foolish</u> (v. 18-20)

Tell the Gospel. . .

III. <u>CONFIDENTLY</u>, not worrying about the <u>results</u> (v. 21-25)

A. Be confident that you are fulfilling <u>God's plan</u> (method) for <u>saving</u> people (v. 21)

B. Be confident that you are telling them what they <u>need</u> <u>to hear</u>, rather than what they want to hear (v. 22-23)

C. Be confident that you will see <u>God's power</u> and <u>wisdom</u> manifested in the fruit of your labor (v. 24-25)

"HOW TO TELL THE GOSPEL"

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INTRODUCTION:



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I. **_____, Not worrying about _____ or _____,_____** (v. 17)

Tell the Gospel. . .

II. **_____, not worrying about being considered _____** (v. 18-20)

Tell the Gospel. . .

III. **_____, not worrying about the _____** (v. 21-25)

A. Be confident that you are fulfilling _____ (method) for _____ people (v. 21)

B. Be confident that you are telling them what they _____ _____, rather than what they want to hear (v. 22-23)

C. Be confident that you will see _____ and _____ manifested in the fruit of your labor (v. 24-25)

"HOW TO TELL THE GOSPEL"

I Corinthians 1:17-25

1-22-2023

INTRODUCTION:

"There is ever the danger of men being carried away by the personality of the speaker and missing the message entirely" (DeHaan, p. 21).

"A story is told of two men who visited London one Lord's day during the days of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. In the morning they visited a London church to hear a renowned gospel preacher. As they left the church one was heard to say, 'What a great and wonderful preacher this man is.' However, in the evening they went to hear Charles Haddon Spurgeon, and as they left the tabernacle they were heard to remark, 'What wonderful Christ that man has preached.' In the morning they saw a man, and in the evening they say the Man, The Lord Jesus Christ. That is the difference Paul is seeking to emphasize here." (DeHaan, *Studies in I Corinthians, Zondervan* p. 21-22).

The church of Corinth was divided over personalities (1:12).

Some were exclusively loyal:

> --to Paul (no doubt because he planted their church and was a theological genius)
>
> --Others to Apollos (because he had great oratory skill, a stunning pulpiteer; a master of the Greek language, a homoletical genius - Acts 18:24)
>
> --Others to Cephas (Peter) (because he was an apostle of notoriety, who was of the inner circle [Peter, James, John] who walked with Jesus; he was a big-name apostle)

To humble the Corinthians, Paul glorifies the power of the Gospel and downplays and disregards man's proud wisdom.

***Let God give you true wisdom about how to share the Gospel with unsaved people!**

Tell the Gospel. . .

I. <u>SIMPLY</u>, Not worrying about <u>big vocabulary</u> or <u>clever, human arguments</u> (v. 17)

"Christ sent me not to baptize" - Paul would delegate this step of obedience to others while he concentrated on evangelizing the lost.

"Preach the Gospel" - to announce good news

The Good News (Gospel) that Paul proclaimed is outlined in I Cor. 15:1-3 -

1. Christ's substitutionary death
2. Christ's bodily resurrection--all based on the Scriptures

"Wisdom of words" - i.e. not a speech with worldly wisdom or human wisdom

Paul didn't speak to <u>impress</u>, but he spoke to <u>communicate</u>!

(ILLUS: how many pseudo-intellectuals will purposely use enormous, ten-syllable words, high tech language, impressive vocabulary in order to show how smart they are.)

We need to concentrate more on speaking <u>right</u> than speaking well, on being <u>accurate</u> than being eloquent, on <u>rightly dividing</u> the Word of Truth rather than impressing with words of the learned.

If politicians always concentrated more on being <u>right</u> (truthful) than being popular (diplomatic), our country would gain a healing.

When told to go lead Israel out of Egypt (Exod. 3:10), Moses gave the excuse, *"I am not eloquent...I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue"* (Exod. 4:10). *"And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth...have not I the Lord? Now therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say"* (Exod. 4:11-12).

If you hang your participles, pluralize words that should be singular, disconnect your conjunctions, etc. and "slaughter the king's English," but yet you sincerely and simply communicate the great work Christ accomplished on the cross, you are a success in God's eyes, and God will use you (even in your weakness) to demonstrate His power (SEE: I Cor. 2:1-5)

Don't worry about whether or not you can answer every philosophical question or even every Bible question someone might ask; just tell what Christ did at Calvary.

You get better at witnessing, the more you do it. The more you share the Gospel, the more Bible verses you will memorize and the smoother your witness will go.

God is not against true wisdom (He's the Author of it - Prov. 2:6). What He is against is *"the wisdom of this world"* (v. 20).

"The cross of Christ" - The death of Christ for sinners was the theme (main topic) of Paul's preaching.

The ***"cross of Christ"*** is the heart and soul of the Gospel. It is the sum total of the salvation message.

To preach that men are sinners, that hell awaits them, that they must repent of sin -- is not to preach the whole Gospel (EX: hyper-Calvinism). --You must tell them what was accomplished on the cross.

To preach that you need Jesus in your heart, accept Him, believe in Him, etc., is not to preach the complete Gospel (EX: Easy believism). -- You must explain the substitutionary, vicarious, complete work of Christ on Calvary's cross.

"None effect" - to be void, empty, vain ("*emptied of its power"* NIV)

To be more concerned about tickling itching ears (II Tim. 4:3) than accurately communicating the news of what Christ accomplished on the cross is to distract from the Gospel.

Tell the Gospel. . .

II. <u>COURAGEOUSLY</u>, not worrying about being considered <u>foolish</u> (v. 18-20)

V. 18

"Preaching" = <u>not</u> *kerux*, but *logos*. "The <u>word</u> of the cross" - i.e. "the <u>word about the cross</u>" (which can be shared by any Christian - not necessarily a preacher).

"To them that perish" - lit. to the ones who are perishing (pres. mid. part.). The lost are <u>already</u> in a state of destruction. They are already on the road to perdition. God's wrath already abides on them (Jn. 3:36).

Paul uses the present tense (<u>are</u> perishing) rather than the future tense (<u>will</u> perish) because the condition, destiny, and eternity of the lost can be altered in this life if God reaches their heart via the Gospel, and they respond in belief (v. 21).

(ILLUS: I once viewed Bible Christianity as a foolish waste of time, until God changed my mind and life).

"Foolishness" - folly, nonsense

When people mock or make fun of your message, don't be offended.

--Realize they are <u>blind</u> (Eph. 4:18)
--Realize they are <u>spiritually dead</u> (Eph. 2:1)
--Realize they are <u>ignorant</u> (I Pet. 1:14)

It is foolishness to their minds because it conflicts with their own proud ideas and thinking. (people attempt to lower God's ways so as to elevate their own).

If you view the *"preaching of the cross"* as foolishness, it is because you are on the path of destruction, you are in a state of ruin.
"Us which are saved" - "Us which are (presently) being saved (passive)"

--The present tense shows that people are being saved right now (the salvation of sinners occurs <u>not</u> in their past but in their present life)

--The passive voice shows that salvation is a work of God, not of human works or effort. God does the saving.

"The power of God" - What energy, strength, or power does God use to save sinners? Answer: The power of the message of Calvary.

They can call you a "fool" and your message "foolish," but you have experienced a life-changing <u>power</u> that the world knows nothing about.

Are we the fools who have come to trust in Christ's finished work?
Or are the fools the ones attempting to work their way into God's favor and kingdom?

Are we the fools who have available to us the *"power and wisdom of God"* (v. 24)...

...To have answers to life's greatest questions

...To have personal lives that have been miraculously transformed

...To have the knowledge how to have marriages that last through thick and thin

Or are the fools the ones who hop from school of thought to school of thought. . .from book to book. . . from class to class. . . and still lack solutions to the moral, ethical, social, and spiritual problems we see every day.

You can judge a person's relationship to God on how he views the *"preaching of the cross."*

V. 19

In Isaiah 29:14, it is written that God will one day destroy the worldly viewpoints of the supposed worldly wiseman. He will throw aside the pseudo-intellectualism of the anti-Bible, anti-Christ intelligencia.

One day those who were so confident in their own ideas, so smug in their own philosophies, so reliant on their own plans, schemes, etc., will have a rude awakening after death. They will then be in the torment and anguish their own sinful, unbelieving heart deserves. They will forever regret: "I was wrong!" "I am the fool!"

--The theory of evolution will one day come crashing down.

--The thoughts that the Bible is not God's inspired, infallible, inerrant Word will be corrected.

--The disbelief in the miracles of the Bible (EX: Red Sea, Jonah, Jesus' miracles, etc.) will one day be straightened out.

V. 20
Compared to God's wisdom, ***"Where is the wise?"***
Compared to God's scholarship, ***"Where is the scribe?"***
Compared to God's ability to debate, ***"Where is the disputer of this world?"***

"Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" - To those who know the mystery of the Gospel, they can see through the foolish deception and lies of this world. The world may view our Gospel as foolish, but we can take courage in the

fact that they are the real fools.

ILLUS: A man used to walk the streets of Manhattan with a sign over his chest and one over his back. On the front if said, "I'M A FOOL FOR JESUS!" On the back it read, "WHOSE FOOL ARE YOU?"

Tell the Gospel. . .

III. CONFIDENTLY, not worrying about the results (v. 21-25)

A. Be confident that you are fulfilling God's plan (method) for saving people (v. 21)

"The world by wisdom knew not God" - We live in a technologically-advanced society today, with men increasingly making new discoveries and new advances; yet in all of man's learning, he has not made any strides in terms of knowing the God who created it all.

Yes, through creation man can know about God (Rom. 1:20; Ps. 19:1), but man cannot know God personally without a clear presentation of the Gospel (cp. Acts 8:31). People may have Ph.D's, more degrees than a thermometer, yet be ignorant when it comes to knowing God.

The lost world of humanity could never come to know who God was and what He did without God revealing Himself in special revelation. If it weren't for the Scriptures, no one could ever know God's plan of salvation.

God is ***"pleased"*** when we convey His gospel to a lost and dying world. Are you bringing pleasure to the heart of God by your faithfulness to proclaiming the Gospel?

"The foolishness of preaching" - i.e. *"the foolishness of the message preached"* (NASV). The phrase describes not merely the method of delivery but the content of the message delivered.

"To save them that believe" - God saves those who believe (Acts 16:31). Belief is a prerequisite to God's saving a person. No one is saved prior to belief.

It builds confidence to know that when we lovingly, graciously and truthfully proclaim the gospel, we are fulfilling God's plan for drawing people to Himself.

God could use any other means to convey His gospel.
He could write it across the sky.
He could subliminally insert it into a person's mind when they are asleep.
He could send angels down with the message.

Yet His only plan (a plan which He is very pleased with) is to utilize His people to herald His truth.

B. Be confident that you are telling them what they need to hear, rather than what they want to hear (v. 22-23)

V. 22

A ***"sign" -*** to appeal to one's senses
"Wisdom" - to appeal to one's intellect

A ***"sign" -*** to move a person by means of an experience
"Wisdom" - to move a person by means of reasoning

Although God is able, He is not saving people today by means of signs, nor by means of human reasoning (although the gospel does produce an "experience" and it is "reasonable", God doesn't want us to base our faith completely on either).

--Many today refuse to believe in Christ unless He first does some existential, experiential, sensational miracle or sign for them.

> ILLUS: The rich man in hell erroneously thought that a visit of a dead man to his five brothers' home would convince them of God's plan of salvation (Lk. 16).

--Others refuse to believe in His deity because it defies human logic (EX: Jehovah's Witnesses)

V. 23
Paul's focus was not on signs and wonders, nor was it on impressive philosophical arguments; it was on preaching the simple Gospel story.

The Jews stumbled over Christ because He didn't prove Himself to them at their bidding (at their request).

The Greeks view His message as foolish because it was too simplistic, too easy. The gospel didn't blow their minds philosophically.

The Jews wanted powerful signs, yet Paul preached One who died a shameful, humble death on a cross.

The Greeks wanted some deep philosophical discourse, yet Paul gave a clean-cut, simple message of Christ's payment for man's sins.

C. Be confident that you will see God's power and wisdom manifested in the fruit of your labor (v. 24-25)

V. 24

"Called" - This word can refer to a general invitation (Mt. 22:14) or to an invitation to which people responded and thus were saved (Rom. 8:28). Here Paul is using the term in reference to saved people.

Everyone (whether Jew or Gentile) who is saved knows Christ's mighty power to save and the marvelous wisdom that exists in His salvation plan.

As the hymnwriter said: *"I need no other argument, I need no other plea, it is enough that Jesus died and that He died for me."*

V. 25

God really has no foolishness or weakness.

Yet for sake of comparison with mortal man, the perceived most foolish thing God would do is still "light years" ahead of the sum total of man's wisdom, and the perceived most weak thing God would do is more mighty than the combined efforts of all humanity.

CONCLUSION:

Why is the way to God exclusively through Jesus Christ?
Why is Christ's Work on the Cross the only way to our attaining forgiveness of sins and eternal life?

Couldn't God have devised another means of Salvation?
Couldn't there be an easier way? A less offensive way? Couldn't any road be the right road to Heaven?

- ***Christ's payment for sin at the Cross is the only payment God accepts.***

Why is the Cross the only way?
Why is Jesus the only way to Heaven?

Because God is God, and Heaven is His Heaven, He deserves the right to determine the means by which anyone enters His Heaven! If He requires Faith in His Son, He has the right to do so.

In order for Salvation to be made possible, the following had to be accomplished:

1. Sin had to be paid for
2. Forgiveness had to be granted
3. Righteousness had to be imputed

1. God's <u>nature</u> demands a salvation plan which would be <u>consistent</u> with <u>His character</u>. (Romans 3:26)

2. God's <u>justice</u> demands that <u>sin be paid for</u>. (1 Peter 3:18)

3. Sin's infinite <u>price</u> demands an <u>infinite payment</u>. (2 Corinthians 1:10)

4. God's <u>holiness</u> demands a <u>perfect sacrifice for sin</u>. (Hebrews 9-10)

5. God's <u>Son</u> is the only one who could <u>qualify to pay</u> sin's penalty.
(Hebrews 7:27)

6. **God's <u>glory</u> demands a salvation plan which would give Him the <u>highest credit, honor, and praise</u>.** (Isaiah 42:8; Isaiah 43:10-12)

"To GOD be the GLORY!"

(God specializes in transforming "Nobodies" & "Nothings")

I Corinthians 1:26-31

1-29-2023

Introduction:

God can take someone the world views as a "<u>nobody</u>" and make a somebody out of him! ... He can take something the world views as "<u>nothing</u>" and make something out of it!

Why?

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

I. To <u>display</u> His <u>wisdom</u> & <u>power</u>(v.24-26)

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

II. To <u>shame</u> the wisdom of this <u>world</u>(v.27-28)

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

III. To <u>strip</u> man of his <u>proud boasting</u>(v.29)

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

IV. To <u>glorify</u> His Son -- Jesus Christ(v.30)

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

V. To <u>fulfill</u> His <u>Word</u>(v.31)

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Why?

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

I. To _____ His _____ & _____ (v.24-26)

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

II. To _____ the wisdom of this _____ (v.27-28)

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

III. To _____ man of his _____(v.29)

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

IV. To _____ His Son -- Jesus Christ (v.30)

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

V. To _____ His _____ (v.31)

"To GOD be the GLORY!"

(God specializes in transforming "Nobodies" & "Nothings")

I Corinthians 1:26-31

1-29-2023

Introduction:

The Corinthians' main problem was "I" trouble. "I am this; I can do that; I am better than you are" etc.

They were "*puffed up*" with pride (I Cor. 4:6, 18-19; 5:2).

In these first three chapters, Paul deflates their pride and elevates, magnifies, and exalts God.

Note the previous context:

In verses 17-25, the Apostle Paul portrayed the message of God ("*the preaching of the cross*" - v. 18) as being weak in men's eyes, but mighty in God's eyes.

Now in verses 26-31, he portrays the people of God as being weak in the world's eyes, but blessed in God's eyes.

Continuing with the intention to deflate the Corinthians' vain pride and to humble those who glory in men, Paul shows the type of people God saves and uses for His glory.

God not only has a message the unsaved, perishing world regards as "*foolish*" (v. 18, 21, 23, 25), but He also has messengers they mighty view as foolish.

God not only has a gospel the godless, unconverted, lost, pagan world would disregard, but He has a people that often don't add up to much in the world's estimation.

God is not desperately "looking for millionaires or famous athletes or entertainers or statesmen" as if He needed their money, fame, fortune, or talent to get His work done!

The Lord specializes in converting simple folk, common people, the under-privileged, the down-and-outers, the project kids, and other looked-down-upon

groups.

Some might say: "That's because they are the only ones dumb enough to believe the Bible."

No, actually, they are the only ones humble enough to believe!

Jesus said, "*I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes.*" (Mt. 11:25).

God delights in taking a Sarah who could not bear children and making her the mother of one of the largest races on earth (Gen. 18:14, 32:12)

God delights in taking a humble slave like Joseph and elevating him second to Pharaoh over Egypt (Gen. 41:38-44).

God delights in enlisting 300 soldiers of Gideon to fight and conquer 120,000 Mideanites (Jud. 7:2, 7, 12; 8:10) (NOTE: 400 to 1 odds).

God delights in utilizing a Samson to destroy 1,000 wicked Philistines with a jawbone of a donkey (Jud. 15:16).

God delights in using a red-headed, freckle-faced, baby-faced (I Sam. 17:42) shepherd boy named David to wipe out a 9'9" fully armored Philistine named Goliath (I Sam. 17).

God delights in providing adequate food for a poor widow of Zarephath who only had a few drops of oil and a handful of grain (I Ki. 17:9ff).

God delights in using three Hebrew youths to show up King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Dan. 3).

God delights in using as His mouthpiece a John the Baptist, "who had no formal education, no training in a trade or profession, no money, no military rank, no political position, no social pedigree, no impressive appearance (or diet!)" (MacArthur, p. 51). Yet Jesus said, "*Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist*" (Mt. 11:11).

God delights in taking a boy's lunch consisting of two sardines and five bite-size biscuits to feed 5,000 men besides women and children (Mt. 14:17-19).

"Little is much when God is in it." -- Conversely, much is little, if God is not in it!

God delights in taking unlearned, ignorant, dumb fishermen from Galilee and turning them into the most bold and influential mortals ever to spread the Gospel message (Acts 4:13).

**God can take someone the world views as a "<u>nobody</u>" and make a somebody out of him! ... He can take something the world views as "<u>nothing</u>" and make something out of it!*

Why?

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

I. To <u>display</u> His <u>wisdom</u> & <u>power</u>(v.24-26)

V. 26

"Your calling" *(klesin)* - speaking of God's calling to salvation (an efficacious calling here). God calls people to salvation via the Gospel (v. 23-24).

The church (*ekklesia)* is the whole company of "called out ones."

"Not many" - He does not say "not any" but rather "not many" -- because few of the proud, intelligencia, humanistic, worldly philosophers end up getting saved.

Reason: They are too stuck on their own egotistical ideas and world views. They think they are too smart for God and Bible Christianity (Rom. 1:21-22 - *"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,")*.

"Not many wise men" - It is uncommon today to see a secular university professor become a born-again Christian. It is rare in our day to find a Ph.D. who is serious about digging into God's Word.

"Wise men after the flesh" - Paul purposely qualifies who he is referring to, because he does not want to confuse Godly "wise men" with fleshly, worldly, carnal "wise" men.

There is a wisdom which is from <u>above</u> and a wisdom from below (Ja. 3:15-16). God refers to the wisdom that is <u>not</u> from above as being "*earthly, sensual, devilish*" (Ja. 3:15).

"Mighty" - Those who are powerful or influential among the world. It is sparse to find saved, sanctified, surrendered and serving, men and women who are influential in the political world, commercial world, financial world, etc.

"Noble" - lit. "good birth, well born" I.e. to be born into a family of notoriety

(EX: to be born into a royal family, or a family of a king or queen).

When was the last time you heard of a prince or princess or king or queen's child turning their country right-side-up for Christ?

God is not impressed with man's knowledge ("*wise*"), influence ("*mighty*"), or rank ("*noble*").

Paul's description of many Corinthians certainly was not a flattering one (I Cor. 6:9-11).

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

II. To shame the wisdom of this world(v.27-28)

V. 27

"God hath chosen" - God is sovereign; He has deliberately chosen not to do things man's way.

Take, for example, the humble birth of Christ:
--a lineage of sinners (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth)
--a poor family (Mary & Joseph)
--a little insignificant town, Bethlehem, and then Nazareth
"Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem" (cp. Micah 3:5)
"*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*" (Jn. 1:4b)
--a humble beginning on earth
"*no room in the inn*" (Lk. 2:7)
"*stable...manger*" (Lk. 2:12)
--a humble life and ministry

"Foolish things of the world" - not foolish things, but foolish things by the world's standards

No doubt one reason why God uses neuter nouns (hence the word "*things*"), is because He not only is referring to the men God utilizes, but also the means God utilizes (He uses a plan of salvation or a Gospel that men view as foolish, weak, base, despised, nothing-- and with it puts to shame those who are perishing - cp. v. 19).

"Confound" - to put to shame. The lost world is put to shame, as they see how their rehab. programs, psychiatric expertise, social reform programs, etc., fail to do what the Gospel of Christ does.

"The wise of this world cannot understand how God changes sinners into saints" (Wiersbe, p. 571), losers into winners, "gutterballs into strikes," delinquent teenagers into successful citizens, broken homes into model families.

"The weak things"- The people who are without human power

God blesses those of little strength with golden opportunities. Jesus said to the church of Philadelphia, "*I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*" (Rev. 3:8)

The lost world admires social status, fame, fortune, and power. But none of these things impress God.

Don't ever despise (belittle) a person who does not have much in their world! Don't be partial to those whom the world elevates (Ja. 2:1ff).

V. 28

***"Base"* =** lowly, humble. I.e. not of noble birth. Those viewed as insignificant.

"Despised" - That which has a reputation of being considered "nothing." (Note: the perfect tense of this participle "indicates that that which was once despised will continue to be despised" - Grosheide, cited by Reinecker, p. 389).

Things have changed, but sinful mankind's values of what is desirable and good have not.

* Should churches move to the suburbs when neighborhoods change?

God delights to choose those called fools to put to shame those who the world thinks are wise; He delights to choose the weak to embarrass the strong with victory.

He delights to choose the lowlies and the nothings to bring to nothing the those who are "it" in this world.

God chooses the ***"base"*** (those without family or heritage), the ***"despised"*** (men in low condition, whom the rich and noble look upon with contempt), and the ***"things which are not"*** (those who are entirely overlooked as though they had no existence). (C. Hodge, p. 25-26).

If God were to root for a sports team, He no doubt would pull for the underdog.

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

III. To <u>strip</u> man of his <u>proud boasting</u>(v.29)

"That no flesh should glory in His presence" - God pulls down all pomp, pride, and arrogance, with the result that no mortal, frail, finite, carnal man or woman would have grounds for bragging or boasting in front of Him.

When we glory in men (like the Corinthians were doing), we rob God of the glory He alone deserves.

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

IV. To <u>glorify</u> His Son -- Jesus Christ(v.30)

"Of <u>Him</u>" - Your salvation is solely due to God; you are not converted because you are wiser, better, or more diligent than others (C. Hodge, p. 26).

"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus" - It is out of the sovereign plan of God the Father that you have a refuge, salvation, and relationship in Christ.

No one would be in Christ outside of God taking the initiative and drawing us to Christ (Jn. 6:44).

Who gets the credit that you are "*in Christ Jesus?*" God does.

God's plan of salvation is one of <u>grace</u>, not works (Ti. 3:5; Eph. 2:8); He by His grace has "*blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places <u>in Christ</u>*" (Eph. 3:3).

Thanks be to God that Christ is our:

1) Wisdom(spiritual intelligence)
2) Righteousness(spiritual sinlessness)
3) Sanctification (spiritual separateness)
4) Redemption (spiritual freedom)

"Wisdom" - spiritual perception and insight which produces skillful living.

You are "plugged into" true wisdom when Christ is your Savior. You are illuminated (Heb. 10:32) or enlightened (Eph. 1:18; Heb. 6:4) via your union to Christ.

If my wisdom comes from Christ, what do I have to brag about?

In Christ "*dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*" (Col. 2:9).

In Him are "*hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" (Col. 2:3)

"*No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him*" (Jn. 1:18).

The greatest wisdom is to know God, and you cannot know Him without knowing the Son.

"Righteousness" - You are right (just) in the sight of God because of your relationship to Christ.

We are "justified" (or "just as if we had never sinned" - Rom. 5:1) because of our connection to the perfect One - Jesus Christ.

II Cor. 5:21 - "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*"

If you were saved by your righteous acts and character (Rom. 3:28), you would have grounds for boasting. But since it is because of Christ's righteousness, He gets the credit.

"Sanctification" - The day you were married to Jesus Christ, was the day He set you apart from the world to belong only to Him.

Your positional holiness (set-apartness) is not manufactured by your efforts to scrub your life clean, but by His imputed purity that was given to you via your oneness with Him.

--We don't make ourselves saints, He has made us saints.

--Saints are not born, they are born again!

"Redemption" - To purchase in order to free or liberate from bondage; to buy back so as to release us from sin, Satan, and suffering.

The price paid to free us was <u>not</u> a price we paid or could pay; it was a price Jesus paid with His own blood.

Gal. 3:13 - "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*"

I Pet. 1:18 - "*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, form your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers.*"

Rev. 5:9 - "*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*"

"Redemption" not only refers to our present deliverance from sin but also to the future rapture which is called the "*day of redemption*" (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14, 4:30; Heb. 9:12).

Because Christ is our "*righteousness*",
we have victory over the penalty of sin.
Because He is our "*sanctification,*"
we can have daily victory over the power of sin,
And because He is our "*redemption,*"
one day we have total victory over the very presence of sin!

All the glory should to go Jesus, not us. "*He must increase...*" Cp. I Cor. 4:7.

God mightily transforms "nobodies" and "nothings"...

V. To fulfill His Word(v.31)

When it comes to salvation, we can brag; but not on ourselves. We can only brag on the Lord, because He did it, not us!

Paul said in Gal. 6:14, "*May it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

"*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: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

How often do you sincerely brag about the Lord? When was the last time you publicly praised Him for what He has done to accomplish your salvation?

Conclusion:
Be willing to be nothing in the world's eyes, so that God can make you something.

The Touch of the Master's Hand

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But held it up with a smile.
"What am I bidden, good folks," he cried,
"Who'll start the bidding for me?"
"A dollar, a dollar. Then two! Only two?
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"

"Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;
Going for three…" But no,
From the room, far back, a grey-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow;
Then wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening the loosened strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet,
As a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,

Said: "What am I bid for the old violin?"
And he held it up with the bow.
"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?
Two thousand! And who'll make it three?
Three thousand, once; three thousand, twice,
And going and gone," said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,
"We do not quite understand.
What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply:
"The touch of the Master's hand."
And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and scarred with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd
Much like the old violin.

A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine,
A game — and he travels on.
He is "going" once, and "going" twice,
He's "going" and almost "gone."
But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought
By the touch of the Master's hand.

A Gospel Witness God Empowers

(How to have God give power to our evangelistic efforts)

I Corinthians 2:1-5

2-5-2023

Introduction: When do you as a witness, teacher, evangelist, or preacher experience life-changing, eternal results from your labor of sharing the Gospel?

Answer: When God empowers your message! **(Verse 5)**

*** God will give real power to our evangelistic efforts, if we evangelize His way!**

God EMPOWERS our message...

I. When we do not <u>rely</u> on worldly <u>wisdom & words</u> (v.1)

God EMPOWERS our message...

II. When we keep our message <u>focused</u> on <u>Jesus Christ</u> and <u>His finished Work</u> (v.2)

God EMPOWERS our message...

III. When we do <u>not depend</u> on our own <u>strength</u> (v.3)

God EMPOWERS our message...

IV. When we do <u>not</u> seek to force a decision by <u>persuasive gimmicks</u> (v.4a)

God EMPOWERS our message...

V. When we trust the <u>Holy Spirit</u> to work with <u>His power</u> (v.4b)

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II. When we keep our message _____ on _____and His_____ _____ (v.2)

God EMPOWERS our message...

III. When we do _____ on our own _____ (v.3)

God EMPOWERS our message...

IV. When we do not seek to force a decision by _____ (v.4a)

God EMPOWERS our message...

V. When we trust the _____ to work with _____ (v.4b)

A Gospel Witness God Empowers

(How to have God give power to our evangelistic efforts)

I Corinthians 2:1-5

2-5-2023

Introduction:

Why do many profess faith in Christ and then fall away? . . . become apostates? . . . never grow? . . . are nowhere to be found?

Could it be that we (the witness) have failed in our evangelistic method and message? Could it be that there were flaws in both what we said to the lost person and how we said it?

Note verse 5.

Many people's faith unfortunately stands *"in the wisdom of men"* and not *"in the power of God."*

--Converts of men, not converts of God

--No change in their lives, no desire for spiritual things, no love for Christ, etc.

What are some causes for this travesty?

Faith (belief) only comes as one first hears the Word of God.
"Faith comes by hearing. . . the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Faith does not come by gimmicks, manipulation, emotional services, signs and wonders, etc., but by the Scriptures.

The new birth will evidence itself by new life
Where there is birth, there is *life*!

When a birth takes place:

a. A family is received
(Jn. 1:12, 13; 3:1-7; I Jn. 3:9)

b. A family name is received
(Don't be ashamed of the name "Christian" - Acts 11:26; II Cor. 1:1)

c. A family inheritance is received
(Rom. 8:17; I Cor. 3:22, 23; Gal. 4:6; I Pet. 1:4, 5)

d. A family nature is received

1) This is true in the natural realm (Ps. 58:3; Rom. 5:12, 19)
2) This is true in the spiritual realm

a) A family love (I Jn. 3:14)
--for God (I Jn. 4:19-21)
--for God's children (I Jn. 2:7-11; 3:10-24; *4:7; 5:1)

b) A family likeness (I Jn. 1:5-7; 2:3-6; 2:29)

c) A family loyalty
You will have a desire to:
--Speak to your Father
(Rom. 8:15; Jn. 14:13, 24; 16:23-24)
--Listen to your Father (I Pet. 2:2)

d. A family discipline is received

Our Heavenly Father loves us enough to discipline us in order to train and protect us (Heb. 12:5-11)

If you make a "convert" there will be no real change. Those God converts, get converted!

When do you as a witness, teacher, evangelist, or preacher experience life-changing, eternal results from your labor of sharing the Gospel?
Answer: When God empowers your message! **(Verse 5)**

*** God will give real power to our evangelistic efforts, if we evangelize His way!**

God EMPOWERS our message...

I. When we do not rely on worldly wisdom & words (v.1)

"And I" - Paul, continuing his thought from chapter 1 now gives himself as an example of the principles laid down in the previous verses.

His key theme in chapter 1 was that it was terribly inconsistent and foolish for the Corinthians to be "man followers" (to be divided over personalities).

Reasons:

1) God chose to empower an unsophisticated message (v. 17-25)

2) God chooses to empower unsophisticated messengers (v. 26-31)

3) God chose to empower an unsophisticated messenger (Paul) (2:1-5)

The Greeks of Paul's day placed a heavy emphasis on skillful oratory and worldly cleverness.

"Excellency of speech" - Superiority of speech (i.e. eloquence of word)

Content always matters more than delivery

To deliver the "right stuff" in a tattered package is a million times better than delivering garbage in glittering wrapping!

How we say something has its importance, but what we say is of utmost value.

In your teaching, witnessing, etc., put more attention on being Biblically accurate than verbally impressive!

It's sad how many new believers can be "wowed," "impressed," or "awestruck" by a preacher's (evangelist's) style and charisma rather than by his substance and careful exegesis.

"Wisdom" - Worldly wisdom; man's wisdom; humanistic wisdom that leaves God out.

(Paul is not against "wisdom"; rather he is against the foolish, man-centered humanistic wisdom of this world (2:6).

Paul is not elevating ignorance. Nor is he promoting a mindless anti-intellectualism.

It's not that God isn't interested in talented orators or gifted speakers. What He is against is Christians putting their trust in themselves, their ability, their wisdom (II Cor. 3:5).

One can be an eloquent, polished, homiletical genius and still not have God's power and blessing!

When we rely on rhetorical art, eloquence, human rationalization, we get what man can do. When we rely on God's clear-cut Gospel message and His Spirit, we get what God can do.

"Declaring" - This word describes the proper way to deliver God's message:

1) To solemnly proclaim
(to announce truth with serious boldness)

2) To continually proclaim
(the present tense indicates a patient reiteration of the simple yet profound Gospel of Christ)

"Testimony" - Witness

The *"testimony of God"* is that body of Gospel truth that He has entrusted to us to bear witness of.

You can be a witness if you have a testimony. You can testify of that which you have witnessed (or experienced) in your own life.

You don't need a D.D., Th.M., D.Min., M.Div., or B.S. degree in theology to be a witness. All you need is a B.A. -- born again!

Paul is saying in effect: I did not borrow from the verbiage and opinions of Plato, Aristotle or Socrates. My testimony was from God!

God EMPOWERS our message...

II. When we keep our message <u>focused</u> on <u>Jesus Christ</u> and <u>His finished Work</u> (v.2)

***"I determined"* =** I resolved; I decided.

After evaluating the pressures at Corinth to drift from the centrality of Christ, Paul purposed in his heart that he would not succumb by getting side-tracked from his message.

Paul went to Corinth fully aware of the Grecian mind-set, the philosophical thinking, the worldly humanistic mentality he was up against.

Although Paul certainly ***"knew"*** more, he honed in his Gospel presentation to focus on Christ.

The "knowledge" he conveyed to them was limited and specific. Why? The salvation plan is limited to one message, and this message is exclusively Christ and His death for sinners.

The Gospel is clearly and succinctly delineated in I Cor. 15:1-3.

Paul's sold Gospel message was *"Jesus Christ and Him crucified."* (He strayed not from the <u>person</u> and <u>work</u> of Jesus Christ.

Paul gloried only in the cross of Christ. Gal. 6:14 - *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."*

Don't get side-tracked. Keep your Gospel witness focused on:

One Person - *"<u>Jesus Christ</u>"*
One work - *"<u>Him crucified</u>"*

Paul's Gospel message had one theme -- namely, the substitutionary finished work of Christ (Paul implicitly shows how this is the solid core, the bedrock foundation of our witness).

Scriptures emphasizing the fact of Christ's substitutionary death
(using the word huper):

"This is my body which is given for you" (Lk. 22:19)
"This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you"
(Lk. 22:20)
"The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51)
"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (Jn.10:11)
"I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:15)
". . . He (Caiaphas) prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. . . and not for that nation only . . ." (Jn. 11:51-52, cp. 18:14)
"Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6)
"Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8)
"He . . . delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32)
"Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3)
"For he hath made him to be sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21)
"Christ . . . gave himself for our sins" (Gal. 1:4)
"Christ . . . loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20)
"Christ [was] . . . made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13)
"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2)
"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25)
"Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . died for us" (I Th. 5:10)
"Who gave himself a ransom for all" (I Tim. 2:6)
"He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9)
"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).
"Christ also suffered for us" (I Pet. 2:21)
"Christ also hath once suffered for sins" (I Pet. 3:18)
"Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh" (I Pet. 4:1)
"He laid down his life for us" (I Jn. 3:16)

When you give the Gospel, keep your presentation focused on Jesus and His substitutionary death.

Don't get side-tracked! Satan will try to do all kinds of things and raise all kings of questions to move you from your central point.

Things Satan will use to divert your message away from Christ and His work:

--Questions "Where did Cain get his wife?" "What do your think about ____?"
(he asks a question about which you are knowledgeable)

--Interruptions: the phone rings; the baby cries; the door bell buzzes etc.

--Arguments about religious differences

Sometimes a believer's gospel presentation has so many extras, so many add-ons (not unbiblical ones necessarily), so many rabbit trails, etc., that the burning ray of the true Gospel is clouded over.

The "Gospel," when it is not diluted (watered down) or added to or subtracted from, is powerful (Rom. 1:16 - *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.")*

WIERSBE ILLUS. P. 573

God EMPOWERS our message...

III. When we do <u>not depend</u> on our own <u>strength</u> (v.3)

Verse 3 shifts from Paul's message too Paul's <u>method</u>.

It's encouraging to know that even the "great" Apostle Paul had a battle with fear.

No wonder he requested prayer for <u>boldness</u>. Do you recall him saying: <u>Pray</u> *"for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."* (Eph. 6:19-20).

"Weakness" - To be without physical strength in a certain area of your body (we don't know what Paul's *"thorn"* was - II Cor. 12:7).

God can use your life no matter what ailment you have!

He delights to use the *"<u>weak</u> things."* (1:27)

"Fear" - Even Paul had times of apprehension; concern gripped his heart for his very life at times.

"Fear" is due to a lack of faith. Even the "giants" of faith have their moments.

"Trembling" - To shudder nervously; to shake due to fear.

SEE: Acts 18:1, 9, 10

The Corinthians were not impressed with Paul's personal presence (II Cor. 10:10).

There was nothing attractive about Paul's appearance. You wouldn't find him in the <u>Who's Who</u> of shining, varnished, charismatic preachers of today.

God uses weak, fearful, timid people! Those who are such throw themselves upon God for results, because they recognize that they are inadequate in and of themselves.

When we recognize our own weakness and inability, it is then that we are made strong by God (II Cor. 12:9 - *"And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*

Note: Paul's weakness, fear, and trembling did <u>not</u> keep him from doing what he was commissioned to do.

Reason: He feared displeasing his Lord more! He did not want to be unfaithful to a sacred trust (I Cor. 9:16 - *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."*).

John 7:13 - *"No man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews"*

How to Overcome Fear:

1. Remember His presence is with you
   (Mt. 28:20; Acts 18:9-10; Heb. 13:5-6)

2. Pray for boldness (Acts 4:29, 31; Ps. 34:4)

3. Trust God for results, not yourself (I Thes. 2:2)

4. Know the adequacy of the Gospel message
   (Rom. 1:14-16 - *The power of the Word of God;* Heb. 4:12)

5. Memorize approach questions and a soul-winning plan (I Pet. 3:15)

6. Be more concerned about winning souls than winning friends (Gal. 1:10)

7. Don't be afraid of:

   a. Making a mistake (the greatest mistake you can make is to say nothing)

   b. Doing more harm than good

   c. Being asked questions (If you don't know the answer, assure them that the Bible has one, and promise to get back with them)

8.Begin! (*"In soul-winning, more than half the battle is won by beginning. Nobody would be walking today if they hadn't made their first attempt as a baby."*)

God EMPOWERS our message...

IV. When we do <u>not</u> seek to force a decision by <u>persuasive gimmicks</u> (v.4a)

Paul had great natural abilities and an impressive religious pedigree and background (Phil. 3:4-7), but he did not rely on them.

<u>Verbal manipulation</u> in witnessing is man attempting to do the Holy Spirit's job without the Holy Spirit.

Beware: The cults play mind games with unsuspecting people (Rom. 16:18 - *"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple"*).

What are some methods many stoop to use to <u>entice</u> the listener to respond?

1) Salvation will give you a <u>trouble-free</u> life (Note: I Pet. 1:6, 7)

2) All you need to do is "<u>accept Jesus</u>" (this is true and false. They can't accept a "Jesus" they know nothing about; they must understand what He did for them and rely upon Him and His finished work).

We cannot lure people into Christianity by compromising our message and turning church into an amusement parlor. Many churches today "are constructed like theaters ('playhouses' Spurgeon called them). Instead of a pulpit, the focus is a stage. Churches are hiring full-time media specialist, programming consultants, special effects experts, and choreographers" (John MacArthur, <u>Ashamed of the Gospel</u>, p. 71).

One dear woman, struggling in a church that had become a worldly carnival, like Broadway, like "Show Time" religion, complained, *"What is the church going to stop trying to entertain the goats and get back to feeding the sheep?"*

Satan whispers:

1. Don't get <u>specific</u> but speak in vague generalities (subtle statements that could be taken more than one way) (Prov. 28:23 - *"He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue").*

2. <u>Soften</u> your message so it doesn't offend (Is. 58:1 - *"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins";* Jer. 48:10 - *"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood";* II Cor. 4:2 - *"But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."*

   --Don't preach about <u>specific sins</u> (Is. 58:1 - see above; Prov. 27:5 - *"Open rebuke is better than secret love")*.
   --Don't preach on hell, fire, and brimstone
   --Don't preach on the blood of Christ (a "bloody message" is offensive)
   --Don't preach that all men are totally depraved

3. Speak so as to impress the intellectuals (you end up going over the heads of the average person)

4. Hold off on negative preaching (be only positive) (Ezek. 3:17-18 - *"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand"*).

5. Go ahead, try a little flattering (flatter the people with how good they are) (Prov. 28:23 - *"He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue")*

6. Appeal primarily to people's emotions

   "A person convinced against his will remains an unbeliever still." (C.H. Spurgeon)

Jonathan Edwards intentionally read his sermons from a manuscript "so that he would not be guilty of using human persuasive techniques to gain a response. He wanted only the message to bring the results" (MacArthur, p. 57).

If someone, through persuasive techniques, could "talk a person into" being saved, the power of the Spirit would not be necessary. *"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6)*

God EMPOWERS our message...

V. When we trust the Holy Spirit to work with His power (v.4b)

***"Demonstration"* =** proof, evidence

The changed hearts and lives of the Corinthians was clear proof that God's powerful Spirit did the work, and not Paul's persuasiveness

The proof was in the product.

The product was that wicked sinners (fornicators, idol worshippers, adulterers, sodomites, thieves, materialistic, drunkards) were miraculously transformed by God's power (I Cor. 6:9-11).

I Cor. 4:20 - *"For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."*

Mere words fall to the ground, but the Word of God energized and directed by the Spirit of God is mighty (Heb. 4:12).

God said to Ezekiel: *"But you shall speak my words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious"* (Ezek. 2:7).

REMEMBER: The real "Soulwinner" is the Holy Spirit

"The Holy Spirit is the soulwinner; we are but a vessel He wants to use. As we labor in this God-commanded task, our total dependence must be upon His power, ability and enablement. We are the vessel He desires to use, for He wants our minds, our hands, our feet, our lips to do the work of winning the lost." (Dr. Ed Watke)

a. The Holy Spirit must convict of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come (Jn. 16:6-8).

b. Let the Holy Spirit fill you (Eph. 5:18) and guide you (Acts 8:26-40).

c. Unless one is *"born of the Spirit"* they are not "born!" (Jn. 3:5-8; Titus 3:5)

d. The instrument the Holy Spirit uses to bring people to Himself is the Bible (Heb. 4:12). The Bible is *"the sword of the Spirit"* (Eph.6:17)

ILLUS: It is reported that a man went up to D.L. Moody and said, "I just saw one of your converts in the bar drinking and carousing." Moody responded: "He surely must be one of my converts; he certainly isn't a convert of the Lord."

"The Source of True Wisdom"

I Corinthians 2:6-16

2-12-2023

Introduction: (Job 28:12-23)

**** Where is the source of true wisdom?***

I. God's wisdom is not revealed by the world's wise men (v.6-9)

A. God's wisdom is only appreciated by those who are spiritually mature (v.6a)

B. God's wisdom is not of this world (v.6b)

C. God's wisdom is a hidden mystery (v.7-9)

II. God's wisdom is revealed by His Spirit through His Word (v.10-16)

A. The Holy Spirit gives the ability to KNOW God's Mind(v.10-12)

B. The Holy Spirit gives the ability to TEACH God's Word(v.13)

C. The Holy Spirit gives the ability to DISCERN God's Ways (v.14-16)

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"Howbeit" - Paul-- having stated how he came to Corinth with a simple, clear-cut, specific message void of this world's wisdom--now shows how his message (though viewed by the world as *"foolish"*) was not foolish but is really the ultimate wisdom -- God's wisdom.

"Them that are perfect" - Those whom the Lord has brought to a complete (full) knowledge of the truth.

"Perfect" - Excludes the unsaved and carnal (3:1; 14:20).

If you find that the preaching and teaching of God's Word is uninteresting, doesn't make sense, is a waste of time, perhaps it's because you are not among those who have a matured understanding of Christ's work at Calvary.

Though the world may view the Christian message as nonsense, absurd, idle religious chatter, those whose hearts God has touched by His Spirit (taking His Word and convicting our hearts by its truth) find we love to hear God's wisdom.

No matter where you go in this world, when you meet a fellow believer, you find an instant comradery, an instant common bond. Your world view matches; he relates to what you say; you are on the same wave length.

B. God's wisdom is <u>not</u> of this <u>world</u> (v.6b)

God's wisdom and the humanistic *"wisdom of this age"* are worlds apart (light years apart).

> ***"My thoughts. . ." -*** Isaiah 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."*

> "Recall the great thinkers of past ages whose ideas of science, medicine, and philosophy have been disproved by the discoveries of subsequent ages. Genuine wisdom transcends the ages of time and is eternal" (Gromacki, p. 32).

> ***"Princes" -*** The leaders, the "head honchos," the intelligencia of this age.

> Those scholastic humanistic brains are already being put out of commission by God.

> Their supposed philosophical truth is being made idle. Their ideas (of how the world began, why we are here, and where we are going) are going to be buried by God.

> However, His wisdom (Word) by contrast will remain forever and ever.

> One day their ideas will be erased and forgotten, but God's truth will be evident for eternity.

C. God's wisdom is a <u>hidden mystery</u>(v.7-9)

V. 7

The ***"wisdom of God"*** is wisdom which originates <u>in</u> God and comes to us <u>from</u> God.

He is the source and supply of all true spiritual wisdom.

The ***"wisdom of God***" is "the work of Christ in His crucifixion, as God's secret plan of redemption (v. 2, 8) and the exalted Christ who presently mediates God's hidden wisdom tot His people" (E.E. Ellis, cited by Rienecker, p. 391).

"A mystery" - A mystery is something that is concealed, viewed, kept secret; *"hidden"* from man's eyes unless God reveals it.

Unless God removes the blinders, people will remain oblivious to His will and ways.

This verse shows that there is <u>truth</u> which exists outside of man, truth which man has no way of knowing unless God reveals it.

Much truth eludes mankind's five senses (cp. v. 9).

God's mystery is revealed via the <u>Scriptures</u> (Rom. 16:25-26 - *"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."*

"Ordained" - To decide beforehand; to pre-determine.

God planned before time began, before the ages of this world began to unfold that He would have a wise plan of redeeming people which would result in the glorification of those who believe.

His past wisdom leads to our future glory.

V. 8

"They would not have crucified" - Obviously, if the lost leaders had known who Jesus really was, they would not have crucified Him, and God's plant o save sinners would never have come to fruition.

Had the religious leaders known that Christ's death for sinners was essential to His plan of salvation, they (in an attempt to foil God's plan) would not have crucified Christ. Out of rebellious spite, they would have avoided any dealings with Christ.

Satan knew God's plan of salvation. This is why he, through Peter, rebuked Jesus for His plans to go to the cross (Mk. 8:33), and no doubt instigated others to demand Him to come down from the cross (Mt. 27:40, 42).

Jesus said, *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"* (Lk. 23:34).

"What is so amazing is the fact that God worked out His wise plan in and through human ignorance. Wicked hands of blinded men crucified, but this is exactly what God had willed (Acts 2:22-23). Nevertheless, God holds men spiritually responsible for their sinful deeds" (Gromacki, p. 34).

V. 9

Paul paraphrases Isaiah 64:4 to show how the spiritually blind, deaf, and dull world has no grasp on the wonderful things God has prepared for His people (Note: Loving God is the fruit of faith in Him. A practically synonymous phrase for a regenerate Christ is *"a lover of God"* - Rom. 8:28; I Cor. 8:3).

II. God's wisdom is revealed by His Spirit through His Word (v.10-16)

A. The Holy Spirit gives the ability to KNOW God's Mind(v.10-12)

V. 10

Though the unsaved lost world has no inkling of an idea what God has given to His people and what God has planned for His people, we have seen, heard, and it has entered into our hearts by the supernatural unveiling work of the Holy Spirit.

"Our salvation involves all three persons in the Godhead (Eph. 1:3-14; I Pet. 1:2). You cannot be saved apart from the Father's electing grace, the Son's loving sacrifice, and the Spirit's ministry of conviction and regeneration" (Wiersbe, p. 575).

The Father planned to save me before the world began,
The Son died to save me almost 2,000 years ago,
The Spirit opened my eyes and saved me in March, 1976.

The Holy Spirit knows the depths of God's mysterious secrets. Those who have His Spirit have been initiated into His past, present, and future wisdom.

"Searcheth" - Does not mean that the Spirit searches with a view to obtaining information; rather, it is a way of saying that He penetrates into all things" (Leon Morris, p. 57).

V. 11
To demonstrate how the Holy Spirit has insight into the mind of God, Paul uses an illustration.

Man has a human spirit with which he can comprehend and know the abstract thoughts of other men who share the same human spirit. I can talk to my dog about physics and mathematics, but my dog will never understand; the brute has not the capacity. However, I can speak about abstract concepts with people, and they get what I'm saying. Why? Because we share the same Adamic nature.

"For a flea to understand a dog, it would have to be at least as advanced as a dog" (MacArthur, p. 60).

For man to understand God, he must be as advanced as God (which he is not even remotely close to).
Just as man relates (communicates) on a level above the animal realm, so God has thoughts and concepts that are beyond our grasp to reach without the Holy Spirit's illumination.

"No man" - Not even the greatest of geniuses can by empiricism (observation) or rationalism (reason) come to understand God's hidden truth.

Romans 11:33 - *"O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"*

No one knows God's ways like the Spirit, because the Spirit has the same divine nature as God!

Important theological note: Just as there is no distinction between man and his human spirit, so there is no distinction between God and His Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows God's mind because He is God!

V. 12

"Received" - No one is born with the Holy Spirit; He must be received.

It is God who gives His Spirit. The Spirit is not earned, worked for, or deserved.

Prior to the Holy Spirit's regenerating work, we had the spirit of the world. We thought like the world, reasoned like the world, planned like the world, etc. But now we have a new Spirit (Ezek. 36:26).

Why did God give us His Holy Spirit? ***"That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."***

The Holy Spirit opened our minds to the grace of God, and to the gifts He gives by grace!

The glories of eternity thrill our hearts because the Holy Spirit has shown us things to come (via His Word).

Every believers has an in-house "resident Truth Teacher" (MacArthur, p. 64) (I Jn. 2:27).

Never take arrogant pride in your spiritual knowledge, because it is the Holy Spirit who gave you such knowledge.

B. The Holy Spirit gives the ability to TEACH God's Word(v.13)

When we speak God's Word, it is not the world's message. Rather, it is the Holy Spirit's message.

Only speak that which you know to be true. If the Holy Spirit hasn't taught you it in His Word (and you don't have firm Scriptural footing), don't teach it to others!

Speak according to the *"measure of faith*" (confidence) He has given you (Rom. 12:3, 6).

"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" - Paul keeps the thought general because it has a broad range of applications.

1) We can compare spiritual words with spiritual words (compare "Scriptures with Scriptures" - a vital rule of hermeneutics).

2) We can compare "spiritual truths because we have spiritual minds" (this is the point of verses 12, 16).

*3) We can express "spiritual truths to spiritual men" (this is the main emphasis of the verse which follows - **v. 14**)

C. The Holy Spirit gives the ability to DISCERN God's Ways (v.14-16)

V. 14

"Natural man" - the man who is limited to his five senses (Hence, the *"sensual"* man - Jude 19).

"Natural" - "having only the things of nature" (Wiersbe, p. 577) (Born of natural parents from the natural line of Adam).

This old nature cannot be improved, fixed, repaired or reformed. It must be replaced via the new birth.

"The natural man" - lit. "the soulish man" (i.e. the man devoid of the Holy Spirit).

The man who is left to himself. (He has a soul, but not the Holy Spirit).

He is a man left to himself without the special revelation of God. He has not God's revelation because he has not God's Spirit.

The natural man does not have the desire nor ability to understand God's truth.

The natural man "totally and persistently does not welcome spiritual concepts. He is inhospitable to Biblical doctrines and moral principles" (Gromacki, p. 40).

John 8:47 - *"He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."*

Because the *"natural man"* does not have the capacity to comprehend the Holy Spirit's message, he regards it as ***"foolishness"*** (folly, nonsense).

It does not make sense to his limited mind because he dwells in the realm of darkness and sin.

The natural man is not "in tune" with the Spirit. If he had a new "tuner" (i.e. a new heart), the message he views as "static" to his ears would have a discernable, clear sound.

Not only does he refuse to ***"receive"*** the Spirit's message, he cannot even ***"know"*** it (he does not have the capacity or ability to comprehend it).

Apart from the Holy Spirit's working on a man and opening his eyes to the truth, it is absolutely impossible for him to understand.
This is why a man must be *"born again"* by the Spirit (Jn. 3).

Satan has blinded the minds of those who don't believe (II Cor. 4:3-4).

"Paul rejects Philo's view that man has within him--breathed into him by God--the capacity for knowing God and the higher truths of the universe (Rienecker, p. 392).

Man can know about God via creation (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20) and via conscience (Rom. 2:14), but cannot know God and His mysterious ways and plans for the future.

"Spiritually discerned" - spiritually judged. No one can understand God's ways who is under God's judgment.

V. 15

"Judgeth" - to examine and understand

In contrast to the natural man, the spiritual man has the ability to scrutinize, examine, sift, and comprehend all things. It is an ability the Holy Spirit gives.

A whole new world opens up to a man regenerated by the Spirit. The blinders are removed from one's eyes; the scales of one's eyes fall off (Acts 9:18); the veil is taken away (II Cor. 3:14-18 - *"But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.")*

"Yet he himself is judged of no man" - (i.e. he is not *"rightly judged"* NKJV).

While a believer can understand what makes an unsaved man tick, an unsaved man cannot understand what makes the believer tick. Because he cannot figure out God's ways, he has no ability to rightly instruct God's man in God's ways.

V. 16

No finite man can instruct an infinite God (SEE: Isaiah 40:13-18).

"But we have the mind of Christ" - We share Christ's mind because we share Christ's Spirit.

--We know what is right! Sadly, though, we don't always yield to that knowledge.

--We ALL (who are saved) have the same ability to know the deep things of God; if only we wouldn't be so lazy and would start reading His Word.

--We have the capacity to think "God's thoughts" and know how to conduct our lives, if we would not be so stubborn and rebellious.

"Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Lk. 24:45).

*The doctrine of illumination: Does not mean we can know and understand everything (Deut. 29:29) [But we can understand everything God has revealed.]

*It does not mean we do not need human teachers (Eph. 4:11-14) [The Spirit can teach us through what He has taught others.]

*It does not mean that study is <u>not</u> hard work (II Tim. 2:15) [It does mean that Scripture can be understood by every Christian who is diligent and obedient.]

(MacArthur, p. 65)

Conclusion:

Faith in God's wisdom is "the death blow to our own natural reason. . . [it] means a negation of our own logic and our own philosophy. . . [this] is a humbling experience." (DeHaan, p. 31).

What is a Carnal Christian?

I Corinthians 3:1-4
2-26-2023

Intro: (v.1)

* *Are You a <u>Carnal Christian</u>?*

...To find out, take this test.
Note the 4 basic characteristics of a carnal believer:

I. A Carnal Christian can <u>EAT ONLY</u> "<u>BABY FOOD</u>" (v.2)
(His <u>DIET</u> of Milk)

II. A Carnal Christian <u>CAN'T GET ALONG</u> with <u>OTHER BELIEVERS</u> (v.3)
(His <u>DIVISIVE</u> Behavior)

III. A Carnal Christian <u>LIVES LIKE THE WORLD</u> (v.3b)
(His <u>DOUBLE</u> Life)

IV. A Carnal Christian <u>PLEDGES ALLEGIANCE TO HUMAN PERSONALITIES</u>
***(His <u>DEVOTION</u> to Man)* (v.4)**

How to gain victory over carnality; how to become a spiritual Christian:
<u>Listen</u> to the Spirit (Rev. 2:29)
<u>Invest</u> in the Spirit (Gal. 6:8)
<u>Walk</u> in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25)

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(His _____ of Milk)

II. **A Carnal Christian** _____ **with** _____ (v.3)
(His _____ Behavior)

III. **A Carnal Christian** _____ (v.3b)
(His _____ Life)

IV. **A Carnal Christian** _____
_____
(His _____ to Man) (v.4)

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_____ in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25)

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I Corinthians 3:1-4

2-26-2023

Intro: (v.1)

"There are only two kinds of people in the world: saved and lost, born once and born twice, those on the way to heaven and those on the way to hell." (DeHaan, p. 33)

Christians have two natures, the old man and the new, the flesh and the spirit.

There are two kinds of Christians, those who feed the old nature and those who feed the new; those who give in to the old carnal nature, and those who give in to the new spiritual nature. (carnal or spiritual)

V. 1

"Brethren" - spiritual "brothers"

[Paul was not genetically related to the Corinthians, most of whom were Greek by nationality, but he was spiritually related to them via their common relationship *"in Christ"* (v. 3b).]

He is writing to "Christians." Saved, regenerate believers. People who had received God's sanctifying work (1:2), God's grace (1:4), God's spiritual knowledge (1:5); God's gifts (1:7), God's eternal security (1:8), God's fellowship (1:9).

"Could not speak" = i.e. by means of earlier communication and by this epistle, Paul could not speak to them with the words and concepts that only spiritual believers could understand
(The book of I Corinthians is very helpful to carnal Christians.)

"Spiritual" - Paul is not implying that they did not have the Spirit, but that they were not being controlled by the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

You can have the Holy Spirit and still not be spiritual.

"Carnal" - *(sarkinois)* = the opposite of being spiritual: the word refers to the "flesh" (i.e. the self-centered, sinful old nature we were born with).

"Carnality" describes a man who functions solely based on what his five senses dictate to him. A carnal man/woman is one whose eye is solely focused on the glitter, glamour, and glee of this world; whose ear is solely in tune with the messages, philosophies, goals, and ambitions of this world; the fragrance of this world, the taste of this world, the touch of this world so grips and controls the heart, mind, and will of this person that he lives as if God didn't exist at all (self-sufficiently independent of God).

"Babes" - *(nepiois)* infants; newborn babies

It is very difficult to express truth of any depth to a child (they lack the capacity to comprehend anything but "DaDa, MaMa, BaBa," etc.

V. 1b

"A baby who acts like a baby is a joy; but an adult who acts like a baby is a tragedy" (MacArthur, p. 72).

Spiritual retardation is a shame.

"They had come through the door of faith, but had gone on no further." (MacArthur, p. 70).

** Are You a Carnal Christian?*

...To find out, take this test.

Note the 4 basic characteristics of a carnal believer:

I. A Carnal Christian can EAT ONLY "BABY FOOD" (v.2) *(His DIET of Milk)*

The first way to test immature carnality is to see what we eat.

God's Word is referred to as necessary food (Job 23:12), milk (I Pet. 2:2), bread (Mt. 4:4), meat (Heb. 5:11-14), and honey (Ps. 119:103).

"As children grow, they learn to eat different food. they graduate (to use Paul's words) from milk to meat" (Wiersbe, p. 578).

"I have fed you" - A baby needs to be fed. The word ***"fed"*** means to "give to drink" and here it has the idea of holding a bottle of milk for a baby to suck on.

A maturing believer will not depend on "bottle feedings," but will be able to get out a fork and knife and feed himself with spiritual steak dinners.

Having someone serve you a dinner (e.g. like a pastor giving a message; Eph. 4:11-12) is not the same has having to be "spoon fed." (ILLUS: Terri prepares and serves supper for me, but she doesn't have to spoon the food into my mouth!)

"Milk" - It goes down smoothly, does not require chewing, and digests easily.

Nothing is wrong with a "formula" or breast-fed diet, but something is seriously wrong when a person stays at the nursing stage.

"Meat" = Solid food. Food that requires the capability of teeth to chew on it, a throat to swallow it without choking it, and a stomach to digest it without requiring "Tums" or "Rolaids."

"Ye were not...neither yet now" - Both in their past and up to the present, they remained babies. Their diet never changed, because their ability to consume, digest, and utilize God's truth never changed.

God expects us to grow, not remain stagnant with time.

"Are ye able" - to swallow the deeper things of God's Word now. As time passes, does your ability to hear and heed God's Word increase, decrease, or stay the same? (SEE: Hebrews 5:11 - 6:1).

Paul is not discussing the status of new converts, but the status of those who should be rock-solid sages of Christianity.

Far too many believers live off of "Bible stories" and not Bible doctrines (Wiersbe, p. 578).

Christian entertainment and not Christian edification, shallow sermonettes and not deep expositions, skim the surface "devotions" rather than submerging into the depths of personal Bible reading.

"Their problem was not low I.Q. or lack of teaching. . . The cause was not mental but spiritual" (MacArthur, p. 71).

"For a Christian preacher or teacher to give only milk week after week, year after year, is a crime against the Word of God and the Holy Spirit!" (MacArthur, p. 72).

Your level of spirituality can be measured by your <u>interest</u> in God's Word, your <u>alertness</u> to God's Word (not sleeping), and your <u>obedience</u> to God's Word.

II. A Carnal Christian CAN'T GET ALONG with OTHER BELIEVERS (v.3) *(His DIVISIVE Behavior)*

A second way to test immature carnality is to see how we get alone with each other.

Children like to fight and fuss for their own self-interests.

"Yet carnal" - still; up to this point, the Corinthians remain an infantile church though they had been saved for some time [at least six years, based on the date Paul planted the church (A.D. 50) on his second missionary journey (Acts 18), and on the date he now writes (A.D. 56) from Ephesus (16:8).]

"Envying" - To be jealous over what others are or have (to have a "zeal" to be better or to have more than others).

At Corinth, the believers were jealous of each other's gifts and abilities (v. 12-14).

No doubt such jealousy resulted in:

--"put-downs" so as to lift self up

--spreading gossip rather than the gospel

--having an evil eye looking to get, rather than a good eye looking to give.

"Among you" - In your midst (of believers). It is understandable that an unbeliever would cause hardship and trouble for a believer, but it is inexcusable and should be unthinkable for believers not to get along with fellow believers.

"Strife" - the outward result of the internal envy.

This word was used of the self-serving, dirty tactics used by a person running for political office.

"Strife" depicts people fighting for their own interests, competing to win something over someone else, stepping on top of others as one climbed the ladder of success.

Don't ever forget where true promotion comes from (Ps. 75:6-7 - *"For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another."*)

SEE: James 3:13-18

"Divisions" (KJV) - the outcome of the strife.

Where there is envy, there will be strife, and where there is strife, there will inevitably come division (disunity, a party, fractional, schismatic spirit).

One of the actions most hated by God is that done by the person who sows *"discord among brethren"* (Prov. 6:19).

Unity is spiritual (Eph. 4:3).

Unity is good and pleasant (Ps. 133:1).

Unity was the last recorded request of Jesus for His people (Jn. 17:11, 22).

In the Body of Christ -

--We need a cooperative spirit not a competitive spirit;

--We need selfless motivation not selfish motivation;

--We need a servant's heart not a sensual heart (looking out for self-pleasure)

In Christianity. . .

--We must learn to agree to disagree

--We must remember we are playing on the same team

--We are fighting the same enemy

A spiritually mature Christian uses his gifts as tools to build with, while a carnal immature Christian uses his gifts as toys to play with or fight with (Wiersbe, p. 578).

III. A Carnal Christian LIVES LIKE THE WORLD (v.3b)
(His DOUBLE Life)

A third way to test immature carnality is to see who we act like.

The lost world functions based on envy, strife, and division.

Envy is a prime motive that will wake this city up to go out to the rat race tomorrow.

"Walk as men" - To conduct one's life as a mere unsaved "natural" man (with nothing different, nothing distinctive, nothing supernatural, etc.).

We ought to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).

We ought to walk as Christ did (I Jn. 2:6).

We ought to walk in the light (I Jn. 1:7).

We ought to walk in the truth (III Jn. 4).

We ought to walk in good works (Eph. 2:10).

We ought to walk in love (Eph. 5:2).

We ought to walk in wisdom (Col. 4:5).

*We ought to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25).
(Only as we yield to the Spirit will we avoid walking *"as men"*)

Is there a moral uniqueness about your life?

--Our actions and reactions should be different than the world.

--Our incentives and motives should be uniquely different than the world.

--Our goals and ambitions should be uniquely different than the world.

If today a law was passed to imprison all Christians, would there be enough evidence in your life to convict you??

IV. A Carnal Christian PLEDGES ALLEGIANCE TO HUMAN PERSONALITIES *(His DEVOTION to Man)* (v.4)

A fourth way to test immature carnality is to see who we identify with.

"Children identify with heroes, whether sports heroes or Hollywood heroes. . . [The church at Corinth] sounded like children on the playground: 'My father can fight better than your father! My father makes more money than your father!'." (Wiersbe, p. 578).

"I am of Paul. . . of Apollos"- I am a product of Paul. . . and I am a loyalist to Paul. . . which is like saying, "I pledge my allegiance to Paul... Apollos."

Carnality thrives on undivided allegiance to a human personality.

The fleshly life puts its trust in fleshly man.

Whenever a people divide over a person and form a party split, they have become cultic!

One distinguishing mark of a cult is that a cult will surround itself around a human personality and be loyal to that person no matter what.

Who do cults pledge allegiance to?
--To the Jonestown cult -Jim Jones
--To the Jehovah's Witnesses cult -Joseph B. Rutherford and the Elite officers of the Watchtower Society
--To the Mormon cult -Joseph Smith and his successor Brigham Young
--To the Unification cult - Sung Yung Moon
--To the 7th Day Adventist cult - Ellen G. White
--To the Waco, Texas cult - David Koresh
--To the Christian Science cult - Mary Baker Eddy
--To the Muslim cult - Muhammad
--To the Roman Catholic cult - the Pope of the Vatican

There exists the danger of "personality cults" within Christianity today. Preachers with a certain charisma or dogmatic personality on large TV ministries or radio networks are (if they are not humble) in positions of danger - the danger of drawing *"away disciples after them"* (Acts 20:30).

Those who pride themselves on being superior to others often unknowingly attribute such superiority to the guru they follow. They (with "ultra-separatistic," contentious attitudes) divide themselves into sects, groups, or cliques.

Paul goes on to show how absurd it was for people to be Paulites or Apollosites, by referring to himself as a mere servant (***minister -*** *v. 5), who* **planted** the seed of God's Word (v. 6); but it was God who gave the increase (v. 7)

(God gave the seed its fertile soil to soak into (Acts 16:14), He caused it to

germinate, to sprout, to grow, and bear fruit).

Conclusion:

How to gain victory over carnality; how to become a spiritual Christian:

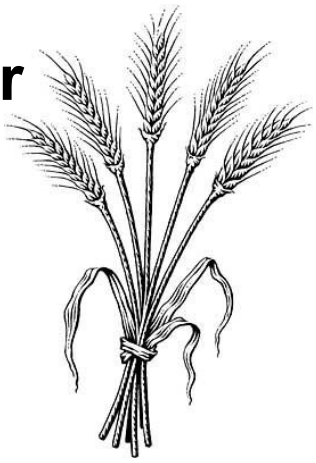
Listen to the Spirit (Rev. 2:29 - *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.")*.

Invest in the Spirit (Gal. 6:8 - *"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.";* Rom. 13:14 - *"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.")*

Walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25 - *"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. . . If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."*

SEE: Gal. 5:16-26 (flesh vs. the spirit).

The Attitude of the Laborer in God's Harvest Field



I Corinthians 3:5-9

3-5-2023

Introduction:

**** As you labor in God's Harvest Field, seeking to reap souls for Christ, HAVE A HUMBLE ATTITUDE ABOUT YOURSELF!***

I. ***View yourself as:***
A humble <u>SERVANT</u> commissioned by God (v.5)
(Needed in the Lord's Work: A spirit of <u>availability</u>)

II. ***View yourself as:***
A humble <u>FARMER</u> relying on God (v.6-7)
(Needed in the Lord's Work: A spirit of <u>dependency</u>)

III. ***View yourself as:***
A humble <u>CO-LABORER</u> working for God(v.8-9)
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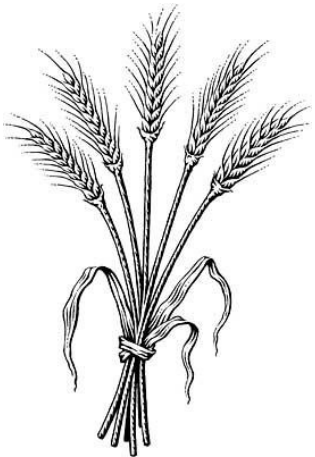

Conclusion: Remember Who the Lord of the Harvest really is, and GIVE HIM ALL THE GLORY!

The Attitude of the Laborer in God's Harvest Field

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The Attitude of the Laborer in God's Harvest Field

I Corinthians 3:5-9
3-5-2023

Introduction:

Pride is a killer!

One of the tendencies of carnal people is to give man the credit for a work that God did. This was the problem among the carnal Corinthians (3:3-4).

The ancient Greek philosopher said: "Humility is Truth" (being truthful about yourself and what you accomplish).

In chapter three, Paul illustrates the "Church" of believers in three ways: He calls the Church...

1) A FIELD , cultivated by men and blessed by God (3:5-9)

2) A BUILDING, resting on the foundation of Christ (3:9b-15)

3) A TEMPLE, in which God's Spirit dwells (3:16-23)

Several times in Scripture, God uses the imagery of the "field" to describe the world of humanity and the "seed" to describe the Word of God (Lk. 9; Mt. 13; Jn. 4:35 - *"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.")*

**** As you labor in God's Harvest Field, seeking to reap souls for Christ,***
HAVE A HUMBLE ATTITUDE ABOUT YOURSELF!

I. ***View yourself as:***
A humble SERVANT commissioned by God (v.5)
(Needed in the Lord's Work:A spirit of availability)

You can tell a lot about a person by how humble he is.

Paul did not seek the "limelight"; he did not want anyone to follow him or pledge allegiance to him.

Hence, he asks the question: *"Who then is Paul?. . ."* (implied: "Not what you made me out to be.")

"The world honors and tries to immortalize great men because men are the highest thing it knows. The world cannot see beyond itself." (MacArthur, p. 74).

"Ministers" - "It is a word which stresses the lowly character of the service rendered" (Morris, p. 65).

Diakonoi - Table waiter (bus boy).

Paul was saying in effect, "No one builds a movement around a waiter or busboy, or erects a monument to them. Apollos and I are just waiters or busboys whom the Lord used as servants to bring you food" (MacArthur, p. 74).

"Ministers" *(diakonoi)* - humble servants; household servants of God.

When you think of us, Paul says, don't view us as gods, angels, popes, elite clergy, etc., but rather view us as humble servants.

"By whom ye believed" - Through Paul's and Apollo's evangelism and discipleship, the Corinthians came to faith in Christ.

Paul says: God led you to belief by means of us. We were mere tools or instruments which God used to give you His Gospel and lead you to faith. (It is amazing that God would choose to use mere mortals to give His message and thereby initiate and build the faith of others. Are you being used to build someone's faith?).
--Does the surgeon's knife receive the glory for a successful operation, or does the doctor?

--Does the hammer receive the glory for a constructed building, or does the carpenter?

--Does the plow receive the credit for the harvested field, or does the farmer?

--Does the water pot receive the praise for a plant's growth, or does the gardener?
All we are, are the tools ("Channels Only"). God is the life-giver.

We are just "brushes or palettes in the Master's hands" (MacArthur, p. 74).

"Even as the Lord gave to every man" - It is the Lord who gives each one of u s the opportunity (NKJV), assigned task (NIV), and the gifts with which we can, as servants, build the faith of others.

God uses different instruments, different men, different talents, different approaches, different personalities. But everything still depends upon the blessing of the Spirit of God. And so Paul's admonition seems to be, Get your eyes off the instrument and place them alone on the Lord Jesus Christ (it is silly to childishly admire human personalities)." (DeHaan, p. 35).

"The Holy Spirit is the soulwinner; we are but a vessel He wants to use. As we labor in this God-commanded task, our total dependence must be upon His power, ability, and enablement. We are the vessel He desires to use, for He wants our minds, our hands, our feet, our lips to do the work of winning lost." (Dr. Ed Watke).

Are you available for God to use?

II. ***View yourself as:***
A humble FARMER relying on God (v.6-7)
(Needed in the Lord's Work:A spirit of dependency)

V. 6

"I have planted" - Paul initially gave the *"seed"* (Lk. 8:11) of God's Word to the Corinthians.

Faith does not always come immediately. Most often, people do not get saved the first time they hear the message.

"Apollos watered" - This is the work of continuing where someone else left off. Apollos continued the work Paul started.

Others, like Apollos, pick up where the pioneer left off.

Paul originally evangelized the city (Acts 18:1-18), whereas Apollos preached in Corinth later (Acts 18:24 - 19:1).

In our church, Pastor Doug Lowery planted, I am watering, but God has been giving the increase.

"Increase" - An agricultural term referring to life and growth. It is God who performs the miracle of new life and spiritual growth.

"God gave the increase" - lit. God was giving the increase (growth).

Paul used the Aorist tense when referring to how Paul *"planted"* and Apollos *"watered"*, but He switched to the imperfect to show how God was continually harvesting, during both the planting and watering.

Church growth is God's work. *"The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."* (Acts 2:47).

People can plant and water, but God does a work which we cannot. He alone can prepare the "soil" of one's heart.

--He opens the heart (EX: Lydia, Acts 16:14)

--He alone can regenerate the heart and produce a changed life

Four basic steps before harvesting:

1) Cultivating the soil
   How?
   a. Pray for people
   b. Show compassion to people
   c. Build trust with people

   (Your life can *"adorn"* the Gospel (Ti. 2:10), but only God can convince men of its worth and truth)

2) Sowing the seed
   How?
   a. Making initial contact
   b. Sharing your testimony
   c. Handing out tracts and Gospel literature
   d. Allowing the listener to hear the clear, simple Gospel

3) Watering the soil and seed
   How?
   a. Follow-up visitation
   b. Giving basic Bible doctrines which build faith
   c. Living a life which is consistent with the message you proclaim

   How do we "*water"*? Answer: One way is with tears of compassion (Ps. 126:5-6 - *"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.")*

4) Waiting for God to produce life and growth
   How?
   a. Remain patient
      Be patient! It takes time to cultivate, plant, water, and harvest.

   b. Don't force decisions from people
      You are not responsible for the results -- God is! We are only responsible for planting and watering.

      Encourage, but don't force people to put their faith in Christ. Many so-called "conversions" will amount to *"wood, hay, and stubble"* because we attempted to coerce an *"increase"* rather than allow the Holy Spirit to produce the harvest.

   c. Trust God to convict and convince

V. 6

"Salvation is of the LORD" (Jonah 2:9)

We are regenerated, saved, and sanctified by His Spirit.

It is because of God's sovereign working in our lives (yea, through the instrumentality of men) that we are members of the King's family.

V. 7

Both Paul and Apollos add up to a "zero" (nothing, nil) (without Christ) (SEE: DeHaan, p. 35-36)

Only He can germinate life within a dead sinner and nourish that regenerated soul (He is the ultimate source and sustainer of life) (Gromacki, p. 46).

SEE: I Cor. 1:30-31

All glory must go to God.

All that we <u>have</u> and all that we <u>are</u> is from Him (I Cor. 4:7).

Who is really <u>important</u>?

"He must increase, I must decrease" (Jn. 3:30).

III. ***View yourself as:***
A humble CO-LABORER working for God(v.8-9)
(Needed in the Lord's Work:A spirit of unity)

V. 8
"He that planteth and he that watereth are one" - It was absurd for the Corinthians to take sides since both Paul and Apollos were one - a unit - a team.

The work of the Gospel ministry is a team effort. We all have different gifts, functions, and jobs, but we all have the same:
aim - God's glory
motivation - the love of Christ
result - fruit for God's Kingdom

Paul is saying: I and Apollos are not rivals; we are *"one."*

Though we have distinctive contributions in the same work, we are one in that work.

Though we have diversity of service, there is unity of purpose.

We are preaching the same Scriptures, about the same Christ, through the same power (of the Holy Spirit), for the same purpose (seeing people saved), having the same goal (for God to be glorified).

"Every man shall receive his own reward" - Even though we are a team, we each will receive individual recognition and reward.

"Reward" - SEE: John 4:35-38

"According to his own labor" - Salvation is a free gift (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8), not the result of our labor or *"works"* (Ti. 3:5). However, our service for Christ will be rewarded, and God's rewards will not be arbitrarily (haphazardly) given out.

Jesus Christ knows our works (Rev. 2:2). Nothing you do for another soul will go unrewarded. The measure and motive of your labor will merit reward. No matter what part you have, whether cultivating, planting, watering, reaping, etc., you will not go unrewarded.

One who prayed for a soul will be rewarded just as one who witnessed to that soul.

God rewards on the basis of labor, not success or results.

Contrast:Jeremiah (faithful and dedicated prophet) had little results (over a life of ministry)

Jonah (petty and unwilling prophet) saw a whole city repent (over a couple of days of ministry)

What men may think of your ministry is not important; what God thinks is of supreme importance.

Our reward must not be the praise of men, but the "Well Done!" of the Lord of the harvest (Wiersbe, p. 579).

God's award ceremony will be:
1) Universal (***"Every man"*** - every single child of God)

2) Sure (***"Shall"***)

3) Fair (***"According to his own labor"***)

V. 9
The greatest labor is the labor in the greatest task.

No task is greater than the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 1:8).

In every city there awaits a field to be cultivated, planted, watered, reaped, and harvested.

--There is fruit for God in the city of NY, but more laborers are needed to work the field (Luke 10:2 - *"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.")*

"We" - Paul and Apollos

"Labourers together" - fellow workers. We are God's fellow workers.

In the work of God, there is no room for a competitive spirit, no room for strife and vain glory. We are on the same team, seeking to reap the same harvest field, for the same Master.

"Ye are God's husbandry" - i.e. God's tillage, working field, cultivated land.

Paul says we are God's farmers and you (Corinthians) are God's field.

This church is God's church; you are God's field and God's building (edifice). The reason you are God's field is because He produced you (you are His "produce"). You are God's building because He constructed you; you are built on the foundation of Christ (v. 11).
Conclusion:

Remember Who the Lord of the Harvest really is, and
GIVE HIM ALL THE GLORY!

It is God's work, wrought by God's power, therefore it should be to God's glory (not man's).

Give God the glory! (I Cor. 10:31)

To God be the glory!

"HOW TO BUILD FOR ETERNITY"

I Corinthians 3:10-17

3-12-2023

INTRODUCTION: Verse 10

***Take heed how you build others for Jesus Christ!**

I. Build on the <u>RIGHT FOUNDATION</u> (v. 11)

II. Build with the <u>BEST MATERIALS</u> (v. 12)

III. Build so as to be <u>INSPECTED</u> and <u>TESTED</u> (v. 13)

IV. Build with the <u>LONG LOOK</u> in View (v. 14-15)

V. Build, Don't <u>CORRUPT GOD'S TEMPLE</u>! (v. 16-17)

CONCLUSION:

"HOW TO BUILD FOR ETERNITY"

I Corinthians 3:10-17

3-12-2023



INTRODUCTION: Verse 10

***Take heed how you build others for Jesus Christ!**

I. **Build on the _____** (v. 11)

II. **Build with the _____** (v. 12)

III. **Build so as to be _____ and _____** (v. 13)

IV. **Build with the _____ in View** (v. 14-15)

V. **Build, Don't _____!** (v. 16-17)

CONCLUSION:

"HOW TO BUILD FOR ETERNITY"

I Corinthians 3:10-17

3-12-2023

INTRODUCTION:

If Christ were to walk in this room today, approach you, and say, "I want you to construct a building for me. . . and I will give you all the wisdom, time, strength, and talent to do the job." --
How would you respond?

How would you build?

In verses 10-17, Paul shifts from the analogy of farmer (v. 6-8) to builder, from agriculture to architecture.

V. 9 - *"Ye are God's building"*

He is the owner of every Biblical assembly of believers.

Although He uses us as His tools to build with, ultimately, He is the Builder. He built this church and owns it.

Paul was not content to merely contend in life -- He wanted to win for Christ! (I Cor. 9:24-27)

There exists much apathy in Christianity today.

Paul here describes not the Great White Throne Judgment, but the Judgment Seat of Christ (the *Bema* seat - a reference to the place where awards were given out to the victors of ancient Olympic games).

Believers will not be judged based on what they did for their salvation, but what they did with their salvation (cp. Phil. 2:12).

V. 10

"The grace of God" - Paul is quick to attribute his privileged responsibility to point men to Christ to the grace of God.

The wisdom, ability, and office of apostleship which Paul had for the ministry came to him via God's unmerited kindness and favor.

You are a humble man of God when you attribute your wisdom, talents, and position to God.

"Masterbuilder" - Greek *architecton* - architect, skilled craftsman.

Paul didn't design the foundation -- He simply ***"laid"*** it (MacArthur, p. 81).

"I have laid the foundation" - the foundation Paul placed down among the Corinthians was Jesus Christ (v. 11).

God used Paul to give the simple message of salvation in Christ (2:2). Since it was Paul who introduced them to Christ, he was in a sense a spiritual "father" to them (SEE: 4:15).

Paul led the Corinthians to Christ and thus was used by God's grace to get their eternal souls anchored in the bedrock foundation of Jesus Christ.

Paul did not just contribute knowledge, he contributed labor! (Morris, p. 67).

"Another buildeth thereon" - Apollos, then others would build on the work Paul had initiated. They picked up where he left off (just as I picked up where Pastor Lowery left off in terms of building upon the lives God used him to lead to Christ).

"Laid (aorist - past complete) . . . ***buildeth***" (present - continuous)

The laying of the foundation in a person's life never needs repeating (Heb. 6:1ff); however, the building is to be continuous and repetitious all our lives.

All of us, whether we like it or not, are building something onto someone else (whether intentionally or unintentionally).

"Take heed how he buildeth" - "Seriously look at" or "pay careful attention" to how you are building the lives of others (with whom you come in contact).

***Take heed how you build others for Jesus Christ!**

I. Build on the RIGHT FOUNDATION (v. 11)

You can't choose any foundation you want or like.

Salvation and Christianity are only built on the foundation of Christ (not Paul, Apollos, Peter, good works, humanism, or science).

True Bible Christianity is exclusive.

Not all roads lead to Heaven. Not all foundations are sure.

Only one road goes to Heaven (Jn. 14:16). Only one foundation is sure!

People may attempt to build other foundations, but those foundations will all crumble. On Judgment day, those foundations will be "slippery" places from which people will fall and be destroyed (Ps. 73:18; Jer. 23:12).

Jesus Christ is the bottom line of Christianity.

He is the foundation from which everything else builds.

A building is only as good as its foundation. If the foundation is *"sand"* [Mt. 7:26], it doesn't matter how good the building is, it will not stand when the storm comes.

EX: Many well-meaning people attempt to build Christian principles, ethics,and morals on people who are not even saved. This is like building an edifice on quicksand. Totally futile!

The foundation determines

the size of the building

the shape of the building

the strength of the building (Wiersbe)

II. Build with the <u>BEST MATERIALS</u> (v. 12)

"Gold" - Can be refined (Job 23:10)

"Silver" - Can be *"purified"* (Ps. 12:6)

"Precious stones" - Will take on a different molecular structure

"Precious stones" - costly, valuable stone like granite or marble.

However, ***"wood, hay, and stubble"*** cannot pass through fire without being totally consumed.

"Stubble" - Straw. Was often used as a building material for thatching roofs (Rienecker, p. 394). It can't handle fire at all! (nor even heavy winds - EX: "The Three Little Pigs" story)

Note the order from ***"gold"*** <u>down</u> to ***"stubble"*** (straw).

The elements display a:

<u>decrease</u> in value

<u>increase</u> in flammability

GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES	WOOD, HAY, STUBBLE
* Permanent	* Passing; Temporary
* Beautiful	* Ordinary; Even Ugly
* Valuable	* Cheap
* Hard to Obtain	* Easy to Obtain

Chart by: Warren Wiersbe

III. Build so as to be INSPECTED and TESTED (v. 13)

When building a new house in New York, one will find that the codes and inspectors are strict.

"Every man's work" - In context the "every man" refers to believers (and all believers; none excluded).

Believers who attempt to build on the foundation of Christ (v. 10) and who themselves will be *"saved"* (v. 15) will have their works evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Each Christian will be judged for his own works (don't worry about others; concern yourself with your own; you will answer for yourself).

***"Work"* =** In context, a positive deed done for Christ. All works built on Christ's foundation will be made evident.

"Every man's work" - Note: it is not people (believers) who go through the fire (not RCC Purgatory), but our works go through the fire.

It is our works not our sins that will be judged. Our sins were judged at Calvary (II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:1).

"Shall be made manifest" - to be brought out into the open so as to be seen for what it really is.

--The secret works will be made known (Ro. 2:16)
--The motives of "why" will be evident
--The methods of "how" will be evident

Just a small box full of gold, silver, and precious stones is worth more than a barn or warehouse full of wood, hay, or stubble!

Bigness (mass and bulk) does not necessarily mean goodness or precious value (cp. DeHaan).

When someone builds a house using only the cheapest of inferior materials, that house may look good at first glance, but it will:

1) Not stand the test of close scrutiny (an expert builder could look beneath the facade and determine its real worth)
2) Not stand the test of time (it will deteriorate rapidly)

"The day" - the article points to a day which is well known (Schlatter).

"The day shall declare it" - "The day" refers to the day of Christ's coming (1:8; cp. I Th. 5:4; Heb. 10:25). The Day of the Lord, when Jesus catches His Bride away.

When He returns, He will bring His rewards with Him (Rev. 22:12 - *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be")*.

"Revealed by fire" *(apocalupsis)* **-** Unveiled, uncovered, opened up to plain sight.

"By fire" - The refining fire of Jesus Christ [Particularly His all-searching, penetrating eyes (Heb. 4:13), which are like blazing fire (Rev. 1:14), will see right through to the true value (quality) and motives of the works we did for others.]

Just as hot fire purges the dross out of gold and the alloys out of silver and the sediment out of stone, so the fire of Christ's judgment will test or try every work we did for Him.

ILLUS: of a fire sweeping through a building and consuming everything combustible except valuable metals (Morris, p. 68).

"The fire shall try" - Test so as to prove genuineness. What is a "genuine" work?
--A work performed by His power (Holy Spirit)
--A work performed by His rules (Biblical standard)
--A work performed for His glory (right motives)

All works done by Christ's power (Jn. 15:4-5) and for Christ's glory (I Cor. 10:31) will be rewarded (whether: witnessing, discipling, teaching, preaching, ushering, cleaning, translating, babysitting, building, visiting, leading . . .all forms of serving).

"Of what sort" = of what kind of quality

God is not merely keeping records of what we did but how and why we did it.

--Gold, silver, precious stones =Products of a mighty supernatural creative act
--Wood, hay, stubble =Products of common natural growth and development (DeHaan)

If you are not in the Word daily, you are no doubt building with the wrong materials. If you are not in prayer daily, you are no doubt building with the wrong power!

"What sort" - Quality examination. Why do we do what we do? What is our intention? Do we have interior motives (please self), exterior motives (please others), ulterior motives (get something). . . or "superior" motives (to please God)? (SEE: II Cor. 5:9-11a).

IV. Build with the LONG LOOK in View (v. 14-15)

V. 14

ILLUS: How people don't build things to last.

"Abide" - To remain or survive the revealing fires. That which still exists after going through the fire will earn a reward.

"Built thereupon" - Only works built on the foundation of Christ will merit reward in Heaven.

--You may be involved in a lot of social programs, relief organizations, and humanitarian societies, etc., but your efforts will not be rewarded by God unless they were done for God's glory and His cause!

"A reward" - A reward for each and every "work" is promised (In this life, you may not get the recognition you deserve, but remember, nothing [not even a cup of cold water - Mk. 9:41] will go unnoticed by God.

ILLUS: of a old veteran missionary couple returning to America after many years serving God on the foreign field. As they left the ship, huge crowds were cheering, reporters were crowding around, etc. The couple soon learned that Teddy Roosevelt was also leaving the same ship. The woman sighed and complained of how there was no one there to welcome or cheer for them. Her husband replied, "Don't worry, dear, our recognition and reward come later-- when we reach Heaven's shore."

Rewards are often spoken of as crowns:

I Cor. 9:25 - *"Incorruptible crown"* - for striving lawfully

II Tim. 4:8 - *"Crown of righteousness"* - For those who love His appearing

Ja. 1:12 - *"Crown of life"* - for enduring testing out of love (cp. Rev. 2:10)

I Pet. 5:4 - *"Crown of glory"* - for the faithful pastor

Salvation is by grace alone, but rewards are based on our works.

Entrance into Heaven is not determined by our works, but the metals and honors we receive in Heaven are based on our works

Note: Even our works are the result of our allowing Christ to work through us (I Cor. 15:10 - *"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.";* Phil. 2:13 - *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.")*

Our chief focus ought to be on laying up treasures in Heaven (Mt. 6:19-20 - *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.")*.

V. 15

Note, it is the believer's *"work"* which is burned up and not the believer.

"He shall suffer loss" - loss of reward throughout eternity.

It is never a pleasant feeling to *"suffer loss."*

II John 8 - *"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."*

"But he himself shall be saved" - Delivered by Christ from the fire. The same fire that tested our works could have tested our souls (if our souls were not justified by God's grace).

No believer can lose his salvation, but he can lose rewards.

"Yet so as by fire" - As one who escapes through the flames without being burned.

As Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego endured the fiery furnace (Dan. 3), yet had just their ropes burned, so we will endure a fire that will only burn works performed by the flesh.

"The thought here is of a person who runs through flames without being burned, but who has the smell of smoke on him -- barely escaping!" (MacArthur, p. 85).

ILLUS: the explosion and fire at Chipper's Paint Warehouse, and Vernon's escape

V. Build, Don't CORRUPT GOD'S TEMPLE! (v. 16-17)

V. 16

"Ye. . . temple" - You Christians (plural) form a temple (singular).

The Church at large is a holy shrine (holy place, sanctuary). All the company of the redeemed comprise a temple which God owns and His Spirit indwells.

He owns us individually (6:20) and indwells us individually (6:19).

That which God owns and indwells must be respected. We must take serious heed how we treat God's property and house (ie. His people)!

How you build a fellow believer ought to take on a new perspective after today.

The ***"Temple"*** spoken of here is God's local church (cp. I Tim. 3:15).

V. 17

Here a greater crime than inferior workmanship is in mind (Morris, p. 70).

(Paul is evidently referring to the corruption spread over God's work by an unsaved person.)

"Defile" - to destroy by means of corrupting (I Cor. 15:33).

Any church, pastor, layman, who corrupts God's temple of believers by either:

corrupt morals, corrupt doctrine, corrupt practice . . . is in deep trouble!

The corruption in context refers to building something on someone else that is unclean or impure.

To hammer bad building materials onto God's temple, which is founded on Christ, is to disgrace God's property.

"Him shall God destroy" - lit. him will God destroy with corruption (same word).

You corrupt God's temple and god will see to it that you are corrupted.

God intends that His temple remain "holy" (set apart from corruption).

CONCLUSION:

If you are a child of God, you automatically have a "Building Permit."

Are you building anything for eternity?

"A Word to the Wise"

I Corinthians 3:18 - 4:5

3-19-2023

INTRODUCTION:

***You can be wise, as God measures "wisdom"!**

You are wise when you. . .

I. Trade in <u>MAN'S</u> wisdom for <u>GOD'S</u> wisdom (v. 18-20)
(A word to the wise: *"Don't <u>measure yourself</u> with men")*

You are wise when you. . .

II. Benefit from <u>ALL</u> God has to offer (v. 21-23)
(A word to the wise: *"Don't <u>limit yourself</u> to a man")*

You are wise when you. . .

III. Realize the <u>GREATNESS</u> of <u>FAITHFUL SERVITUDE</u> (4:1-2)
(A word to the wise: *"Don't <u>think too much</u> of men")*

"You are wise when you. . .

**IV. Stand <u>UNINTIMIDATED</u> by man's judgment,
but live in anticipation of God's judgment** (4:3-5)
(A word to the wise: *"Don't <u>assume things</u> about men")*

CONCLUSION:

"A Word to the Wise"



I Corinthians 3:18 - 4:5

3-19-2023

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***You can be wise, as God measures "wisdom"!**

You are wise when you. . .

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(A word to the wise: *"Don't _____ with men")*

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II. **Benefit from _____ God has to offer** (v. 21-23)
(A word to the wise: *"Don't _____ to a man")*

You are wise when you. . .

III. **Realize the _____ of _____** (4:1-2)
(A word to the wise: *"Don't _____ of men")*

"You are wise when you. . .

IV. **Stand _____ by man's judgment,**
but live in anticipation of God's judgment (4:3-5)
(A word to the wise: *"Don't _____ about men")*

CONCLUSION:

"A Word to the Wise"

I Corinthians 3:18 - 4:5

3-19-2023

INTRODUCTION:

What is Wisdom? Wisdom is the perception of God's thoughts and insight into God's ways resulting in an accurate understanding of truth and manifesting itself in the art of skillful living.

How is Wisdom obtained? The attainment of wisdom is achieved by means of:

1) The "fear" of the Lord (Respect for God) (Psalm 111:10; Prov. 9:10)
2) The Word of the Lord (The Written and Living Logos)
   (The written Word – Prov. 4:5; Psalm 119:130)
   (The Living Word – Col. 2:3; 1 Cor. 1:24)

Just Ask God for Wisdom believing that He is the source and dispenser of Wisdom (James 1:5)

***You can be wise, as God measures "wisdom"!**

You are wise when you. . .

I. Trade in <u>MAN'S</u> wisdom for <u>GOD'S</u> wisdom (v. 18-20)
(A word to the wise: *"Don't <u>measure yourself</u> with men ")*

V. 18

Many people are self-deceived when it comes to true "wisdom." They delude themselves into thinking that if they can reason like the world's great rationalists, if they can quote the world's great philosophers, if they can argue like the world's great apologists. . . then truly they must have wisdom.

We are so prone to seek wisdom from the world rather than from God.
Many assume that people of notoriety are the source of wisdom (a famous guru or religious leader; A professor from an ivy league university etc.) In the days of ancient Greece Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates were looked to as the source of wisdom. While they had many good insightful things to say, none were infallible and none knew God's way of salvation for His ways of successful living.

While many in our day assume that popular opinion is the source of wisdom. If enough people believe something then it must be true. But is popular opinion the test of rightness?

With the amazing technological advancements of our day many others assume that if it's on the internet then it must be true; If an answer is spit out from a program of artificial intelligence then it must be true.

God's ways may seem foolish to the world. Outdated; archaic; Foolish;
Many deem His ways as unworthy of our consumption or adaptation because they are so vastly different from the times in which we live. But remember this: He says that His ways are not our ways. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

The Bible has a lot of apparent paradoxes. It teaches us that:

--The way up is down (Lk. 11:14)
(Humility before exaltation)

--The way to greatness is servitude (Mt. 20:26, 27)

--The way to be wise is to be a fool

"Let him become a fool" - Not a "fool" in the eyes of God, but a fool in the eyes of the world.

Until you are willing to allow the world to view your beliefs, principles, ideals, etc., as foolish, pride will forever keep you from pursuing and attaining God's wisdom.

ILLUS: The man who walked the streets of Manhattan wearing a sign on his chest and back. On the front it read: "I AM A FOOL FOR CHRIST." On the back: "WHOSE FOOL ARE YOU?"

The greatest fault a man can have is to be aware of none (to see none in his life).

Spiritual growth does not occur in the life of one who thinks he has "arrived." It occurs in the one who, in honest evaluation of himself, sees himself as fallible, able to err, able to be short-sighted.

V. 18-20

Have you ever said to God, "Lord, change any thoughts, ideas, philosophies, ambitions in me that are not in line with yours?" (Isaiah 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.")*.

Is your mind all "made up"? Or are you open to truth?

How willingly do you take constructive criticism and thank God for it?

What does it take for God to change your mind?

Always have a tender, pliable, open heart to God. The day it closes, is the day life stops for you. Growth ceases and death begins.

V. 19

"It is difficult to teach a person who thinks he knows everything. The Roman rhetorician Quintilian said of some of his students,

'They would doubtlessly have become excellent scholars
if they had not been so fully persuaded of their own scholarship.'

A well-known Arab proverb goes:
'He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool. Shun him.
He who knows not, and knows that he knows not, is simple. Teach him'."
(MacArthur, p. 89).

God in His mercy often has to humble a man before He can teach that man anything.

The most intelligent university professor who lacks God's intelligence is really foolish with God.

All true wisdom is God's wisdom -- wisdom He has chosen to reveal to man via the Bible.

Paul cites Job 5:13 to make his point.

A man's own wise ideas end up tripping him up.

--Like a boomerang, those philosophies by which he sought to corrupt others and ruin their faith, end up damning his own soul.

--Like Haman's gallows, he ends up hanging himself by his own schemes.

V. 20

Now Paul refers to Psalm 94:11.

"Vain" has the idea of <u>futility</u>, <u>fruitlessness</u>, <u>without result</u> (a lot of empty jargon.

The thoughts of this world's wise don't result in anything which will last for eternity. Their wisdom is limited to things which will pass away.

"The worldly wise, whom the Corinthians held in such high esteem, are totally unable to penetrate the divine mysteries. These are open to the humblest man of faith, but are forever hid from the wise of this world." (Morris, p. 71)

You are wise when you. . .

II. Benefit from ALL God has to offer (v. 21-23)
(A word to the wise: *"Don't limit yourself to a man")*

V. 21

The Corinthians were divided over their favorite teacher's popularity, personality, giftedness, or style (cp. 1:12; 3:4, 5).

"Let no man glory in men" - None of us should boast about a man. Brag about God -- Yes! Brag about God's servant -- No!
Regarding your local church pastor, Honor them? Yes; Listen to them? Yes; Follow their leadership? Yes; Worship them? NO

To pledge one's allegiance to a particular charismatic preacher is totally carnal.
The celebrity syndrome in Christianity is sickening.

We should not divide over personalities (like the Corinthians did). It is foolish to be a loyalist to one TV or radio personality, or to one author (commentary writer).

All men are short-sighted, fallible; none is perfect in every area of Bible knowledge. So to limit yourself to one guru, or one famous teacher is the height of foolishness -- It is cultic!

"For all things are yours" - Don't limit yourself to just one man (one teacher of truth) when you can benefit from all (cp. 4:15).

V. 22

"Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas (Peter)" - Don't pick one from the exclusion of the others when you can gain blessings from all (Paul no doubt could fill their tank with doctrine, Apollos with enthusiasm, and Peter with practical experience).

"No believer has an exclusive claim to truth." God has gifted many people with His wisdom.

"The world" - Since God owns all, and we belong to God, we will inherit the earth one day -- in the Millennium (Mt. 5:5; Rev. 20:6). We are *"joint heirs"* with Christ! (Rom. 8:17)

"Life or death" - By faith the believer has victory over life and death.

--The abundant life belongs to us (Jn. 10:10).

--Triumph over death belongs to us (since we belong to the One who has the keys of death -- Jesus Christ) (Rev. 1:18)

While death is the end of all things for the lost, death is gain for believers (Phil. 1:21; I Cor. 15:55-57).

"Things present or things to come" - The blessings of God now and the blessings of God for the future, all belong to us -- the children of God. (We are part of the King's family, we are part of royalty! *"No good thing will He withhold from them which walk uprightly."*)

V. 23

"All is yours" for this reason: You belong to Christ!

In Christ we are blessed with *"all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places"* (Eph. 1:3).

Everything that belongs to Christ belongs to you by virtue of your relationship to Him (EX: When I got married, all my belongings became Terri's and vice-versa).

"Christ is God's" - Christ has everything God (the Father) has because of His relationship to the Father. He is one with the Father; hence, He has everything the Father has. (Ex. To be in Christ's hand is to be in the Father's hand - John 10:29)

If I belong to Christ and He belongs to the Father, what lack I?

So Paul's point is this: Don't limit yourself when you belong to One who has the vast resources of the universe to help you, train you, equip you, etc.

You are wise when you. . .

III. Realize the <u>GREATNESS</u> of <u>FAITHFUL SERVITUDE</u> (4:1-2)
(A word to the wise: *"Don't <u>think too much</u> of men")*

V. 1

"Let a man so (in this way) ***account of us" -*** Paul says, "When you think about Apollos, Peter, and I, don't have grandiose, bigger than life, superman images in your minds. Rather, have a mental reckoning of us as <u>servants</u> and <u>stewards</u>.

Just view us as humble servants (serving another Master) and humble stewards (caring for Another's possessions).

"Ministers" - *huperetas* - under-rowers. The word was used to refer to the slaves who would row on the lower part of a ship which had three banks of oars.

Paul says, "View me as a hard-working slave for Christ."

True greatness, according to Jesus, is being a servant. The more you serve, the greater you are (SEE: Mt. 20:25-28).

"Stewards" - *oikonomous* - manager; one who would manage or take care of the household belongings of a master (EX: Joseph in Potiphar's house).

Paul was responsible to manage the mysteries of God (i.e. the formerly hidden, but now revealed revelation of God).

V. 2

The key requirement of a steward is not good looks, charismatic personality, charm and wit, but faithfulness to the task.

"<u>Faithful</u>" - One you can put "<u>full faith</u>" in; reliable, dependable ("The greatest ability is dependability" - Bob Jones, Sr.).

As Christ looks at you, does He find you to be faithful? Can He count on you to get a job done the way He wants it done? Will Jesus say of you, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant"* (Mt. 25:21)?

To be smart, you must realize that the greatest men of God are great at serving Christ.

"You are wise when you. . .

IV. Stand <u>UNINTIMIDATED</u> by man's judgment, but live in anticipation of God's judgment (4:3-5)
(A word to the wise: *"Don't <u>assume things</u> about men")*

V. 3

Have you ever been unjustly criticized?

Don't allow your life to be manipulated by man's opinions or criticisms.

"With me" - Some people might be more intimidated by the scrutiny (magnifying glass examinations) of others than Paul was.

It was of little importance to Paul that others judged him and criticized him. He did not live to please people, but a higher standard. Paul was not swayed by peer pressure.

"Or of man's judgment" - lit. "of man's day." It was God's day of judgment that concerned Paul.

Because they seek to live up to man's expectations and wishes, many people are:

--Wishy-washy (vacillate back and forth - seeking to please all)

--Paranoid (worried about what others think)

--Self-satisfied (when they compare themselves with others' ministry and effort, they look pretty good, so they stop [remain stunted])

"Yea, I judge not mine own self" - Paul didn't waste his life in constant introspection (his focus was <u>up</u>, not <u>in</u>)

"This does <u>not</u> mean that there is no place for times of heart-searching and rigid self-scrutiny with a view to more whole-hearted and more efficient service" (Morris, p. 75).

What Paul is saying is that his own judgment of himself may be flawed; the Lord's is the only 100% accurate evaluation he would receive (v. 4).

V. 4

"For I know nothing by myself" - I do not know anything about myself, that I am doing wrong; lit. I know nothing about myself.

"Yet am I <u>not</u> hereby justified" - Just because I can't see any flaws in my life or ministry, does <u>not</u> mean that <u>none exist</u>.

I'm not right just because I think I'm right.

The One who determines whether or not I am right is the Lord.

As Paul evaluated his life, he saw himself as a faithful steward; however, he recognized that only God can determine how faithful we really were in this life.

We all tend to build ourselves up in our own minds. We are prone to flatter ourselves and be smugly self-righteous or self-satisfied.

Solomon said, *"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts"* (Prov. 21:2).

V. 5

"Judge nothing before <u>the</u> <u>time</u>" - "The time" is defined by the next phrase - ***"Until the Lord come" -***

The time of judgment for a believer is when Christ returns
(II Tim. 4:1 - *"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick (living) and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom";* Rev. 22:12 - *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.")*.

"The Lord...who" - It is Christ alone who will judge us (cp. Jn. 5:22).

Christ's judgment of believers will:

1) <u>Expose</u> <u>what</u> we did
"Bring to light the hidden things"

2) <u>Expose</u> <u>why</u> we did what we did
"Manifest...hearts"

Whether you realize it or not, you are under constant divine surveillance, continual divine scrutiny.

"The Lord...will bring to light the hidden things of darkness" - *What we did in secret for Christ (EX: Mt. 6:4, 6) will have the spotlight shined on it (No one else knew, but He did).

He knows the *"secrets"* of men (Rom. 2:16; Ps. 139).

"The Lord...will make manifest (open up for all to see) ***the counsels*** (motives) ***of the hearts" -***

Any motive other than love for Christ (a desire to please Him) is inferior and faulty. Such *"wood, hay, and stubble"* works will be burned up.

Why do you do what you do for Christ? Why do you come to church? Why do you pray, read Bible, witness, work in nursery, teach S.S. class, do AWANA, etc.?

Was the service rendered/motivated, by ulterior, interior (to please self) or exterior (to please others) motives?

"Then shall every man" - Every man who is part of the Rapture when Christ comes.

"Shall...have praise of God" - Praise from God (*"Well done..."*) is the only praise that should motivate us to live for Christ.

Man's praise is hollow, empty, vain.

Paul gave this advice to Timothy: *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God"* (II Tim. 2:15).

There will be no additional trials or other court of appeals, because the Lord's judgment will be 100% unbiased, accurate, and fair.

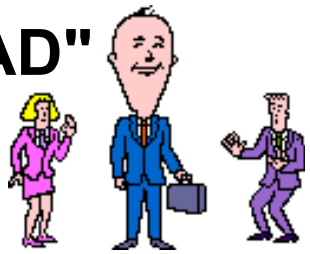
V. 3-5

Don't worry about man's evaluation! Get ready for God's!

CONCLUSION:

"Deflating a BIG HEAD"

(I Corinthians 4:6-21)
3-26-2023



Introduction:

*** How can you avoid having an inflated *"Puffed Up"* head?**
(How can you be free from foolish pride?)

I. **D*on't let your head be swelled by***
<u>WHO</u> YOU <u>KNOW</u> (v.6)
(The pride of associating yourself with famous people)

II. ***Don't let your head be swelled by***
<u>WHAT</u> YOU <u>ARE & HAVE</u> (v.7)
(The pride of gloating over personal achievement)

III. ***Don't let your head be swelled by***
HOW <u>SMOOTH</u> YOUR <u>LIFE</u> IS (v.8-12)
(The pride of wealth, power & prosperity)

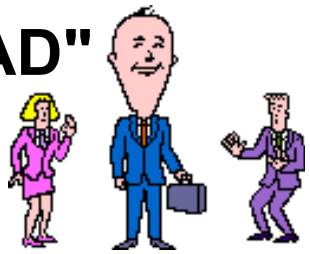
IV. ***Don't let your head be swelled by***
<u>FORGETTING WHO GOD USED</u> TO NURTURE YOUR FAITH (v.13-17)
(The pride of spiritual independence)

V. ***Don't let your head be swelled by***
<u>WHAT</u> YOU <u>KNOW</u> AND CAN <u>SPEAK</u> (v.18-21)
(The pride of pseudo-intellectualism and eloquent verbosity)

"Deflating a BIG HEAD"

(I Corinthians 4:6-21)

3-26-2023



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"Deflating a BIG HEAD"

(I Corinthians 4:6-21)

3-26-2023

Introduction:

The key recurring phrase in vv. 6 - 21 is ***"puffed up"*** (v. 6, 18, 19).

Use BALLOON ILLUSTRATION

"Puffed up" - *phusioo* = to inflate, blow up (to have an inflated, exaggerated, untrue view of one's self).

In the first four chapters Paul has been confronting the Corinthians about how wrong it was for them to exalt human wisdom and human leaders (they prided themselves in both).

*** How can you avoid having an inflated *"Puffed Up"* head?**
(How can you be free from foolish pride?)

I. ***Don't let your head be swelled by***
<u>WHO</u> YOU <u>KNOW</u> (v.6)
(The pride of associating yourself with famous people)

***"These things"* =** The examples Paul used (chapters 1 - 4) to show how absurd and foolish it was for the Corinthians to be loyalists to mere men.

1) They were <u>divisive</u> in a cultic way over personalities (1:11-13)

2) They were impressed by a man's <u>verbal impressiveness</u> and <u>human reasoning</u> (2:1).

3) They became blinded to the true <u>source</u> of <u>spirituality</u> and <u>Christian maturity</u> (3:6-7)

4) They were <u>glorying</u> in a <u>particular servant</u> of God when they could have benefitted from many that God sent their way to minister (3:21-22)

5) They failed to see that God's men were humble <u>slaves</u> and <u>managers</u> for Jesus Christ (4:1)

"In a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos" - Paul used himself and Apollos repeatedly throughout the context (ch. 1-4) as examples of men they were following, although in actuality they also had other personalities that they became cultic followers of.

"Not to think of men above that which is written" - God's Word teaches us to give respect or honor to others (Ro. 12:10, 13:7); to love and serve others (Gal. 5:13); but never to idolize a person, never to deify a person, never to bow and worship a person, never to stoop to viewing a mortal as a guru.

(The Catholic church's official position on the Virgin Mary and the Saints is a prime example of people thinking more about mere mortals than God's Word allows.)

(Now the "Faith Teachers" [EX: Hagen, Fred Price, & Copeland] are in a sense deifying man, claiming themselves to be "gods.")

"No one of you be puffed up for one against another" -

> --Why is it that a child will say, "My Daddy is bigger (smarter, better) than your Daddy?"
>
> --Why is it that people have a tendency to be loyal fans to one particular sports team?
>
> --Why is it that countries have nationalistic pride and view their own cultures and customs as superior to others?
>
> --Why do many practically worship a particular rock group, famous celebrity, or sports hero?

Answer: PRIDE.

By our identifying with them, we share in the glory they receive.

Where do you get your identity? (hopefully in Christ)

Vain people often seek to "borrow" glory by associating themselves with "great men."

Factions, sects, and cults are always the result of people glorying in a man. Satan knows this, and he wants to see division in Christ's Church, so he appeals to man's pride by suggesting that they become exclusively loyal to one teacher of truth.

II. ***Don't let your head be swelled by***
WHAT YOU ARE & HAVE (v.7)
(The pride of gloating over personal achievement)

"Who maketh thee to differ from another?" - Paul is asking "Who is dividing over you?" "Is anyone regarding you as superior?" If no one is idolizing you, why are you idolizing others?

If you realize your finite mortality, and then you see that all men are created equal, you will see that no creature should be idolized.

To prick their conscience, Paul asks the Corinthians the three questions in verse 7.

"What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" - Answer: Nothing

"Almost everything we are, physically, mentally, spiritually, was thrust upon us, wholly without our choice, before we had any voice in the matter whatsoever. Physically, you are what you are, not by choice, but by birth. You came into this world without being consulted about your birth or anything about the condition in which you find yourself today. You were born with a body, in the choice of which you had no part. No one asked you whether you wanted to be black or white or yellow or red. No one asked you whom you wanted for your parents. You did not choose the country, the home, the environment in which you were to be born. No one asked you your choice of physique, whether tall or short, lean or fat. No one asked you what color of eyes or hair you wanted. In fact, your entire physical being was thrust upon you without your own knowledge or your own consent, or without any consultation with you. And while proper care of that body may determine health or sickness, strength or weakness, the basic characteristics of your physical being were all genetically determined at the moment of your conception. They are a matter of simple genetics, not of choice." (DeHaan, p. 54).

"Were you consulted as to your choice of a place of birth? Were you born of Christian parents who perhaps early taught you the Word of god, and how to pray, and pointed you to the Lord Jesus christ? You did not choose those parents. As far as your say in the matter is concerned, you might have been born in a save, cannibalistic hut in the jungle. Did you choose to be born in a community where the Gospel was preached? We all know better than this, and so when we heard the Gospel and believed it, it was but the culmination of a long train of circumstances beyond our control, which were thrust upon us even before we were born, and over which we had absolutely nothing to say." (DeHaan, p. 56).

Everything good we have is by God's grace and from His hand (Ja. 1:17).

--Our health ("*The Lord is the strength of my life"* - Ps. 27:1)

--Our wealth (*"It is He that giveth thee the power to get wealth"* - Dt. 8:18)

--Our salvation (*"Salvation is of the Lord"* - Jonah 2:9)

--Our success (is the result of obedience - Joshua 1:8)

--Our spiritual understanding (Col. 1:19)

--Everything we need (Ps. 23; Phil. 4:19)

John the Baptist said: *"A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. . . He [Christ] must increase, but I must decrease"* (Jn. 3:27, 30).

A young man once said, "Please pray that I will stay humble." To which his friend replied, "Tell me, what do you have to be proud about?" (Wiersbe, p. 583).

"Glory" - to brag or boast. Pride always shows itself by bragging.

When someone is "full of themselves" out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh (Lk. 6:45).

"...As if thou hadst not received it?" - If you have been given that which you have, why do you brag as if you independently manufactured all the blessings of your life by yourself.

All that I have and all that I am is by His grace (*"By the grace of God I am what I am"* - I Cor. 15:10).

By grace, God revealed His Word to me and instilled faith in my heart via His Word (Ro. 10:17); to the degree that I have been obedient to His Word I have been blessed. But even my obedience has been by His inspiring and energizing grace.

Someone has said, "Everything we have outside of hell is the grace of God" (cited by DeHaan, p. 56).

Dr. James M. Gray said it best in this hymn:

Naught have I gotten, but what I received
Grace hath bestowed it, since I have believed.
Boasting excluded, Pride I abase;
I'm only a sinner, saved by grace!

III. ***Don't let your head be swelled by***
HOW SMOOTH YOUR LIFE IS (v.8-12)
(The pride of wealth, power & prosperity)

In verses 8-12, Paul contrasts his humility with the Corinthians' conceit.

V. 8

"Full. . . rich" - The Corinthians gloated over how wealthy they were.

They took pride in their financial prosperity and viewed it as an indication of God's favor on them.

Is financial prosperity a barometer of one's spirituality? Absolutely not!

Like the Church of Laodicea, they bragged that they were *"rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing"* (Rev. 3:17).

"Ye have reigned as kings" - They gloated over the power they felt they had.

The Corinthians thought that they had arrived!

"I would to God ye did reign" - i.e. in the Millennium with Christ (Rev. 20).

V. 9

If God did not exalt the "great Apostles," but allowed humbling experiences to be their daily lot in life, how could the Corinthians (who didn't endure such humiliation) think so much of themselves when they did not have such a grant office?

Am I too good to suffer for Christ? No.

"A spectacle unto the world" - "The imagery used here is of doomed people brought into the arena condemned to die as criminals (MacArthur, p. 110).

(To be slaughtered by the lions as entertainment for those in the grandstands)

v. 10

Paul contrasts himself with the Corinthians:

--Intellectually - ***"Fools. . . wise"***
--Physically - ***"Weak. . . strong"***
--Socially - ***"Honorable. . . despised"***

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose" (martyred missionary Jim Elliot)

V. 11

Paul often endured inadequate food (***"hunger"***), water (***"thirsty"***), clothing (***"naked"***), protection (***"buffeted"***), housing (***"no certain dwelling place"***).

Should we in pride ever look down on someone who lacks in any of these areas?

V. 12-13

Paul didn't merely endure hardship, he endured it in a Christ-like manner.

--He worked for his bread;

--He blessed his revilers (those who cursed him);

--He patiently endured persecution (those who gave him trouble);

--He softly and kindly responded to those who defamed his character

V. 13

"Filth" - refuse; scum

"Offscouring" - the hardened leftovers or crusty dregs that one would scrape off of a dish or pan into the garbage can.

(Use a crusty plate illustration)

Are you humble enough to be made fun of, viewed as foolish, outdated, ridiculed, spit upon, imprisoned, beaten, mocked, and treated like criminals for what you believe?

Pride will cause man to shun identification with Christ.

The test of your faith is what you do when your faith is tested. You need the faith to see that you are not scum in God's eyes to support you when you are viewed as scum by the world.

IV. *Don't let your head be swelled by* <u>FORGETTING WHO GOD USED</u> TO NURTURE YOUR FAITH (v.13-17)

(The pride of spiritual independence)

Many in pride fail to see how they need the fellowship of other believers.

--We do <u>need</u> each other
(Heb. 10:24-25 - *"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.")*

--We do <u>benefit</u> from each other
(Prov. 27:17 - *"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.")*

--Your <u>life</u> is being <u>observed</u> (and it is either an encouragement or a stumbling block)

V. 14

As a father would admonish a son, so Paul speaks, not so as to embarrass the Corinthians, but to correct their arrogance.

V. 15

Though they had many teachers ("child trainers" - tutors) who had picked up where Paul left off (built on the foundation he laid - 3:10), Paul was the one who had introduced them to Christ.

Paul was the human element that God used to lead those people to Christ. In that sense, he was their spiritual father. Evidently, Timothy was also the product of Paul's evangelistic efforts (v. 17) (*"Timotheus, who is my beloved son"* - cp. I Tim. 1:2).

V. 16

In light of the fact that Paul was the one who initiated them to Christianity, this gave a basis for them to continue to follow his humble example.

"Followers" **=** imitator or mimic (not of his personality, but of his example in spiritual things, his example of humble servitude).

V. 17
We have a tendency to forget how we came to the spiritual standing we have in Christ at the present. Now we stand "high and mighty," forgetting the people God used to nurture and instill Biblical principles into our lives. We see how far we have matured and think we did it independently. Paul was sending Timothy back to Corinth to remind them of his (Paul's) life and testimony.

V. *Don't let your head be swelled by*

WHAT YOU KNOW AND CAN SPEAK (v.18-21)
(The pride of pseudo-intellectualism and eloquent verbosity)

V. 18

Some cultic leaders at Corinth said in effect: "Paul will not come to us! His bark is worse than his bite!" (II Cor. 10:8-11) (Wiersbe, p. 585).

V. 19

"If the Lord will" - What we do, where we go, etc., is determined on whether God will allow it or not.

(Beware of presumptuous arrogance when it comes to planning your life - cp. Ja. 4:13ff).

"Not the speech . . . but the power" - Paul was not impressed by the words of men (gifted speaking ability, "verbal advantage"), but by the power of God in their lives and on their ministry (many preachers, teachers, and evangelists excel in their ability to articulate but have rotten fruit in their lives and ministries)

V. 20

No doubt many teachers deluded the Corinthians into thinking they were Apostles, on par with Paul (and in presumptuous arrogant pride, they boasted and bragged that they were worthy of exclusive allegiance). "Away with Paul," they no doubt said, "We are the men of god!" They could talk a good talk. This is what Paul warned the Romans of (SEE: Rom. 16:17-18).

God's Kingdom is not one that is built by man's words, but by God's power!

The proof is in the power! (transformed, humble lives is the proof that the Gospel "took" root in people).

Bishop John Ryle was convinced that one of the keys to the 18th century revival in England was the simplicity of the preaching of such men as Wesley and Whitefield. He said, 'They were not ashamed to crucify their style or sacrifice their reputation for learning. They carried out the maxim of Augustine, who said that a wooden key is not as beautiful as a gold one, but if it can open the door when the gold one cannot, it is far more useful'." (MacArthur, p. 118).

V. 21
Paul, being an Apostle, had apostolic authority unshared by anyone at Corinth. He could wield such authority to chastise (EX: Elymas struck with blindness - Acts 13:8-11).

Conclusion:

Until you humble yourself, there is no salvation for you.

As long as you feel you have something of merit, worth, or spiritual strength to get you into God's heaven, you are not even a candidate for salvation.

"When God creates a new thing, He always begins with nothing" (cited by DeHaan, p. 58).

REMOVE THE CANCER!

I Corinthians 5:1-13

4-2-2023

Introduction:

**** A local church must expel a wicked sinning member from its body!***

I. <u>WHO</u> should be removed from a church body? (v.1)

Answer: One <u>practicing</u> a <u>publicly known</u>, sinful, <u>unrepentant</u> lifestyle

II. <u>HOW</u> should an unrepentant evil person be removed from a church body? (v.2-5a)

Answer: After the steps of Matthew 18:15-17 are taken:

Remove the unrepentant sinner with...

A. <u>CONTRITION</u> (in deep sorrow - v.2)

B. <u>CONVICTION</u> (under Christ's Authority - v.3-4a)

C. <u>CONGRUITY</u> (united in the Assembly - v.4b)

D. <u>COURAGE</u> (with strength from Christ - v.4c)

E. <u>COMPLETENESS</u> (involving total disassociation - v.5a)

III. <u>WHY</u> should an unrepentant evil person be removed from the church body? (v.5b-13)

A. So that God may <u>save</u> his/her <u>soul</u> (v.5b)

B. So that the <u>church body</u> may remain <u>pure</u> (v.6-8)

C. So that the <u>command</u> of <u>God</u> may be <u>obeyed</u> (v.9-13)

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B. _____ *(under Christ's Authority - v.3-4a)*

C. _____ *(united in the Assembly - v.4b)*

D. _____ *(with strength from Christ - v.4c)*

E. _____ *(involving total disassociation - v.5a)*

III. <u>WHY</u> should an unrepentant evil person be removed from the church body? (v.5b-13)

A. So that God may _____ *his/her* _____ *(v.5b)*

B. So that the _____ *may remain* _____ *(v.6-8)*

C. So that the _____ *of <u>God</u> may be* _____ *(v.9-13)*

REMOVE THE CANCER!

I Corinthians 5:1-13

4-2-2023

Introduction:

ILLUS: My grandmother, brother, and sister all had one thing in common. They all had their appendix explode. The removal of that organ from their body was for the benefit of their body. The toxic poisons from those hemorrhaged appendixes would have killed them had they not been removed by emergency surgery.

The dominant theme of chapter five is on <u>separating</u> or <u>removing</u> an unrepentant, sinning member from the local church body.

"Taken away (v. 2)*. . . deliver unto Satan* (v. 5) . . . *purge out* (v. 7) . . . *not to company* (v. 9)*not to eat* (v. 11) . . . *put away* (v. 13)."

**** A local church must expel a wicked sinning member from its body!***

I. <u>WHO</u> should be removed from a church body? (v.1)

Answer: One <u>practicing</u> a <u>publicly known</u>, sinful, <u>unrepentant</u> lifestyle

"Reported" - present, passive. Paul says: "It is right <u>now</u> (at the present) being heard (passive) all over the place."

Bad news has wings -- it flies ever so quickly.

"Fornication" - *porneia* (from which "pornography" is derived) - The word generally speaks of immoral sexual relations between people who are <u>not</u> husband and wife.

This word includes various forms of sexual perversion (ranging from premarital sex to incest to bestiality). It is a general term which would include porno magazines, porno movies, masturbation, orgies, homosexuality, lesbianism, etc.

The word is contrasted from *"adultery"* (I Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19) (a more specific reference to <u>marital unfaithfulness</u>).

"Not. . . named among the Gentiles" - Even the lost pagans didn't normally stoop to this low level of degradation. Corinth was a pagan city where sexual immorality abounded (was common place). Hence, many were desensitized to the immoral nature of it.

"<u>Have</u>" - the present tense emphasizes the <u>continual possession</u> (Rienecker, p. 399). It was not a one-time act, but an existing, unrepentant lifestyle.

"Father's wife" - A stepmother (perhaps the father had died).

Such an incestuous relationship is a complete violation of Lev. 18:7, 8; 20:11, and was punishable under the O.T. theocracy by death. Lev. 20:11 - *"And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them."*

Fornication is wrong because:

1) Fornication is a perversion (twisting) of God's plan for marital oneness (Gen. 2:24-25; I Cor. 6:16) (It is acting out a lie, since the ones involved really are not "one" in God's eyes)

2) Fornication is a violation of God's clear commands against it (Exodus 20:14; Dt. 5:18) (Fornicators will be judged - Heb. 13:4)

3) Fornication cheapens human dignity and treats the body like an object to be used then discarded (that which is common [profane] is cheap) (I Thes. 4:4; Prov. 11:22)

4) Fornication is not God's will for true sanctification (I Thes. 4:1-3) (Defilement is a dirty feeling)

5) Fornication reveals a lack of self-control over one's sexual desires (I Cor. 7:5)

6) Fornication is stealing what belongs to someone else (or will in the future belong to someone else) (I Thes. 4:6)

7) Fornication preoccupies and enslaves the mind and becomes an idol which may substitute for God (II Pet. 2:14; I Cor. 6:13) (It can be more addicting than drugs)

8) Fornication violates a trust of faithfulness between you and your spouse (Prov. 6:29-35)

9) Fornication runs the high risk of acquiring serious infection and fatal disease (Rom. 1:27)

10) Fornication results in unwanted pregnancies, evil abortion, and children who will lack a proper family structure (II Sam. 11:5; Prov. 5:17)

11) Fornication is totally inconsistent for a saint to commit (Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:3-5)

Note: It is not only fornicators whom we should be separated from -
SEE: V. 11 - *"coveteous. . . idolater. . ."*

II Th. 3:6 - one who refuses to work
Titus 3:10 - one who promotes a cardinal false doctrine

II. HOW should an unrepentant evil person be removed from a church body? (v.2-5a)

How is church discipline to be accomplished? SEE: Mt. 18:15-17

Step #1 - Personal confrontation (v. 15)

Step #2 - Semi-private confrontation (v. 16)

Step #3 - Public confrontation (v. 17)

Step #4 - Ex-communication (v. 17b) (dismissal from church fellowship)

How does a church expel a wicked person from its fellowship?

Answer: After the steps of Matthew 18:15-17 are taken:

Remove the unrepentant sinner with...

A. CONTRITION (in deep sorrow - v.2)

"Puffed up" - Inflated with pride

Perhaps some of the Corinthians apparently equated grace with freedom to sin and liberty with license (cp. Rom. 6:1; Gal. 5:13 - *"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.")* (EX: Some churches today ordain homosexual clergy)

Better: Their pride was that they thought they could allow such a sinner to stay in the fellowship and they remain unaffected by his presence.

"Mourned" - To weep like at a funeral. When a brother or sister falls, we should not gloat over how strong we are in comparison to the weak believer; rather, we should in sorrow mourn because of:

1) What his sin does for Christ's testimony (EX: Jimmy Swaggert)
2) How his sin will affect the lost or weak believers
3) How his sin will affect himself (emotionally, physically, an spiritually)

One should never have an attitude of "holier than thou," snobbery, self-righteousness, joy, etc., but we should be heartbroken, have a spirit of anguish and regret, be "bummed out" as Jeremiah in Lamentations.

"Taken away" - lit. lifted up and carried away; i.e. removed (put out of the fellowship; dismissed from membership and association)

B. *CONVICTION (under Christ's Authority - v.3-4a)*

V. 3

Since Paul's judgment was based on God's Word (divine precept), he did not need to be present to render a decision.

V. 4

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" - Such dismissal is for Christ's glory. A church exercises disciplinary action with Him as the authority behind the action. Decisions made in *"His name"* have His approval (In the context of church discipline, Christ said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I int he midst of them"* - Mt. 18:20).

C. *CONGRUITY (united in the Assembly - v.4b)*

"When ye are gathered together" - The church as a whole must decide to expel the unrepentant person.

--This phrase proves that Christians should gather together.

--This phrase also demonstrates how a church should govern itself (Paul didn't kick the person out; the church was supposed to).

D. *COURAGE (with strength from Christ - v.4c)*

"With the power *(dunamis)* ***of our Lord Jesus Christ" -*** It takes emotional strength from Christ to expel a member. It is not easy.

Perhaps the emotional trauma and difficulty involved is a reason why most churches don't exercise discipline of their willfully-sinning members.

E. *COMPLETENESS (involving total disassociation - v.5a)*

The rebel is to be dis-fellowshipped from completely.
--No fellowship with him (II Th. 3:14 - *"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be*

ashamed.").
--Not even a meal (SEE: I Cor. 5:11)

III. WHY should an unrepentant evil person be removed from the church body? (v.5b-13)

A. So that God may save his/her soul (v.5b)

"Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh" - When someone is dis-fellowshipped with, he/she is placed outside of the protective umbrella of the local church.

The sanctifying protection of God (because of that person's close association with God's people) is removed.

EX: An unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife (I Cor. 7:14).

EX: God would not destroy Sodom if even ten righteous people were in it (Gen. 18:32). God would not destroy Sodom until the only righteous man, Lot, was removed (Gen. 19:16; II Pet. 2:7-8).

EX: God blessed Potiphar because of Joseph's presence in the home (Gen. 39:5).

The goal of church discipline is correction and conversion.

"That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" - The person's lifestyle demonstrates that he may be a non-believer. By allowing him to remain in fellowship, he will deceive himself into thinking he's okay. By expelling him, his conscience may be smitten with conviction and guilt. He then will be in the domain of Satan where God will allow demonic forces to afflict him with a view to get his attention, show him his lostness, and reveal to him his need of salvation.

When a person is dismissed from a church's fellowship, God may get his attention, as he is outside of the umbrella of the protection of the church and will feel the loneliness; the onslaught of Satanic oppression, etc. (cp. I Tim. 1:20).

"The destruction of the flesh" would happen from sickness due to the sin (cp. James 5) and this may be effective in God getting the attention of the person, perhaps showing him his need of Christ for salvation.

The goal of church discipline is not a permanent shunning or lifelong excommunication, but restoration. (SEE: II Cor. 2:5-11)

When genuine repentance is evident by the offender's public acknowledgment and pursuit of Godliness, we cannot keep the offender at a distance. We must joyfully restore the person back into the fellowship (NOTE: This does not necessarily mean a restoration to public office - Ex: pastor or deacon. Total forgiveness does not necessarily mean restoration to leadership privilege if one becomes disqualified).

We must always *"forgive"..."comfort"...*and "*reaffirm"* our *"love"*

"Unlike the "Scarlet Letter" in Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel, Biblical church discipline is designed to restore not to punish" (Laney, p. 354).

We must never give up on people!

In reality the church discipline process should not end until the "brother has either repented or died. . . the purpose of the ostracism is not to punish (or rid ourselves of the sinner), but to awaken" (and restore) (MacArthur, MATTHEW, p. 136-137).

Church discipline is not fleshly revenge, nor cruel punishment, not an act of hatred but to the contrary it is a humble, gentle, truthful, loving response to seek to save a *"soul from death"* and to *"hide a multitude of sins"* (Ja. 5:20).

"There is a vast difference between putting your nose in other people's business and putting your heart in other people's problems" (unknown)

B. *So that the church body may remain pure (v.6-8)*

V. 6

"Leaven" - baker's yeast

When mixed into dough, it spreads and affects the whole batch of dough, causing it to swell and expand.

"Leaven" is often used as a picture of sin int he Bible. EX: *"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees"* (Mt. 16:6, 22; Lk. 12:1).

Paul used the same expression, *"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"* in Galatians 5:9 in a context of the false teaching of the Judaizers.

Just a little sin left undealt with eventually grows and grows, spreads and spreads until the whole church is affected (EX: a small patch of rust or a few cancer cells).

"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Cor. 15:33).

V. 7

"A new lump" - unmixed; pure

"Ye are unleavened" - In Christ we are perfect! Sinless! We should live practically what we are positionally.

The reason we are unleavened spiritually is because we have benefitted from the sacrifice of Christ. Our "passover" Lamb (Jn. 1:29) has been slain to free us from bondage. We are now unleavened in Christ, just as unleavened bread immediately followed Passover, so our purity followed our appropriation of Christ's sacrifice).

"Purge out" - As the Israelites did at Passover, when they swept every trace of leaven out of their houses.

V. 8

"Keep the feast" - What feast? The Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed Passover (Lev. 23:5-66).

How do we *"keep the feast"*? Not literally (Col. 2:16-17; Gal. 4:9-10), but in ***"sincerity and truth"*** (be real, be true, live the truth of God's Word and ways).

C. So that the command of God may be obeyed (v.9-13)

V. 9

"I wrote unto you" - In a specific non-canonical letter (not included in sacred text).

This was not the first time and it would not be the last (cp. II Cor. 6:14ff).

"Not to company" - lit. not to mix together with. Not to closely associate with; not to intimately fellowship with.

This would mean not having close friendships with sexually immoral people.

V. 10

"Yet not altogether" - We are not to break off all contact with the fornicators of the world.

To do this would necessitate our leaving the world entirely. Those in the working world rub shoulders with fornicators all week.

The city of Corinth was filled with fornicators (Wine, women, and wealth was what the average man of Corinth lived for. To worship, for a male citizen of Corinth, usually meant going to the Temple of Aphrodite and having sexual relations with one of the 1,000 prostitutes who served Satan there. The city had such a bad reputation that the term *"Korinthiazoma"* meant to "practice sexual immorality." Corinth's reputation was such that prostitutes in other cities began to be called "Corinthian girls" (Life Applic. Bible note, p. 2,088).

"Covetous" = greedy

"Extortioners" = robbers, swindlers

"Idolaters" = object worshippers

V. 11

"Any man" - none excluded; no matter how high and mighty they are

"Called a brother" - We should expect more from believers than we expect from the world.

If someone claims to be a Christian, then they should be expected to live like it.

"No, not to eat" - No breakfast, lunch, or dinner with him.

"Supping" meant "fellowship" (cp. Rev. 3:20).

To a Jew, having someone over for dinner meant your guest was on kosher terms with you (EX: Acts 10:28; Gal. 2:12-13).

V. 12

"What have I..." - What business do I have to correct the heathen? (those "outside" of Christianity) None!

We do have business to seek to correct those "inside" the family. (EX: A man has no right to discipline his neighbor's kid, only his son)

"The church should leave the judgment of unbelievers to God and concentrate on setting its own house in order" (Ryrie note).

CONCLUSION: The need for Church "Family" Discipline:

The local church is to be a holy family.

Like a family, a local church requires three things to have God's blessings:
Love, Truth, and Discipline

Church discipline should be as normal as disciplining children.

Discipline is a family matter, and the church is a family.

God serves as the pattern for loving discipline (Heb. 12:4-13; Prov. 3:11-12; cp. Rev. 3:19).

Today, many churches are reluctant to take disciplinary action to deal with sin among their members.

Why? It takes courage, time, effort, and love (just as family discipline). Another reason is this: It's easy to tolerate sin in the lives of others, when you tolerate it in your own life.

Discipline is really an act of discipleship.

"Is church discipline necessary? Few would dispute the necessity of pulling a drowning man from a flooding torrent or recovering a fallen climber from a mountain crevasse. Most decent people would skip the verbal exercise and give themselves to the rescue! Should less concern be demonstrated for the believer who has fallen morally and whose spiritual

life is in danger? With some justification the church has been accused of being the only army that shoots its wounded." ("The Biblical Practice of Church Discipline," Bibliotheca Sacra, Oct.-Dec., 1986, by J. Carl Laney).

How to Handle
Disputes between Brethren

1 Corinthians 6:1-8

4-30-2023

Introduction:

*** How should disputes be handled between fellow believers?**

I. Realize you <u>don't need the world</u> for answers (v. 1)

II. Realize that <u>believers</u> (indwelt by God's Spirit) are <u>more than qualified</u> to mediate problems (v. 2-5)

III. Realize you have a <u>testimony to uphold</u> in front of the public eye of unbelievers (v. 6)

IV. <u>Be willing to take a loss</u>, rather than demanding your rights and hurting Christ's testimony (v. 7-8)

Conclusion:

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IV. _____, rather than demanding your rights and hurting Christ's testimony (v. 7-8)

Conclusion:

How to Handle
Disputes between Brethren

1 Corinthians 6:1-8

4-30-2023

Introduction:

ILLUS: of a family where all of the family members (brothers and sisters) took care of each other.

Contrary to that ideal, families today have become less close, less loving, and less patient.

Contemporary society reflects such self-centeredness quite graphically.

Most people seem to be out for themselves; with their own best interests in mind, living for # 1.

Our church is a family (Eph. 2:18-19), and like a family we need to care for one another.

Sometimes in "family" (where our true nature is often tested and manifested), we cause each other friction, conflict, disagreement, dispute, etc.

How we handle our problem is more vital than the problem itself.

In chapter 6 the carnal Corinthians again manifest their selfishness and pride by pursuing legal action against each other -- thus further ruining their testimony. They were already known for tolerating immorality (5:1-13).

The number of lawsuits in America is astounding.

Every six seconds a new lawsuit is begun in America (1995 statistic).

ILLUS: The woman who spilled her hot coffee on herself in McDonalds and sued them for not having a warning sign on the cup telling that it was hot . . . She won the case!

Greeks and the Law: Going to law to settle disputes was a way of life for the Greek. Contributing to this was the keen interest in philosophy, debate, dialect and argumentation. Public debate to sharpen one's view and settle disputes became a way of life, first in Athens and then spread to other parts of Greece. A good debate was considered as a form of entertainment and amusement.

*** How should disputes be handled between fellow believers?**

I. Realize you <u>don't need the world</u> for answers (v. 1)

Paul makes it a matter of audacity! How dare you?!

(This is a <u>serious</u> passage to God!)

"Any of you" - This admonition applies to every believer. No one is justified to go to the world for judgment on an inter-personal matter.

***"Matter"* =** case or dispute

Disagreements are unavoidable even among Christians.

The main problem is not the dispute, but how we handle the dispute.

In any relationship friction and differences of opinion will arise (Reason: We are all finite mortals, coming from various backgrounds, cultures, having different levels of understanding and Christian maturity).

"Unjust" - A synonym for an unbeliever or non-Christian. One who is <u>not</u> just (right) before the eyes of God. One who has never been justified by grace through faith.

"Saints" - holy ones, set-apart ones, people who have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit upon experiencing the new birth.

The people whom Paul is addressing, though *"carnal,"* are called *"saints."* (1:2). Note: ***"Saints...<u>you</u>"*** (6:2).

Should Christians ever go to the heathen (lost, unsaved, unregenerate) world for counsel (advice) on spiritual or interpersonal relationships?

Answer: NO!

Why not? They are not qualified to give true spiritual answers.

--They don't have a relationship with God.
--They don't possess the Holy Spirit
--They don't know God's Word
--Generally they don't care about you (don't have the love of Christ)

Yet, many Christians go to the heathen for:

- <u>marriage</u> counselling
- <u>crisis</u> counselling
- <u>family</u> counselling (child rearing)
- <u>psychological</u> counselling

(For physical or medical treatment, they can be beneficial; but for spiritual, emotional, relational therapy, no one is more qualified than a Christian who knows God's Word)

Nothing is more disgraceful than a Christian couple in a divorce court!

II. Realize that <u>believers</u> (indwelt by God's Spirit) are <u>more than qualified</u> to mediate problems (v. 2-5)

V. 2

"Do ye not know" - a common phrase in I Corinthians, showing the spiritual ignorance of this immature church (cp. 3:16; 5:6; 6:3, 9, 15, 16, 19; 9:13, 24).

"The saints shall judge the world *(kosmos)****" -*** When will God's people judge the world? Answer: During the 1,000 year Millennial reign of Christ.

SEE: Rev. 20:1-6

Jesus said:
"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19:28)

"But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. . . And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. . . And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." (Daniel 7:18, 25, 27)

If you are qualified (via the Spirit who <u>now</u> dwells in you) to judge the world, aren't you qualified to examine (sift through the problems) and make proper decisions about the minute matters of this life?

According to Paul, you are <u>over-qualified</u> to judge.

The best judgment comes from God's people. They make the best judges and juries (the problem is that the world generally views our answers as unacceptable to them).

Paul recognized that the Romans were competent to counsel (Rom. 15:14 - *"And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."*)

"Smallest matters" - The disputed matters were evidently so trivial and petty that they should have been embarrassed to fight such a case (we often get all bent out of shape over the silliest of issues).

V. 3

"We shall judge angels" - After the Rapture, when in glorified bodies, we shall (via our oneness in Christ) judge fallen angels who are reserved unto judgment (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

Since Christ will do all the judging (Jn. 5:22), we because of our union with Him will take part in it.

Note: Since Christ lives in our hearts now, we are able to properly evaluate problems and render right verdicts.

If we will one day judge angels, judging things in "this life" ought to be a "piece of cake." (no sweat, no problem).

If the saints are qualified to judge the "highest class of created beings" (Morris, p. 94), are they not capable to judge in man's affairs?

V. 4

When it comes to judging earthly matters, believers are so qualified that Paul says that the Corinthians could even use the ones who are ***"least esteemed"*** (of lowly account) to sit in judgment and render a truthful, just, and accurate verdict or decision.

V. 5

"I speak to your shame" - It is a shame that the carnal Corinthian Christians took their interpersonal cases to the lost world, when they could have so easily dealt with the problem themselves. (A church must Biblically deal with its own problems; a synod, college or cardinals, or Pope is not needed.)

--It's a shame for a couple not to be able to handle their own problems and to go to some secular therapist for advice.

--It's a shame for believing parents not to know how to rear their own children, but to read the world's "How-to's" about child-rearing.

--It's a shame when a body of believers don't know how to work together to arrive at a solution which will honor Christ.

Is there ***"not a wise man?"*** - The Corinthians, who prided themselves on their pseudo "wisdom" (3:18, 4:10), could not even find one wise man who could judge in this matter.

"Among you" - Contextually, it is fitting that this admonition for the church to deal with its own problems comes on the heels of Paul's admonition for the church to do something about the immoral person who was in their midst (5:1-13). A church must deal with its own problems autonomously.

III. Realize you have a <u>testimony to uphold</u> in front of the public eye of unbelievers (v. 6)

"But <u>brother</u>. . . with <u>brother</u>" - Perhaps it doesn't happen often, but when it does it is really sad: to see a brother seeking to sue the pants off of his brother.

Shouldn't there be a family loyalty among brethren? A *"storge"* love? We are in the same family, experienced the same new birth, indwelt by the same spirit, have the same Father. . .

It is part of our Church Covenant not to take a fellow member to court.

Hodge cites the Rabbinical maxim: "It is a statute which binds all Israelites, that if one Israelite has a cause against another, it must not be prosecuted before the Gentiles." (cited by Morris, p. 93)

To take a brother to court is bad enough, but to do so before unbelievers is really a travesty. We don't need to "parade our differences" before the world. Be very careful about speaking evil of another brother before an unsaved person.

IV. <u>Be willing to take a loss</u>, rather than demanding your rights and hurting Christ's testimony (v. 7-8)

V. 7

"Utterly a fault" - A complete failure; i.e. before your case is even determined, Paul says, you are already complete <u>defeated</u>.

You are failure because you failed God in your pursuit of self-interest.

When Christians drag their disgruntled spirits before public eye and can't settle out of court, both parties lose! The only winner is the <u>devil</u>!

Believers are not to render evil for evil or seek revenge (Rom. 12:17, 19).

Sometimes we must turn the *"other cheek"* (Mt. 5:39) and *"give up our cloak"* (Mt. 5:40).

"Rights" -
"One element of the great American philosophy of life is that we all have certain inalienable rights. Among the most important privileges that our Declaration of Independence espouses are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (MacArthur, p. 327).

We live in a day and age when everyone is quick to defend their rights.

Today, we hear a lot about rights, but not a whole lot about responsibility.

It is a day when everyone wants their rights!

The gays want their rights, the feminists, union workers, the whites, Indians, blacks, Hispanics, etc. The prisoners, animals, etc.

The only ones who really deserve rights but don't have the ability to ask for it are the unborn.

In a world of wrong, not everyone can always have every right.

An over-concern for one's own rights stems from a preoccupation with self.

"Selfishness is at the core of people who live to get their own way." (Ja. 4:1-2 NKJV - *"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.")*
When our # 1 goal in life is to get and keep what is "rightfully ours", then whoever or whatever gets in our way becomes the object of retaliation.

Much ungodly legislation has been signed into law by evil people under the guise of "civil rights" (EX: pornographic "art" which blasphemed Christ).

Paul willingly set aside his rights for the sake of the gospel and the welfare of others.

"Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? . . . Do we not have a right to eat and drink? Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? . . . If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ" (I Cor. 9:1, 4-6, 12).

The only one who can suffer insult, injury and loss and never carry a grudge is the person who has died to self (Gal. 2:20 - *"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now life in the flesh, I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.")*

"George Mueller wrote, 'There was a day when I died, utterly died to George Mueller and his opinions, his preferences, and his tastes and his will. I died to the world, to its approval and its censure. I died to the approval or the blame of even my brethren and friends. And since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.'." (MacArthur, p. 336)

The one who surrenders his rights is like:

--Abraham, who gave the best to Lot
--Joseph, who blessed his brothers
--David, who honored King Saul
--Elisha, who fed his enemies (the Assyrian army)
--Daniel, who graciously entered the lion's den
--Stephen, who prayed for his executioners

"Rather take wrong" - Instead of making sure you squeeze every ounce of juice owed you, why not for testimony's sake forget it and be wronged; swallow the unjust pill; be cheated.

Something of more value is at stake than winning a case and arriving at a fair settlement.

"Be defrauded" - Be deprived.

Look at all the injustices Christ endured.

ILLUS: for the sake of peace and harmony, a child will allow his sibling to have the toy he snatched from the owner.

Rather than seeking restitution, sometimes we should just drop it!

We can justify our stingy-ness by saying, "It's mine! I worked for it! I earned it! I own it! And therefore, I am not obligated to share it!"

Who really owns it? Remember, we are only stewards.

ILLUS: A missionary in Papua New Guinea had a small garden next to his house. After trying many different vegetables without success, he finally discovered that pineapples would grow there. He had to wait 3 years for the plants to bear fruit, and he eagerly looked forward to tasting the delicious juicy pineapples. Unfortunately, he lived among natives that were the worst thieves in the world (including stealing the baby's diaper pins to use as earrings, the man's ball-point pen to put in place of the bone in their nose!). Before he could taste a single pineapple, they were all stolen. This happened again and again. He continually scolded, yelled at and rebuked the people. They in turn called him "Angry White Man." During furlough, he listened to a message about giving up all his rights to God, putting everything (even his pineapples) into God's hands. He returned to the field, telling God that the pineapple field was now His and he, the missionary, wouldn't even look at it anymore. The stealing continued as before, but the people noticed the difference in the missionary's attitude. Coming to him, they said, "Missionary, we see that you have become a Christian! You always used to preach to us about Christianity and we longed to really meet a Christian in person. Now you have become one!" Although humiliating to the missionary, this was the first step that led to the salvation of most of the tribe. (taken from "Pineapple Story" video)

Should a Christian ever sue a person? Most often No. It depends on what your motive is. 99.9% greed motive.

No, if it meant utter poverty to your opponent (today most people are covered by insurance, though).

Do you live for God's glory or your gold? . . . His righteousness or your rights? . . . for His service or your selfish desires?

(Before we do anything we should always ask, "Will God be glorified by this?" - I Cor. 10:31)

V. 8

Because you don't desire to be wronged, you do wrong. To get your way, you violate God's ways. To get your "pound of flesh," you dishonor God.

To see to it that you are not deprived (and go without something due you), you end up depriving God of the honor He should have had in the eyes of the pagans through your life and testimony.

"And that your brethren" - We owe unconditional love to our brethren; we owe forgiveness to our brethren. When you see God's love and forgiveness for you, you will see your need to do likewise to others.

It's better to take a loss than to sin against God.

EX: the selfish church which had a sign on its property that read "JESUS FIRST." Strong winds view the "JES" off, leaving the true spirit of the church remaining: "US FIRST"

Conclusion:

Well, we have seen how we should not treat one another in God's family. But how should we treat each other?

VIRTUES that promote unity:

--Humility (Phil. 2:2ff)

When our pride gets hurt, we are in danger of doing most anything to "win" for ego's sake.

--Peace (Ph. 4:3)

--Compassion & Love

I Pet. 3:8 - "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous"

--Unselfishness

Acts 4:32 - "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

--Courage (to confront and lovingly deal with interpersonal conflicts)

"A chain is only as strong as its weakest link" (We must all be faithful to each other and to the work of God)

--For any relationship to work, there must be uniting
(EX: work, sports, church, family).

--Satan fights unity! Don't let Him have a foothold in our church family.

Here is a list of the "one another's" in the New Testament:

1. Love one another (Jn. 13:34; 15:12)

2. In honor, preferring one another (Ro. 12:10)

3. Receive one another (Ro. 15:7)

4. Admonish one another (Ro. 15:14)

5. Greet ye one another (I Cor. 16:20)

6. Serve one another (Gal. 5:13)

7. (Patiently) forbearing one another (Eph. 4:2)

8. Forgiving one another (Eph. 4:32)

9. Comfort one another (I Th. 4:18)

10. Exhort one another (Heb. 3:13)

11. Consider one another (Heb. 10:24)

"SEXUAL PURITY: WHY?"

1 Corinthians 6:9-20

5-7-2023

INTRODUCTION:

***Genuine Christians have every good reason to be sexually pure!**

Eight reasons why you should abstain from sexual immorality:

I. Sexual sin is a <u>CHARACTERISTIC</u> of those headed for <u>HELL</u> (v. 9-10)

II. Sexual sin is <u>INCONSISTENT</u> with your <u>NEW LIFE</u> in Christ (v. 11)

III. Sexual sin is <u>HARMFUL</u> to yourself and others (v. 12)

IV. Sexual sin <u>PERVERTS</u> the <u>TRUE PURPOSE</u> for your body (v. 13-14)

V. Sexual sin <u>DEFILES</u> the <u>ONENESS</u> the Lord has with you (v. 15-17)

VI. Sexual sin <u>SINS</u> against your own <u>BODY</u> (v. 18)

VII. Sexual sin <u>DESECRATES</u> the <u>TEMPLE</u> in which God's Spirit dwells (v. 19)

VIII. Sexual sin <u>DENIES</u> the Lord's <u>OWNERSHIP</u> and <u>RIGHTS</u> to your body (v. 19b-20)

CONCLUSION:

"SEXUAL PURITY: WHY?"

1 Corinthians 6:9-20 *(Part 2)*

5-21-2023

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II. Sexual sin is _____ with your _____ in Christ (v. 11)

III. Sexual sin is _____ to yourself and others (v. 12)

IV. Sexual sin _____ the _____for your body (v. 13-14)

V. Sexual sin _____ the _____ the Lord has with you (v. 15-17)

VI. Sexual sin _____ against your own _____ (v. 18)

VII. Sexual sin _____ the _____ in which God's Spirit dwells (v. 19)

VIII. Sexual sin _____ the Lord's _____ and _____ _____ to your body (v. 19b-20)

"SEXUAL PURITY: WHY?"

1 Corinthians 6:9-20

5-7-2023

INTRODUCTION:

God's plan and purpose for marriage.

"Marriage is a unique union of one man and one woman. It is so intimate that on the earth nothing is its equal." God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and that man needed a "Help meet" or a helper suitable to himself, his counterpart. Man needed someone to fellowship with him, someone to rejoice with him, someone to plan, share and experience with him the wonders of God and His creation. In Genesis 2:23-24 is presented the ideal which God intended in the marriage relationship. Eve was "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," said Adam. I Corinthians 11:8-9 states that "Man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man--neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." A principle that started in the Garden of Eden has gone down through the ages: Man was to leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the two became one flesh (Gen. 2:24). This "leave and cleave" principle illustrates that God instituted marriage and that it was to be a monogamous, heterosexual and complete union of two persons.

God instituted marriage for four basic reasons:

1) To complete the man which He had created ("help meet" - Gen. 2)
2) To promote sexual purity (I Cor. 7:2)
3) To begin a new family unit (Gen. 2:18-24)
4) To propagate truth and godly principles from one generation to the next (Deut. 6:67)

*What God established in Genesis has **NEVER CHANGED***
"And He (Jesus) answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"
(Matthew 19:4-5)

What makes a marriage?

1. A covenant (a vow before witnesses - Mal. 2:14). This is the premiere essence of a marriage
2. A consummation (sexual union - Gen. 2:24; I Cor. 6:16)

*In the "vow" the two become one by verbal commitment, whereas in the

consummation the two become one by a holy physical act.

In this chapter we learn about improper sexual relationships; in the next chapter (seven) we learn about how to have a proper sexual relationship.

Reasons people give for committing fornication:

1) "Everybody's doing it"

(No -- Everyone's not doing it)

2) "It's just a natural, biological appetite that must be gratified"

(It is an appetite, but can be gratified in God's time and God's way - You are not an animal!)

3) "I love him/her"

(No, you don't - You "lust" him/her! Love is patient; love is not selfish; love (if real, Godly love) upholds God's truth)

4) "I like it!"

(Its pleasures are only for a season; in the end the immoral relationship will be *"bitter as wormwood"* -Prov. 5:4)

***Genuine Christians have every good reason to be sexually pure!**

Eight reasons why you should abstain from sexual immorality:

I. Sexual sin is a CHARACTERISTIC of those headed for hell (v. 9-10)

V. 9

"Know ye not" - A phrase which also occurs in verses 15 and 19, demonstrating the spiritual ignorance of the Corinthians on some very important doctrines.

"Unrighteous" - Those who have never been made righteous by God have no ability to live righteous.

God is not teaching that you get into His Kingdom by living righteous. He is saying you will not get in if you are not righteous.

Unrighteous living is a symptom of a greater problem: An unregenerate heart.

"Be not deceived" - Stop being led astray.

Many have been deceived by a teaching which believes that a person can be a saved individual and at the same time be living a continual, habitual, unrepentant, wicked lifestyle.

"Fornicators" - *porneia* - A broad term referring to various forms of immoral sexual behavior; primarily used of pre-marital sex.

This word heads the list because it is the main subject of Paul's admonition in verses 9 - 20.

"Idolaters" - Someone who lives for something outside of the true and living God.

Idolatry is sandwiched between fornication and adultery perhaps because of its relationship to lustful, immoral sex. God equates idolatry with coveteousness (Col. 3:5); coveteous is a lustful desire to have that which is not yours. This idolatrous spirit is the root of immorality.

"Adulterers" - Someone who is unfaithful sexually to one's spouse. The Old Testament requires the death penalty for adultery.

"Effeminate" - A male who acts like a female. The word means to be "soft; soft to the touch" (used of soft clothing - Mt. 11:8) (Vine, p. 19).

It refers to a man who, by his own sin nature and choice (not genes), chooses to act like a woman. This word refers to one who, without backbone and character, denies his masculinity and is not satisfied with the gender God gave him, and becomes a passive homosexual.

Transvestism, sex change, and other gender perversions are included(MacArthur,p.142).

"Abusers of themselves with mankind" - In 1611, they did not have the word "homosexual," so they used five words to translate one word.

The word *arsenokoitai* (cp. I Tim. 1:10) literally means: male (*arsen*) intercourse (*koite*) or sodomite (cp. Dt. 23:17).

V. 10

"Thieves" - Those who practice stealing what doesn't belong to them (one who takes the property of someone else).

"Coveteous" - Those who practice a greedy lifestyle and live with strong desires to get more and more (one who is not content).

"Drunkards" - Those who live intoxicated lives (drinking is often connected with loose, immoral living).

"Revilers" - One whose tongue utters abusive language toward others.

"Extortioners" - Swindlers; a robber who uses force and violence in stealing from others.

Those who practice any of the above sins will not inherit God's Kingdom.

Why? Because their evil lifestyle is indicative of an evil heart (Mk. 7:21f), an unregenerate heart.

These verses describe the lifestyle of a lost person.

Those who are trapped in such vices prove that they have never been liberated by God.

It is totally unnatural and inconsistent for a child of God to live like a child of the devil.

Is it possible for a believer to commit any of these sins?

Yes, but it should not happen even once (Eph. 5:3).

Yes, but when he does:

1. Deep remorse will immediately grip his heart (since he has grieved the Spirit - Eph. 4:30).

2. Chastisement from God will follow to bring correction and restoration to the erring brother (Heb. 12:6).

II. Sexual sin is <u>INCONSISTENT</u> with your new life in Christ (v. 11)

"Such <u>were</u> some of you" - God can save fornicators, idol worshippers, adulterers, homosexuals, etc.

Those He saves, He changes.

If we <u>were</u> that way (past tense), it means we are <u>not</u> that way now. We are to be different now, based on the new life Christ has given us.

"Washed" - To be complete freed from dirt and defilement -- middle voice - you thoroughly washed yourself (cp. Ja. 4:8) by repenting of your sin and placing your trust in Christ.

The middle voice indicates man's volition (will) in the washing.

The aorist tense refers to a <u>decisive</u> action which occurred at a <u>specific point</u> in one's life.

"Sanctified" - (aor. passive) to be once and for all time set apart by God.

We have been made holy by God and have become saints by God's grace.

The word of sanctification involved the Holy Spirit taking God's Word (Jn. 17:19) and convincing us of its truth. We then responded with faith in Christ (Acts 26:18), and were claimed by God to be His chosen people.

"Sanctified" - SEE: I Thes. 4:3f.

"Justified" - (aor. passive) To be once and for all time declared righteous before the judicial bench of Heaven.

The Judge Himself has declared us pardoned. We are now viewed and treated as if we had never sinned.

Our justification is <u>based on</u> the person of Christ (*"in the name* [person] *of the Lord Jesus")* and <u>brought about</u> by the Holy Spirit.

Christ <u>did</u> the work for our justification, and the Holy Spirit <u>applied</u> His work to us.

"Washed" speaks of new <u>life</u>.

"Sanctified" speaks of new <u>behavior</u>

"Justified" speaks of new <u>standing</u> (with God)
(MacArthur, p. 143)

III. Sexual sin is <u>HARMFUL</u> to yourself and others (v. 12)

"All things are lawful unto me" - i.e. All things <u>not</u> specifically prohibited in Scripture.

This phrase *"all things are lawful"* was "evidently a slogan that the Corinthian Christians had adopted and used to rationalize their sinful behavior." This context would show Paul to mean "all things" not specifically forbidden in Scripture (Bob Wilkin).

<u>Two principles</u> should govern whether or not we should engage in something not specifically forbidden in Scripture:

1) Is it ***"<u>expedient</u>"***? (helpful or beneficial to me and others)

   Is it a potential stumbling block? Time waster? Will it edify?

   Illicit sex always inevitably results in <u>loss</u> (a no-win situation). Loss of health, possessions, and honor and respect (EX: <u>David</u>) (SEE: Prov. 5:9-11; Prov. 9:17-18)

2) Is it <u>enslaving</u>? (***"brought under the power"* =** to be <u>ruled</u> or <u>mastered</u> by something)

   Beware of addictions.

IV. Sexual sin PERVERTS the TRUE PURPOSE for your body (v. 13-14)

V. 13

Evidently some of the Corinthians were trying to justify their immorality with the slogan: ***"Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats"***. Meaning: Just as the belly and food goes together, so the body and sex go together.

It's just the natural use of the body, they argued.

Paul is saying, God didn't give you a body to use it for fornication, He gave it to you to use for Him!

"All things were made by Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16).

Your body was given to glorified God with, not to indulge your every passion any way you want.

While the carnal Corinthians cited *"Means for the belly and the belly for means,"* Paul countered with his own proverb: Rather, the body is ***"for the Lord, and the Lord for the body."***

V. 14

The Corinthians further thought that things physical, like the body, will pass away.

It's temporary, not permanent; therefore, they thought they could use it any way their lusts would be satisfied.

Paul counters this argument by showing how our bodies should not be thrown out like pearls before swine because the Lord is one day going to resurrect our bodies.

V. Sexual sin DEFILES the ONENESS the Lord has with you (v. 15-17)

V. 15

"The members of Christ" - We are all various limbs of the "Body of Christ" (He is the Head of the "Body"). We are united to Christ, one with Him.

Because of our relationship with Christ and each other, whatever we do indirectly affects others and our Lord.

(If you stick your finger into an electrical socket, it affects your whole body and sends an urgent message to your brain.)

Therefore, whatever we do, we take Christ along with us.

Can we bring that which is related to Him into sexual contact with a whore?

"God forbid" - May it never be! (Such a thought is unthinkable)

V. 16

When you commit illicit sex, you don't merely perform an act, you form a unity.

"One body" - A "psychosomatic" oneness of mind and body occurs in a sexual union.

You become one with that person, and therefore also one with every other person that person had sex with.

Doctors have recently discovered that this principle is true in regards to the transmission of diseases.

Only in the context of marriage is the two become *"one flesh"* spoken of in a positive light (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5; Eph. 5:31).

V. 17

"One spirit" - Not one in essence or nature, but one in relationship.

If we are joined to Christ, we can't do anything without it either benefitting or hurting our relationship to Him.

VI. Sexual sin SINS against your own body (v. 18)

"Flee fornication" - Keep on fleeing; continually run from it.

When you realize its damaging affects to you physically, emotionally, spiritually, it should be abhorrent. When you consider its ramifications to others to whom you are related, you should avoid it at all costs.

When you think about how it affects your relationship to Christ, you should respond like Joseph: *"How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"* (Gen. 39:9. Joseph fled literally (Gen. 39:12).

Stay as far away as possible from persons, places, and situations that are likely to get you in trouble (MacArthur, p. 148). *"Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house"* (Prov. 5:8).

"Passion is not rational or sensible, and sexually dangerous situations should be avoided or fled, not debated" (MacArthur, p. 148).

"Without the body" - Most sins affect our minds and emotions. But this one not only affects our minds and emotions, but also our bodies. Fornication is a sin which involves the whole being, the total person.

"Sinneth against his own body" - How is it a sin against your body?

1) It cheapens (dishonors) your body (I Th. 4:4).
2) It opens the door for fatal disease to destroy your body (Rom. 1:27)
3) It sins against the in-house Resident who dwells in your body, and it grieves Him (Eph. 4:30)

You don't throw away that which is valuable. You protect that which is valuable. You save that which is valuable.

Your virginity is priceless! Don't throw it away! (like meat to the dogs or pearls to the pigs)

Determine to save yourself for the one spouse God has for you.

Sexual immorality cheapens God's design for sex in marriage. That which is common is not valuable. That which everyone has access to is not priceless. EX: Diamonds and gold are valuable. Why? Because diamonds are not a common stone and gold is not a common metal.

--Pornography degrades women (it does not honor them)

--Pre-marital sex takes the thrill and anticipation out of marriage (it does not honor

marriage) Heb. 13:5 - "Marriage is honorable in all and the bed [sex in marriage] undefiled..."

VII. Sexual sin <u>DESECRATES</u> the temple in which God's Spirit dwells (v. 19)

"Temple" - Shrine; sanctuary; dwelling place

Like the Old Testament temple, we must not:

--worship our temple

--defile our temple

The Spirit of the living God lives inside the believer's body!

To commit sexual sin in a church sanctuary, disgusting as that would be, would be no worse than committing the sin anywhere else -- Because your body is a <u>sanctuary</u> in which God's Spirit lives (MacArthur, p. 152).

No one feels so miserable, stained, dirty, and guilty about sin as a believer.

Reason: God's Spirit is grieving inside us, as one weeps at a funeral.

The reality of our body being a temple in which God's Spirit abides should govern everything we do to our bodies or allow into our bodies (EX: smoking, drinking, drugs, obesity; and in this context, fornication).

"Which ye have of God" - You didn't manufacture the Holy Spirit yourself. He is the Spirit which emanates from God.

VIII. Sexual sin <u>DENIES</u> the Lord's <u>OWNERSHIP</u> and <u>RIGHTS</u> to your body (v. 19b-20)

V. 19b

You can't say, "It's my life, my body, and I will live it anyway I want."

Many don't come to Christ because they don't want to give up ownership rights.

"Ye are not your own" - If you are saved, you don't own yourself. You don't belong to yourself. You belong to the One who made you and redeemed you (ILLUS: The "Little Red Boat" story)

V. 20

"Ye are bought" - bought at the market place (as a slave in the days of ancient Rome).

"Ye are bought with a <u>price</u>" - Christ's blood (Acts 20:18; Heb. 9:12; I Peter 1:18; Rev. 5:9).

"Therefore" - Drawing a conclusion.

Since God lives in us and owns us, we are obligated to live for His <u>glory</u> (I Cor. 10:31) (i.e. that God would be <u>well thought of by how you live</u>).

If you love the Lord, you will do that which pleases Him.

In the last days, "men will be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

The world seeks to get pleasure; the Christian seeks to <u>give it</u>.

We <u>must</u> conduct our lives in a way that pleases God. Are you more interested in God's pleasure than your own?

"To Glorify God" is the goal of the way we live.

Our <u>primary</u> goal is <u>not</u> to keep ourselves pure so that:

1) We can offer ourselves pure to our spouse at the wedding altar (though this is a noble and praise-worthy reason) - but to glorify God.

2) We won't ruin our lives and the lives of others who are watching us - but to glorify God.

3) We won't get AIDS or other communicable diseases - but to please God!

> Joseph said: "how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9)

Our primary desire in life ought to be to glorify God.

Is that your desire?

If it is, you will say to yourself:

"I can't look at pornography, I want to glorify God."
"I can't look at women with lust in my heart, I want to glorify God."
"I can't read Harlequin romance books, I want to glorify God."
"I can't commit fornication or adultery, I want to glorify God."

"Body. . . spirit" - It is not just our body or spirit, but both that belong to God.

You cannot make a dichotomy of your life.

He gets all of us!

CONCLUSION:

Yield to God what you read, watch, and think . . . and enjoy freedom from a mind chained to vanity.

Abstinence is a matter of faith -

F - Forsaking
A - All
I - I
T - Trust
H - Him

God knows best!

Fornication is wrong because:

1) **Fornication is a perversion (twisting) of God's plan for marital oneness**
(Gen. 2:24-25; I Cor. 6:16) (It is acting out a lie, since the ones involved really are not "one" in God's eyes)

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11) **Fornication is totally inconsistent for a saint to commit** (Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:3-5)

The Physical Relationship of Marriage

I Corinthians 7:1-9

6-4-2023

Introduction: verses 1; 6-9

***God's people must know what the Bible teaches about sex.**

Principles about sex from I Corinthians 7:1-9

I. **Sex <u>prior</u> to marriage is sin (v. 2)**
(wrong <u>time</u> for sex)

II. **Sex <u>apart</u> from marriage is sin (v. 2)**
(wrong <u>kind</u> of sex)

III. **Sexual relations within marriage are <u>clean, good, and wholesome</u> (v.2-3).**

IV. **Sexual relations within marriage are to be <u>regularly participated in</u> (v. 3)**

V. **Sexual relations are to be <u>unselfish</u> (v. 3 & 4)**

VI. **There is to be no sexual bargaining (controlling or manipulating) (v. 5)**

VII. **A couple must seek to keep each other sexually satisfied to decrease the chances of Satan tempting in the area of lack of self-control (v. 5)**

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II. **Sex apart from marriage is sin (v. 2)**
(wrong kind of sex)

III. **Sexual relations within marriage are _____, good, and _____ (v.2-3).**

IV. **Sexual relations within marriage are to be _____participated in (v. 3)**

V. **Sexual relations are to be _____ (v. 3 & 4)**

VI. **There is to be ____ sexual _____ (controlling or manipulating) (v. 5)**

VII. **A couple must seek to keep each other sexually satisfied to decrease the chances of _____ tempting in the area of lack of self-control (v. 5)**

The Physical Relationship of Marriage

I Corinthians 7:1-9

5-28-2023

Introduction: verses 1; 6-9

V. 1

"Ye wrote unto me" - The Corinthians were confused about many areas of the Christian life (in large pagan cities with diverse religions and cultures, diversities of opinions would abound).

Perplexed about the matter of celibacy, they wrote to Paul asking him if they should remain single. Paul addresses this issue in chapter 7.

"Touch" =

--to literally touch with the hand (Mt. 8:3, 15; 9:20, 21, 29)
--to cling on to (Jn. 20:17)
--to be in contact or close association with (II Cor. 6:17)

"It is good for a man not to touch a woman" - It is beneficial for an unmarried man not to establish an intimate relationship with a woman (to be unattached, to remain single). It is advantageous for an unmarried person to remain celibate (if this is her/her gift - v. 7).

V. 6

"Not of commandment" - The revelation Paul is giving here was not previously given in God's Word. The admonition to consider remaining celibate (unmarried) was not a commandment of God, but now is a suggestion by God via Paul.

V. 7

"I would that all men were even as I myself" = Single, unmarried (cp. v. 8; 9:5)

(Some believe that perhaps Paul had been a member of the Sanhedrin [[cp. Acts 26:10] and therefore he must have been married, and perhaps his wife had died and he remained a widower. --However, no statement of Scripture would clearly substantiate this.)

Paul never hints at a previous marriage in his Epistles.

"Every man has his proper gift of God" - Some people are endowed with a gift of celibacy (most are not).

Some have no desire to get married (and there is nothing wrong with a person who does not need a mate).

However, to try to exercise a gift you don't have is indeed frustrating. Not all people are able to accept the statement: *"It is good not to marry"* (Mt. 19:12).

V. 8

"It is good" - This phrase ties back to verse one and explains it.
Paul is saying, It is good to be single.

V. 9

"If they cannot contain" - If they are unable to exercise life-long self-control over sexual appetites and passions -- ***"It is better to marry than to burn"*** (lit. be inflamed).

"Burn" - Two views:

1) In hell because of a life of fornicating (F.F. Bruce) (Mt. 5:27-30; Heb. 13:4; I Cor. 6:9)

*2) In passionate lust (to be inflamed [passive] with sexual desires)

Satan today (via the TV, movies, music, magazines and other media) has glorified illicit sex. Through over-emphasis, he creates obsessions in the minds of people in regards to this area of life.

Definitions of "Love" in the Greek language

1) **"Storge"** -A loyal/family love (Rom.12:10; cp. II Tim. 3:3 "astorge" - in the last days many will be without "natural affection")

2) **"Philia"** -An affectionate/friendship love (Titus 2:4; Heb.13:1)

3) **"Agape"** -A self-giving love (A decision of the will to give sacrificially, & unconditionally - Eph. 5:25,28,30; I Pet.3:7)

4) **"Eros"** -A physical/sensual love (This word is not found in the N.T.)
This "love" has its source in a emotional & biological urge which seeks fulfillment in sexual union.

The old testament equivalent would be the word "doth" which literally means to "boil"
and is used of passionate lovemaking (Song of Solomon 1:2; 4:10)

Two wrong extremes existed in Corinth:

1) **Eroticism** -To please the flesh at all cost (no absolutes)
(cp. I Peter 4:1-5)
2) **Asceticism** -To view anything enjoyable or physical as being evil (cp. Colossians 2:20-23)

Evidently some at the church in Corinth taught that a couple (to be spiritual), ought to live as though they were not married; to never enjoy the intimate physical relationship.

Sex is an expression of love which God designed to be the unique experience between one man and one woman, an experience not to be shared with anyone else. It is the most personal and intimate knowledge that one human being can have of another. This is why the Bible uses the euphemism "know" to describe this most intimate of relationships (Gen.4:1; 25).

***God's people must know what the Bible teaches about sex.**

Principles about sex from I Corinthians 7:1-9

I. Sex <u>prior</u> to marriage is sin (v. 2)
(wrong <u>time</u> for sex)

V. 2

God never asks us to <u>avoid</u> something that is not harmful to us. If something is forbidden, it is because it is not beneficial to us. It is bad, dangerous, etc.

"Fornication" refers to premarital sexual relations, whereas adultery refers to a married person who commits intercourse with someone other than mate (cp. Gal. 5:19; I Cor. 6:9 where a distinction is made; NOTE I Cor. 6:18 - Fornication is a sin against one's <u>own</u> body; adultery would be sin against two: you and your mate).

"To avoid fornication" - "Marriage cannot be reduced simply to being God's escape valve for the sex drive" (MacArthur, p.156) However, marriage is a lifelong commitment to mutual helpfulness and mutual fellowship (Gen.2:18). The result of the marriage bond however, will be an outlet for the sex drive to be satisfied in a private, satisfying, and proper way.

"His own wife (singular) ***. . . her own husband*** (singular)" - God's will is a monogamous relationship of <u>one</u> woman married to <u>one</u> man for life.

"The <u>two</u> shall be <u>one</u> flesh" (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5; Eph. 5:31).

Cp. Jacob who waited until marriage - Gen. 29:21 - "And Jacob said unto Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her." (Such intercourse would consummate the marriage)

Cp. Shechem who didn't wait until marriage - Gen. 34:2, 31.

See I Thessalonians 4:1-8

II. Sex <u>apart</u> from marriage is sin (v. 2)
(wrong <u>kind</u> of sex)

The word fornication comes from the Greek "porneia" from which we get our English word "pornography."

You must guard your eyes and mind (Job 31:1 - "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?").

Jesus said Lust is the same as adultery (Mt. 5:28)
Not only is pre-marital sex wrong, but a pornographic thought life is.

Masturbation is sin because it is selfish in nature; It is a manifestation of a covetous spirit.

*"His <u>own</u> wife . . . her <u>own</u> husband" (**"own"** - to belong exclusively to someone) (v. 2)*
"Drink waters out of thine <u>own</u> cistern, and running waters out of thine <u>own</u> well" (Prov. 5:15)

If sex is for marriage, it follows that anything which would lead to sexual contact should also be reserved for marriage (EX: kissing, hugging, petting).

Sexual activity is <u>not</u> limited to intercourse. Many delude themselves into thinking that if they go just as far as to come short of intercourse, then they are still innocent of fornication (a *"lustful look"* is adultery - Mt. 5:28).

Any stimulation of sexual organs by any means (whether by thought, visual stimulus [EX: pornography], audio stimulus [EX: Dial-a-porn], masturbation, etc.) is fornication.

Fornication is wrong because:

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11) **Fornication is totally inconsistent for a saint to commit** (Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:3-5)

III. Sexual relations within marriage are <u>clean, good, and wholesome</u> (v.2-3).

Sex was God's invention, not Satan's (Gen. 1:27, 28, 31; 2:25; 4:1).

Sex is not sinful within the walls of marriage. Within the marriage bonds it is holy and good.

"It is indeed a sad, sad situation that the high and holy function of sex life should have been so abused that we have come to think of it as something filthy, sinful..." (Dehaan, p.75)

Heb. 13:4 - "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed (koite - marriage bed; sexual intercourse) undefiled: but whoremongers (fornicators) and adulterers God will judge" (i.e. "let marriage be <u>held</u> in <u>honor</u> by all (everyone); Marriage has a <u>dignity</u>; a <u>value</u> above and beyond any other human relationship.

How will God judge violators of the marriage bed?In this life - AIDS; STDs
In the next life - (I Cor. 6:9)

Sex is for procreation, but it is primarily intended for <u>pleasure</u> (Prov.5:19)
Certain parts of the human (male & female) anatomy have no biological function other than the pleasure of sexual fulfillment. Sexual expression should not be viewed as a "necessary evil in which spiritual Christians engage only to procreate children. It is far more than a physical act. God created it to be the expression and experience of love on the deepest human level and to be a beautiful and powerful bond between husband and wife." (MacArthur, p.157)

"The pursuit of pleasure with your mate in bed is <u>unlimited</u>, except where a certain act would violate the moral law of God's Word or would do harm to the temple of the Holy Ghost, your body" (Dr. Tim Jordan)

Are certain acts forbidden? No, as long as it will not damage or harm your body; or is dissatisfying to your spouse.

The physical act of marriage should consist of that which would please your spouse. If both partners do not give consent, then the couple should abstain from that particular practice.

IV. Sexual relations within marriage are to be <u>regularly participated in</u> (v. 3)

"Render" = This imperative means to pay or give back.

The present tense implies to <u>pay</u> your debt to your mate on a <u>continual</u> or <u>habitual</u> basis. The frequency of the physical union is up to the couple.

Just as God designed the marriage relationship to remain permanent, He designed for the sexual relationship to remain permanent. (MacArthur, p.157)

--Such satisfaction will prevent temptation to find satisfaction elsewhere.
--Such satisfaction will prevent "burning" (unfulfilled sexual desire - v. 9)

V. Sexual relations are to be <u>unselfish</u> (v. 3 & 4)

V. 3
"Due benevolence" = obligation or debt. It's not only a privilege to have relations in marriage it is a responsibility!

Note: This is one debt that can be mutually satisfying to pay if a married couple has the <u>right attitude</u> about it (look at it as a debt you "get to" pay, rather than "have to" pay).

You are obligated to <u>please</u> your spouse (whether or not he/she is a Christian).

If you are married, you can't say, It's my body, not yours" (v. 4).

A wife cannot say to her husband: "It's <u>my</u> body and you can't have it."

When the "two become one," their lives are no longer separate (distinct). Their lives are mysteriously interwoven so that an inseparable oneness occurs.

What's mine is hers and vice versa. It's no longer "you" and "me," but "we."

God is teaching us "mutual dependence." Each is the other's property.

Sexual problems in marriage are <u>not</u> the problem, but are symptoms of a deeper problem. (Anger; guilt; selfishness; unfaithfulness hurt the sex life)

Sex in marriage is usually a good barometer which measures the spiritual temperature of the marriage itself.

Your goal in sexual relations is not to please yourself but your spouse.

"The Husband seeks to please the wife, the wife to please the husband. Each is willing to forego his or her personal wishes, if need be, for the sake of the other. And when this is done in Christian love, marriage can be beautiful" (Dehaan, p.75)

True happiness & fulfillment in life comes as the result of unselfishly giving to others. (It is more blessed to give than to receive)

"Your primary consideration in sex must be meeting your mate's need, not your own! You go to that bed to please and satisfy the other" (Dr. Tim Jordan)

Generally, women require some: 1) Romance; 2) More Time

Someone has described the average man as being like a "light bulb" (which can be quickly turned on & off); The female however, is like a piece of iron (it takes time to heat up, but once hot it remains that way for a while)

The Purpose for sex: Your physical relationship is a reassurance of love and affection.

Technically, Sex should not be called *"making love"* but *"showing love"* This is because God intended sex to be an expression of the oneness, love, & affection you have for each other.

This is why fornication & adultery are lies. Such sexual unions are expressing a oneness which does not truly exist.

VI. There is to be no sexual bargaining (controlling or manipulating) (v. 5)

"defraud" - To deprive; keep back; to rob.

Never use sex as a means of exploitation or as a way of conniving to get something else in return. "I will, if you will....."

"Sexual love is a beautiful tool to build with, not a weapon to fight with" (Wiersbe, p.591)

Abstinence must be with consent (agreement).

God says to the bride and groom on honeymoon, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Song of Solomon 5:1).

VII. A couple must seek to keep each other sexually satisfied to decrease the chances of Satan tempting in the area of lack of self-control (v. 5)

During times of deep burden, a couple may not have any sexual desire, but may wish to devote themselves to ***"fasting and prayer"***.

But such abstinence should be temporary so that Satan will not gain foothold into their marriage and introduce alternative means of sexual fulfillment.

"Incontinency" - lack of self-control

Satan tempts after great victories (when our guard is down)
Satan also tempts when needs are not being met.

"When a husband and wife are yielded to the Lord, and when they seek to please each other in the marriage relationship, the marriage will be so satisfying that neither partner would think of looking elsewhere for fulfillment" (Wiersbe, p.591)

If you keep your mate satisfied, you greatly lessen the temptation to look for greener grass elsewhere.

Prov. 27:7 - "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."

Sexual expression in marriage fulfills the person's manhood or womanhood, satisfies the sex drive, relaxes the nervous system, reduces friction in the home, and reassures each other of faithfulness and love. (Tim LaHaye - "The Act of Marriage")

Contrary to popular opinion, sexual happiness in marriage will not occur naturally or by accident. It takes work & sacrifice like any other aspect of marriage.

Sex is not the most important part of marriage, but it is a very important part that must be talked about (between the couple) and worked on! (Dr. Tim Jordan) It takes a concerted effort to be mutually unselfish in this area.

"Remaining Married through Thick & Thin"

I Corinthians 7:10-17

6-11-2023

Introduction:

*** Accept God's will for the life of your marriage!**

I. Observe what <u>Jesus</u> taught about <u>REMAINING MARRIED (IN GENERAL)</u> (v.10-11)

A. Do not <u>Depart</u> (v.10)

B. Do not <u>Divorce</u> (v.11)
[If you do separate, remain unmarried so reconciliation is possible - v.11]

II. Observe what <u>Paul</u> taught about <u>REMAINING MARRIED IN A MIXED MARRIAGE</u> (a believer & non-believer) (v.12-17)

A. If your unbelieving spouse <u>desires</u> you, REMAIN FAITHFULLY MARRIED (v.12-14)

Two reasons to stay married to an unbelieving spouse:

1. Do it for the <u>unbeliever's</u> sake (v.14a)

2. Do it for the <u>children's</u> sake (v.14b)

B. If your unbelieving spouse <u>deserts</u> you, ALLOW FREEDOM TO LEAVE (v.15-17)

Why "let him/her depart"?

1. You are not under <u>"bondage"</u> if he/she leaves you (v.15)

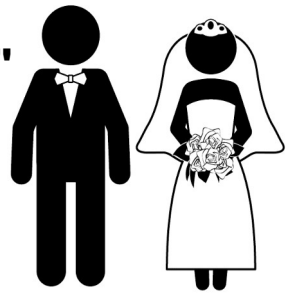
2. You are not sure if you can <u>save</u> your spouse (v.16)

3. You need to put the situation in <u>God's hands</u> and <u>trust</u> Him (v.17)

"Remaining Married through Thick & Thin"

I Corinthians 7:10-17

6-11-2023



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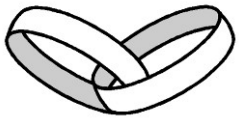
B. Do not _____ (v.11)
[If you do separate, remain unmarried so reconciliation is possible - v.11]

II. Observe what _____ taught about <u>REMAINING MARRIED IN A_____MARRIAGE</u> (a believer & non-believer) (v.12-17)



A. If your unbelieving spouse _____ you,
_____ (v.12-14)

Two reasons to stay married to an unbelieving spouse:

1. Do it for the _____ sake (v.14a)

2. Do it for the _____ sake (v.14b)

B. If your unbelieving spouse _____ you,
_____ (v.15-17)

Why "let him/her depart"?

1. You are not under "_____" if he/she leaves you (v.15)

2. You are not sure if you can _____ your spouse (v.16)

3. You need to put the situation in _____ and _____ Him (v.17)

"Remaining Married through Thick & Thin"

I Corinthians 7:10-17

6-11-2023

Introduction:

In marriage:
"The two become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24)

God joins, and man is not to separate (Mt. 19:5-6)

Divorce occurs because of a person's *"hardness of heart"* (V. 7-8)

God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16)

Marriage is for "keeps"! It is to be "wedlock" - a wedding that is locked for life!

*** Accept God's will for the life of your marriage!**

I. Observe what <u>Jesus</u> taught about <u>REMAINING MARRIED (IN GENERAL)</u> (v.10-11)

V. 10

***"Command"* -**Specific orders or instructions (not optional, but obligatory)

***"Yet not I, but the Lord"* =** Paul, here, does not give new revelation, but rather repeats the Lord Jesus' teaching about the matter of divorce (Mt. 5:32, 19:9; Mk. 10:11, 12; Lk. 16:18).

Interestingly, Paul interpreted Christ as holding to a <u>no divorce</u> position without exceptions or justifiable excuses.

The law of marriage is for life (cp. v. 39).

A. Do not <u>Depart</u> (v.10)

"Let not the wife depart" - The wife is not to be separated from her husband. A married woman should not seek separation. She, by God's grace, should be content with her marital status.

--Work on problems, yes;
--pray about problems, yes;
--get Godly counsel, yes;
--run from problems - NO!

B. Do not Divorce (v.11)

[If you do separate, remain unmarried so reconciliation is possible - v.11]

"If she depart" - Separation, not divorce, due to circumstances where separation might have occurred (EX: instances of wife beating (physical abuse); or where the life of the wife or the children were in jeopardy).

"Remain unmarried" - Why? So that reconciliation remains possible (once a partner remarried, the Mosaic Law forbids that their first marriage be reconciled because a defilement occurred and reconciliation at this point is considered an abomination to God (Dt. 24:4).

The "remaining unmarried" implied a state of celibate living (whereby boyfriends and fornication are not options).

"Reconciled" - This word is a command (reconciliation is God's will; not optional but an obligation).

This word is a passive imperative (ultimately, God must bring about the reconciliation). Also implicit in the passive voice, is the husband's desire to be reconciled. Reconciliation must be desired by both husband and wife for it to be successful.

"Reconciled" - To be brought back into a restored relationship.

God has always been in the "restoring business."

The world's answer is "move on"; God's answer is "mend up." The world's answer is to abandon the problem; God's answer is to resolve the problem. This is true of any relationship where people have obligations to each other, whether in families, churches, friendships, etc.

"Put away" - A different word than *"depart."* This word means to "leave" or to "forsake." It refers to abandonment; can mean to send away or divorce. A husband must never abandon his wife (like so many irresponsible husbands do today).

II. Observe what Paul taught about REMAINING MARRIED IN A MIXED MARRIAGE (a believer & non-believer) (v.12-17)

V. 12

"To the rest" - To scenarios other than the ones Jesus directly addressed while He walked on the earth.

Paul, writing under inspiration, now addresses other marital questions believers at Corinth may have had.

Whereas v. 10-11 speak of marriage of two people in general, Paul now speaks to mixed marriages: believer and non-believer.

Unequal yokes should never occur to begin with (II Cor. 6:14).

But what happens if one did occur? Or what if two unsaved people marry and the husband becomes saved? Wouldn't he be better off ridding himself of his unbelieving wife so he could remarry a Christian woman and serve God more effectively? NO!

A Christian should never marry an unbeliever (SEE: 7:39; II Cor. 6:14).

A. If your unbelieving spouse desires you, REMAIN FAITHFULLY MARRIED (v.12-14)

V. 12

If the unsaved (non-Christian) wife consents (agrees) to live with him (and remain his spouse), he has no right to leave her. He is wrong to divorce her.

Even if she is not pleased to remain married to the believing man, he still must not pursue the divorce; but if that is her choice, let her do as she wishes (v. 15).

V. 13

Now Paul turns the tables and says that the same principle of v. 12 applies to the believing wife as well.

Usually (it has been my observation), there are more believing wives with unbelieving husbands than believing husbands with unbelieving wives. So this principle is vitally important for saved wives.

NOTE: I Peter 3:1-2 - *"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."*

V. 14

God is not necessarily speaking of *"sanctification"* in the sense of saving the unsaved spouse, but in the sense of an umbrella of protection and blessing being on that person because they are in the presence of some "property" of God!

(The wisest friends to pick are God's people who walk with God; the best employee is a Christian.)

It isn't the saved spouse who actively does the sanctifying; it is God who sanctifies by the presence of the believer in the home.

The Bible is filled with examples of God's blessing falling upon people due to the presence of His children. Example:

*God would not destroy Sodom because of the presence of Lot.

*God blessed Potiphar's house because of the presence of Joseph (Gen. 39:5)

*God blessed the house of Obed-Edom because of the presence of the Ark of God in his home (II Sam. 6:11-12).

*God blessed the home of the widow and son at Zarephath who took care of Elijah (I Kings 17:10ff).

*God spared the lives of those in the midst of a storm at sea because of Paul's presence (Acts 27:31).

Paul gives two practical reasons why it is beneficial for a saved spouse to remain married to an unsaved spouse.

1) Because God sanctifies the unsaved spouse because of the presence of the believer in the home

2) God sanctifies the children because of the presence of a saved spouse in the home

Two reasons to stay married to an unbelieving spouse:

1. Do it for the <u>unbeliever's</u> sake (v.14a)

   The word ***"holy"*** is the same word as *"sanctified"* and means to be set apart.

   How is the unbeliever sanctified? He/she is set apart by God for:

   1) <u>Conviction</u> (the Holy Spirit through the believer's life is a source of conviction)

   2) <u>Protection</u> (God often protects people because of their relationship to His children)

   3) <u>Provision</u> (God often provides blessings to unbelievers because they share in the "showers of blessings" which rain on His children)

2. Do it for the <u>children's</u> sake (v.14b)

   "Your children" - If a couple cannot think of any other reason why they should remain together, it should be for the <u>children's</u> sake.

   Children need a father and mother. The greatest victims of a divorce are children.

   "Unclean" - If a believing spouse abandons his/her family, the children, who were set apart by the presence of that believer, will face the social and emotional problems that result from a split-up.

   Divorce has been a primary contributor to:

   --child insecurities
   --child delinquency (anger, bitterness)
   --teen-age rebellion
   --re-enactment of the same behavior (when the children marry)

What are the tragic effects of divorce upon the COUPLE?

1. The divorce usually ends up causing unresolved bitterness, loneliness, and insecurities.

2. If the couple has any conscience at all, the divorce results in guilt, emotional torment, and sorrow.

3. The remarriages that occur after divorce usually adopt the "baggage," unresolved conflicts, and problems of the previous marriage(s).

4. Most who fail in their first marriage fail in their second (the divorce rate for second marriages is higher than first marriages).

What are the tragic effects of divorce upon the CHILDREN?

1. Children become the major victims of the emotional scars divorce brings.

   --Innocently caught in the cross-fire of family feuds, the children often blame themselves.

   --They are often forced to side with one of the parents (usually the one who has major custody).

   --They will never have an example (model) of God's ideal for the family ("Preliminary data indicate that children of divorce, particularly women, have a higher chance of getting divorced themselves than children of intact families) (Newsweek, Jan. 13, 1992, p. 49).

   --Family closeness is hurt (in-laws and grandparent relationships are affected).

2. Divorce teaches children that one's vows, promises, or covenants are not binding.

3. Divorce teaches children that running from a problem is the answer to solving it.

4. Divorce teaches children that Mommy or Daddy are more concerned about themselves (what they want; what makes them happy) than they are concerned for the children and the effect the divorce will have on them. [What a selfish society we live in!]

B. If your unbelieving spouse deserts you, ALLOW FREEDOM TO LEAVE (v.15-17)

V. 15

On your end, you are bound to your spouse as long as he/she lives (Rom. 7:2 - *"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband."*).

A Christian should never initiate a divorce. There are absolutely NO justifiable reasons to do so.

If the unbeliever departs, you can pray but there is nothing else you can do. You can't buy chains and lock the person to your home; you can't force a spouse against his/her will to remain.

You have no direct control over what your unsaved spouse will do. You can't control that. You just need to do your part, perform your role Biblically.

A believer is never justified to depart from his/her spouse. However, an unbeliever, who is not committed to God's plan for permanency in marriage, may depart.

What should the believer do in such a case? Should he fight it? Contest it? Take it to court? Manipulate to keep the spouse?

***"Let him depart"* =** Allow him to separate.

If the unbeliever relentlessly wants "out," let him/her leave.

Don't contest the divorce. Don't fight to keep him/her. Put the matter in God's hands and let Him do what He is going to allow.

Why "let him/her depart"?

1. You are not under "bondage" if he/she leaves you (v.15)

   "Bondage" - (*douloo)* not the same Greek word as "bound" (*deo)* in verse 27.

   "Douloo" = to enslave; to be a slave; to be in bondage as a servant.

   "Deo" (v. 27) - means to bind with chains, to be tied together (in the bonds of marriage).

   What is the believer released from?

   Is the believer released to remarry?
   OR
   *Is the believer released from all attempts to keep the marriage together?

A believer should not deny or abandon his faith in order to keep the marriage alive (many unsaved spouses will put the pressure on you to choose: God or me).

A believer is a slave to Christ, not to a spouse who wants to hit the road.

"God hath called us to peace" - Don't war with a spouse who wants to depart. God does not intend for His children to lose heart and blood, sweat, and tears over a partner whose heart is so hardened that they are quitting on God by quitting on His institution of life-long marriage.

Fighting, turmoil, bickering, frustration disrupt the harmony and peace God wants His children to have (MacArthur, p. 168).

Romans 12:18 - *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."*

[Note: Don't scheme to make life miserable so your unbelieving spouse will want to leave (What a wicked thought).]

2. You are not sure if you can save your spouse (v.16)

The ***"saving"*** in verse 16 is not soteriological (not the salvation of his/her soul; only God can do this). The saving in view is the salvation of your marriage with a spouse who is determined that he/she wants to terminate it.

Don't go to bizarre extremes to keep a person in your life. Reason: You don't know if you (by any behavior modifications) will be able to save your marriage.

3. You need to put the situation in God's hands and trust Him (v.17)

If God gave you a wife, stick with her; if God gave you a husband, stick with him.

If that spouse leaves you, don't leave God in order to save your marriage. Rather, entrust the person in God's hands and let Him deal with him/her as He sovereignly chooses.

Take what God gives you. If He so chooses, He alone can change the hardened heart of a spouse who wants to go his/her own selfish way. If He chooses not to soften their heart, you take whatever happens as God's will for you. It is refreshing to rest in the will of God.

Conclusion:

How to Avoid a Tragic Divorce

1. Don't rush into a marriage to begin with. Make sure before you marry that your spouse is saved and loves the Lord.

2. Be convicted that God says: *Marriage is for life.* (Rom. 7:1ff) [Even though you think you married the wrong person at the wrong time for the wrong reasons, you are married and it is right to remain true to your commitment. One wrong does not justify another wrong.]

3. Do not allow conflicts to go unresolved.
   --Practice forgiveness
   --Don't go to bed angry
   --Talk! Learn to communicate. *"Speak the truth in love."*
   --Seek Godly advice.
   --Learn to say the words: "I love you." "I was wrong." "Please forgive me"

4. Meet your mate's needs.
   --physically --emotionally --sexually (I Cor. 7:1ff)
   [Note: Beware of an over-demanding, time-consuming vocation. You need to spend time together.]

5. Guard yourself against anything you might read, hear, or see that causes discontentment (Beware of Satan's attempts to breed covetousness). Don't compare your wife or husband to any other wife or husband to make a point (Example: "Mary's husband faithfully mows the grass every Saturday. Why can't you?"). God didn't give you to _____; He gave you your husband or wife, so you should be grateful, and quit looking at the greener grass at someone else's home!

6. Be faithful to your spouse (Illicit sex [adulterous affairs] pulls down and destroys a couple's trust and respect for each other).

7. Fulfill your God-given roles in the marriage.

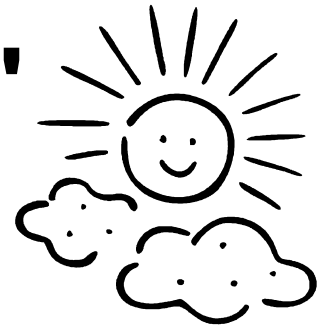
8. Cultivate a close walk with Christ as a couple. *"A family that prays together, stays together."* Sincere prayer is the surest way to release Satan's strangle-hold on your marriage.

9. Realize that love is not a "feeling" or a "romantic emotion" but it is action based on a commitment! In fact, "love" is a commitment (i.e. a decision to be loyal to your responsibility).

10. Consider the word "divorce" the dirtiest word in the English language. It should never be considered as even a remote possibility!

Remember: **Marriage is ultimately a picture of Christ's relationship with His bride; and He will never leave her!**

"Be Content"



I Corinthians 7:17-28
6-25-2023

Introduction (v.17,20,24)

*** Stay where God puts you!**

Paul told the Corinthian believers to "abide" ("stay put") where God has led them, unless God moves them

I. Be Content with your present <u>SPIRITUAL</u> status (v.18-20)
(Your position in Christ and in His salvation needs no additives [like circumcision etc.])

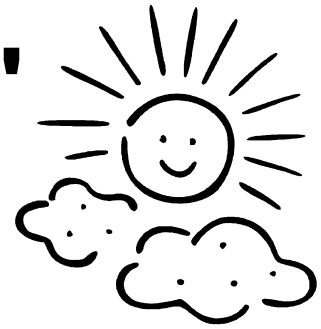
II. Be Content with your present <u>SOCIAL</u> status (v.21-24)

III. Be Content with your present <u>MARITAL</u> status (v.25-28)

A. Be content being <u>Single</u> (v.25-26)

B. Be content being <u>Married</u> (v.27-28)

"Be Content"



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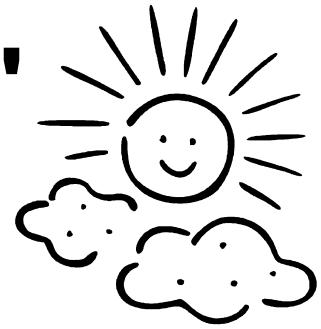


I Corinthians 7:17-28
6-25-2023

Introduction (v.17,20,24)

Today more than ever it is a rarity in the USA to find a contented person.

The allurements of advertising, the fantasies of the soap operas, the pressures of peers (keeping up with the Jones'), and man's basic greedy, covetous nature -- all propel him to seek something new...different...better...more.

As toddlers we wanted someone else's toy. Rarely content with what we had.

As children, we are not content in grade school: "Oh, if I could only be in Jr. High" . . . "High school" . . . "College" . . . "Out in the ministry" etc.

As teenagers, we were not content being a son or daughter, we wanted the independence of adulthood.

When we became adults, we became dicontent with our careers, so we hopped from one employment opportunity to another.
(John the Baptist said: "Be content with your wages" (Lk. 3:13).)

Then married and with time became discontent with our spouse.

When God blessed our homes with children we compared them to others' kids and said "why can't you be like _____?"

Grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

EX: Lucifer was not content in his great position which he held.

A <u>content</u> person is one who is <u>satisfied</u> with his/her lot (portion) in life, whether that portion be: possessions, position, or relationships.

ILLUS: of Paul's contentment: Phil. 4:11-13 - *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."*

The opposite of being content is three letters: contention. Those who strive against what God wants for them always have lives characterized by struggle, strife, and conflict.

The theme of verses 17-28 is found in verses 20 and 24 - *"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. . . . Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."*

Don't seek to leave your present status! (Be content where God has put you!)

Paul's theme here: "We should not be preoccupied with changing our outward circumstances." (MacArthur, p. 170)

The word *"called"* or "*calling"* occurs frequently in verses 17-24.

The word is used here with the same meaning as *"saved"* or *"converted."* It describes God's sovereign act of saving our souls.

So Paul is peaking to believers from the point at which they became Christians. This message has specific application to God's people.

V. 17

The context of verse 17 involves the believer's faithfulness to his/her spouse (even though an unbeliever).

You must not pursue separation of divorce from your mate (v. 10-16).

What God is saying is this: Retain the place in life that I assign to you! (don't seek a way out; don't pursue a back door exit; don't be bitter over that which has been distributed to you by God; accept what He gives you.)

Simply: Don't run from God's will for your life! Don't be a Jonah or a John Mark!

*** Stay where God puts you!**

Paul told the Corinthian believers to "abide" ("stay put") where God has led them, unless God moves them

I. Be Content with your present SPIRITUAL status (v.18-20)
(Your position in Christ and in His salvation needs no additives [like circumcision etc.])

Now, lest you misconstrue and twist what I am saying, hear me out!

V. 18

"Let him not become uncircumcised" - fleshly circumcision id virtually an impossibility to reverse. For this reason, some may argue that Paul is using the term "circumcision" in a broader sense than merely the cutting away of foreskin (i.e. *"circumcision"* referring to being a Jew; *"uncircumcision"* - Gentile).

Although some Jews (to appear like Gentiles) did in fact undergo operations to reverse the circumcision (MacArthur).

Our ***"calling"*** is not to make a Gentile out of a Jew, nor a Jew out of a Gentile.

In Paul's day many (influenced by Judaizers) thought that circumcision was needed for salvation (Acts 15:1 - *"And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."*).

At the Council of Jerusalem it was asserted by the Apostles that circumcision was not a requirement for salvation. Man's heart is purified by faith (Acts 15:9) because of God's grace (v. 11).

V. 19

Circumcision was a command given only to the Jews and is not binding to the Christian. It was a matter of obedience, not a matter of salvation (Rom. 4:1-12).

The issue of "circumcision" was a problem that the people in Paul's day wrestled with (many were discontent to merely rest in Christ).

I am content that I don't need water baptism, Roman Catholic sacraments, the experience of tongues or any other work of the flesh to be a child of God.

Paul is clearly teaching that:

1) Circumcision has no part in attaining salvation
2) Circumcision has no part in increasing spirituality

Nothing needs to be added to Christ (and His finished work at Calvary) to provide us with salvation (there are no additives requires to the "spiritual octane" that is in Christ Jesus).

NOTE: On the one hand, we are to *"grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (II Peter 3:18), and on the other hand, we are *"complete"* in Christ (Col. 2:10). How can both be true? My salvation is complete; my sanctification needs growth. My position in Christ is fixed; my practice for Christ may need adjustments.

If you are backslidden, you should not be content. Although your relationship to Christ is secure, your fellowship with Christ can be altered.

If you are unsaved, you should not be content. Spiritual contentment should not be the experience of those who are not related to Jesus Christ.

However, if you are in Christ, you should rest in Him, enjoy the peace that is in Him, stand fast in the liberty that is in Him (**SEE: Gal. 5:1-6).

The hymnwriter said it best:

I need no other argument,
I need no other plea,
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me!

II. Be Content with your present SOCIAL status (v.21-24)

V. 21
"Servant" - *doulos* - a slave

In the N.T. times, a man was either "bond (a servant) or free" (Gal. 3:28).

In the days of the Romans, approximately 60 % of the people were servants to someone.

The N.T. does not condemn the servant/master relationship (EX: the book of Philemon; I Cor. 7:21ff), but it does regulate it.

The O.T. Law concerning servitude (SEE: Exodus 21:1-11; Leviticus 25:39-55)

How did one become a servant?

1. **By poverty** - an impoverished man would often sell himself to an owner whom he would serve (Lev. 25:39-40)

2. **By theft** - The Law required a thief to pay 2 - 5 times the amount he stole. If he could not repay it, he then would be sold as a slave and thereby repay the debt (Exod. 22:1-4)

3. **By debt** - If someone owed someone money, but did not have the cash, he could sell one of his servants to pay the debt (Lev. 25:39; Amos 2:6; 8:6). The average price for a servant was about thirty shekels (Exod. 21:32)

4. **By birth** - the slave's children also automatically became the servants of the master (Exod. 21:4; Gen. 14:14; 17:12; Eccl. 2:7)

5. **By war** - prisoners of war (Num. 31:26; Lev. 25:44, 45)

6. **By choice** - A servant would so love his Master that he would become a devoted bondslave for life.

Forced slavery is wicked;
however, voluntary servitude (like that in India)--though not ideal--is regulated by Scripture (Eph. 6:5-9).

How could a slave be content to be a slave?

Answer: With the faith that God would use him/her in that position for a special purpose (God used Paul while a prisoner in many ways to a far greater degree than when he was free).

> (Phil. 1:12-14 - *"But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds are much more bold to speak the word without fear.")*

"Care not for it" - Don't worry about it; don't let it trouble you [Use your social status to honor God whether a slave or free.]

God certainly did not command converted slaves to march for civil rights.

V. 22

Paul is saying that each Christian is both a slave and a free man. Though a servant of men, you are free in Christ. Though free from servitude, you are a slave to Christ.

V. 23

Many would choose to become a bond slave for life to a master. Paul says, if you are not one yet, don't become one.

Ultimately the only One who owns us is Christ. He bought us with His blood (I Cor. 6:20; Rev. 5:9).

"Be not ye the servants of men" = No man can serve two masters. Although a slave served a human master, he really only served one Master: God in Heaven.

"Divine obligation supersede human demands" (Gromacki, p. 94).

III. Be Content with your present MARITAL status (v.25-28)

A. Be content being Single (v.25-26)

V. 25

"Virgins" - Here: Unmarried celebrate men and women

(A phase being popularized: "Control your 'urgen' - Be a virgin")

V. 26

"Present distress" - The particular necessities, calamities, or crises experienced by the Corinthians made it beneficial for them to remain single (perhaps impending persecution or trials and tribulations made it advantageous to be single. They would be better able to face the problems impending if they were not married.)

Sometimes being content during a time of crisis is most beneficial. Never make a major move in a time of distress.

"In view of troubled times, Paul felt it best for men to stay as they were. When high seas are raging, it is no time for changing ships." (Morris, p. 116).

"It is good for a man so to be" - To be what?

An unmarried man; a celebrate virgin (v. 25). [Cp. 7:1 - *"It is good for a man not to touch* (be in intimate relationship, i.e. marriage) *a woman"*]

Benefits of being single:

1) You avoid the problems of marriage (***"Such shall have trouble in the flesh"*** - v. 28).

2) You can serve Christ without marital distractions or hindrances (v. 32-35).

   More freedom of time
   More freedom of finances
   More freedom from worries, concerns, preoccupations, that come with a family.

Be content to be single until God yokes you with His choice. How do I find God's choice?

1. Focus on being the right one rather than finding the right one (*"You reap what you sow")*

2. Be determined to date only those who are *"in the Lord"* (I Cor. 7:39)

3. By serving Jesus Christ, your path will merge with the one who is God's choice for you on the road of service (cp. Acts 13:ff - God steers those who are moving for Him)

4. Be patient

5. Be prayerful (cp. Gen. 24:12-15)

6. Respect your parent's insight into your choice of a mate

B. Be content being Married (v.27-28)

V. 27

ILLUS: Wedding day at the altar: How beautiful she looked, saw sparkle in her eyes, heard a sweet soft voice, smelled the freshness of her hair, you felt the excitement and anticipation of a lifetime to fulfill dreams and aspirations. . . . . With time has the glow dimmed? Have the expectations failed?

"Keep thy eyes wide open before marriage, and half shut afterwards." (Ben Franklin)

When the late Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, a reporter asked them, "To what do you attribute your 50 years of successful married life?" "The formula," Ford replied, "is the same formula I have always used in making cars -- just stick to one model."

"Bound" - To bind with chains. Pictures a permanent "wedlock," a past link-up (yoke) with continuing results.

The passive voice points to the fact that it is God who does the binding of marriage (Mt. 19:6).

Someone has identified the wedding ring as being like a tourniquet (a tourniquet is used to wrap tightly around a body part to stop bleeding). Your wedding ring is worn on your left hand to "stop your circulation" (you no longer date around).

"Seek not to be loosed" - It is wrong for a child of God to actively pursue a divorce (leave such a prerogative in the hands of the unsaved spouse - v. 12-13).

God is saying: "Don't look for a way to be freed from your mate. If you allow for an exit door in your marriage, you will be tempted to take it when the pressures of marriage come."

Be content with your spouse; let him/her satisfy your needs
(SEE: Prov. 5:15-19).

Be content with your <u>place</u> in the home (Eph. 5:22-23).
In team sports, great problems occur when players seek to fill others' positions.

--The wife should be content to be a <u>submissive supporter</u> (for her husband) (Eph. 5:22-24; 33).

--The husband should be content to be a <u>loving leader</u> (for his wife) (Eph. 5:25-33)

Will you ask God to make you content with His will for your life? (your role, place in your family?)

"Seek not a wife" - The seeking here specifically refers to one who has been released (*"loosed")* from a wife.

If you have been divorced (v. 15), you should be content to remain single.

However one understands the word *"loosed"* in the first sentence, he must (to be consistent) interpret it the same way in the next sentence (*"loosed"* = released, let go, unbound).

V. 28

"If <u>thou</u> marry" - The "*thou"* refers to the same *"thou"* as in verse 27 (ie. the one who has been divorced by his spouse).

"If thou marry, thou hast <u>not sinned</u>" - Remarriage is not a sin; divorce is the sin.

I, as a pastor, will <u>not</u> perform the wedding ceremonies of divorcees. My reason is <u>not</u> that I believe remarriage is a sin, but because I'm not bound to marry anyone to begin with, so I have chosen to perform the ceremonies of saved people previously unmarried so as to uphold God's <u>ideal</u> of a marriage before the eyes of our young people.

"<u>Trouble</u> in the flesh" - lit. tribulation, affliction

--Perhaps Paul is referring to the *"present distress"* (v. 26) which would make marriage more difficult

--Or Paul is referring to problems all couples will encounter simply because they have a weak flesh and a sinful nature. Marriage does bring out the worst in a person. Being in relationships tests our true spirituality.

CONCLUSION:

The Enemies of Contentment:

1. Pride
   In pride we view ourselves as worthy of more or better than we have or really deserve. A man said to a friend, "How come you never married?" The friend replied, "It was like this: I wasn't satisfied until I found the ideal woman." "And you never found her?" "Oh, sure, I found her. But just my luck: she was looking for the ideal man?"

2. Covetousness (dissatisfaction with what you have)
   Heb. 13:5 - *"Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*

   Paul testified: *"Godliness with contentment is great gain."* (I Tim. 6:6).

   Being content in life does not mean that you should never seek to better your situation financially; it does mean that money is not your obsession. Money will not conflict with my personal walk with God, my family, or my church attendance.

3. Jealousy (seeing what others have and then desiring it so you retain a feeling of superiority over them or at least remain equal with them [Prov. 23:17])

4. Fear (insecurities due to a lack of faith in God)

   Be satisfied even through the bad times.

   Accept the state (situation) you are in. Be satisfied! Don't make your circumstances your enemy if bad (where you fight it) or your god if good (where you won't let anything alter it).

   --Don't rebel or run

   --Don't make any changes unless you are 100% sure it is God Who is leading you on (to a new job, new state, etc.)

5. Ultimately, unbelief (a lack of faith that God can work in your present state)
   God placed you in the situation you are in for a purpose!

Basically, to test the genuineness of your faith.

Times of need are a test (to see if you will totally depend on Christ).
Times of financial prosperity are a test (to see how you will handle what God has given)
What is the secret of contentment? Faith in God's sovereign control over every detail of my life. God has given me the good I have (James 1:17) and will continue to do so until Christ returns (Phil. 1:6)

When our focus shifts from God, when our concentration in life is not beamed in on Him, we are sure to experience discouragement and emotional unrest (Ps. 42:5 - *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.")*

"Contentment makes poor men rich; discontentment makes rich men poor." (Ben Franklin)

The most joy-filled people I know are not those with the "nicest" things in life, but are those who are content with what they have.

Practice THANKFULNESS daily. Thank God for your Salvation; Job; Marital status; Wife/Husband; Children; Church; etc.

This is the secret to be free from worry! - Contentment
This is the secret to be free from covetousness! - Contentment
This is the secret to be free from jealousy! - Contentment
This is the secret to be free from lust! - Contentment
This is the secret to e free from loving the world! - Contentment

HYMN: "Take the World, But Give Me Jesus"

Be content to be single until God yokes you with His choice.

How do I find God's choice?

1. Focus on **being the right one** rather than finding the right one
   (*"You reap what you sow")*

2. Be determined to **date only those** who are ***"in the Lord"*** (I Cor. 7:39)

3. **By serving Jesus Christ**, your path will merge with the one who is God's choice for you
   on the road of service (cp. Acts 13:ff - God steers those who are moving for Him)

4. Be **patient**

5. Be **prayerful** (cp. Gen. 24:12-15)

6. Respect your **parent's insight** into your choice of a mate

The Enemies of Contentment:

1. Pride
In pride we view ourselves as worthy of more or better than we have or really deserve.

2. Covetousness (dissatisfaction with what you have)
Heb. 13:5 - *"Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*

Paul testified: *"Godliness with contentment is great gain."*
(I Tim. 6:6).

3. Jealousy
(seeing what others have and then desiring it so you retain a feeling of superiority over them or at least remain equal with them [Prov. 23:17])

4. Fear (insecurities due to a lack of faith in God)

***5.** **Ultimately, <u>UNBELIEF</u>** (a lack of faith that God can work in your present state)

What is the secret of contentment?

Answer: **FAITH** in <u>God's sovereign control</u> over every detail of my life.
God has given me the good I have (James 1:17) and will continue to do so until Christ returns (Phil. 1:6)

"BEWARE OF DISTRACTIONS"

I Corinthians 7:29-35

7-2-2023

INTRODUCTION: *V. 32, 35b

***Look out for anything that would distract you from living fully for Christ!**

I. Don't let any human RELATIONSHIP distract you from the Lord (v. 29, 32-34)

II. Don't let any human EMOTION distract you from the Lord (v. 30a)

III. Don't let any earthly POSSESSION distract you from the Lord (v. 30b)

IV. Don't let any earthly OCCUPATION or ENJOYMENT distract you from the Lord (v. 31)



CONCLUSION: *V. 35

"BEWARE OF DISTRACTIONS"

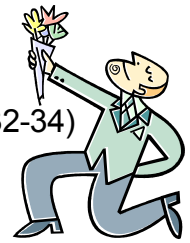
I Corinthians 7:29-35

7-2-2023

INTRODUCTION: *V. 32, 35b



***Look out for anything that would distract you from living fully for Christ!**



I. Don't let any human <u>RELATIONSHIP</u> distract you from the Lord (v. 29, 32-34)

II. Don't let any human <u>EMOTION</u> distract you from the Lord (v. 30a)



III. Don't let any earthly <u>POSSESSION</u> distract you from the Lord (v. 30b)



IV. Don't let any earthly <u>OCCUPATION</u> or <u>ENJOYMENT</u> distract you from the Lord (v. 31)



CONCLUSION: *V. 35

"BEWARE OF DISTRACTIONS"

I Corinthians 7:29-35

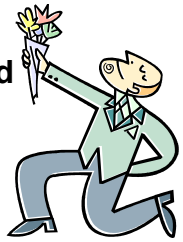
7-2-2023

INTRODUCTION: *V. 32, 35b

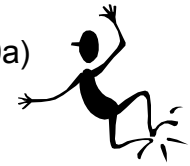


***Look out for anything that would distract you from living fully for Christ!**

I. **Don't let any human _____ distract you from the Lord** (v. 29, 32-34)



II. **Don't let any human _____distract you from the Lord** (v. 30a)



III. **Don't let any earthly _____ distract you from the Lord** (v. 30b)



IV. **Don't let any earthly _____ or _____ distract you from the Lord** (v. 31)



CONCLUSION: *V. 35

"BEWARE OF DISTRACTIONS"

I Corinthians 7:29-35

7-2-2023

INTRODUCTION: *V. 32, 35b

Slight distractions (diversions of our attention) can bring serious consequences.

ILLUS: Driving a car and something catches your eye so you end up smacking into the truck in front of you.

The key point (theme) of verses 29-35 is found in verse 32: ***"But I would have you without carefulness."*** And in verse 35: ***". . . that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction."***

Satan's plot to hinder your service for Christ may not come as an outright attack on your bible beliefs; may not come as some seducing harlot. . . but simply and innocently as something good, right, and proper that will come into your life to divert your focus and tie up your time and interest (it may be a girl, job, course of study...).

Distractions come in different colors, shapes, and sizes, because what turns your head may not turn mine.

Distracted People:

--Martha (Lk. 10:40) (by lesser priorities)

--Demas (love for the world)

--John Mark (the going got tough)

***Look out for anything that would distract you from living fully for Christ!**

I. Don't let any human RELATIONSHIP distract you from the Lord (v. 29, 32-34)

v. 29

"The time is short" - The season of time during which the Corinthians would be experiencing a *"present distress* [calamity]" has been limited or cut brief.

Therefore, in light of the special difficult circumstances these people faced (and would face), it was advantageous for them to not to anything which would cripple or hinder their service for Christ.

Note the context in verses 25-28 where Paul advocates singleness as preferable if such a *"gift"* (v. 7) is possessed by a man or woman.

Some rethinking on verses 27-28:

The word *"loosed"* may be specifically referring to one who was never married (not a divorced individual).

1) The context is describing the unmarried (*"virgins"* - v. 25) (not divorcees particularly)

2) The word *"loosed"* - the perfect voice employed here in a non-technical sense to emphasize a state of singleness (i.e. free from the bonds of marriage)

3) The teaching of Jesus - the one who remarries commits *"adultery"*

4) Paul's one exception: (death of a spouse allows for remarriage - v. 39)

Marriage will bring (to one degree or another) ***"trouble*** [lit. tribulation] ***in the flesh"*** (v. 28) ("Trouble 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 it does not solve all problems. It brings more." John MacArthur, p. 181).

Marriage is not necessarily a guaranteed cure-all from: loneliness or lust (lack of sexual control).

In verse 29, Paul is certainly not saying that husbands should:

--leave their wives (this would violate vv. 10-11)
--ignore their wives
--neglect their marital obligations (v. 3-5)
--not love their wives (I Cor. 13)
--not provide for their wives (Eph. 5)
--not meet the emotional, physical needs of their wives (Eph. 5)

What he is saying is that your wife should not hinder your devotion and service for Jesus Christ.

Many wives and husbands will give their spouse an ultimatum: "It's me or your Jesus...who do you want?"

Reply: "I love you and I love the Lord, but my first love is for the Lord. It is He who has given me a love for you; I must be faithful to Him to be all I can be for you!"

Don't let marriage become an excuse for why you are not living for God like you should.

Don't marry someone who will distract you from serving the Lord.

V. 32

This is Paul's point: Don't worry about anything in this world! Don't be overly concerned or "careful" (anxious) about the things of this world (I Jn. 2:15-17).

Getting back to his key thought in this context, Paul now restates some of the benefits of being single.

A contented single man who does not have a wife to worry about can concern himself exclusively with the Lord's work. He does not have a wife to please, and he can live with a single goal of pleasing Christ.

"It is easier for a single person to be single-minded in the things of the Lord" (MacArthur, p. 184).

When you are not absorbed in the things that belong to you, you can be free to be absorbed in the things which belong to Christ!

What things belong to Christ? His people (His Church); His Word (His Gospel).

The people who should be serving the Lord the most (i.e. singles) are often the people who serve the Lord the least.

Of necessity a married man (one who is "worth his salt") must concern himself with

some things in the world, particularly putting a roof over his family's head, food in their mouths, and clothes on their backs.

V. 33

A husband must seek to please his wife.

V. 34

"Holy" - lit. set apart or sanctified totally unto the Lord.

A virgin's body and spirit are dedicated and devoted only to God. Set apart for His work.

Like the husband, the married woman should not live so as to merely please herself, but to please her husband.

II. Don't let any human EMOTION distract you from the Lord (v. 30a)

Emotions are more controllable than we may think or have been led to believe.

EX: God commands us to love (therefore, we can control this emotion).

[NOTE: Love (*agape*) is not a mere emotion. It includes emotion, but is primarily an act of the will, a choice to meet a need whether you feel like it or not!]

"They that weep" - Those who experience pain and sorrow (grief) should not allow their hurt emotions to take over their life.

They should weep, but still press on and move forward for Christ as though they were not in deep sorrow.

When we experience:

earthly loss (ex: death of loved ones)
earthly failures (ex: loss of job)
earthly misfortunes (ex: loss of property or possessions)
earthly ailments (ex: loss of full health)

--We need a faith that will move us ever onward and upward for our Lord.

"They that rejoice" - Good times are as much of a danger to our being distracted as bad times. When life's waters are calm, when the sun is shining, and the soothing breezes of life blow blessings our way, beware that we do not grow complacent in our walk with Christ.

To rejoice in good circumstances and to grow gleefully confident and self-sufficient in the situation we find ourselves in is to open ourselves up to thinking we *"stand"* when we had better *"take heed lest [we] fall*"!

What God is calling for is an even-keeled, steady, consistent, balanced control of our emotions so that we keep plodding for Jesus through times of deep grief and times of ecstatic joy (both negative and positive emotions must be controlled).

III. Don't let any earthly POSSESSION distract you from the Lord (v. 30b)

"They that buy" - Those who have the dollars to buy this world's goods should not cling to those goods as if they were in permanent ownership of them.

We who have "goods" (furniture, appliances, cars, houses, clothing, recreational items, etc.) should not live as though these things were our permanent treasure or security.

You ought to live as thou you *"possessed not"* = as though you were not the permanent owner. We are only stewards (managers) put in trust with the possessions of this world.

We live with possessions, but must not live for possessions.

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Do you possess possessions, or do the possessions possess you?

How much time do you spend:

--thinking about your possessions?
--polishing and maintaining your possessions?

How much thought do you put into:

--planning how to acquire more possessions?
--protecting your possessions?

How tightly do you grip the cloth, plastic, metals, rocks, animal skins, dirt and wood of this world? (most everything tangible is made of these materials).

Are you tight-fisted or do you give (of your possessions)? How generous are you? Do you take and take? Or do you ever relinquish--not just your junk and clutter--but your unused, seldom used, or often used treasures and "pride & joys"?

Finances ($) can be a big distractions! (Keep I Timothy 6 in mind! Note v. 6-10, 17-18).

Lay up *"treasures in Heaven*"

IV. Don't let any earthly OCCUPATION or ENJOYMENT distract you from the Lord (v. 31)

When you "use" the things of this world, do you seek to fully use them to the utmost, to the point that they absorb all your time, thought, and energy?

We ought to use the resources God gave this world, but we must never become obsessed (engrossed) with material things so that we abuse them.

*How much are your distracted by the STUFF of this life?

EX: Being in India and seeing poor Christians who --because of their poverty-- were not as distracted in serving Christ as we are in America.

--Drive your car; don't worship your car
--Wear your clothes; don't worship your clothes
--Comb your hair; don't worship your hair (I Pet. 3)
--Mow your lawn; don't worship your lawn
--Clean your house; don't worship your house

This *kosmos* in its present form (***"fashion"***) is going to pass away!

The Lord (through Peter) addressed the transiency of this world in II Peter 3:10-13).

Our affection must be set on things above (Col. 3:1-2 - *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth."*)

INSERT POEM: "What Disturbs You More?"

CONCLUSION: *V. 35

V. 35

"This I speak for your own profit" - for your own benefit; for your own good.

"Not that I may cast a snare upon you" - My goal, says Paul, is not to cast a rope around your necks or put binding restrains or restrictions on you like the Roman Catholic church does to its nuns and priests.

"But for that which is comely" - Paul gives this encouragement to singles so that they will be well-fitted, well-ordered, properly suited, unhindered servants of Christ.

Someone asked a talented concern violinist how she became so good at playing the violin. Her reply: "Planned neglect. I planned to neglect anything and everything that was not related to my goal."

"Attend" - to be ready for service at the Lord's altar (cp. 9:13).

"Attend" - this word was used of a servant who had no other job than to attend to his king.

"Without distraction" - *aperispastos* - lit. without something drawn around a person (like a noose; so as to keep him immobile, tied up, hindered).

Actually, anything we do in life (outside of attending the Lord) is a distraction. All of us have distractions. The question is: Do they have you?? Do distractions control your time, thought, and energy so that your service for Christ is limited?

Nothing is wrong with relationships, emotions, possessions, occupations, or enjoyments ("We are to hold marriage in the highest honor [Heb. 13:4], to *"rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep"* [Rom. 12:15], and not despise earthly possessions. Our *"heavenly Father knows that [we] need all these things"* [Mt. 6:32]. But we should not overvalue those things, knowing that they are passing away." John MacARthur, p. 183).

These things can be wrong, however, when they dominate our minds and behavior and distract from Christ and His work.

Perhaps something in this world is distracting you from. . .

--Reading, meditating, and memorizing God's Word.

--Spending quality and quantity time in God's presence

--Assembling on Wednesday nights or Prayer Time Sunday mornings

--Witnessing to the lost; utilizing your gift for the benefit of God's people

I feel concerned when we excuse our distraction, lest God remove that excuse. EX: "I can't come to church, I have to work" (He may remove the job from you.) EX: "I don't have time to spend with God -- the kids keep me too busy." (God forbid, He may remove your excuse!)

A lot of things can distract the best of Christians. Have you become preoccupied with your:

beauty

body
clothes
hobbies
sports
recreation
travel
food
comforts
cars
career
family & friends
savings & investments
college education

SONGS: "It is Well"; "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus."

"Spiritual Advice for Marriage"

I Corinthians 7:36-40

7-9-2023

INTRODUCTION:

***Observe some implicit principles that will get you ready for a blessed marriage!**

I. Be a <u>VIRGIN</u> Until Marriage (implied in verses 36-37)

II. Honor <u>PARENTAL AUTHORITY</u> Before Marriage (implied in verses 36-38)

Two clearly taught principles:

A. An unmarried woman is under the authority of her father

B. An unmarried couple should seek their parents' blessing on their marriage

III. Be <u>COMMITTED</u> to Your Marriage <u>FOR LIFE</u> (v. 39)

IV. Marry Only a <u>CHRISTIAN</u> who Loves the Lord (v. 39b)

V. Be <u>HAPPY</u> Being Single (v. 40)
(Remain content with singleness until God alters your marital status)

"Spiritual Advice for Marriage"

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Two clearly taught principles:

A. An unmarried woman is under the authority of her _____

B. An unmarried couple should seek their _____ on their marriage

III. Be _____ to Your Marriage _____ (v. 39)

IV. Marry Only a _____ who Loves the Lord (v. 39b)

V. Be _____ Being Single (v. 40)
(Remain content with singleness until God alters your marital status)

"Spiritual Advice for Marriage"

I Corinthians 7:36-40

7-9-2023

INTRODUCTION:

This whole chapter answers the question: "Should I marry or not?"

Verses 25-38 deal specifically with virgins and whether or not they should remain unmarried, especially in light of the *"present distress"* (v. 26) they were facing.

V. 36

A general interpretation of verses 36-38:

Who is the ***"man"*** spoken about in verses 36-38?

Some say Paul is addressing the virgin's fiance, who is engaged (betrothed) to her (NIV interpretation).

A better view is that Paul is addressing the father of a virgin daughter (KJV, NASV).

Reasons:

1) The one referred to has authority (exousia – v.37) over the virgin (a fiance has none).

2) The third person plural passive imperative ***"Let them marry"*** indicates that Paul is speaking to someone outside of the couple.

3) ***"Giveth . . . in marriage"*** - (*gamizon)* - pres. act. participle. "Verbs with this ending are generally causative ('to give in marriage')." (Reinecker, p. 410).

4) The widow can marry *"whom she will"* (v. 39); this is an evident contrast to the will of her father (v. 37), who arranged her first marriage.

5) The custom of Paul's day was arranged marriages. The girl was under the authority of her dad until he gave her to the authority of another man in marriage. Even today we have a trace of this custom in America, as the preacher says at the wedding altar, "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?" "I do" or "Her mother and I" Most marriage sin foreign countries today are either arranged or have a heavy parental involvement.

> "In Jewish culture, parents, and particularly fathers, had long had a dominant role in deciding whom their children would marry. The same general custom prevailed in many ancient societies, including that of Rome. Some historians credit Rome's decline in part to the weakening of the family caused by loss of parental control in arranging marriages. In New Testament times the arranged marriage, especially for young people, was the norm." (MacArthur, p. 185).

"In light of the extant teaching about the advantages of singleness, some of the fathers of Corinth apparently had dedicated their young daughters to the Lord as permanent virgins" (MacArthur, p. 185) (EX: Jepthah's daughter)

If the father, for whatever reason, senses that he is not doing what is best in her self interest by keeping his daughter unmarried, he should give her away in holy matrimony.

"flower" – beyond the bloom or prime of life; 20 years old and up (Plato);
To pass the stage of full development (physical maturity; adulthood).
It is sad to see that in certain cultures and in certain parts of the world child brides forced into marriage. This is not Biblical.

V. 37

Paul basically says that a father who has decided (for whatever reasons) that he should keep his daughter unmarried *"doeth well."*

V. 38

Giving a daughter in marriage in not a difference of right or wrong, but a difference of "good" (*"well")* and "better." In some situations, it is *"better"* not to marry. In this context, the "present distress" spoken of in verse 26, is perhaps a valid reason to not give away a daughter in marriage at such a time of crisis. Such added external pressure (thlipsis – verse 28) upon the marriage would give an extra dose of stress on the relationship (this is why Paul said with confidence, "such shall have trouble in the flesh" v.28).

***Observe some implicit principles that will get you ready for a blessed marriage!**

I. Be a VIRGIN Until Marriage (implied in verses 36-37)

"Virgin" *(parthenon)* - In context, an unmarried woman who has not had sexual relations (EX: the Virgin Mary).

The benefits of being a virgin until marriage:

1. You have a clean conscience (free from guilt)
2. You avoid the trap of feeling obligated to marry the one you had sex with
3. You look forward with greater anticipation to the consummation of your marriage
4. You earn the respect of your future spouse (and others)
5. You avoid illegitimate pregnancy
6. You avoid sexually-transmitted diseases
7. You obey God and honor His plan for marriage

II. Honor PARENTAL AUTHORITY Before Marriage (implied in verses 36-38)

Two clearly taught principles:

A. An unmarried woman is under the authority of her father

Throughout the Bible, an unmarried woman was under the authority of her father until he gave her away in marriage.

EX: Rebekah to her father Bethuel (Gen. 24:24, 50-51)
Rachel to her father Laban (Gen. 29:21)

Another evidence of the authority of a father over his daughter is seen in Num. 30:3ff, in which a father could invalidate a vow she made as long as she lived in his house.

Our society today knows very little about he issue of parental authority.

More and more, it's not the parents who run the home, it's the kids.

Disobedience to parental authority is a mark of the "*last days."* (II Tim. 3:2)

It was always God's design that a woman be provided for and protected; she should not have to fend for herself. She was always to be under the care of either her dad or her husband.

All of life is structured around a "chain of responsibility" (cp. Mt. 8:10).

Three basic divinely established institutions to provide structure (order) and safety (protection) to society:

1) The Home (I Cor. 7:2ff; Eph. 5:22-6:4)
2) The Government(Rom. 13:1-f)
3) The Church (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; I Peter 5:1-5)

These institutions involve submission and authority.

An "AUTHORITY" is someone with a position of oversight.

The position of authority is ultimately given by God (Rom.13:1).

This position of authority is one of service (an "authority" is a servant-Rom.13:4))

This position of authority is to provide leadership, training, and/or protection for the well being of the one(s) served.

The one who holds such a position of authority is responsible to God and will answer to God (cp. Heb.13:17).

The one who is expected to submit to the authority will also be accountable to God for how he/she responded to the authority.

Respect for parents is so serious that God told Moses:

*"He who **strikes** **(physical disrespect)** his father or his mother shall surely be put to death";*
*and "He who **curses** **(verbal disrespect)** his father or his mother shall surely be put to death"* (Ex. 21:15, 17; cp. Lev. 20:9; Proverbs 30:11-f; See: Deut.21:18-21).

Proverbs 20:20 - *"Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness"* (ie. his life will be snuffed out)

If a girl will not submit to her father's authority, neither will she submit to her husband's.

Young people, if you are not submitted to your parent's authority, it is because you are not submitted to God! (Eph. 6:1-2)

B. An unmarried couple should seek their parents' blessing on their marriage

Arranged marriages last longer.

Today with our present form of dating, people are almost preconditioned for divorce before they are even married. Why?

He dates someone, finds he doesn't like her, so he dumps her.
He dates someone else, finds he doesn't like her, so he dumps her.
On and on it goes until he marries, then finds he doesn't like her, so he is tempted to continue the pattern he followed before marriage.

Children should seek their parent's blessing on their marriage. If either set of parents are opposed to it, you should consider their reasons why.

What procedure should Christian girls follow in a courtship relationship?

1) Remember you are under the authority of your father until you marry (I Cor. 7:36-38).

2) Before starting to date, meet with your father (whether or not he is a Christian) and share with him your goals for marriage: that yours will be the kind of marriage God wants, and thus be the happiest possible.

3) Agree that any boy who wants to date you must first ask your father for permission. This simply requires saying, "I am honored that you have asked, but before I can give you an answer, you will have to ask my father." This takes all the pressure off the girl and creates these benefits:

   a) It makes the boy appreciate you more because what is easily gotten is not usually appreciated.

   b) It decreases the temptation of the boy to mistreat you. If he thinks you are completely on your own, it increases the risk that he will try something.

   c) It proves to the boy that your father loves you.

   d) It gives your father a chance to discern the boy's intentions. A woman is more affected by actions than by motives, but a man discerns first the motive.

   e) It places the boy under your father's counsel, which is exactly where he should be if the relationship grows into marriage.

4) Agree that anytime a fellow starts talking to you about marriage you will say, "If you are thinking about marriage, you had better talk to my father." This is tremendously important because so often talk about marriage is just camouflaged lust.

Interracial marriage is a matter which should be entirely left up to the
<u>parents</u> (and the couple).

How can young people know who is the right one for marriage? What advice can we offer to our children/grandchildren etc.?

God's principles for courtship:

a. Be submitted and obedient to the advice and discretion of your parents (Eph. 6:1-2).

b. Determine that you will court only Christians (I Cor. 7:39; II Cor. 6:14-18).
God forbids the intermarriage of a believer with a non-believer (SEE: Gen. 24:3-4, 28:1-2; Ex. 34:12-16; Deut. 7:3-4; Ezra 9:10-12; Neb. 10:30).

c. Determine that you will strive to be the right one, rather than focusing on meeting the "right one" (Rom. 12:1-2).

d. Be busy doing the general will of God, and He will guide you in the specifics of His will (Phil. 2:12-13; Prov. 3:5-6).

e. Purpose in your heart that you will not defile yourself or defraud the one you court (I Cor. 7:1-2; I Th. 4:6).

f. Decide that the one you marry must enhance your ministry, not diminish or destroy it (Is she a "helpmeet" [Gen. 2:18] or a hindrance?).

g. Yield your plans to God's will in the vital area of courtship and marriage (desire His will above all else) (Mt. 6:33).

h. Wait for God's timing (Eccl. 3:1). Patience is a key virtue. It requires absolute trust in God and His timing.

i. Avoid the "steady" relationship until the time is right.
(Have several friends and let God bring the right one alone in His Time;
Song of Solomon 2:7 - I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please. The same statement is made in 3:5.

Hibernate in this area of your life until God is pleased to awaken your love for the one of His choosing.

j. Avoid situations and circumstances that might involve temptations and trouble (don't be alone in secluded places).

K. Avoid physical involvement (lust can't wait until marriage; but true love can).

III. Be <u>COMMITTED</u> to Your Marriage <u>FOR LIFE</u> (v. 39)

Marriage is not a:
Temporary arrangement
Trial and error test

Marriage is a contract for life!

***"Bound"* =** to permanently tie together; to bind as with chains.

See Romans 7:2

"Is bound" = has been bound and still is (perfect, passive).

Marriage is a <u>permanent</u> bond. That is why it is called "wed<u>lock</u>." The problem today is that many are "manufacturing keys" to unlock that which is to be kept locked and secured.

"Bound by the Law" = It is God's Law (established before the Mosaic Law) that binds two (male and female) into one (Gen. 2:24).

NOTE: God says: "We are bound to our spouse <u>by Law</u>; He does <u>not</u> say "by love." "Falling out of love" is not a justifiable reason for divorce.

"If the husband be dead" = if the husband should happen to be die (by means of a natural course of events, not by the wife killing him off!!!).

"Loosed" = annulled, nullified, or discharged; away from the obligation of God's Law of matrimony.

The only way out of marriage is death! It is "till death do we part" Marriage is for keeps!

The permanence of marriage is evidenced by:

1.The Bonding of "WEDLOCK" (Gen. 2:24)
(Marriage is an inseparable union)

a.The Cleaving of Marriage (v. 24a)
b.The Oneness of Marriage (v. 24b)
c."Till death do we part" (Romans 7:2-3)

2.The Meaning of a "COVENANT" (Malachi 2:14)
(Marriage is a Covenant)

--Definition of a "Covenant"

--Examples of "Covenants" in the Bible
a).Gen. 15:6-18 - Abrahamic Covenant (cp. Jer. 34:18-19)
b).Matt. 26:28 - The New Covenant

a.The marriage covenant is an irrevocable Vow
Observe the nature of vows:
1).Numbers 30:2 - Your words are extremely important
2).Deuteronomy 23:21 - God holds you accountable
3).Example: Jephthah's vow - Judges 11:30-39

b.The marriage covenant is an unconditional Vow
"For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer"

3.Christ's Relationship to His BRIDE (Eph. 5:22-32)
(Jesus will never forsake His wife, the Church)

a. The Church is one with Christ (Eph. 5:30; I Cor. 6:17)
b. The Church is the "Bride of Christ" (Rev. 19:7-9)
c. The Church has the promise of eternal security
(Mt. 16:18; Jn. 10:28-29; Titus 1:2; Heb. 13:5)

4. God's Attitude about DIVORCE (Malachi 2:16)
(God hates divorce)

a. "He may not put her away all his days"
(Deut. 22:19, 29)
Suppose you were to pursue a divorce and you received a letter in the mail. It read: "I hate divorce. Signed, Jehovah God"

"At liberty" - free. The only specifically stated justifiable reason for remarriage given in Scripture is in the case of the death of the spouse (cp. Rom. 7:2).

IV. Marry Only a CHRISTIAN who Loves the Lord (v. 39b)

Determine that you will date only Christians (I Cor. 7:39; II Cor. 6:14-18).

God forbids the intermarriage of a believer with a non-believer (SEE: Gen. 24:3-4, 28:1-2; Ex. 34:12-16; Deut. 7:3-4; Ezra 9:10-12; Neb. 10:30).

Examples of disasters caused by unequal yokes in marriage:

1) The sons of God married good-looking but godless daughters of men (Gen. 6:2).
2) Esau married two Hittite wives (Gen. 26:34-35).
3) Samson became betrothed to a Philistine woman (Jud. 14).
4) Solomon married heathen women (Neh. 13:26).

V. Be HAPPY Being Single (v. 40)

(Remain content with singleness until God alters your marital status)

Paul gives not a command, but a suggestion (good advice).

"I think also that I have the Spirit of God" - "With a touch of sarcasm he was saying that he, too, had access to the leading of the Holy Spirit -- a claim apparently made both by the group that advocated celibacy only and by the group that advocated marriage only." (MacArthur, p. 186).

The bottom line: Let God lead in this very important part of your life. Be content in the situation you are in and don't independently pursue a change. Let the Lord direct your steps. Trust HIM in everything (Proverbs 3:5-6)

"Don’t be a Stumbling Block"

I Corinthians 8:1-13

7-16-2023

INTRODUCTION: (Verse 1a)

***Take heed that no one stumbles into sin because of you** (v. 9).

I. Pay more attention to <u>LOVE</u> than to your knowledge (v. 1-8)

II. Pay more attention to <u>RESPONSIBILITY</u> than to your rights (v. 9-12)

III. Pay more attention to <u>OTHERS</u> than to your self (v. 13)

CONCLUSION:

"Don’t be a Stumbling Block"

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CONCLUSION:

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I Corinthians 8:1-13
7-16-2023

INTRODUCTION: (Verse 1a)

V. 1

With the questions regarding marriage and singleness answered, Paul now answers a second question.

"Now as touching..." - The Apostle Paul now speaks to a question evidently asked by a large segment of the Corinthian church regarding eating meat sacrificed to idols.

[These believers--strongly convinced of their doctrinal position and basking in their Christian liberty--had expected Paul to come to their side in defending their right (*"liberty"* - v. 9) to indulge freely in practices which in and of themselves were non-moral issues.]

Another segment of the Corinthian church felt strongly that a Christian should never eat meat that had been offered to idols.

Many of the Corinthians were saved out of idolatry (I Cor. 6:9), so they felt more strongly about anything that reminded them of their pagan, idolatrous past.

"Things offered unto idols" - "Various types of choice animals without blemish were offered to the gods. Part of the meat was burned on the altar and part of it was used for a sacred banquet with the deity as the honored guest,a nd that which was left was sold at the market place (Bruce, cited by Reinecker, p. 411).

This meat would have been the highest quality meat since it was used in sacrifice by pagan priests, and it would have been the most inexpensive meat since it would have been originally donated freely to the pagan temple.

(Can you image being an economically-minded Christian and getting a great deal on top-quality steaks?)

V. 13

"Offend" - Not speaking of something you dislike (EX: "That black shirt you are wearing offends me." If by that you mean that you don't like it, then "Tough luck, buddy, I'm going to wear it anyway." But if you mean, "You don't realize it, but I was once in the church of Satan and every time the priest would perform a sacrifice, he would wear a shirt like that, and yours reminds me of my old life in Satanism" --- Then I would burn that shirt and never wear it again! (ILLUS. by Jim Binney).

"Offend" - Not speaking about hurt feelings but doing something which will lead a person to stumble or trip into sin.

V. 9

"Take heed" - This is the only imperative in this chapter! God is saying something of importance; Note this, pay attention, look out!

"Stumbling block" - A hindrance; an obstacle; something which gets in the way of a person and thus either stops his progress or trips him up.

Romans 14:13 - *"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."*

***Take heed that no one stumbles into sin because of you** (v. 9).

I. Pay more attention to <u>LOVE</u> than to your knowledge (v. 1-8)

V. 1

"We all have knowledge" - The Corinthian church certainly did <u>not</u> lack in knowledge (I Cor. 1:5) [at least on many issues] -- but they did lack in <u>love</u>.

"Knowledge <u>puffeth up</u>, but charity (love which gives) ***<u>edifieth</u>" -*** What a powerful statement! One blows up the head, the other builds up a life.

Head knowledge of facts (truths) can make one proud, but having a heart concern for others will build them up in the faith.

Biblical knowledge may make a man look big, but only Biblical love (coupled with that knowledge) can bring you and others to full maturity.

Many have their doctrinal *i's* dotted and their theological *t's* crossed, but lack the most important virtue of love.

Paul is not down on theological or doctrinal knowledge (in fact, he praises it - v. 4-8); what he is down on is knowledge without concern for others (specifically, others who are weaker).

Mere knowledge of right and wrong does not make you a spiritual Christian (ignorance does not either). If you are content with your knowledge of God's Word, but are not loving God and His children, you know NOTHING yet.

V. 2

"Ignorance" - Does not know that it does not know

"Pride" - Thinks it knows all when it does not know it

"Humility" - Does not know all and knows it

A "know-it-all" is ignorant of the fact that he does not know it all.

V. 3

It's not the man who knows about God who has a relationship with Him, but the one who loves God (Jn. 14:23 - *"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him"*; cp. Rom. 8:28).

Are you known by God? Does He know you to be His child? (cp. Gal. 4:9; II Tim. 2:19).

The proof is not merely in what you know but in who you love.

V. 4

We know an idol has no power to alter the contents of meat offered to it, because an idol is nothing but a piece of stone or wood.

The knowledgeable Christian knows full well that eating meat that was offered to an idol will not affect his salvation, or erase his relationship to Christ.

Paul says, "I'm not endorsing the 'god' by eating meat offered to it; however, if someone might make such an association, I would not do it, lest I offend him.

V. 5

***"Called gods"* =** so-called gods, which really are not at all

In India alone there are over 33 million gods and goddesses. Not one is real, but images stemming from imaginations of people's blind and sinful hearts.

V. 6

"One God" - Christianity is not polytheistic like Hinduism, New Age Movement, or Mormonism; it is monotheistic.

Trinitarianism does not violate or contradict monotheism, as this verse clearly demonstrates.

Note the contrast:

"gods many" (v. 5) . . . *"One God"* (v. 6)
"lords many" (v. 5) . . . *"One Lord"* (v. 6)

--***"the Father of whom"*** - lit. "out of whom" -- the Father is the source from which all things have their origin (Creation owes its origin to the creative mind of God; He planned it).

"Jesus Christ by whom" - The Son is the instrumental cause of all things (Creation owes its existence to the creative power of Christ; He performed it).

"We in Him" - (lit *eis* - "unto" Him) - We were made to exist for (*eis*) God the Father.

"We by Him" - We were made to exist through (*dia*) the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Paul speaks of *"one God"* and *"one Lord"* he is speaking about the same God and the same Lord, thus implicitly teaching the unity of the Godhead (the oneness of the Father and the Son).

V. 7

"There is not in every man that knowledge" - Unfortunately, not everyone (not even every Christian) knows the full truth of verse 6.

"Not being able to shake off the feeling that the idol was somehow real, they felt that they were doing wrong when they ate what had been offered to it" (Morris, p. 127).

You ***"defile"*** (pollute, contaminate) your conscience every time you do something you think you should not (and thereby sin against God).

Even to do something you are not sure about is sin. (Romans 14:23 - *"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.")*

V. 8

Meat (food, whether offered to idols or not) does not bring you nearer to God if you do eat, or drive you away from Him if you don't. No neutral, non-moral, carnal thing (physical thing) can improve or damage a spiritual relationship by itself.

Vegetarians are not more spiritual than meat-eaters, and vice versa.

II. Pay more attention to RESPONSIBILITY than to your rights (v. 9-12)

V. 9

"Liberty" *(exousia)* = right; to have perfect rights or authority to do something

Who might be ***"weak"*** in the faith?

--new converts
--recovering backsliders
--children

Those who are strong in Christ have to care about those who are weak in Christ.

We must not be all wrapped up in our own wants and rights and forget our responsibility to our brother.

--Would your watching certain TV programs be a stumbling block?

--Would your going to certain theater shows (or renting certain videos) be a stumbling block?

--Would your social drinking be a stumbling block?

--Would your music be a stumbling block?

--Would your work ethic (or lack of one) be a stumbling block?

--Would your dress standards be a stumbling block?

--Would the way your treat your spouse be a stumbling block to your kids?

--Would the friends you have chosen be a stumbling block to you or anyone else?

--Would your hobbies or recreational choices be a stumbling block? (EX: going to public beaches; going to the movies)

--Could you attend a baby baptism or first communion service at a Roman Catholic church?

When we refrain from something (even if there is nothing wrong with it) for the sake of others, we are not acting in legalism (as some would accuse) -- but in agape LOVE!

Beware of associations with things or people that will confuse other believers.

When we demand our rights at the expense of weaker brothers and sisters, we end up:

- Hindering them (v. 9)
- Emboldening them to sin (v. 10)
- Destroying them (v. 11)
- Wounding them (v. 12)
- Offending them (v. 13)

Some may rationalize this way: "Okay, I don't want to be a stumbling block to any of the brothers and sisters at church, so I just won't go to church anymore" (I'll avoid all Christians).

Is this God's solution? Or would His solution be that you remove the stumbling block from your life? Don't remove yourself, remove the sin! You will be a stumbling block of you remove yourself. You will be a discouragement to others being faithful to assembling.

V. 10

"Thee which hast knowledge" - You who are recognized for your spiritual maturity ought to be the most careful of what you allow in your life (what you do and don't do). Someone is looking up to you!

"Emboldened" - Strengthened. The weaker brother will feel he has some ground to stand on, even though he is not quite sure he should be doing what he sees you doing.

A weaker brother will always justify his behavior by your behavior. If he sees it's okay for you to do, then he will assume it's okay for him.

"Sit at meat in the idol's temple" - To recline at a table in a shrine dedicated to an idol.

"It would not be uncommon to be invited to a meal in the temple, as evident from some 'invitation cards' found among the papyri" (Bruce, cited by Reinecker, p. 412).

In the first century, it was an accepted social practice to have meals in a temple, or in some place associated with an idol. It was all part and parcel of the formal etiquette in society." (Morris, p. 123).

The places you go to will associate you with the place and what goes on there, so "Be careful little feet where you go."

Have you been found in any of this world's temples?

Do you sit at meat in questionable places?

A believer has no business in a night club, smoke-filled bar, a den of wickedness.

V. 11

"Perish" - be destroyed (in *"conscience"* - v. 12).

The destruction spoken of is in this life. It is not God who destroys this person, but another believer.

A saved *"brother"* cannot lose his salvation, but can have his spiritual life damaged by the practices of an inconsiderate believer.

V. 12

"Wound" - to strike with the first, staff, or whip. The wound you cause may leave a permanent scar on the person you cause to stumble.

"Ye sin" - To do something that someone perceives as wrong is wrong for me to do in their presence (or with their knowledge of it).

I have sinned (in such a case) even though the thing I did was not sinful.

What you do against a believer, you do against Christ.

Paul had this lesson brought home to him on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:4ff) (Morris, p. 129).

When you sin against a believer, you do not merely sin against them, but you sin against the one who died for them, saved them, and lives in them. Why? You lead them to violate their conscience by what you did in your life.

III. Pay more attention to <u>OTHERS</u> than to your self (v. 13)

"I will eat no flesh" - Not merely flesh offered to idols, but meat itself, if it would stumble someone.

Paul often waived his Christian liberties and rights for the sake of others. He would refrain from doing something if it might be misinterpreted, twisted, or be a hindrance in any way to the work of Christ (chapter 9). What great love he had for Christ and others!

Romans 14:21 - *"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."*

Paul's answer is <u>not</u> to ignore the consciences of those narrow-minded, immature, legalistic, critical, judgmental, hawk-eyed, weaker brethren -- but to bend so as not to offend.

God always expects the <u>strong</u> believer to do the bending (not to pamper the weak, but to build him).

"The strong must adapt their behavior to the consciences of the weak" (Morris, p. 130).

The strong should <u>not</u> expect the weak to conform to their higher standards without Biblical instruction (*"knowledge"*).

"There are many things which my conscience, enlightened by grace, permits me to do, but I won't do them because I might offend someone who does not have the same knowledge of grace." (M.R. DeHaan, p. 96).

--Many Mennonites believe that all <u>competitive sports</u> are sinful (I will not play sports in their presence).

--Some churches believe it is unspiritual for a woman to go to church without wearing a <u>hat</u> (my wife would wear a hate in their church).

--There was a time (in the days of the hippies) when having a <u>beard</u> was considered worldly by some believers (in such company, I would not have one).

Don't flaunt your Christian liberty!

The answer: Either correct their lack of knowledge, or yield to their standards.

Love must regulate liberty. You must choose to let love for others dictate what you do or don't do (it may be okay for you, no problem; but if one person perishes over your liberty, you will answer to God for it).

The question is <u>not</u>, "Is this okay for me to do? But "Would this be a help or a hindrance to the ones who are watching me?"

Do you have such an unselfish, gracious, loving spirit?

What are you willing to <u>give up</u> for the glory of Christ and the spiritual advancement of others?

CONCLUSION:

Should I or shouldn't I?

Here are some questions to ask about questionable practices:

<u>Excess</u> - **Will this weigh me down?** Is the activity or habit necessary, or is it merely an extra that is not really important? Is it perhaps only an encumbrance that we should willingly give up (Heb. 12:1)?

<u>Expediency</u> - Is what I want to do helpful and useful, or only desirable?
"All things are lawful for me," Paul says, "but not all things or profitable" or expedient (I Cor. 6:12).

<u>Emulation</u> -Would Jesus do this? *"The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked."* (I Jn. 2:6) If we are doing what Christ would do, our action not only is permissible but good and right.

<u>Example</u> - Are we setting the right example for others, especially for weaker brothers and sisters? If we emulate Christ, others will be able to emulate us, to follow our example (I Tim. 4:12).

<u>Evangelism</u> - Is my testimony going to be helped or hindered? Will unbelievers be drawn to Christ or turned away from Him by what I am doing? Will it help me conduct myself *"with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity"* (Col. 4:5)?

<u>Edification</u> - Will I be built up and matured in Christ; will I become spiritually stronger? *"All things are lawful, but not all things edify"* (I Cor. 10:23).

<u>Exaltation</u> -Will the Lord be lifted up and glorified in what I do? God's glory and exaltation should be the supreme purpose behind everything we do. *"Whether then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God"* (I Cor. 10:31).

(<u>Enslavement</u>) - Will this action control me?
"*I will not be brought under the power of any"* (I Cor. 6:12)

[List by John MacArthur]

"For the GOSPEL's Sake"

I Corinthians 9:1-27

7-30-2023

Introduction:

***What are you willing to sacrifice for the sake of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ?**

Let the Apostle Paul's example challenge you to surrender whatever it takes so that you will be more effective in giving your life for world evangelism!

I. Paul chose to remain <u>single</u>
so that he would not be hindered by marital obligations (v.5)

II. Paul chose to <u>minister</u> without <u>pay</u>
so that he would not be misjudged as a money-hungry evangelist (v.6-18)

III. Paul chose to <u>adjust</u> his <u>methodologies</u>
so that he would reach more people, without compromising his message or Biblical convictions (v.19-23)

IV. Paul chose to <u>discipline</u> his <u>life</u>
so that he would remain usable to Christ (v.24-27)

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I Corinthians 9:1-27

7-30-2023

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II. Paul chose to _____ without _____
so that he would not be misjudged as a money-hungry evangelist (v.6-18)

III. Paul chose to _____ his _____
so that he would reach more people, without compromising his message or Biblical convictions (v.19-23)

IV. Paul chose to _____ his _____
so that he would remain usable to Christ (v.24-27)

"For the GOSPEL's Sake"

I Corinthians 9:1-27

7-30-2023

Introduction:

Spreading the Gospel was Paul's life. When he woke up in the morning, he had one consuming thought: "How can I reach souls for Christ?" During his day: "How can I make contacts and build bridges into people's lives so that they might hear the Gospel and be saved? At night he did most of his discipleship as he taught from house to house, spreading the Gospel (Acts 20:20).

The word "Gospel" (good news) occurs seven times in this chapter.

Having answered the Corinthians question about the eating of meat offered to idols, Paul in chapter 9 gives himself as an example of one who did not abuse his Christian liberty (selfishly) but rather used it most effectively so as to reach as many people as possible with the Gospel of Christ (Note: One can only use himself as an example if he "practices what he preaches"!)

Note the theme of this chapter:

V. 12 - *"...[we] suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ."*

V. 18 - "*...when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge."*

V. 23 - *"And this I do for the Gospel's sake..."*

In Paul, we find an example of an unselfish, dedicated, flexible man, who was willing to adjust his lifestyle, techniques, and methodologies all so that he could reach others for Christ.

V. 1

"Am I not an Apostle" - Some questioned Paul's apostleship (perhaps because of his humble appearance, or his mediocre speaking ability, or his refusal to accept a large salary for his ministry - cf. II Cor. 11:7-12).

However, he was an official Apostle ("sent-one"), commissioned by Jesus Christ Himself, specially chosen to go to the Gentiles with the Gospel (Acts 9:15 - *"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.")*.

One mark of an apostle was that he be an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:21-22) (Paul saw Him and heard Him in Acts 9; cp. II Cor. 12).

Other marks of an apostle include:

--Ability to perform signs and wonders (II Cor. 12:12; cp. Heb. 2:3-4)

--Commissioned directly by Christ (Lk. 6:13; Acts 9)

--Reception of direct revelation (II Cor. 12:7)

--They laid the foundation for the Church (Eph. 2:20; I Cor. 3:10)

--They preached with the power of God (Acts; I Cor. 9:2)

"Am I not free?" - Not a slave to anyone, but a free man. Free socially and spiritually. Able to come and go as he pleased; able to utilize his liberty any way he chose.

"Are ye not my work in the Lord?" - i.e. your salvation is the result of my labor accomplished in Christ's power and wisdom.

This statement shows the paradoxical interplay between human agency and divine energy in the salvation of sinners. God employs human instruments to bring lost souls to Himself.

V. 2

"seal" - a stamp of authentication.

Although some others did not view Paul as a bonified apostle, the Corinthians had no reason not to. You, says Paul, are living proof of my apostolic power and authority. A false apostle could not lead anyone to a saving knowledge of Christ.

V. 3

Paul's answer (defense) to those who sit in judgment on him is giving by means of a series of questions which he rhetorically asks (v. 4-13).

V. 4

Although Paul had the power (right) to eat and drink anything he wanted, he would suspend this right in cases where his actions might mislead a weaker believer (ex: meat offered to idols - chapter 8).

The reference to eating and drinking in this chapter may refer to his right to eat or drink what other Christians gave him in compensation for his ministry. (i.e. to eat and drink at the church's expense - Morris, p.132)

***What are you willing to sacrifice for the sake of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ?**

Let the Apostle Paul's example challenge you to surrender whatever it takes so that you will be more effective in giving your life for world evangelism!

I. Paul chose to remain <u>single</u>

so that he would not be hindered by marital obligations (v.5)

V. 5

Paul had the right to marry a believer (*"sister")* just as the other famous apostles; the physical brothers of Jesus (James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas - Mt. 13:55); and Cephas.

"Paul asserts here the right of the apostle, if married, to take his wife with him, the implication being that she, too, would be supported by the church" (Morris, p.133)

Paul relinquished his right to marry because he had the gift of celibacy, not because of clergy celibacy laws, which were never instituted by God.

As he said in chapter 7, he was more free to serve Christ without distraction and the obligations of marriage by being single (v. 7-8, 32, 35).

II. Paul chose to <u>minister</u> without <u>pay</u>
so that he would not be misjudged as a money-hungry evangelist (v.6-18)

"To illustrate the surrender of rights within Christian liberty, Paul chose to talk about one right that all people possess. It is the right to receive wages for work (cp. I Tim. 5:18). By moving into this non-controversial area, Paul was free to explain clearly what he had mentioned earlier (8:9, 13)." (Gromacki, p. 108).

Paul did <u>not</u> reject all financial support (EX: the churches of Macedonia and Philippi, etc. gave to him over and over again). He, knowing he would be falsely accused at Corinth (judged as someone who pedaled the Gospel for money) chose to waive his right to receive a salary from this church.

V. 6

"Have we not power to forbear working?" - Don't we have the authority not to work (a secular job)? Paul and Barnabas had the right to refrain from working (and to be supported by the churches they planted), but they chose to surrender that right and to work as tentmakers (Acts 18:3).

In verses 7-14, Paul gives four illustrations to show how a preacher is worthy of pay, a minister should be renumerated with money, a servant of Christ is deserving of a salary.

1. The <u>Soldier</u> (v. 7a) -

No one goes into the armed services (whether Marines, Army, Navy, or Airforce) at his own expense. He does not buy his own uniform, artillery, ammunition, food, etc.

2. The <u>Farmer</u> (v. 7b) -

No one plants grapes without eating some; no one raises cows or goats without drinking their milk

3. The <u>Ox</u> (v. 9) -

The ox that works the field should be allowed to eat some along the way (Dt. 25:4)

V. 10 - This law had a broader application than merely to benefit animals.

V. 11 - The sowing and reaping principle applies specifically to pastors and people (Gal. 6:6-7).

4. The <u>Old Testament Levitical Priests</u> -

Didn't the Old Testament Levites have a right to eat of the offerings brought to the Temple? (Num. 18:8-24) Couldn't they eat of the animal sacrifices, the shewbread; drink of the wine?

V. 11

I Tim. 5:17- *"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine."*

V. 12

If others benefited from the right to be renumerated for their ministry, certainly the founder of the Corinthian Church had the right to be! But Paul voluntarily chose not to use this right to a paid salary, but rather endured the rigors of a job, so that no one could ever accuse him of preaching for dollars or ministering for money.

V. 14

"The Lord ordained" - Jesus taught: *"The labouror is worthy of his hire"* (Luke 10:7)

Those who proclaim the Gospel (as a living) should get their living from the Gospel.

Those who minister to a Church should be supported by that Church.

Those who are in full-time ministry ought to be on a full-time salary.

For the Brethren denomination to legislate church law which forbids their elders (pastors) from receiving a salary is unscriptural. It is contrary to a principle *"the Lord ordained."*

V. 15

"But I have used none of these things" - Paul did not exercise any of these financial rights at Corinth.

Nor is he writing this chapter that some at Corinth might feel sorry for him and send him a check in the mail!

Paul says, in effect: "I would rather die, than for someone to strip me of my proof that I did not evangelize for denarai or sheckels." or "I would rather be dead than have people point the finger and accuse me of preaching and teaching for filthy lucre"

V. 16

When he realized he was merely the chief of sinners (I Tim. 1:15) saved by God's grace, apart from works, and called into a ministerial office he did not deserve, Paul was aware that he had nothing to brag or boast about.

For Paul, preaching the Gospel was a binding obligation, not an option. A sacred duty, not a sometimes desire. It was a must, not a maybe; a conviction, not a choice.

He was compelled like Jeremiah, who said: *"Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."* (Jer. 20:9)

Compelled like Elihu, who said: *"For I am full of matter; the spirit within me constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer."* (Job 32:18-20)

Many times in our lives there is no "GO" because there is no "WOE." (We don't realize the seriousness of remaining silent.)

V. 17

Rewards only come to someone who witnesses willingly (not under compulsion from man, but love for Christ).

But even if we don't feel like doing it, we are stewards with a sacred trust and must preach the Gospel even when we don't want to.

V. 18

Paul's reward (in this life) was in the satisfaction of preaching the Gospel without pay. To see sinners saved and to know that his motive was not money.

III. Paul chose to <u>adjust</u> his <u>methodologies</u>
so that he would reach more people, without compromising his message or Biblical convictions (v.19-23)

V. 19

In verses 19-22, the phrase ***"that I might gain"*** occurs five times.

Paul's heart was fixed on gaining souls for Christ.

"Free from all men" - Although Paul did <u>not</u> have to live to suit anyone's customs, cultural practices, or mannerisms, he freely chose to serve them by adapting to their non-moral distinctions so as to win them for Christ.

V. 20

--Paul adapted his lifestyle to the <u>Jew</u> to win them (he would perhaps eat kosher foods, wear a homica on his head, speak the Hebrew which he knew, observe the Sabbath, etc. Observe certain Old Testament Jewish Laws (not with the intent of gaining salvation).

V. 21

--Paul adapted his lifestyle to the <u>Gentile</u> to win them (when in a Gentile's home, Paul did not rise up at the hour of prayer, face Jerusalem and begin praying; he didn't fulfill Old Testament civil and ceremonial laws, which were done away with and fulfilled at the cross. He lived by the Law of Love when in a Gentile's house.

V. 22

--Paul adapted his lifestyle to the weak to win them (the *"weak"* in context would include the one with a weak conscience toward idols [i:9-12]; Paul would not engage in any practice which would violate the conscience of anyone.)

"I am made all things to all men" - This does not involve Biblical compromise on doctrine, dogma, or clearly-defined moral issues.

This does not involve adaptations for fleshly purposes (i.e. "When in Rome do as the Romans do.")

It does involve adjustments in technique, methodology, and custom for the Gospel's sake.

If a person is offended by God's Word, Bible Doctrine, Clearly revealed standards etc. that is their problem. However, if he is offended by our unnecessary attitudes, behavior or practices, its our problem.

Jesus taught that those who go with the Gospel should be as *"wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."*

We need wisdom to adjust our methods without doing damage to the message.

Paul said that we all should *"walk in wisdom toward them that are without* (without Christ and salvation; those outside of the family of believers), *redeeming the time."* (Col. 4:5).

If Paul ministered in Mexico, would he allow a guitar to be used in the service?. . . in Jerusalem - a tambourine? . . . in Africa - a drum? (without the jungle demonic beat)

What does it mean to ***"be all things to all men"***? It means:

1. A willingness to allow for differences (not everyone has to "do Christianity" just like an American; how willing are you to accomodate the differences of others without ignoring or violating God's moral law?)

2. A willingness to bend on non-moral issues (compromise on preferences, never on principles)

3. A willingness to adjust your ways of doing things so that you can conform to the culture you are ministering in, without Biblical compromise (be flexible).

4. A willingness to be open to new methodologies (EX: a lunch sandwiched in between morning and afternoon services) (EX: Cell groups [as long as they do not abandon the corporate gathering]) (EX: Lifestyle Evangelism [as long as your lips give the Gospel])
   Methods change; Bible truth cannot change.

Paul adjusted his ways of doing things so that others might be joint-participants in the gospel (not joint-partakers in his version of dress, style, custom, and culture).

Paul was <u>not</u> a rigid, starchy, wooden, stereo-typed, cloned Christian. Paul in one sense would be against cloned Christianity.

We should be modelling Christ, not a standard American version of a three-piece suit, hair above the ears, black-framed glasses, old-time Fundamentalist.

IV. Paul chose to <u>discipline</u> his <u>life</u>

so that he would remain usable to Christ (v.24-27)

V. 24

In a race, all runners run, but only one ends up the winner.

All of us believers, who are also running a race (Heb. 12:1-2) ought to run so as to obtain the favor of Christ. Not a half-hearted, laxidazical, who cares style of Christianity.

In the Greek Isthmian games (likewise in the Roman Olympics), there could be only one winner, but in the Christian race, there can be many winners.

In the Olympic games, each contestant competed against others; in Christianity, we compete against ourselves (Gromacki).

V. 25-27

To be a winner for the Gospel's sake, we must be:

1) <u>Disciplined</u> (***"temperate"*** *v. 25* - not given to excesses or abuses, but given to strict training) Our Lord deserves more than half-hearted, flabby christian service!

2) <u>Focused</u> (***"not as uncertainly"*** v. 26 - not aimless or without purpose or objective -- Have a goal! Don't be a shadow boxing Christian; get in the ring & do something!)

3) <u>Self-Controlled</u> (***"body...into subjection"*** v. 27 - Paul's body did not control him; rather, he controlled it and subjected it to his spirit and mind. Our spirit should control our mind, and our mind should control our body -- not in reverse order!)

V. 27

"Castaway" - (*adokimos*) - unapproved, disqualified in the race.

The word "castaway" in context does not refer to the loss of salvation, but loss of

service or ministry for Christ. To be rendered unusable, worthless, or "put on a shelf."

Conclusion:

What are you willing to sacrifice for the Gospel? (i.e. that you may share it with others)

Some time? (Are you redeeming it? - Eph. 5:16)

Some sleep? (you can rest in Heaven)

Some energy? (walk door to door)

Some pride? (swallow your pride and witness)

Some money? (to buy tracts; give to missions)

Some TV? (what a preoccupation and time waster)

Some pleasures? (recreations, hobbies, etc.)

Are you willing to do for the truth what the cults are willing to do for a lie?

"TAKE HEED LEST YOU FALL!"

(How to Prevent Falling Into Sin)

I Corinthians 10:1-13

8-6-2023

INTRODUCTION: 9:24-27

***Take HEED lest you fall!** (v. 12)
(People stumble and fall when they don't pay attention to where they are going)

Pay attention to four principles that will prevent you from making a drastic fall.

I. Experiencing great <u>PRIVILEGES</u> does not exempt you from falling (v. 1-5)
(Look how sin is no respecter of persons)

Israel experienced the privilege of . . .

A. Miraculous <u>deliverance</u> (v. 1)
B. Godly <u>leadership</u> (v. 2)
C. Supernatural <u>provision</u> (v. 3-4)

. . . Yet Israel fell!

II. Learning from <u>EXAMPLE</u> is better than falling through experience (v. 6, 11)
(Look at the <u>examples</u> of the <u>fallen</u>)

III. Fearing sin's <u>CONSEQUENCES</u> can motivate you to keep from falling into its clutches (v. 7-10) (Look at the <u>end results</u> of sin)

IV. Taking <u>GOD'S ESCAPE ROUTE</u> is the way to endure Satan's temptations
(v. 13) (Look for an <u>open door</u> from temptation)

6 truths about the temptations you face:

A. You are not alone; Others have had the same temptations
("There hat no temptation taken you but such as is <u>common to man</u>")

B. God is in sovereign control over the tests He allows you to face
("But God is faithful, who will not suffer you ...")

C. Your trial is not too great for you to handle
("to be tempted above that ye are able")

D. God will always provide a way out without you giving in
("...but will with the temptation also make a way to escape")

E. Your trials will not continue forever
("...a way to escape..")

F. You can count on it, God will enable you to stand up under the pressure without caving under
("...that ye may be able to bear it")

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. . . Yet Israel fell!

II. Learning from _____ is better than falling through experience (v. 6, 11)
(Look at the _____ of the _____)

III. Fearing sin's _____ can motivate you to keep from falling into its clutches (v. 7-10) (Look at the _____ of sin)

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("...that ye may be able to bear it")

"TAKE HEED LEST YOU FALL!"

(How to Prevent Falling Into Sin)
I Corinthians 10:1-13
8-6-2023

INTRODUCTION: 9:24-27

Chapter 10 is actually a continuation of 9:24-27. Paul had stated in 9:24-27 that he (for the Gospel's sake) strictly controlled his body (with its lusts and passions) so that he would never become a castaway (disapproved and disqualified for service; rendered useless or worthless for Christ's ministry).

The apostle now uses many of the people among the nation of Israel as an illustration of people who had great privilege yet because of selfish and sinister lusts (v. 6) were judged by God and rendered disapproved.

V. 12

Look out! Your standing today does not guarantee you won't fall tomorrow.

Those who suppose themselves to be so high and mighty that nothing could knock them off their pedestal have a problem in several ways. They are:

1. Intellectually deceived (*"thinketh")*

2. Independently self-sufficient (*"he standeth")*
   (i.e. not by God's power but by his own)
   (Prov. 16:18 - *"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."*)

3. Indifferently oblivious (to the potential of a fall) (*"take heed"* - look out, wake up and take notice)
   (II Peter 3:17 - *"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness")*

***Take HEED lest you fall!** (v. 12)

(People stumble and fall when they don't pay attention to where they are going)

Pay attention to four principles that will prevent you from making a drastic fall.

I. Experiencing great <u>PRIVILEGES</u> does not exempt you from falling (v. 1-5)
(Look how sin is no respecter of persons)

Paul's point of view in v. 1-4 is that Israel had <u>tremendous privilege</u>. The nation was privy to wonders and miracles never experienced by anyone before or after.

Note: With privilege comes responsibility; and with greater privilege comes greater accountability. *"To whom much is given, much is required."*

By using the five-fold repetition of the word *"All,"* Paul stresses "the fact that without exception the Israelites received the tokens of God's good hand upon them" (Morris, p. 140).

Note: In verses 1-4, the word "***<u>all</u>***" occurs in every verse, showing that no one could excuse his sin by claiming a lack of deliverance, leadership, or provision. All shared the same blessings and all had the same privilege. Note: In Christ we all share in the same spiritual blessings (no "black sheep" in His family).

Specifically, what great privileges did the Moses generation of Israelites have?

1. Miraculous <u>deliverance</u> (v. 1)
2. Godly <u>leadership</u> (v. 2)
3. Supernatural <u>provision</u> (v. 3-4)
   --manna (v. 3)
   --water from a rock (v. 4)

A. Miraculous <u>Deliverance</u> (v. 1)

"I would not that ye should be ignorant" - "Those who fail to remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (a sign hung at Jonestown - ie. the Jonestown cult, Jim Jones)

"Under the <u>cloud</u>" - This supernatural cloud both guided and protected the nation of Israel as they made their exodus from Egypt.

It <u>guided</u> them by day as it took the form of a giant pillar and by night as a pillar of fire (which illuminated their path). SEE: Exodus 13:21-22.

It <u>protected</u> them from their pursuers as it produced a thick, foggy darkness, making it impossible for the Egyptians to know where they were going; and it protected them by providing light for their night journey (SEE: Exod. 14:19-20).

B. Godly <u>leadership</u> (v. 2)

"Baptized unto Moses" - i.e. they were fully identified with Moses as their leader as they were immersed, as it were, in the midst of the cloud and in the midst of the Red Sea which parted for them [Note: Baptism is believers' way of showing whom he identifies with; we identify with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and specifically with the salvation provided for us in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.]

Israel had the privilege of being led by the greatest human leader to ever live!

C. Supernatural provision (v. 3-4)

V. 3
"Spiritual meat" - Food produced by a supernatural or spiritual agent. The manna was literal food but owes its origin not to natural causes but to spiritual. It was delicious, honey-flavored, light, white wafers manufactured in Heaven (Exod. 16:4, 31)

"Spiritual drink" - Again, literal water, which came not from natural rivers, reservoirs, or springs, but from the invisible yet real and powerful pre-incarnate Person of Jesus Christ.

V. 4
"The rock was Christ" **=** Proof of Christ's pre-existence (cp. Jn. 8:58).

Everywhere they went, Jesus Christ went and gave them water for their parched tongues in the midst of a waterless desert (Exod. 17:1-9; Num. 20:1-13).

V. 5
"But" - Shows a marked contrast between the privilege received (v. 1-4) and the evil, ungrateful, disobedient, lustful response of the Israelites.

"Many of them" - Most of them but not "all" of them (God always has a narrow remnant).

"Overthrown" - To be strewn all over, low in the dust, as if blown down by a hurricane.
Having these privileges will not guarantee you will not fall:

--Growing up in a Christian home
--Going to a Christian school (college, seminary, institute)
--Going through the mechanics of devotions or church attendance

[Note: Paul had the privilege of being an apostle! Yet he feared being a castaway.]

II. Learning from EXAMPLE is better than falling through experience (v. 6, 11)
(Look at the examples of the fallen)

V. 6

Why did God reveal the casualties, ship wrecks, and negative examples of the Old Testament? Answer: So that we would not do likewise and face the abhorrent consequences of disobedience. We can either learn by example or we will learn by experience. But we will learn. Why not learn from the blunders of others rather than having to go through the "school of hard knocks" yourself?

A ***"lust"*** is simply an appetite which seeks to be satisfied outside of the will of God.

"Lust" - to have a strong desire toward something you don't have; to crave something that is not yours.

"Evil things" - bad things, things which are forbidden; detrimental, harmful.

It is intriguing to see how forbidden things tend to incite cravings for them. *"Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant"* (Prov. 9:17).

Things people lust after today:

--the pretty woman/the handsome man
--the fancy clothes
--the new house
--the latest model car
--fame & fortune

The Israelites lusted when they preferred the food of Egypt over God's food (Numb. 11:4 - *"And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?"*
How to Gain Victory Over Lusts:

1. Pray for God to help you and meet your needs
   (James 4:2 - *"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not."*)

2. Discipline your thought life
   (II Cor. 10:5 - *"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.")*

3. Don't feed illicit passions
   (Rom. 13:14 - *"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.")*

4. Be content with what you have in God and from God
   (Heb. 13:5 - *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hat said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.")*

V. 11

God wrote the Old Testament not merely for the Old Testament saint but for us who live in the Last Days of the Church age.

III. Fearing sin's CONSEQUENCES can motivate you to keep from falling into its clutches (v. 7-10)

(Look at the end results of sin)

Satan can paint such an alluring picture of sin. There is a beautiful side to evil. That side is the front; the back side is ugly!

Look at the end result of sexual impurity (SEE: Prov. 5:1-13, 22:23)

V. 7

An idol is any substitute for God to which you devote time, thought, and energy.

Idolatry can be more than mere objects of wood, stone, or metal. The bible speaks of *"idols in the heart"* (Ezek. 14:3, 4, 7)

Examples of modern idols:

--rock or rap musician
--Hollywood movie star
--famous celebrity
--sports hero
[Note: Our identify should be in Christ]
--humanism (the worship of man)
--materialism (the worship of things)
--New Age-ism (the worship of self)

The idolatry referred to here is the golden calf set up below Mt. Sinai (Exod. 32:1ff).

"The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (Exod. 32:6). The word *"play"* suggest sex play (it is the same Hebrew word as is used in Gen. 26:8). In light of the drinking and nakedness (32:25), the scene likely became a drunken sex orgy (Ryrie note).

Idolatry always results in immorality.

Sinful humans will readily accept a deity which will allow them to live any way they want to.

V. 8

"Fornication" - Sexual immorality -- a broad term including: masturbation, pornography (sex videos, books, magazines), pre-marital sex, homosexuality, extra-marital affairs, etc.

Israel's idolatry and mingling with the heathen Midianites at Baal Peorr led to sexual immorality resulting in the deaths of 23,000 in *"one day"* and an additional 1,000 later, totalling 24,000 (SEE: Num. 25:1-9).

V. 9

"Tempt Christ" - Christ was in the Old Testament (another evidence of His pre-existence and deity).

"Tempt" - Israel tested Christ's patience, by being continually ungrateful and

having a bad, bitter attitude. He who is long-suffering can have His patience run out!

God sent vipers among the gripers (SEE: Num. 21:4-9).

Have you been testing the Lord's patience? (*"His spirit shall not always strive with man"* (Gen. 6:3; I Pet. 3:20).

V. 10

***"Murmer"* -** to grumble and complain. To have a bad attitude involving a reluctance to submit to God's will.

After God wiped out the rebels of Korah, many who were sympathetic toward them grumbled against Moses for it, and 14,700 of them died in the plague (SEE: Num. 16:41-50).

Murmuring is a terrible sinful attitude because:

1) It reveals a <u>stubborn</u> heart
(a refusal to subject oneself and one's consequences to God's will)
(Why do people complain about the weather? it's their chance to get back at God)

2) It is usually a <u>shifting of blame</u> onto someone other than self
(many justify their wicked attitude over the sin of others)

3) It reveals a <u>discontented</u> heart
(Phil. 2:14 - *"Do all things without murmurings and disputings")*

IV. Taking <u>GOD'S ESCAPE ROUTE</u> is the way to endure Satan's temptations (v. 13)
(Look for an <u>open door</u> from temptation)

V. 13 confirms 6 truths about the temptations you face:

A. You are not alone; Others have had the same temptations
("There hat no temptation taken you but such as is common to man")

B. God is in sovereign control over the tests He allows you to face
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D. God will always provide a way out without you giving in
("...but will with the temptation also make a way to escape")

E. Your trials will not continue forever
("...a way to escape..")

F. You can count on it, God will enable you to stand up under the pressure without caving under
("...that ye may be able to bear it")

The world, flesh, or devil provide the temptation -- God provides the way out.

God can be trusted to provide a place of refuge and protection that you can flee to.

God's "way out" might not seem to be the most desirable way in the short run, but it is the best when you take the long look.

God will meet the need you feel you have in His way and in His time if you *"wait upon Him."*

But we must take God's way out when He provides it. If we linger near the temptation, wondering if we should take God's way or the temptation, we may find that later the escape is gone and we are trapped. ("He who hesitates is lost")

"Should I or Shouldn't I ?"

I Corinthians 10:14-11:1

8-20-2023

Introduction: v.14,15

*** When facing a decision about whether or not we should do something we need to ask ourselves the right questions!**

I. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>ASSOCIATE</u> me with evil? *(vv.16-22)*

II. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>BUILD ME UP</u> in the Faith? *(v.23)*

III. ***If I do this...***
Will it be <u>HELPFUL</u> to others or purely <u>SELFISH</u> for me? *(v.24)*

IV. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>CONFUSE the CONSCIENCE</u> of others? *(v.25-30)*

V. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>GLORIFY GOD</u>? *(v.31)*

VI. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>STUMBLE</u> any non-believer or Christian? *(v.32)*

VII. ***If I do this...***
Will my <u>EXAMPLE</u> be one that others can follow? *(v.33, 11:1)*

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Will it _____ me with evil? *(vv.16-22)*

II. ***If I do this...***
Will it _____ in the Faith? *(v.23)*

III. ***If I do this...***
Will it be _____ to others or purely _____ for me? *(v.24)*

IV. ***If I do this...***
Will it _____of others? *(v.25-30)*

V. ***If I do this...***
Will it _____? *(v.31)*

VI. ***If I do this...***
Will it _____ any non-believer or Christian? *(v.32)*

VII. ***If I do this...***
Will my _____ be one that others can follow? *(v.33,11:1)*

"Should I or Shouldn't I ?"

I Corinthians 10:14-11:1

8-20-2023

Introduction: v.14,15

V. 14

"Wherefore" - After a two-chapter parenthesis, Paul now concludes a subject he began discussing in 8:1: specifically, the believer's response to food offered to idols.

"Dearly beloved" - The truths Paul expresses come from a heart of love.

"Idolatry" :

--Worshipping <u>any image</u> is idolatry (Dt. 4:14-19)

--Worshipping <u>angels</u> is idolatry (Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10)

--Worshipping <u>demons</u> is idolatry (Rev. 9:20)

--Worshipping <u>dead men</u> is idolatry (Ps. 106:28-29)

--<u>Covetousness</u> is idolatry (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5)

"Flee idolatry" - Run from it; keep as far removed from idolatry as possible (as one would flee from the flowing hot lava of a volcano or from the falling timber in a burning forest, so we should <u>run</u> away from anything associated with idolatry). The RCC not only refuses to flee from idolatry; they have in fact promoted it!

V. 15

The Corinthians, who prided themselves in their wisdom, should have enough discernment to evaluate and embrace what Paul now says.

*** When facing a decision about whether or not we should do something we need to ask ourselves the right questions!**

I. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>ASSOCIATE</u> me with evil? (vv.16-22)

V. 16

"Bless" - to give thanks

(Every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we give thanks for what those elements represent.)

Paul here is telling us <u>what</u> we are sharing in, <u>not how</u> we are sharing in it.

Therefore, to compare with other Scripture, the <u>sharing</u> (partaking) in the blood and body of Christ in the Lord's Supper is only a sharing in it by way of *"remembrance"* (cp. Lk. 22:19; I Cor. 11:24, 25).

Since it is a symbol of Christ's blood and body, sharing in the Communion elements identifies the partaker with Christ Himself.

The word "communion" (*koinonia)* means to fellowship; it speaks of an intimate sharing together.

Every time we have the Lord's Supper, we fellowship with Christ and associate ourselves with His shed blood and pierced Body which He sacrificed on Calvary.

V. 17

"For" - introduces a reason which validates verse 16.

Paul is saying: The reason we are so closely associated with Christ in the Lord's Supper is because we are in fact <u>one</u> with Him (all believers are united with each other because of our common partaking of that *"one bread"* - Jesus Christ Himself.)

"We are all partakers of that <u>one bread</u>" - This is not a reference to the different pieces of unleavened bread we all consume at the Lord's Supper, but to the singular person of Jesus Christ Himself; He is the *"true bread from heaven"* which if a man partake of by faith, he instantly becomes one with Christ (John 6:32-35 - *"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father given you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and given life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth in me shall never thirst."* Cp. v. 48-64)

V. 18

"Israel after the flesh" - Paul is not using this expression to distinguish that nation Israel from the true Israel, the Christian church, as some suggest (Morris, p. 146). Rather, he is distinguishing between unregenerate Israelites who still offered up carnal sacrifices and regenerate Israelites who were no longer involving themselves in the Old Testament sacrificial system (cp. Hebrews).

Every time a national Israelite ate something off of God's altar, he was associating with that altar and everything it stood for.

V. 19

Paul asks rhetorical questions expecting a NO answer.

He is not saying that the idol has any reality in it by exhorting us to not associate with it.

Anyone who worships idols is in fact worshipping demons (cp. Dt. 32:17), since the idols owe their origin to the demonic host who spawned their existence in the minds of men. Demons can even cause an idol to take on human characteristics (such as speaking, shedding tears, movement; cp. Rev. 13:15).

V. 21

Verse 21 is similar to Christ's statement: *"No man can serve two masters..."* (Mt. 6:24).

There are some who:

--sing the Lord's song on Sunday and dance to the devil's music on Monday.

--praise the Lord on Sunday and speak like the devil on Monday.

--serve Christ on Sunday and serve the flesh Monday - Saturday.

V. 22

For a believer to associate with anything connected to Satan is to be unfaithful to God and thereby to commit spiritual adultery against Him.

Such divided affection and loyalty would make Him jealous; yea, it would be to fight against Him.

What's the point of verses 16 - 22? It is simply this: Just as sharing in the Lord's Supper associates the eater with Christ, and just as sharing in the meat on the Temple altar associates the eater with the Temple -- in the same way one who shares in eating things from a pagan altar is associating with that demonic altar and all it represents.

Anything which would associate me with the world (or worldliness), evil, rebellion, etc., is wrong for me to be involved with.

"You are known by the company you keep." You become associated with them.

We guard our language, dress, appearance, diet, recreation, etc., because we don't want to be associated with the world or evil.

Our identity is with Christ; therefore any behavior, attitude, activity, or place which would detract from our Christ-likeness should be shed like a leprous garment.

II. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>BUILD ME UP</u> in the Faith? (v.23)

"Lawful" - Perhaps referring to Roman law; the laws of the land may allow something, but this does not make it right. (There is <u>no</u> civil law against foul language, adultery, pre-marital sex, viewing x-rated videos at home, being arrogant, etc., but none of these things are profitable for the Christian.)

"All things are lawful" - If the reference is to God's Law, Paul is saying, "In the realm of <u>non-moral</u> issues, all things are lawful."

"Expedient" - beneficial, advantageous, profitable, useful.

If it does not benefit us spiritually, physically, or emotionally, and/or if it does not benefit the cause of Jesus Christ, it is <u>not</u> for us to waste our life on!

--The question is <u>not</u> merely "How does it hurt me?" The question should be "How does it help me?"

--Our concern is <u>not</u> merely whether or not it is negatively sinful, but we should consider whether or not it is positively good.

Whatever we spend our time on, we are actually exchanging a part of our life for. We are actually giving part of our life up for it. What we live for, we are actually dying for. So if it isn't worth dying for, it isn't worth living for.

"Edify" - (akin to "edifice") - speaks of that which <u>builds one up</u>.

--If the practice will not advance my life spiritually, I should not spend my life on it.

--If the practice will not enhance my walk with Christ or draw me closer to God, perhaps I should reconsider doing it.

The question is not merely "Does it tear me down?" The question is: "Does it build me up?"

III. ***If I do this...***
Will it be <u>HELPFUL</u> to others or purely <u>SELFISH</u> for me? (v.24)

Is what I am doing purely <u>self-centered</u> or <u>selfish</u>? Or did I consider the ramifications my choices and decisions will have on <u>others</u>? Will my decision have a positive impact on my spouse, children, fellow-Christians?

Phil. 2:4 - *"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."*

(SEE Romans 15:1-3)

IV. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>CONFUSE the CONSCIENCE</u> of others? (v.25-30)

V. 25
"Shambles" - meat market

"Asking no questions" - Such as, "Do you know if this meat was ever offered to an idol?" (what you don't know won't hurt you or anyone else in such cases)

V. 26

What exactly might have happened to the meat between the cow and the market was not to be a fussy matter to be over-scrupulous about. The point is, it has its source in God and is okay to eat. If God gave it to you, eat it and give Him thanks (cp. I Tim. 4:4).

V. 28

"For the earth is the Lord's. . ." - Paul repeats this truth for the second time (cp. v. 26) to show now that, if anyone chooses not to eat (for conscience's sake) he will not starve, for God has much more to give to him ("He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, the wealth in every mine").

The point is this: Whatever you choose to give up for the sake of others, God is sure to replace it, because he owns all.

V. 29

We should never knowingly do anything that would violate the conscience of another [i.e. something that might be construed as sin in us might lead them to sin and violate their conscience.]

Areas of Christian liberty should never be abused so as to violate the conscience of another believer.

V. 25-30

If an unbeliever or weak brother sees in a strong believer's actions a moral or doctrinal compromise, such may lead that person to justify his own deviant actions.

Paul is not calling on us to project false appearances. He is <u>not</u> saying that we should appear to be something we are not (Jesus rebuked this hypocrisy - Mt. 6:2-16; Mt. 23:2b). Rather, Paul is saying we should <u>not</u> appear to be something that we are <u>not</u>. We should not convey a false impression.

As Paul said to the Romans, *"Let not your good be evil spoken of"* (Rom. 14:16).

V. ***If I do this...***
Will it GLORIFY GOD? (v.31)

"Whatsoever" - Includes every activity we do; every place we go; everything we partake of.

"Do all" - Nothing excluded; there ought not to be a distinction between the secular and the sacred for the Christian, for "all ground is holy ground."

"The glory of God" - We ought to do everything so that God would shine; that He would be magnified; that His principles, precepts, and program would be credited, praised, and honored.

A question which should be continually popping up in our minds throughout every minute of every day is the question, "Does this glorify God?"

--Does my attitude toward my children or spouse today glorify God?

--Are my thoughts glorifying God?

--Will this decision glorify God?

--Will this purchase glorify God?

--Is my language glorifying God?

--Are my actions glorifying God?

Should any area of our lives be "off limits" to God?

If not, then we should not mind if He has front row seats to every activity we do!

Will others have a better view of God by the picture they see of His working in our lives? (Mt. 5:16 - *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*).

VI. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>STUMBLE</u> any non-believer or Christian? (v.32)

"Give none offense" - Don't do anything which will hurt, harm, cause injury, or stumble anyone else.

If one person falls into sin or descends into hell because they stumbled over some inconsistency in your life, you will answer to God for that!

"Jews" - national Israelites

"Gentiles" - Greeks

"The church of God" - believers

No matter what nationality or ethnic background, no matter what religious background, no matter whether lost or saved -- we should never be a stumbling block to them.

May nothing in our lives ever be an <u>obstacle</u> to the salvation of any sinner or to the edification of any saint!

Jesus paid taxes so as not to offend the tax collectors, though He is Lord of all the earth and people should have paid tribute and taxes to Him (Mt. 17:27 - *"Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.)*.

Jesus said: *"And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea."* (Mk. 9:42).

VII. ***If I do this...***
Will my <u>EXAMPLE</u> be one that others can follow? (v.33,11:1)

V. 33

Although Paul did not accommodate his message to please men (cp. Gal. 1:10), he did seek their spiritual pleasure or welfare (Gromacki, p. 130).

Although most people live for selfish pleasure (regardless of what their actions might do to others), Paul's life was one characterized by unselfish love for others.

He lived in such a way so as to never do anything which might hinder the Gospel.

What are you willing to change about your life that others might be saved?

11:1

This verse is really the conclusion to chapter 10.

Paul sought to pattern his life after Christ's earthly example, Who relinquished His rights to certain privileges so that He could never be misunderstood or held in contempt.

Paul says model, mimic, imitate, or copy me to the degree that I model Christ. Is your life truly Christ-like? Are you worth modeling?

Titus 2:7-8 says that you young men should *"In all things [be] shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."*

What kind of <u>example</u> are you setting?

Do you want your kids to follow in your steps?

"A SIGN OF SUBMISSION"

I Corinthians 11:2-16

9-10-2023

INTRODUCTION:

***A woman's head covering or long hair is a sign of sweet submission to the authority of her husband.**

Six reasons why women cover their heads with veils or long hair and men do not:

I. The <u>HEADSHIP</u> in Theology (v. 3)

II. The <u>CUSTOMS</u> in Certain Societies (v. 4-6)

III. The <u>REFLECTIONS</u> of Glory by Man and Woman (v. 7)

IV. The <u>CREATION</u> Order (v. 8-9)

V. The <u>ANGELS</u> Watching Over Men and Women (v. 10)

VI. The <u>NATURAL</u> World (v. 14-15)

CONCLUSION: Three vital principles to be applied -

1. A woman's <u>role</u> should be distinct from her husband's
   (on the same team but with different jobs)

2. A woman's <u>appearance</u> should be distinct from a man's
   (in hair and dress - Deut. 22:5 - *"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God."*)

3. A woman's <u>value</u> is equal to a man's (v. 11-13)

Be content being what God made you!

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"A SIGN OF SUBMISSION"

I Corinthians 11:2-16

9-10-2023

INTRODUCTION:

What would be wrong with me wearing a veil or having long hair?

(Most would say, "Because you look weird!" "Nobody's doing it" etc.)

God established the principle of authority and subordination for the purpose of:

1) Order (structure; to avoid chaos and confusion)

2) Harmony (teamwork - to work together)

3) Unity (to work as one)

**4) Service (the one in submission should allow the one in authority to <u>serve</u> by fulfilling his God-assigned task of oversight, protection, and leadership)

V. 2

***"Ordinances"* =** Oral teachings passed on from the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians. Such traditions did not originate with man (cp. Mt. 15:8-9) but with God. As God Word was put in written form, the oral teachings pass on by word-of-mouth would be replaced by permanent, inspired, concrete, printed forms which could be copied and distributed for all believers with unsurpassed accuracy.

***A woman's head covering or long hair is a sign of sweet submission to the authority of her husband.**

Six reasons why women cover their heads with veils or long hair and men do not:

I. The HEADSHIP in Theology (v. 3)

The word ***"head"*** (*kephale)* refers to authority, direction, and leadership.

Just as one's physical head (brain) gives direction to the body and the body willingly responds, so it is in the headship relationships mentioned in this verse.

[NOTE: A body part that functions independently of the brain has serious problems; it's spasmatic.]

[NOTE: The word "head" as used in this context does not refer to "source," as some liberal, feministic Bible interpreters have said.]

The husband's head is Christ (therefore, a Godly man submits to Christ).

The wife's head is her husband (therefore, a Godly woman submits to her husband).

And Christ's head is God the Father (Jesus always submitted Himself to the will of the Father - Jn. 4:34, 6:38).

Headship does not and cannot mean that one sex is better or superior in essence to the other.

If it did, this would mean that Jesus is inferior in essence to God the Father. On the contrary, Jesus is "equal" with the Father (Jn. 5:18; Phil. 2:6). He is of the same essence as the Father (He is "God" - Col. 2:9); He is one with the Father (Jn. 10:30).

In the same way there exists leadership and subordination in the Trinity, so God--who created man in His own image--built leadership and subordination in the Family.

To rebel against god's order for husbands and wives is to rebel against the One who sovereignly instituted the distinct roles.

"If Christ had not submitted to the will of God, redemption for mankind would have been impossible, and we would forever be doomed and lost. If individual human beings do not submit to Christ as Savior and Lord, they are still doomed and lost, because they reject God's gracious provision. And if women do not submit to men, then the family and society as a whole are disrupted and destroyed. Whether on a divine or human scale, subordination and authority are indispensable elements in God's order and plan." (MacArthur, p. 253).

II. The CUSTOMS in Certain Societies (v. 4-6)

V. 4

"His head covered" - lit. having anything down over his head (whether veil or long hair).

For a man to choose to wear a head covering is to disgrace or shame his Head - Jesus Christ.

V. 5

In our wester society, it seems that the only time you see head veils is at weddings and funerals.

However, in Paul's day, they were seen every day. In Paul's day and culture, if a woman did not wear a covering (veil), it was a sign of disrespect for her husband.

I believe that the issue of women wearing veils when praying or testifying in the public church setting was a cultural practice. It was a matter of ***"custom"*** (v. 16). ***"Custom"*** **=** A societal habit.

In Paul's day, there was no custom for a woman to ever pray or testify without a covering. It was true of the secular society and of the ***"churches of God."***

"In many Near East countries today a married woman's veil still signifies that she will not expose herself to other men, that her beauty and charms (and submission) are reserved entirely for her husband, that she does not care even to be noticed by other men." (MacArthur, p. 256).

According to the customs of Paul's day, if a woman refused to wear a head covering in public, she might as well shave off all her hair and be bald!

Only the prostitutes and rebellious feminists of Paul's day refused tow ear a head covering. Reason: They were not submitted any male authority.

V. 6

Paul re-emphasizes his point, saying: If the women refuses to wear a head covering, she might as well go to the barber and get all her hair shaved off. Why? Because it was just as disgraceful for her to be bald as it would be for her to not wear a veil in public in his day and culture.

Her long hair and covering were both equal signs of submission.

So Paul adds, If it was disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off and her head shaved, it was also disgraceful for her to be veiled.

"We know from secular history that various movements of women's liberation and feminism appeared in the Roman empire during New Testament times. Women would often take off their veils or other head coverings and cut their hair in order to look like men. Much as in our own day, some women were demanding to be treated exactly like men and they attacked marriage and the raising of children as unjust restrictions of their rights. They asserted their independence by leaving their husbands and homes, refusing to care for their children, living with other men, demanding jobs traditionally held by men, wearing men's clothing and hairdos, and by discarding all signs of femininity. It is likely that some believers at Corinth were influenced by these movements and, as a sign of protest and independence, refused to cover their heads at appropriate times." (MacArthur, p. 256).

III. The <u>REFLECTIONS</u> of Glory by Man and Woman (v. 7)

Why is it wrong for a man to wear a head veil?

Answer: he reflects God's image and glory, having been made by a direct act of God out of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7).

[And God has nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to hide; therefore, man can manifest God's image and glory without covering his head.]

"Because some ancient rabbis had misinterpreted Exodus 34:33-35, they taught that Jewish men should cover their heads when they prayed because Moses veiled his face in the presence of God's glory. But it was in the people's presence, not God's presence, that Moses wore the veil. As Paul explains in his next letter to Corinth, Moses *"used to put a veil over his face that the sons of Israel might not look intently at the end of what was fading away"* (II Cor. 3:13). He did not want them to see the glory of God, which he had received in God's presence, fading from his face. The Jewish tradition of men covering their heads to pray is therefore a human tradition, not a divine one." (MacArthur, p. 258)

However, since the woman was made from the man's *"rib"* (side), she reflects the glory of the man, and man's glory is not worthy to be fully and openly manifested because she is manifesting mere mortality, mere dust and ashes.

IV. The CREATION Order (v. 8-9)

V. 8

The first man, Adam, did not come from the woman, Eve. If he did, man would need to wear the veil. But rather, the woman was made from the man (Gen. 2:22); therefore, she is a reflection of his humble humanness and therefore must have a head covering to show her reflection of mere mortality.

Although a veil or head covering was a customary symbol of subordination in Paul's day, the principle of subordination itself transcends every age and culture. It goes back to creation order.

V. 9

"The woman for the man" - God didn't create Adam for Eve, rather He created Eve for Adam, to be his *"help meet"* (completer or suitable helper).

Every wife needs to realize that she does not exist for her own self; she exists for the benefit of the man God gave to her.

You were not made for your career -- you were made for your husband. You were not made for your children (although God did made you sot hat you would bear and care for them) -- you were made for your husband.

If you help him to be all that God wants him to be, you will fulfill the purpose for which you were made, and you will finally find joy in life.

V. The ANGELS Watching Over Men and Women (v. 10)

"Power on her head" - (the sign or symbol) of authority on her head.

The woman's head covering was an external symbol showing submission to her authority over her.

"Because of the angels" - The angels who observe the conduct of every believer (cp. I Pet. 1:12) and minister to (serve, help, aid) every believer (Heb. 1:14), evidently become offended (ashamed) when a wife is insubordinate to her head. Perhaps they even withdraw their assistance and protection from such women!

VI. The NATURAL World (v. 14-15)

V. 14

The issue of hair length on men and women was not a matter only applicable to certain cultures. Even ***"nature"*** (which transcends every culture and custom) teaches that men ought to have short hair and women longer hair.

--A man's hair generally does not grow as fast as a woman's (in some cases it doesn't grow at all - EX: bald men)

--A man's hair is never as beautiful as a woman's (generally rough like a lion's mane)

For a man to have long hair (with the exception of the Jewish Nazarite vow) is for him to be submissive to his wife, and to fail to reflect the *"image and glory of God"* (v. 7).

In every culture, country, and continent, men generally have short hair and women longer. (it's a part of life; it's an innate, inbred, natural part of human life on earth).

How long is long?

> Scripture doesn't give an inch measurement. Rule of thumb: It should be noticeably shorter than the average woman's hair. (and it should not be cut in feminine styles)

Did Jesus have long hair? No, He would not contradict His own Word and principles. Jesus was a Nazarene (from Nazareth), not a Nazarite. The Renaissance painters who depicted Him with long hair were forcing their own styles on Him.

V. 15

"A glory to her" - Your hair, ladies, is your glory! It is that which makes you uniquely beautiful.

[An interesting observation: When the woman Mary (the sister of Martha and Lazarus) wiped precious perfumed oil on Jesus' feet with the hair of her head, she was utilizing her "glory" to bring glory to Him! (John 11:2ff)]

How long is long?

Noticeably longer than a man's (and not cut in masculine styles)

The modern short styles of women's hair is reflective of a society which has discarded any desire to be subordinate to authority.

The short hair on women and long hair on men in America is a visible demonstration of a Satanically-inspired role reversal. I want nothing to do with a

hair salon which bears the name "UNISEX"!

"Her hair is given her (by God) ***for a covering" -*** The word translated *"covering"* here refers to anything which might be "thrown over" (*peribolaiou)* the head.

The word translated "for" is the Green word "*anti"*, which means "instead of, in the place of, as a substitute for."

God has given every woman a natural head covering. You don't need to buy a hat at Penney's - you have the most glorious covering already!

A woman's long hair is a natural covering, whereas a veil or other material covering was a cultural covering.

Long hair is always a sign of submission. (EX: In the Jewish Nazarite vow, men such as Samson [Jud. 13], Samuel [I Sam. 1:9-11], John the Baptist [Lk. 1:15, 80], and Paul [Acts 18:18]) wore long hair as an external sign of submission to a "separation" vow they had made [Numbers 6]. The long hair during this usually-temporary vow evidently served as a reminder to the Nazarite to daily submit to his vow.

CONCLUSION: Three vital principles to be applied -

1. A woman's role should be distinct from her husband's
   (on the same team but with different jobs)

--Submission is trusting God to lead you through the responsible decisions of your husband.

--"Submission is ducking so your husband gets the punch" from God.

2. A woman's appearance should be distinct from a man's
(in hair and dress - Deut. 22:5 - *"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.")*

3. A woman's value is equal to a man's (v. 11-13)

V. 11

Lest the male human species should be puffed up with pride, Paul is quick to demonstrate a mutual dependency. Man needs the woman and the woman needs the man. Without either, the means of procreation would be non-existent.

The Lord views both men and women to be equal in value, dignity, respect, and usefulness in His ministry.

Differences in roles and responsibilities? Yes
Differences in worth or essence? NO!

V. 12

Eve came from Adam, but all other males (and females) came in to the world by means of the woman's gender, yet God is ultimately to be credited since He is the Author of life itself.

V. 13

A woman cannot pray uncovered; to do so would be to dishonor her husband by not having on her head a symbol of submission to him.

Certainly more important than the sign of submission is the substance of submission. In other words, actually submitting to your husband matters more than the head covering, which is supposed to manifest such submission. Yet, Paul now--as he did in chapter 10--is showing us that it is important that we portray with our external lifestyles what we really practice in our hearts, so that no one might mis-judge us or be turned away from our Christianity.

Be content being what God made you!

The Lord's Supper

I Corinthians 11:17-34

9-17-2023

Introduction:

*** How should we celebrate the Lord's Supper?**

We must realize 3 truths about the Lord's Supper:

The Lord's Supper is:

I. A Time of <u>REVERENCE</u> (v.17-22)
(Communion is a <u>SERIOUS</u> service,
not a greedy "all you can eat," "first come, first served" feast)

The Lord's Supper is:

II. A Time of <u>REMEMBRANCE</u> (v.23-26)
(Communion is a <u>MEMORIAL</u> service
of Christ's death for sinners)

The Lord's Supper is:

III. A Time of <u>REFLECTION</u> (v.27-32)
(Communion is a <u>SELF-EXAMINATION</u> service,
which should never be partaken of unworthily)

Conclusion: v.33-34

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Conclusion: v.33-34

The Lord's Supper

I Corinthians 11:17-34

9-17-2023

Introduction:

The Lord's Supper is no light, insignificant matter. In it we show:

1) Our Faith in Him
2) Our Allegiance to Him
3) Our Dependence on Him
4) Our Reverence for Him

*** How should we celebrate the Lord's Supper?**

We must realize 3 truths about the Lord's Supper:

The Lord's Supper is:

I. A Time of REVERENCE (v.17-22)

(Communion is a SERIOUS service,
not a greedy "all you can eat," "first come, first serve" feast)

V. 17

"I praise you not" - Most of the letter to the Corinthians is one of rebuke and correction.

"Ye come together not for the better, but for the worse" - The Corinthians' church gatherings did more harm than good.

Assembling with God's people, around God's Word, under the direction of God's Spirit, should result in the spiritual benefit (edification) of those who attend. (In many churches today, the same can be said as was said to Corinth: "Your gathering does more harm than good." When God's work is not done God's way, this will happen!)

V. 18

"When ye come together" - The tense of the participle shows that they had a habit of continually assembling (cp. Heb. 10:25). At least they had this right: They had not forsaken the assembly.

The problem was, when they gathered, they formed cliques, sects, or schisms.

These ***"divisions"*** were no doubt formed around economic status. Those who had wealth separated from those who did not.

V. 19

"Heresies" - Dissensions or divisions caused by people taking sides, choosing to side with a particular party or opinion.

"They which are approved" - When divisions occur, the result is a separation between those whom God approves of and those "big shots" whom men approve of.

V. 20

While their gathering was supposed to include the Lord's Supper, they in fact had what they called "the Lord's Supper," but it was not. Their supper may have been a "Pig-Out Supper" but it sure wasn't the Lord's.

You see, they had turned the Lord's Supper into a selfish, gluttonous, "first come first served," bread and wine feast.

It wasn't "passing the plate" of bread pieces; it was "grabbing the loaf" before anyone else did.

The Lord's Supper is the "Lord's Supper," not the church's supper or a denomination's supper. He instituted it and He resides at the table as we commune with Him.

V. 21

What was supposed to be *"the Lord's Supper"* (v. 20) had turned into one's ***"own supper"*** (v. 21). It was every man for himself.

"Taketh before another" - Rather than *"tarry"* (v. 33) or wait for the rest of the members to arrive, the disorderly, carnal Corinthians dug their claws and teeth into the bread before the others showed up.

Those who got to service early got well-fed, but the ones who showed up late left ***"hungry."***

"Drunken" - If people were getting *"drunken,"* it is evident that they even had messed up the elements of the Lord's Supper by bringing alcoholic beverages to church! The scene was carnal!

V. 22

Rather than celebrating the Lord's Supper as a "first come first served" banquet, Paul says: Don't you have houses for such consumption parties to occur in?

"Despise" - to look down upon, to belittle. For such greedy festivity to be occurring during what was supposed to be the Lord's Supper was to treat the church without dignity; it was to take a serious ordinance lightly.

Not to mention the humiliation ***("shame")*** endured by those in the church who didn't even get a sampling of the bread and wine.

The Lord's Supper was a serious worship ordinance, not a "gorge your gut" jubilee!

Christianity must never lose its reverence for the Lord or His work.

There is a time for laughter, joking, comics, and entertainment. The church service is not the time (eternal issues are at stake here!)

There appears to be a growing tendency to trivialize sacred things today.

*Let us look out for two extremes:

1. High Church, dead orthodoxy, stuffy, ritualistic religion (where every move of the clergy and laity is a liturgical, regimented, formatted, somber, formal ceremony.

2. Party Time, "let's celebrate Jesus," chaotic, disorderly, comical, rolling in the aisles, "holy laughter," entertainment show.

We must rejoice and be glad in the Lord, but in the serious, holy, righteous manner which is fitting a holy, righteous God.

The Lord's Supper is:

II. A Time of REMEMBRANCE (v.23-26)

(Communion is a MEMORIAL service
of Christ's death for sinners)

V. 23

Although Paul verbally ***"delivered"*** the right message to them, it never sunk in. They never got it. Careful listening is just as important as careful teaching.

Perhaps the Lord allowed the Corinthians' debacle of the Lord's Supper so that the Church of Jesus Christ could have a permanent written record of how the Lord's Supper was supposed to be practiced.

"The same night" - This would have been the night of the Passover (on the 14th of Nisan, the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread - Exod. 12:3-10; Mt. 26:17ff).

Jesus was ending one memorial to begin another memorial.

For Christians, Christ is our Passover Lamb (I Cor. 5:7), and we remember the spiritual deliverance provided by Him rather than a mere physical deliverance from Egypt as the Israelites remembered by the Passover.

V. 24

"This is My Body" - A symbol of His undefiled body; Jesus was speaking by analogy, showing that the bread was a picture, representation, or a tangible illustration of His body.

We reject the Roman Catholic notion of transubstantiation, that the bread become the actual and literal body of Christ.

Several proofs that the bread cannot be in actuality the literal body of Christ:

1. It wasn't literal at the Passover Supper (Mt. 26:26-28; Mk. 14:22-24; Lk. 22:17-20). Jesus didn't take a knife and cut off a piece of His literal flesh to share with His disciples -- Such would be cannibalism.

2. Christ in a similar context (Jn. 6:56) taught that eating His flesh was not a literal but a spiritual matter. *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life"* (Jn. 6:63). Jesus was speaking in a spiritual sense.

3. Christ said to partake of the bread in *"remembrance of Me"* (a memorial service to recall, not to partake of, Christ's death).

4. Eating the bread and drinking the communion cup was to *"shew"* (declare or proclaim) the Lord's death, not to consume Christ Himself.

5. Transubstantiation, which involves the actual essence of bread being transformed in substance into Christ's literal body, is erroneous on several counts:

   a. It assumes that man (the priest) has the power to alter a material substance and turn it into a "god."

   b. It assumes that God is in the business of magically reproducing Himself into physical wafers and that He is consumed by eating.

   c. It assumes that salvation comes via a material substance rather than faith (Eph. 2:8).

   d. It distracts from the true meaning of Communion, namely: the Lord's substitutionary death on Calvary.

   e. It necessitates that salvation be dispense only through a particular church (RCC), through a particular service (the Mass), by a particular miracle (transubstantiation), by a particular person (the priest). This is cultic.

The Lord's Supper is not sacred because of the element itself; it is sacred because of what the element represents!

"Broken for you" - Christ gave His life personally "for you"

"For you" - We may not soon forget that Christ died, but we often forget the great price He paid in dying for us personally. And often we forget the infinite cost of the salvation He purchased for us. And we become so unthankful.

Paul's emphasis is on the twice-repeated word ***"remembrance***" (v. 24, 25). His point in context is that the Lord's Supper is not an "all you can eat" banquet -- it's a memorial service!

Christ does not ever want His people to lose sight of the most vital aspect os His coming to earth: that being His substitutionary death for sinners on the cross.

V. 25

"Testament" - A covenant or promise which cannot be broken (sealed with the blood of Christ, which confirmed the promise and provided the blessings of the covenant).

"New testament" - "new" implies that the "old" was insufficient and now invalidated and replaced (Heb. 8:6-13; 9:15-28). [We are no longer under the conditional covenant of the Mosaic Law.]

The old covenant meant temporal, material blessings for Israel under the condition of obedience (Deut. 28 - 29).

The new covenant means permanent, spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3) for all people under the condition of belief.

V. 26

"As often as" - Never does the New Testament require a set daily or weekly schedule for the Lord's Supper (each local church has the liberty to decide for itself).

"Till He come" - When Jesus returns, we will not need to remember by faith, for we will see Him by sight. (the picture of Christ in the elements will be replaced by the presence of Christ in person).

Until we experience the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19), we will partake of the simple yet sacred Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is:

III. A Time of REFLECTION (v.27-32)

(Communion is a SELF-EXAMINATION service,
which should never be partaken of unworthily)

V. 27

The Lord's Supper--being a sobering, serious ordinance--requires introspection, self-analysis, or soul-searching (Note Paul's emphasis: *"Let a man examine himself"* [v. 28]; *"Judge ourselves"* [v. 31]).

Since the Lord's Supper is portraying such a vital truth, namely His *"death"* (v. 26), it should never be indulged in in an unworthy manner.

***"Unworthily"* =** an unworthy manner, as the Corinthians were in context (v. 17-22; 33-34). The style or character of the ordinance ought to equal or match the character of Christ and His finished work.

To consume the elements in a trivial, party-time manner is to do so in an unworthy fashion and it is to shame that which those elements represent: namely, Christ's body and blood. EX: "To trample our country's flag is not to dishonor a piece of cloth but to dishonor the country it represents" (MacArthur, p. 274) (same with the Lord's Supper).

V. 28

"Examine himself" - To see if he is approved to eat (each person should have the liberty to examine his own worthiness to partake; we do not believer in "closed communion").

"Examine" for what? --Unconfessed, unforsaken sinful attitudes or actions.

No one comes to the Lord's table perfectly but we should come honestly (DeHaan, p. 134).

V. 29

We are all unworthy in ourselves, but are made worthy by the blood of Christ shed on Calvary.

"Damnation" - (*krima*) = judgment (temporal judgment by God as revealed in v. 30, 32).

Failure to realize the seriousness of what the communion elements represent, namely ***"the Lord's body"*** (which is glorified in Heaven) is to invite God's judgment on yourself.

V. 30

***"Weak"* =** without strength

***"Sickly"* =** powerless, feeble

***"Sleep"* =** a euphemism for death (EX: Ananias and Saphira)

A physical curse falls upon the life of Christians who take lightly Christ and His right to deep reverence.

Not all physical illness is due to personal sin (EX: Job, Paul's thorn - II Cor. 12), but much physical illness is due to sinful attitudes and actions (James 5:15, 16).

(EX: David - Ps. 32:3-4 - *"When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah."*)

A sincere dose of soul-searching coupled with genuine confession (I Jn. 1:9) and repentance is the Christian's best medicine.

V. 31

If you judge yourself, God won't have to!

It's easy to judge others and to see the spiritual needs of others; it goes against our hideous pride and sinful nature (Jer. 17:9) to see our own faults and to do something about them.

When was the last time you took a sincere, long, and deep look at yourself? We avoid such self-inspections because we are afraid of what we may find or unwilling to change what we find.

We are careful to leave no stone unturned when it comes to many things in life. Are we as equally concerned about uncovering bad attitudes, motives, and behavior that lies hidden in our hearts and lives?

V. 32

God, in love, spanks His kids (Heb. 12:7 - *"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"*)

He does so to correct and train us so as to spare us the dreadful wages of an unrepentant heart.

It is time to get serious with God.

No more careless Christianity. It's time to stop playing games with Christ and His cause.

How the HOLY SPIRIT Works

(Part 1)
I Corinthians 12:1-31
9-24-2023

Introduction: (Verse 1)

*** Do not be ignorant about how the Holy Spirit works!**

How do I discern whether a message, gift, or movement is a work of the Holy Spirit or not?
Take a look at the product of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit Preaches...

I. A SINGULAR Message (v.2-3)

When the Holy Spirit speaks...

A. His message is CONSISTENT (Never contradictory to His nature, His ways or His Word)

B. His message is CHRIST-CENTERED (Never promoting anyone except Jesus Christ)

The Holy Spirit Provides...

II. A VARIETY of Gifts (v.4-11)

A. Spiritual Gifts come from a common source (v.4-6)

B. Spiritual Gifts come for a common good (v.7)

C. Spiritual Gifts come through a common Spirit (v.8-11)

1. The Holy Spirit gives the Gifts (v.8-10)

2. The Holy Spirit operates the Gifts (v.11a)

3. The Holy Spirit determines the Gifts (v.11b)

The Holy Spirit Produces...

III. A UNIFIED Church Body (v.12-31)

(To be continued)

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1. The Holy Spirit _____ the Gifts (v.8-10)
2. The Holy Spirit _____ the Gifts (v.11a)
3. The Holy Spirit _____ the Gifts (v.11b)

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III. A _____ <u>Church Body</u> (v.12-31)

(To be continued)

How the HOLY SPIRIT Works

(Part 1)

I Corinthians 12:1-31

9-24-2023

Introduction: (Verse 1)

Praise God for the blessed Holy Spirit!

The Names and Titles of the Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit - Lk. 11:13; Ro. 1:4
2. The Holy Ghost - Matthew 28:19
   ["Ghost" and "Spirit" are the same Greek word]
3. The Spirit of God - II Chron. 15:1; Gen. 1:2; I Cor. 3:16
4. My Spirit - Gen. 6:3; Joel 2:28, 29; Mt. 12:18
5. The Spirit of the Lord - Isaiah 11:2; II Chron. 20:14
6. The Spirit of Holiness - Psalm 51:11; Rom. 1:4
7. The Spirit of Wisdom - Isaiah 11:2
8. The Spirit of Counsel - Isaiah 11:2
9. The Spirit of Understanding - Isaiah 11:2
10. The Spirit of Supplication - Zech. 12:10
11. The Spirit of Truth - John 14:17
12. The Spirit of Comfort - John 14:26
13. The Spirit of Life - Romans 8:2
14. The Spirit of Adoption - Romans 8:15
15. The Spirit of Faith - II Cor. 4:13
16. The Spirit of Love - II Tim. 1:7
17. The Spirit of Might - II Tim. 1:7
18. The Spirit of love, might, and a sound mind - II Tim. 1:7
19. The Spirit of Revelation - Ephes. 1:17
20. The Spirit of Power - Eph. 3:20; Rom. 15:13
21. The Spirit of Eternity or the Eternal Spirit - Heb. 9:14
22. The Spirit of Grace - Heb. 10:29
23. The Spirit of Glory - I Pet. 1:17; I Pet. 4:14

The Works of the Holy Spirit

a. He is responsible for creation (Job 33:4)
b. He is responsible for the inspiration of Scripture (He "bore men along" in the production of God's Word - I Pet. 1:21).
c. He performed undeniable sign miracles
   1) Virgin birth (Lk. 1:35)
   2) Caught away Philip (Acts 8:39)
   3) Signs and miracles through Apostles (Rom. 15:19)
   4) He reveals prophecy (Acts 2:17-18)
d. He convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn. 16:8)
e. He regenerates, imparting a Godly nature to a fallen man when he places his faith in God's Word (Jn. 3:5-6; Titus 3:5)
f. He unites believers to the Body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13)
g. He comforts as Jesus could comfort (Jn. 14:16)
h. He intercedes (prays) for God's people (Rom. 8:26, 27)
i. He sanctifies the yielded child of God (II Thes. 2:13)
j. He imparts life (Jn. 6:63; Rom. 8:11); He is the direct cause of resurrection (cp. I Pet. 3:18)
k. He seals believers (Eph. 4:30)

V. 1

"Spiritual gifts" - lit. "the spirituals" or "spiritual matters" (a major part of which included the "gifts," hence the KJV italicized insertion).

Paul in this chapter intends to straighten out the confused Corinthians about the true working of the Holy Spirit.

The tone of I Corinthians 12 - 14 is corrective in nature (he does not condone all that went on at the church in Corinth, but did correct them in love).

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 are one big unit of thought dealing with one theme: Namely, the gifts given to God's people by the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 12 - The diversity and unity produced by the gifts of the Spirit
Chapter 13 - The supremacy of love over the spiritual gifts
Chapter 14 - The supremacy of the gift of prophecy over tongues

We are commanded to:

--*"test the spirits"* (I Jn. 4:1 - *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world")*

--*"prove* (test) *all things"* (II Th. 5:21)

We (as believers) can be ignorant about many things in life (EX: geometry, the distance from earth to mars), but we cannot be ignorant about spiritual matters (I.e. how the Holy Spirit operates). Reason: God warned of spiritual deception in the Last Days (Mt. 24:24; I Tim. 4:1).

Spiritual ignorance is: --Dangerous (II Cor. 11:14; II Cor. 2:11)
--Inexcusable (we have God's Spirit within and God's Word on our bookshelf)

Recent trends in churches:

1) Visions, dreams, new revelations
2) "Holy Laughter" (Prov. 17:22)
3) "Holy barking" (*"Howl ye"* - Is. 13:6; Jer. 25:34) and "holy crying"
4) "Holy shaking" and being "slain in the Spirit"

Are these actions manifestations of the Holy Spirit or the orchestrations of Satan?

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I. A <u>SINGULAR</u> <u>Message</u> (v.2-3)

V. 2

"Gentiles" - polytheistic pagans, idolatrous heathen

"Carried away" - Before salvation the Corinthians were (past tense) influenced by and led astray by voiceless idols which supposedly delivered messages which captivated the minds and controlled the lives of the devotees.

"The verb is often used of leading away a prisoner or condemned person" (EX: Mk. 14:44, 15:16) (Morris, p. 167).

They would lead the blind, ignorant idolaters in one direction at one point and then switch gears and lead them somewhere else the next.

It didn't matter if the messages were contradictory. All that mattered was that the followers yield their mind, body and will to the whims and wishes of the mute idols. Hence, all their lives they were *"blown about by every wind of doctrine by the sleight of man"* (Eph. 4:14).

V. 3

Paul is saying: The Holy Spirit will never say, "Jesus is cursed"; and then turn around and say "Jesus is Lord." The Holy Spirit will always speak a consistent message.

When the Holy Spirit speaks...

A. His message is <u>CONSISTENT</u> (Never contradictory to His nature, His ways or His Word)

V. 3

The Holy Spirit today speaks through <u>one</u> means: The Scriptures

(*"The Sword of the Spirit"* - He fights with it [Eph. 6:17] and operates on us with it [Heb. 4:12]).

The Spirit <u>authored</u> the Bible (Jn. 14:26; II Pet. 1:21)

The Spirit <u>illuminates</u> our minds to the Bible (Heb. 10:32; I Cor. 2:10)

The Spirit <u>teaches</u> the Bible (Jn. 16:13; I Jn. 2:20)

His Will <u>NEVER</u> contradicts His Word.

The Spirit will never lead anyone to violate the Bible.

One reason I know for fact that the ecumenical Catholic Charismatic renewal and the "Name It/Claim it" prosperity movement and the "Faith movement" are not from God's Spirit is because in doctrine and practice these movements violate Scripture.

The more you know the "*<u>truth</u>"* the more *"free"* you will be (Jn. 8:32).

B. His message is <u>CHRIST-CENTERED</u> (Never promoting anyone except

Jesus Christ)

V. 3

"Jesus is the Lord" - A bold truth asserting Christ deity (as God), sovereignty (as ruler) and authority (as Master of our lives).

Only the Holy Spirit can illuminate people's minds to the Lordship of Christ, and this is what He does best.

The Holy Spirit's central message surrounds the person and work of Jesus Christ (Jn. 16:13-14 - *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.")*

Any church where the teaching and preaching continuously focuses on the Holy Spirit is NOT a Holy-Spirit-filled church.

The first test we must give every message we hear is the Doctrinal Test.

If the preacher/teacher holds a derogatory view of Jesus Christ, it may be a spirit guiding him, but it is not the Holy Spirit.

Sad to say, multitudes of professing Christians today pay more attention to the charisma of the speaker than to his content; excitement rather than exactness; flash rather than faithfulness to the facts of the test.

The Holy Spirit Provides...

II. A VARIETY of Gifts (v.4-11)

V. 4

"Gifts" - *charismaton -*

charis = grace
ma = the result of
ton = several (plural)

All of God's gifts are the results of His grace. You don't deserve them, can't earn them, and can't buy them (Acts 8:20).

Many times a "gift" is nothing more than a crucified talent - a talent you had before salvation which now you can use for God's glory.

The Holy Spirit energizes and re-channels such abilities for the spiritual profit of many other believers.

In most cases our gifts have nothing to do with natural ability (as the unsaved have such talent), but gifts that were non-existent or at least dormant and unawakened prior to salvation. At salvation came the gift of eternal life and the gift(s) for this present life.

The Corinthians had a problem with lusting after the spectacular gifts, the popular gifts, the public eye-catching gifts, the flashy gifts.

"Diversities" = varieties; different kinds.

The Holy Spirit is not in the business of "cloning" people when it comes to His gift-giving.

We ought to be alike in the areas of morals and vital Bible doctrines. We ought to be clones of Christ-likeness in our attitudes and actions.

However, we ought to be different when it comes to particular skills, talents, and abilities (EX: how children have unique personality differences, preferential tastes, and personal skills).

"Diversities" - Can you imagine what life would be like if we all did the same thing, had the same skills and talents, were all spiritual clones?

Life would be boring and quite burdensome. Why? Because no one could balance out and make up for mankind's shortcomings.

Christianity would be tasteless, if we were all the same "flavor."

It would be dull, if we were all the same "color."

Diversities in food is what makes eating so enjoyable ... Diversities in color is what makes for contrast and complement ... Diversities in gifts is what makes the Body of Christ so exciting and useful.

No one's needs would be met if we did not have unique differences.

We are not Xerox copies, printed sheets; rather, we are individually hand-crafted uniquely by God.

A. Spiritual Gifts come from a common source (v.4-6)

V. 4

"The same Spirit" - When you go to a supermarket, you find a variety of products, from a variety of manufacturers. In a church, you find a variety of gifts from a single "manufacturer" - The Holy Spirit.

V. 5

"Administrations" - *(diakonion* - akin to "deacon") -- ministries; service
There are many different ways to minister:

--teaching, preaching, counseling, witnessing, singing

--helping, caring, calling, hospitality

--nursery, Sunday school, Jr. Church, AWANA

--building (construction), translating, overseeing, playing instruments, preparing food, cleaning, ETC.

V. 6

"Operations" - The outcome of God's working; the effects, results, or products produced by the Father's energy or power.

So the source of every gift, and of every service using that gifts, and of every result of that service is credited to God alone.

The source is not Bible College or Seminary [God employs them]; nor is it your own power, insight, or charisma. As Paul said, *"By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me"* (I Cor. 15:10).

"Worketh all in all" - God energizes every gift and empowers every act of service so that the outcome can only be attributed to Him.

"Worketh all in all" - God is not only the power behind every gift and

service; but He is also the only source of empowerment for all the workers themselves (no worker for God can take the credit or glory; it goes to God alone!)

Therefore, do we have any right to boast or brag? Any reason for pride or arrogance?

When the Holy Spirit does the work, He will see to it that the glory goes Heavenward not to flesh and blood.

Incidentally, Paul indicates the Trinity by referring to the "Spirit" (*"Holy Spirit"* - v. 4), the "Lord" (*"Jesus Christ"* - v. 5), and "God" ("*the Father"* - v. 6).

B. Spiritual Gifts come for a common good (v.7)

"...given to every man" - Every believer should have a manifestation of the Spirit; the Spirit has equipped each and every believer with at least one gift. He wants you to use it for Him.

What gift has He given you? Are you using it?

"To profit withal" - God gave each one of us gifts for the purpose of everyone's profit or spiritual benefit.

No spiritual gift was ever meant for self profit alone. God's gifts are not toys to entertain ourselves with, nor are they cards to play solitaire with. Your gifts were meant for others; specifically, other believers!

"A gift exercised in private (or for private benefit) is a perverted gift" (MacArthur, p. 292).

"They are not for individual enjoyment, but for corporate employment" (Wiersbe, p. 608).

C. Spiritual Gifts come through a common Spirit (v.8-11)

1. The Holy Spirit gives the Gifts (v.8-10)

V. 8

Note the key thought in vv. 8-11:

"Given by the Spirit. . . by the same Spirit (v. 8) . . . *by the same Spirit* (two times in v. 9) . . . *"the selfsame Spirit* (v. 11)"

"The word of wisdom" - An ability to communicate practical solutions to life's problems

"The word of knowledge" - an ability to communicate Bible truths, theological facts and doctrines.

"Faith" - All believers have faith or else you wouldn't be saved; however, some are endowed with a special dose of faith whereby they are not afraid to attempt great things for God.

V. 9

"Healing" - A miraculous ability to cure people with various sicknesses, including restoration to life (Acts 9:40, 20:12) (as Jesus, Peter, and Paul did).

V. 10

"Miracles" - Supernatural powers (like those mentioned in Mark 16:17-20).

"Prophecy" - The ability to foretell and/or forthtell a message from God (EX: Agabus [Acts 11:28 - *"And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar"*]).

"Discerning of spirits" - The supernatural ability to distinguish between evil spirits and God's Spirit in people (EX: Peter to Simon, Acts 8:23; Paul to Elymas the Sorcerer, Acts 13:6ff).

"Tongues" (*glosson*) - a supernatural ability to speak in foreign languages unknown to the speaker, but known somewhere in the world (Acts 2:4-11).

This gift was the most coveted by the Corinthians, as evident by the volume of ink Paul gives it in chapters 12 - 14.

"Interpretation of tongues" - A supernatural ability to orally translate a foreign language you never studied before. This gift was a companion gift to speaking in tongues (I Cor. 14:27).

Paul includes "tongues" last in the list here, as also in verse 30, evidently for two reasons:

1) The Corinthians always put it first
2) Tongues was not the priority gift

The Corinthians tested each others' spirituality (like Pentecostals and Charismatics do today) and judged each other with the test question: "Do you speak in tongues?" If not, they implied that you did not have the witness of the Holy Spirit within you (DeHaan, p. 142). However, even at Corinth it was evident that not all spoke in tongues (12:30).

The first list of mentioned gifts (v. 8-9a) are apparently distinct from the second list of gifts (v. 9b-10). The first list are service gifts whereas the second list are sign gifts.

Paul by no means gifts a complete list of the Spirit's gifts (other gifts are mentioned in I Cor. 12:28-30; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7-11).

It is my conviction that all mentioned gifts are operative today except the "sign gifts" (SEE: Mark 16:17ff). The sign gifts were temporary as they introduced to the world God's new message and apostolic messengers (II Cor. 12:12). We should not seek after signs of any type (Mt. 12:39; 16:4).

--No sign or sign gift in the Bible was permanent.

A sign's purpose is to display God's new and direct intervention in the world during times when written revelation was either being given or fulfilled.

Examples of temporary signs:

--The signs which Moses performed before Pharaoh's court were temporary.

--The signs Christ performed were temporary.

--The signs the Apostles performed were temporary.

--The signs that will be displayed on earth and in the sky will be temporary (Joel 2:28-31; Rev. 6:12-17).

A sign by its very nature is temporary since it introduces something new to grab the attention of man to the direct intervention and revelation of God.

2. The Holy Spirit operates the Gifts (v.11a)

"Worketh" - to energize; to empower. The Holy Spirit not only gifts the gifts, He empowers their use (just as God the Father does - v. 6).

Use your gift, but with His power, never in the energy of the flesh (something smells fishy about people who flaunt a gift they don't have

and to make matters worse use "it" in such a carnal way).

3. The Holy Spirit <u>determines</u> the Gifts (v.11b)

"Dividing to every man severally" - The Holy Spirit distributes gifts separately to each individual believer.

"As He will" - As He desires or wants to.

He gives not according to the merit or wishes of men, but according to his own will.

Why do people beg God for gifts they don't have? Answer: They are not content with God's will. Crying, begging, "tarrying" for the gift of tongues is futile.

If God wanted you or me to have the gift of tongues (for example), He would have given it unsolicited as He did in the gook of Acts.

It came spontaneously without the recipient seeking it or even knowing about it.

There is nothing more frustrating to a Christian than to attempt to use a gift he doesn't have.

(Many have bailed out of a ministry because they were never gifted for that ministry to begin with.)

The Holy Spirit dispenses gifts as He sees fit; as <u>He</u> wills, not as the believer wills.

It is with a tongue of spiritual sarcasm that Paul speaks of the Corinthians seeking the best gifts in verse 31 -- Because what they should have sought is <u>love</u> (chapter 13).

Leave the gift-giving to the Holy Spirit. Not many things are as pitiful, in my opinion, as a person telling another person what he wants for Christmas or his birthday. You should leave it up to Him!

CONCLUSION:

<u>(name someone)</u>, you have a gift the Holy Spirit gave you to use in His ministry.

Can you imagine what would take place if every member of every local Body started utilizing his/her gifts for the profit of Christ's church??

(The problem is, that far too many of God's people just idly sit in the Body of Christ like an <u>appendix</u>. Do not do anything, except cause trouble once in a while.)

Man's greatest knowledge is to know the will of God; man's greatest privilege is to do the will of God.

No Christian is fulfilled or completely joyful until he/she fulfills the purpose for which he/she was saved. God has a plan for you! If you surrender your life to Him, He will utilize the gift He has given to you.

The Holy Spirit Produces....

III. A UNIFIED Church Body (v.12-31)

(To be continued)

A Diversified - UNIFIED Church Body

I Corinthians 12:12-31

10-8-2023

Introduction: v.12

**** Each & every member must see his/her vital role in the Body of Christ!***

I. Every member is united by <u>SPIRIT BAPTISM</u> into the Body (v.13)

II. Every member has a <u>DISTINCT FUNCTION</u> in the Body (v.14-17)

III. Every member is placed by <u>DIVINE DESIGN</u> into the Body (v.18)

IV. Every member should be viewed as <u>NECESSARY</u> to the Body (v.19-25a)

V. Every member should be <u>CARED FOR</u> in the Body (v.25b-26)

VI. Every member should be <u>SATISFIED</u> with their particular gifts in the Body (v.27-30)

Conclusion: v.31 & Ephesians 4:15-16 – Our Church Body will be Blessed & Edified if each Member does his/her Ministry out of Love for Christ and each other

A Di*ver*sif*ied* / UNIFIED Church Body

I Corinthians 12:12-31

10-8-2023

Introduction: v.12

**** Each & every member must see his/her vital role in the Body of Christ!***

I. Every member is united by _____ into the Body (v.13)

II. Every member has a _____in the Body (v.14-17)

III. Every member is placed by _____ into the Body (v.18)

IV. Every member should be viewed as _____ to the Body (v.19-25a)

V. Every member should be _____ in the Body (v.25b-26)

VI. Every member should be _____ with their particular gifts in the Body (v.27-30)

Conclusion: v.31

A D*i*versif*ied* - UNIFIED Church Body

I Corinthians 12:12-31

10-8-2023

Introduction: v.12

In FBC, it is amazing how different people are from each other. (different backgrounds, cultures, skin colors, languages, abilities, interests, etc.)

Just as your physical body is all tied (woven) together and yet has distinctively different body parts, so it is with the Body of Christ.

**** Each & every member must see his/her vital role in the Body of Christ!***

I. Every member is united by <u>SPIRIT BAPTISM</u> into the Body (v.13)

Scripture speaks of three baptisms:

1) Water (Mk. 1:4)

2) Death (Lk. 12:50; Mk. 10:38)

3) Spirit (Acts 1:5)

Proofs that Paul is speaking of Spirit baptism and <u>not water</u> in verse 13:

1. In context, Paul is describing how believers became one with Christ and each other -- this only occurs through Spirit baptism.

2. Paul includes himself (***"we"***), and he was <u>not</u> water-baptized at Corinth.

3. The end of v. 13 clarifies the thought by showing how all believers partake of the Holy Spirit.

4. Spirit baptism was a well-known doctrine, as it had been preached by John the Baptist (Mk. 1:8), promised by Jesus (Acts 1:8), experienced by Peter (Acts 2) and by others (including Gentiles - Acts 10:47), and was taught by Paul (Rom. 6; Eph. 4:5).

"<u>All</u> baptized" - Not one child of God goes without Spirit baptism (Rom. 8:9).

"One body" - It is this preacher's interpretation that Paul's reference to Christ's "Body" is a reference to the relationship all true believers, all over the world, have with Him. The Universal Church Body finds its physical outworking in local church bodies.

God calls for a concrete external response to this spiritual reality:

Belief	Spirit Baptism	Bodyof Christ
Testimony	Water Baptism	Local Church

At salvation, a miracle of the Holy Spirit takes place, whereby He regenerates our hearts (Titus 3:5), adopts us into God's family via a second birth (John 3), comes to indwell our bodies (Jn. 14:17; I Cor. 6:19-20), and unites us to Jesus Christ and thus to everyone else who belongs to Christ.

The Spirit immerses (unites) every believer into a vital relationship with Christ, regardless of race or nationality (***"Jews or Gentiles"***), regardless of social status (***"bond or free"***).

Because it is the self-same Spirit who unites us into Christ's Body, there are no second-class, second-rate, lower-cast, or inferior believers.

Note: The work of ***"baptizing"*** and ***"drinking"*** is a work of God. He actively did it; we passively received it.

II. Every member has a DISTINCT FUNCTION in the Body (v.14-17)

V. 14

Your physical body has literally thousands of distinct parts, each performing a different function.

V. 15-16

Rhetorical questions expecting a "NO" answer.

V. 15

A ***"foot"*** may not be as attractive as a ***"hand"*** but it is vitally needed (as it does a job the hand cannot). [When was the last time you saw someone walk to church standing on his hands??]

V. 16

An ***"ear"*** may not be as pretty as an ***"eye"*** but it is vitally needed (as it does a job the eye cannot).

It is infantile (immature) for you to pout about not being the ***"eye."***

"Imagine, if you can, an ear saying, "No one ever looks longingly into me and comments on how beautiful I am, like they do the eyes. I will seek to be an eye." So the poor ear fasts and prays, prostrates itself, pours out its wax, seeking to be an eye. How ridiculous!" (Gardiner, The Corinthian Catastrophe, p. 26-27).

V. 17

Each part of the face experiences life through a different sense (eye sees, ear ears, nose smells, tongue tastes, cheeks feel).

Not everyone in the church body can do the same thing. If we all did the same thing, we wouldn't need each other. The body would be limited, single-faceted, and single-dimensional.

We should never be jealous or envious over the giftedness of another believer. Rather, we should praise God for the role he/she plays in the big picture of Christ's body.

Each part must contribute. If you refuse to function because of fear, pride, "inability," etc., the whole body suffers.

III. Every member is placed by DIVINE DESIGN into the Body (v.18)

Just as God is the Designer and Builder of your physical body (Ps. 139:13-16), so He is the Designer and Builder of the Body of Christ. He sovereignly places each part into Christ's church body and equips and enables each part to do its job.

"Every one of them" - Not one member of Christ is without design and purpose. You are no accident, after-thought, or mistake. You have been saved and placed into a ministry by God!

"As it hath pleased Him" - We were designed and gifted for God's pleasure, not selfish pursuits. All that we are and have is because of Him (cp. v. 11). We should not seek gifts we were not given, rather we should use the ones we have! And use them so as to please God.

With ability comes responsibility. *"Much given...much is required."*

IV. Every member should be viewed as <u>NECESSARY</u> to the Body (v.19-25a)

V. 19

If every believer did the same thing, the church would not be a body, it would be a blob.

V. 20

The church is diversity in unity. Diverse parts functioning as one man.

V. 21

Each part of the body is needed and beneficial to the rest.

The eye helps guide the hand, and the hand removes dirt from the eye.

The head sends directions to the feet, and the feet carry the head.

My feet haven't yet learned how to type, nor can I hold a fork and eat with them; however, my hands can't support the weight of my body, nor can I run and kick with them.

V. 22

"Feeble" - to be weaker, less strong.

My forearm muscles may not be as strong as my biceps, but they are just as vital, perhaps more vital.

Some Christians may tend to have more areas of weakness than you, but they are just as necessary to the body as you are!

WHO MX??

> Xvxn though my typxwritxr is an old modxl, it works wxll xxcxpt for onx kxy. Thxrx arx forty-six kxys that function, but just onx not working makxs thx diffxrxncx. Somxtimxs it sxxms that a church is likx my typxwritxr--that not all thx kxys arx working propxrly. You may say, "Wxll, I'm only onx pxrson; I don't makx or brxak a church." But a succxssful church, to bx xffxctivx, rxquirxs thx activx participation of xvxry mxmbxr. So thx nxxt timx you think that your xfforts arx not nxxdxd, rxmxmbxr my old typxwritxr and say to yoursxlf, "I am vxry valuablx to my church and I am nxxdxd vxry much! For thx church to succxxd, I must do my vxry bxst!"

V. 23

Often the hidden organs or the body parts which are beneath the surface are the most valuable (EX: heart, liver, kidneys, lungs). We tend to spend a lot of time on our face and hair; yet you can live without hair.

Key Words: ***"Seem to be"*** (v. 22) . . . ***"We think"*** (v. 23).

Man may not think much of a "handicapped" Christian, but God sees the true strength and He knows the true value of each one.

V. 24

When some part of Christ's body lacks something, others come to that part's <u>aid</u> and give assistance, thus showering honor on that member.

V. 25

Often schisms (divisions) occur in a church body when certain parts which need attention don't get it (EX: Acts 6).

Weaknesses and areas of need actually have a way of drawing people together. God allows needs to arise so that the body can rally together, come to the rescue and unite in helping that area of need.

V. Every member should be <u>CARED FOR</u> in the Body (v.25b-26)

V. 25

When crisis hits or needs arise, such calamities provide an occasion (opportunity) for love to be manifested (Phil. 4:10 - *"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that not at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.")*.

"One for another" - The care should be reciprocal. Something is deeply wrong when someone is always on the receiving end.

V. 26

Because of the inter-connectedness of the Body, one parts' misery is shared by all. (EX: stubbing a small toe can produce a tension headache, add stress to other muscles that have to make up for the loss of that one member).

If we really understood how much we are one body with each other, we would *"rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep"* (Rom. 12:15). If a team wins, the whole team wins; if it loses, the entire team loses.

VI. Every member should be SATISFIED with their particular gifts in the Body (v.27-30)

EX: Michael Jordan -- should have stuck to basketball and not diverted to baseball, which wasn't his gift.

V. 27

"Ye are the body of Christ" - We are called *"members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."* (Eph. 5:30)

V. 28

"God hath set..." - God determines both one's office and gift.

"First...secondarily...thirdly" - The first are ranked in order of honor (Ryrie). Note: Tongues is ranked last.

Note: The reason why miraculous sign gifts are given in the same list is because they all came from the same source - God! This does not prove that all gifts are operative today.

V. 29-30

Rhetorical questions expecting a "NO" answer.

Note: Even when the sign gift of tongues was given, not all believers spoke it; but all were Spirit-baptized (v. 13).

Paul's over-all point is this: Don't seek tongues or some other flashy, noticeable, sensational gift. Be satisfied with what God made you and gave you.

Conclusion: v.31

"Covet earnestly" - Could be translated by the present tense as a statement of fact "You are coveting earnestly" (Bittlinger, cited by Gardiner, p. 28); or by imperative as KJV - in which case Paul is evidently speaking sarcastically - "You go ahead and covet...but I will now show you what you should be seeking after" (namely, Love - chapter 13).

Are you a team player? Are you a living, functioning part of a body of believers? Will you be missed by the body when God calls you home? Are you contributing in the area of your giftedness?

This is a true statement: "It takes all kinds."

"LOVE: Our # 1 Pursuit"

I CORINTHIANS 13

10-22-2023

INTRODUCTION:

*** Biblical LOVE must be the supreme characteristic of our lives.**

Why?

3 Reasons:

I. BIBLICAL LOVE IS AN <u>ESSENTIAL</u> VIRTUE (v. 1-3)

A. Without love your <u>message</u> accomplishes nothing (v. 1)

B. Without love your <u>gifts</u> (abilities) reveal you to be nothing (v. 2)

C. Without love your <u>sacrifice</u> profits you nothing (v. 3)

II. BIBLICAL LOVE IS AN <u>EXALTED</u> VIRTUE (v. 4-7)

A. Biblical love is not <u>self-centered</u> (v. 4b-5a)

B. Biblical love does <u>not seek the harm of others</u> (v. 5b-6a)

C. Biblical love seeks <u>the well-being of others</u> (v. 4a, 7)

III. BIBLICAL LOVE IS AN <u>ETERNAL</u> VIRTUE (v. 8-13)

A. Love will outlast <u>gifts</u> (v. 8)

B. Love will outlast <u>present limitations</u> (v.9-12)

C. Love will outlast <u>some present spiritual virtues</u> (v.13)

"LOVE: Our # 1 Pursuit"

I CORINTHIANS 13

10-22-2023



INTRODUCTION:

*** Biblical LOVE must be the supreme characteristic of our lives.**

Why? *3 Reasons:*

I. BIBLICAL LOVE IS AN _____ VIRTUE (v. 1-3)

A. Without love your _____ accomplishes nothing (v. 1)

B. Without love your _____ (abilities) reveal you to be nothing (v. 2)

C. Without love your _____ profits you nothing (v. 3)

II. BIBLICAL LOVE IS AN _____ VIRTUE (v. 4-7)

A. Biblical love is not _____ (v. 4b-5a)

B. Biblical love does _____ (v. 5b-6a)

C. Biblical love seeks _____ (v. 4a, 7)

III. BIBLICAL LOVE IS AN _____ VIRTUE (v. 8-13)

A. Love will outlast _____ (v. 8)

B. Love will outlast _____ (v.9-12)

C. Love will outlast _____ (v.13)

"THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE"

I CORINTHIANS 13

10-22-2023

INTRODUCTION:

What is the one thing (gift) that you feel you need in your life? If you could choose but one gift, what would it be?

Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, said, "*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."* (I Cor. 3:1)

They had the sign gifts of the Spirit, but not the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

"Carnal" = fleshly - living like *"natural men"* (I Cor. 2:14)

They were characterized by their envying, strife, and divisions in their church.

Paul wrote a letter of rebuke. The Corinthians needed to be corrected because of their:

1. Division (ch. 3)
2. Boastfulness (ch. 4)
3. Fornication (ch. 5)
4. Lawsuits (ch. 6)
5. Immorality (ch. 6)
6. Overindulgence and drunkenness at the Lord's Supper (ch. 11)

The thrust of Paul's message in chapters 12 - 14 is one continuous thought: Combatting the Corinthians' desire to uplift themselves.

They needed to learn the principle of unity (ch. 12), love (ch. 13), and building up others (ch. 14).

Their motives for seeking the spectacular, eye catching, miraculous sign gifts was totally self-centered.

Paul ended the last chapter by saying in effect: While you are seeking the best gifts for yourselves, I will show you the most excellent virtue you ought to seek after; I'll show you the supreme feature you need for life & ministry!

*** Biblical Love must be the supreme characteristic of your life.**

Why? 3 Reasons:

I. BIBLICAL LOVE IS AN ESSENTIAL VIRTUE (v. 1-3)

Love is a vital ingredient (just as sugar is to cookies, butter to toast, gas to a car)

A. Without love your message accomplishes nothing (v. 1)

(V. 1 is referring to one's speaking ability)

"Tongues of men" - Various literal languages around the world

"Of angels" - the language the angels speak in Heaven (no one has ever spoken in angelic language; Paul is speaking hypothetically here.)

"Tongues" - a sign to unbelieving Jews that the gospel was now going to the people all over the world. To the Jew this was a sign of judgment--like the parables were. (I Cor.14:20-21)

If I knew Spanish and went to Spain to preach -- Without love, my message is worthless.

If I knew Japanese and went to Japan to preach -- Without love, my message is worthless.

* I may know the language better than any in that country . . .

* I may have articulate excellence and have a very polished message . . .
(EX: Apollos - Acts 18:24; I Cor. 1:12) (SEE: I Cor. 2:1-5 - Paul's message)

* I may know what I am talking about (speaking the truth) --God's Word which is dear to my heart--and yet say it without love.

* Our preaching, teaching, witnessing must have love.
Many times we do it out of duty, or burden for mankind as a whole (Someone said, "I love mankind, it's people I can't stand.")

"Love" - Shows to the world our distinctiveness/difference (Jn. 13:34-35 - *"New commandment. . . By this shall all men know.")*

"sounding brass" - like the ringing, echoing, or roaring of a gong.
"tinkling cymbal" - like the high pitch, loud, clashing sound of a cymbal.

Our message is repulsive without love, cold, abrasive (v. 2b)

Win the lost with love, restore a brother with love, put yourself in their shoes and sympathize. . .

B. Without love your gifts (abilities) reveal you to be nothing (v. 2)

(V. 2 is a reference to knowing ability)

The Corinthians boasted over their gifts. And coveted the attention-getting gifts.

NOTE: Paul's use of the superlative ***"All"***.

Note: Some people perhaps could have understood all mysteries (though doubtful), but to also have all knowledge and all faith and then to have it labeled as nothing is really amazing.

--Though we may know the Bible inside out, without love we are nothing.

--We may know all doctrine, all theology, all hermeneutical principles of interpretation, but without love we are nothing.

--We may have unshakable, confident, circumstance-changing faith, but without love we are nothing.

(And we need all of the above - EX: of Ephesus - Rev. 2:2-4)

People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care!

God is more interested in what we are than what we do.

C. Without love your sacrifice profits you nothing (v. 3)

(V. 3 is referring to our giving ability)

1) The voluntary sacrifice of possessions is worthless (v. 3a)

"bestow all my goods to feed" - to divide all one property or possessions up into fragments and dole it all out to the poor so that you have nothing left over; not even a crumb.

This verse is showing that it is possible to have the fruit of love and not love itself.

"The works of love are often imitated by those who have no love and yet desire to enjoy the praise of love." (Lenski)

Giving is a fruit of love, but it is not love itself.

Lk. 10:38-42 - Mary & Martha

This does not mean we are not to sacrifice - I Jn. 3:16-18)

If I gave everything so that I might give to those who had nothing, yet did not have love as my motive, I will not be rewarded by God.

Examine your motive!

EX: Motive of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet was sincere

2) The sacrifice of our life is worthless (v. 3b)

Paul is picturing an act of supreme self-sacrifice which is made with a pretense of love for others.

--A martyr for a worthy cause, a voluntary giving, yet without love, it profits me nothing.

--If you died for your beliefs, yet without love, it would profit you nothing.

--If you died for someone else, yet without love, it would profit you nothing.

(And God knows whether or not you have love.)

Let love be your motive!

God will *"judge the secrets of men."*

Without love, our message does nothing - I do nothing
our abilities are nothing - I am nothing
our sacrifice gains nothing - I will be rewarded nothing

II. BIBLICAL LOVE IS AN EXALTED VIRTUE (v. 4-7)

Note: Paul does not characterize love in its greatest works--sacrifices, martyrdoms, and triumphs--he goes to the ordinary circumstances of life and shows a picture of love.

Instead of attempting a definition of love, Paul gives us a rich description. Placing before our eyes what love does and what love does not do. Take a look at the symptoms of true love.

A. Biblical love is not <u>self-centered</u> (v. 4b-5a)

"Envieth not" - not jealous ("envy" - from "zeal")

EX: Acts 17:1-5 - Unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica *"moved with envy."*

To resent others' prosperity.

*Don't be jealous of others' ability. . .
*Don't be jealous of others' success. . .
*Don't be jealous of others' possessions . . .
*Rather, praise God for it!

Don't try to belittle others, so as to raise up yourself!

"Love looks through a telescope - <u>envy</u> through a microscope."

Those who have Agape Love do not resent the prosperity of others!

"Vaunteth not itself" - lit. does not parade itself (it is not boastful, does not brag).

Behind boastful bragging, there lies conceit, an over-estimation of one's own importance, abilities or achievements.

Paul goes from envy, to boasting, and from boasting to puffing oneself up -- a natural sequence of lovelessness.

Those who have Agape Love refrain from rehearsing all of their good traits and promoting self.

"Is not puffed up" - to be arrogant

Jesus said, "*He that exalteth himself shall be abased; he that humbleth*

himself shall be exalted."

Cp. II Cor. 12:20 - *"puffed up"* = swelling

Those who have Agape Love do not stubbornly insist that their way is best; nor does it look down the nose at others!

"Doth not behave itself unseemly" = to act unbecoming, rude.

After pride puffs up the heart, tactlessness, disrespect, dishonor and inconsideration in conduct naturally follow.

The concept of *"unseemly behavior"* is translated elsewhere in the New Testament as shame, nakedness, indecency, and is applied to illicit sexual lifestyles (EX: Rom. 1:27 - Homosexuality = *"men with men working that which is unseemly")*

Love never sins.

Love does not shame the testimony of Christ.

Those who have Agape Love are considerate and courteous, not sarcastic and rude!

"Seeketh not her own" - *Seek* = to covet earnestly, strive

I Cor. 10:24 - *"Let not man seek his own, but every man another's welfare."*
II Cor. 12:14 - *"I seek not yours but you."*
Phil. 2:21 - *"For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."*

Love does not seek one's own pleasure, profit, honor, etc.

Does not seek the love of others. "There is more pleasure in loving than in being loved."

True love is always unselfish. How easily said, how hard to attain!

Those who have Agape Love seek the other person's best interest!

B. Biblical love does not seek the harm of others (v. 5b-6a)

 (the downfall of others)

Rom. 13:10 - *"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor."*

"Is not easily provoked" - angered, stirred up

Irritated - to the point of a sharp disagreement (EX: Acts 15:39)

Love is not embittered or enraged by abuse, wrong insult, or injury.

"Man is like a piece of steel - he's no good when he loses his temper."

EX: *"When Christ was reviled, He reviled not again."*

EX: Mt. 5:44 - *"Love your enemies..."*

Those who have Agape Love control their anger even when pushed to the limit!

"Thinketh no evil" - Keeps no account book (record) of the wrongs of others. It forgives and forgets (70 x 70).

*Love does not count something against someone.

*Love does not keep a record of wrongs.

Same word used of God: *"He does not impute to us our guilt"*

Rom. 4:8 - *"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will <u>not impute</u> sin."*

II Cor. 5:19 - *"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, <u>not imputing</u> their trespasses unto them..."*

Those who have Agape Love forgive the wrongs committed against them and do not keep score, nor store up memories of past wrongs and then drag them out to win a point at some future time. (Richard Strauss)

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity" - No pleasure in sin whatsoever.

--Does not rejoice over sin in out own life (EX: past sin, before salvation)

--Verse is more specifically referring to sin in the lives of others. Does not

find joy in some juicy tid bit about someone else.

We should be grieved, our hearts should be broken!

Because:
Sin hurts the one who committed it.
Sin calls for the chastisement of God upon the wrong doer.
Sin grieves God's heart - He is displeased.

Those with Agape Love do not take sweet pleasure in the troubles, misfortunes, or failures of even their enemies who fall into sin's snare.

On the contrary, *"Love rejoices in the truth."***

Love seeks to correct a brother.

Love gladly finds pleasure when unrighteousness has been delivered out of a person, and he is living right with God.

Those who have Apape Love praise God when their enemy comes to find the truth of God's grace & love.

C. Biblical love seeks the well-being of others (v. 4a, 7)
(is patiently supportive)

"Suffereth long" - patient

ILLUS: Christ's patience with proud, selfish, quibbling disciples (*"He loved them to the end"*)

Word used of God - *"...longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish..."*

When among those who are hating us and seeking to do us wrong, we don't allow resentment and retaliation although they deserve it.

"Those who deserve love the least, need it the most!"

Those who have Agape Love have an extra level of tolerance toward those who are stupid, careless and inconsiderate.

"And is kind" - useful, helpful, friendly

A mark of Christ's ministry on earth (EX: woman at the well; adulterous woman).

Kindness - despite the surroundings (especially when life is distressing and

hard).

ILLUS: of a rich man about to commit suicide when a little, thin, hungry boy pulled on his coat and asked for help (Knight, p. 215).

Those who have Apape Love are sensitive to the needs of others; Always seeking a way to serve.

"Beareth all things" - supportive, protective

Derived from a word that means "to protect, to cover, to put a roof over, to throw a cloak of silence over what is displeasing in another person."

You go to that person -- not broadcast it to the world. Love never gossips.

I Peter 4:8 - *"And above all these things, have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall* (imperative) *cover* [not the same word as "beareth" but similar idea] *the multitude of sins."*

Those who have Agape Love put a lid on gossip and do not broadcast confidentialities.

"Believeth all things" - trusts; (this does not mean that love is gullible, but that it won't become a skeptic even after getting burned in the past)

Refuse to believe suspicions of doubt.

The flesh is ready to believe all things about a brother and a fellow man in an evil sense. Love does the opposite.

Love places confidence in, it relies upon.

While love *"beareth all things"* in that it refuses to immediately believe all that is worst in a person, it secondly *"believeth all things"* - all that is best in a person.

Those who have Agape Love do not torment others with groundless suspicions but treat them with trust (ultimately trusting God).

"Hopeth all things" - to trust with confidence.
We expect what is best in another person.

Hope knows no pessimism.
Paul said, *"I am confident that He which hath begun a good work in you..."*
The basis of this confidence is not in the person's natural abilities, but in the grace of Christ.

Those who have Agape Love do not lose all confidence in a person and sink into discouragement, despondency and despair.

"Endureth all things" - Brave perseverance.
To remain under; to maintain control under pain, pressure, and injury.
**Opposite of fleeing away and quitting!
When we love our children, we don't quit! Our mate, etc.

Those who have Agape Love do not allow problematic people to rob them of their joy nor will power to go on.

Love as used in other passages:
WHO are we to love?
--Those that labor in the ministry (I Th. 5:13)
--Wives (Eph. 5:25)
--Husbands and children (Ti. 2:4)
--One another in church (Heb. 10:24 - We are to *"provoke one another unto love"*)
--All the saints (Col. 1:4)

WHAT are we NOT to love?
--Our own selves (in a selfish sense; II Tim. 3:2; Rev. 12:11; Jn. 12:25)
--Worldly pleasures (II Tim. 3:4)
--Money (I Tim. 6:10)
--This world system (I Jn. 2:15)
--Having the pre-eminence

HOW are we to love?
--Without hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9)
--As you would a brother (Rom. 12:10)
--Not pretended (II Cor. 6:6)
--Sincerely (II Cor. 8:8)
--With service (Gal. 5:13)
--With forbearance (Eph. 4:12)
--With truth (Eph. 4:15)
--With a lifestyle (*"walk in love"* - Eph. 5:2)
--Even when we are not loved (II Cor. 12:15)
--With labor (I Thes. 1:3)
--As you already naturally love yourself (Ja. 2:8)
--With deeds and truth (I Jn. 3:18)
--At all times (Prov. 17:17)

"For me to love the world is no chore!
My only real problem is my neighbor next door."

III. BIBLICAL LOVE IS AN ETERNAL VIRTUE (v. 8-13)

The permanence of love. ...Where are your investments? What do you take stock in?

"Love never fails" - lit. never falls down, never becomes invalid, never comes to

an end.

There are many things in life that end! They are temporary.

Paul now deals with the permanence of love; Love will never be a bad investment; it will never go "out of style" with God; it will always bring spiritual revenue (eternal dividends).

A. Love will outlast <u>gifts</u> (v. 8)

a. Love will supersede prophesies

"Prophecy" - to foretell and forth-tell (the ability to speak)

"Shall fail" - to be done away with (passive)

b. Love will supersede tongues

"Tongues" - a <u>sign gift</u> of speaking known languages

"Shall cease" - shall stop on its own (when God's purpose was fulfilled - I Cor. 14:22)

c. Love will supersede knowledge

"Knowledge" - a deep, enlarged understanding of spiritual truths (which is still limited compared to what we will know in Heaven).

"Shall vanish away" - to be done away with (passive)

B. Love will outlast <u>present limitations</u> (v.9-12)

Note: Tongues is not mentioned.

a. Presently we have limited knowledge

We know only a part--a portion--of all there is to know about God.

b. Presently we have limited ability to express spiritual truths

We are restricted:

--Because God only revealed to us what He wanted us to know.

--Because our sinful, depraved minds cannot contain all there is to know; therefore, we can't proclaim it all.

*When will those limitations end? ***"When that which is perfect has come."***

***"That which is perfect"* =** To reach the goal, to bring to the end, to reach the place of total completeness and maturity --

> Context demonstrates: When we are transformed when we see Christ face to face in Heaven.

SEE: Rev. 21:1-6a

No more need for preaching/prophesying (Jer. 31:34)

No more need for our partial knowledge.

ILLUS: Paul's replacement of his immature abilities (compares manhood with infancy -- a drastic difference) --

> ***"Spake" -*** alludes to prophecy
> ***"Understood" -*** alludes to knowledge
> ***"Thought" -*** alludes to knowledge

Nothing is wrong with childish things when you are a child. What is wrong with toys, rattles, & play pens? Nothing, when you are a child.

"Glass" - mirror (back then, polished brass or metal) - a dim reflection

Paul contrasts between the incomplete knowledge gained by seeing a reflection of an object and by seeing the object itself.

We will go from <u>present</u> limited sight to <u>future</u> personal sight (I Jn . 3:2).

We will go from <u>present</u> limited knowledge to <u>future</u> perfect

knowledge.

C. Love will outlast <u>some present spiritual virtues</u> (v.13)

In our spiritual investment startegy we need to invest in 3 spiritual stocks, but especially in the matter of love.

1) In Heaven, **faith** will be replaced by <u>sight</u>

2) In Heaven, **hope** will be replaced by <u>reality</u>

3) But **love** (as demonstrated at Calvary) will continue forever.

CONCLUSION:

Biblical love must be the supreme characteristic in your life!

Why?

Because of the <u>necessity</u> of love,

Because of the <u>characteristics</u> of love,

Because of the <u>duration</u> of love.

Is love in your spiritual portfolio?

Do Your Words Edify?

I Corinthians 14:1-19

11-5-2023

Introduction: (v.1,12)

When you speak..."seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church!" (v.12)

5 Reasons why you should use your tongue to proclaim truth in an intelligible manner:

I. Our message should be <u>CLEAR</u> not cryptic (v.2-3)

<u>Tongues</u>: Mysterious Message *<u>Prophecy</u>: Clear Message*

II. Our message should be <u>OTHERS-CENTERED</u> not self-centered (v.4)

<u>Tongues</u>: Ego-Centric *<u>Prophecy</u>: Others-Centered*

III. Our message should <u>EDIFY</u> not mystify (v.5)

<u>Tongues</u>: Inferior Gift *<u>Prophecy</u>: Superior Gift*

IV. Our message should <u>PROFIT</u> not be detrimental (v.6)

<u>Tongues</u>: No Profit (w/o Interpretation) <u>Prophecy</u>: Beneficial

V. Our message should be <u>RATIONAL</u> not illogical (v.7-17)

<u>Tongues</u>: Unintelligible <u>Prophecy</u>: Understandable

5 Illustrations of the need for understandable communication:

A. **<u>Musical Instruments</u>** must communicate an understandable message (v.7-8)

B. **<u>Language</u>** <u>in General</u> must communicate an understandable message (v.9-11)

C. **<u>Prayer</u>** must communicate an understandable message (v.13-15a)

D. **<u>Songs</u>** must communicate an understandable message (v.15b)

E. **<u>Praise</u>** <u>(Testimonies)</u> must communicate an understandable message (v.16-17)

Conclusion: (v.18-19)

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Tongues: No Profit (w/o Interpretation) Prophecy: Beneficial

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Tongues: Unintelligible Prophecy: Understandable

5 Illustrations of the need for understandable communication:

A. _____must communicate an understandable message (v.7-8)

B. _____in General must communicate an understandable message (v.9-11)

C. _____ must communicate an understandable message (v.13-15a)

D. _____ must communicate an understandable message (v.15b)

E. _____ (Testimonies) must communicate an understandable message (v.16-17)

Conclusion: (v.18-19)

Do Your Words Edify?

I Corinthians 14:1-19

11-5-2023

Introduction: (v.1,12)

The Tongue:

There is tremendous power in one of our smallest body parts: the tongue.
With it, we can direct others with words of wisdom, truth, and kindness; or destroy others with error, lies, and maliciousness (Ja. 3).

Solomon said: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" Prov. 18:21

The power of speech is one of the greatest powers God has given us.
With the tongue, man can praise God, pray, preach, lead a soul to Christ, comfort, encourage . . . What a privilege!

But that same tongue can tell lies, ruin a man's reputation, split a church, or break a person's heart.
"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29).

V. 1

"Follow after" - A term denoting concentrated earnestness; lit. to hunt after, to pursue habitually without diversion.

God never says to pursue tongues, but He spent an entire chapter giving us reasons why we should pursue *agape* love (ch. 13).

"Desire" - We should be zealous about the gifts God has to offer us. Anything the Holy Spirit has to offer; I want what He wants for me! (Nothing more, nothing less)

When it comes to prioritizing which spiritual gifts we should desire, Paul is now going to say that we should desire those gifts that will benefit others.

The ultimate way we benefit others in a church is by the words we say.

Hence, Paul's emphasis on the word *"prophesy."*

"Prophesy" - to foretell or forthtell God's Word (in this chapter, the word is used of forthtelling or declaring the truth of God).

V. 12

Note the theme (major point of emphasis) in this chapter in verse 12. Paul says: Since you have a zealot's passion for spiritual gifts, channel that zeal toward seeking to ***"excel*** (abound) ***"to the edifying*** (building up) ***of the church."*** [Seek to possess and implement gifts that will edify the people of your local church!]

"Church" - local church, as in v. 19 *"in the church."*

In chapter 14 Paul shows the pre-eminence of prophecy over tongues.
[Give BACKGROUND to the origin of tongues - Mark 16; Acts 2.]

****When you speak..."seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church!" (v.12)***

5 Reasons why you should use your tongue to proclaim truth in an intelligible manner:

I. Our message should be <u>CLEAR</u> not cryptic (v.2-3)
<u>Tongues</u>: Mysterious Message *<u>Prophecy</u>: Clear Message*

V. 2

"Unknown" - Unknown to the speaker, but known somewhere in the world (Acts 2); yet unless perchance it happens at a United Nations gathering (or the day of *"Pentecost"* - Acts 2), no one will understand you, except God who knows all languages.

"In the Spirit" - two possibilities:
1. Holy Spirit - instrumental use
2. Human Spirit - locative use

"Mysteries" - Something that is kept secret, not revealed, cryptic (EX: When James Cherian speaks in Malialam or Hindi, it is a mystery to me).

V. 3

1) ***"Edification" -*** to <u>build</u> up
(to impart <u>strength</u>)

2) ***"Exhortation" -*** to <u>encourage</u>
(to impart <u>challenge</u>)

3) ***"Comfort" -*** to <u>console</u>
(to impart <u>peace</u>)

No one is strengthened, challenged, or comforted by someone speaking in a language they don't understand.

God expects us to seek to communicate a message that is not cloudy, but clear; not confusing, but convicting; not chaotic, but calming.

II. Our message should be <u>OTHERS-CENTERED</u> not self-centered (v.4)
<u>Tongues</u>: Ego-Centric *<u>Prophecy</u>: Others-Centered*

"Edifieth himself" - Paul is <u>NOT</u> saying that this is the <u>purpose</u> of tongues, but the <u>problem</u> of tongues. If no one understands what is being said, then the only one being edified is the speaker. And since he may not have the gift of interpretation, he may not even know what he is saying, and the only thing being edified is his own ego (pride).

"But" - (in contrast) one who speaks God's truth in a language others know imparts blessing.

III. Our message should <u>EDIFY</u> not mystify (v.5)
<u>Tongues</u>: Inferior Gift *<u>Prophecy</u>: Superior Gift*

Since tongues was a gift given by the Spirit of God for a definite purpose, Paul (in his human reasoning) thought it would be neat if all of the Corinthians had the gift.

However, not all did speak in tongues (12:30), and such was never the Spirit's intention (12:11).

Why is a preacher (prophet) greater than a tongues talker? One is serving others and the other is serving himself. (Greatness is in serving others and not in being served - Mt. 20:25-26).

The truly great Christians use their gifts to edify others.

True greatness as a servant of Christ is to minister to His people in the local church.

Without interpretation tongues had zero value (no purpose) in church.

IV. Our message should <u>PROFIT</u> not be detrimental (v.6)

Tongues: No Profit (w/o Interpretation) Prophecy: Beneficial

"Profit" - benefit, gain

What good would Paul's teaching be to the Corinthians if he didn't speak their language?

"Revelation" - to unveil truth (visually)

"Knowledge" - to comprehend truth (mentally)

"Prophesying" - to declare truth (boldly as a prophet)

"Doctrine" - to teach truth (patiently as a teacher)

V. Our message should be RATIONAL not illogical (v.7-17)

Tongues: Unintelligible Prophecy: Understandable

Note the repeated references to the mind or reason.

Observe the words:

"Known" (v. 7, 9)
"Understood" (v. 9)
"Know" (v. 11)
"Understanding" (v. 14, 15a, 15b, 19)
"Understandeth" (v. 16)

5 Illustrations of the need for understandable communication:

A. **Musical Instruments** must communicate an understandable message (v.7-8)

V. 7

"A distinction in the sounds" - a logical difference in the notes

Music communicates a message (even without the words!). But <u>not</u> if you only hit one note or if you randomly hit any note without order, purpose or intention.

V. 8

"An uncertain sound" - If no one knows the piece of music, nor associates it with an expected response, it will not lead to the desired action. The troops don't prepare for battle to a foreign blues tune of Louis Armstrong.

B. **<u>Language</u>** <u>in General</u> must communicate an understandable message (v.9-11)

V. 9

"Easy to be understood" - With right words, right word order, right syntax, right grammar.

If I said, "Died their sin sinners to Jesus from save" - I make no sense.

However, when I say the same words in the correct grammatic order, it comes out this way: "Jesus died to save sinners from their sin."

Every "tongue talker" in church today is doing nothing but ***"speaking into the <u>air."</u>***

V. 10

Many languages exist in our world, but not one is without meaning. The purpose of language is to communicate meaning.

V. 11

"Barbarians" were European foreigners whose language sounded like "Bar-bar" to the Greek or Hebrew speaking people of Paul's day.

C. **<u>Prayer</u>** must communicate an understandable message (v.13-15a)

V. 13

Since edification is the goal, communication is the means to that goal. Hence, interpretation was a worthy gift for some to pray for.

Incidentally, no one prayed in tongues to receive the gift of interpretation of

tongues; rather, one prayed for God's will with meaning.

V. 14

Many use this verse in an attempt to show tongues to be a private "Prayer Language." However, Paul is speaking "hypothetically," as evidenced by the word ***"if."***

Some try to tie in Rom. 8:26 (*"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."*) to prove that tongues is a prayer language.

However, Rom. 8:26 is teaching that the Holy Spirit prays for us in intercession, not through us in tongues; it also teaches that His groanings cannot be uttered by any human tongue or language!

V. 15

"What is it then?"- What good is such prayer? No good!

To pray without understanding is to violate everything the Bible teaches about prayer. (Prayer must never be without meaning or understanding.) (EX: The Lord's prayer, not speaking God's name in vain, not praying in vain repetitions).

D. **Songs** must communicate an understandable message (v.15b)

Whenever we sing, we must mean what we are singing, or else we may in fact be uttering God's name in vain!

Both spirit and mind must be engaged whenever we pray or sing.

To engage the human spirit without the mind is New Age spooky metaphysics. To engage the mind without the spirit is cold, plastic, carnal, human rationalism.

We need both mind and spirit to be in sync together.

E. **Praise** (Testimonies) must communicate an understandable message (v.16-17)

V. 16

"Bless" - to say a good word about God

"Unlearned" - One who does not understand the message

The Early Church had testimony meetings. Giving testimonies (publically thanking God for what He has done either for you or through you) was a part of the church service (keep testimonies clear, concise, and Christ-centered).

V. 17

One goal of a testimony meeting was to edify others by allowing them to hear how God has worked in your life.

Conclusion: (v.18-19)

V. 18

Tongues was a sign gift, and Paul had signs authenticating his apostolic office in abundance (II Cor. 12:12 - *"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds")*.

V. 19

In church, five words spoken with comprehension are better than 10,000 unintelligible foreign words.

--Tongues were never intended for private use.

--Tongues were never intended for church use (without an interpreter).

How interested (concerned) are you in your words to others in this church?

May we use our tongues unselfishly to build up others rather than to blow our own horns and promote self.

When others leave your presence, are they strengthened, encouraged, stimulated or provoked unto good works, or are they weakened, depressed, or confused?

The Biblical Purpose for TONGUES"

I Corinthians 14:20-22

12-10-2023

INTRODUCTION: *We are to base our beliefs on Scripture, not experience or emotional feelings.

What is the Nature of Tongues?

Tongues were literal languages (Acts 2:2-11) (never gibberish or a "heavenly language")

What is the PURPOSE of Tongues?

SEE: I Cor. 14:20-22

I. Tongues were given as a SIGN (v.22)
("*Tongues are for a sign")*

II. Tongues were given as a sign to UNBELIEVING ISRAEL (v.21)
(*I will speak unto this people (Israel) [see: Isa.28:11-12])*

III. Tongues were given as a sign of JUDGEMENT to unbelieving Israel (v.21)

What is Wrong With Speaking in Tongues?

A. Today's "tongues" is wrong, because it is encouraged for everyone.

B. Today's "tongues" is wrong, because it is interpreted as proof of spiritual maturity.

C. Today's "tongues" is wrong, because it is claimed to be the sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

D. Today's "tongues" is wrong, because it is not practiced according to the rules laid down in Scripture.

1. First: Tongues speaking must acknowledge the Lordship of Christ (I Cor. 12:3).
2. Second: There must be an interpreter (I Cor. 14:5, 27, 28).
   Edification was necessary if the gift was to be exercised in the church (I Cor. 14:3, 4, 5, 6, 17, 19).
3. Third: The "tongues" speaker must realize that "tongues" is not a priority gift (I Cor. 14:19); therefore, boasting of such a gift is unwarranted.
4. Fourth: Tongues should be exercised in the presence of unbelieving Jews (I Cor. 14:21-22).
   Jews require a "sign" (I Cor. 1:22).The sign gift of tongues was to "this people" (I Cor. 14:21 - Israel).
5. Fifth: No more than three persons may exercise this gift at any one meeting (I Cor. 14:27).
6. Sixth: Women are not to speak with tongues in church (I Cor. 14:34, 35).
7. Seventh: The gift must be governed by love (I Cor. 13:1), and by orderliness (I Cor. 14:40).

E. Today's "tongues" is wrong, because God said "Tongues would cease" (I Cor. 13:8).

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"The Biblical Purpose for TONGUES"

I Corinthians 14:20-22

12-10-2023

INTRODUCTORY ADMONITION:

*We are to base our beliefs on Scripture, not experience or emotional feelings.

Experience cannot dictate doctrine. In other words, we are to test any experience by doctrine, not test doctrine by experience. We must "try the spirits" (I Jn. 4:1; Is. 8:20).

The Bible

For feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving.

My warrant is the Word of God;
Naught else is worth believing.

Tho' all my heart should feel oppressed
For want of some sweet token,

There is One greater than my heart,
Whose Word cannot be broken.

I'll trust in God's unchanging Word,
Till soul and body sever;

For tho' all things shall pall away,
His Word shall stand forever!

What is the Nature of Tongues?

A. Tongues were literal languages (Acts 2:2-11)
(never gibberish or a "heavenly language")

Proof:

1. The definition of tongues:

   a. **"Glossa"** (from which we derive our English word "glossary")

      1) Refers to the literal physical tongue (Rom. 3:13)
      2) Refers to a tribe, kindred, people, or nation (Rev. 7:9)
      3) Primarily refers to a literal language (Acts 2:4, 11)

   b. **"Dialektos"** (from which we derive our English word "dialect")

      Only refers to literal languages (Acts 21:40 - "He spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue...")

      NOTE: The words "glossa" and "dialektos" are used synonymously in Acts 2. Acts 2:8, 11 - "We [hear] every man in his own tongue (dialektos). . . we . . . hear them speak in our tongues (glossa)."

2. The demonstration of tongues:
   (Acts 2:8-12)

   --**15** literal languages listed

   NOTE: The gift of tongues always involved a literal known ethnic language, though it was unknown to the speaker (he was not speaking a language he knew, but was speaking a language known somewhere in the world).

   The word "unknown" in I Cor. 14:2, 4, 13, 19, etc., is italicized, meaning it is not in the Greek.

B. Tongues were revelatory in nature (Acts 2:11)

The Spirit of God was speaking directly to and through those who spoke in tongues.

God is not pouring out new revelation today. The only way He directly speaks today is through the Bible!

Much confusion and unsound doctrine has arisen because of a misunderstanding of Scriptures dealing with the matter of tongues.

In the N.T. the sign gift of tongues is specifically mentioned in only five passages of Scripture:

A. <u>Prophetical</u> Passage - foretold by Jesus, Mark 16:17

B. <u>Historical</u> Passages -

1. The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13)

2. The House of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-47; 11:15-18)

3. The disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-7)

[NOTE: An implied reference is in Acts 8:16-18.]

C. <u>Doctrinal</u> Passage - the church in Corinth, I Cor. 12:1-14:40

There is a great need to understand I Cor. 12-14 in its <u>context</u>!

NOTE: The problems in the Corinthian church throughout the book.

The Corinthians are described as "divisive" (1:10) and "carnal" (3:1).

Therefore, the bulk of the teaching Paul gives in this book is <u>corrective</u> in nature. Paul does not condone their practices but actually condemns and corrects their practices (one such practice was their speaking in tongues).

<u>Chapter 12</u>

The need for unity and harmony in the church. The problem at Corinth was that everyone in the church was seeking to be in the limelight (or to be prominent, to have the eye-catching, notable gifts which could be seen by others, such as tongues).

In chapter 12 Paul, therefore, unfolds the importance of every gift and every body part.

<u>Chapter 13</u>

While everyone was busy coveting the "best gifts," Paul in I Cor. 13 shows the prominence and necessity of Love over gifts (specifically over tongues -

v. 1, 8).

Chapter 14

In this chapter Paul condemns the improper use of tongues, and shows the priority of "prophesying" (teaching people in a language they know and understand).

Two key ideas in 14:1-19 -

Prophecy edifies, tongues does not (v. 1-12)

Prophecy is understandable, tongues is not (v. 13-19)

[NOTE: In order for tongues to edify or be understood, interpretation was needed - v. 5, 26-28]

What is the PURPOSE of Tongues?

SEE: I Cor. 14:20-22

v.20 ***"...In understanding be men"*** **-** be mature; grow up when it comes to understanding God's purpose for tongues.

When we understand the purpose of tongues, we then can answer the following questions:

1. What is this unusual sign gift all about?

2. Is tongues for today?

3. If tongues ceased, when did it cease?

Paul gives the purpose of tongues in I Cor. 14:22:

I. Tongues were given as a SIGN (v.22)
("*Tongues are for a sign")*

The gift of tongues was a <u>miraculous sign gift</u>

1. **"Miracle"** = a <u>supernatural</u> event that occurs in the <u>physical</u> world by the direct <u>power</u> of God for the purpose of <u>proving</u> that God is directly speaking and specifically acting (either independently or through a chosen person).

   Greek words: "dynamis - a display of might or power; "teras" - a miracle that causes wonder and amazement.

2. **"Sign"** = ("semeion") a miraculous mark or token that proves a claim (authenticates) or provides a warning.

   The Jews sought for signs - I Cor. 1:22

3. **"Gift"** = ("charisma") an endowment of grace given by the Holy Spirit to believers to accomplish God's will (Rom. 12:6; I Cor. 12:28).

   While every believer has a gift or gifts from God,
   **the basic purpose of <u>sign</u> gifts is to confirm (authenticate) a <u>message</u> or <u>messenger</u>.

   Examples:
   --A message confirmed - Heb. 2:3-4
   --Messengers (apostles) confirmed - II Cor. 12:12

II. Tongues were given as a sign to UNBELIEVING ISRAEL (v.21)
(*I will speak unto <u>this people</u> (Israel) [see: Isa.28:11-12])*

Verse 21

Question: Who is meant by ***"this people"*** in verse 21?
Answer: Israel (cp. Ezekiel 3:4~~4~~7)

The scripture Paul cites in verse 21 is Isaiah 28:11-12

Because Israel wouldn't listen to Isaiah, he had to lecture them like little children - "precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, and there a little" (v. 10).

When they mocked this way of teaching, soon God would give them His message in a language they would not understand (Assyrians, then Babylonians) (READ V. 11, 12)

III. Tongues were given as a sign of JUDGEMENT to unbelieving Israel (v.22)

In verse 22, Paul gives his conclusion based on what he just said in verse 21.

Tongues are a sign of judgment to unbelieving Israel.

ILLUS: Our church is bilingual (in some cases trilingual) for the most part. How would it make you feel if you were in a group of people who knew your language fluently, but they spoke in their own language about something wonderful. You would feel left out (rejected) and curious. They would be wrong for doing it.

But suppose you were a person who just mocked, made fun of, and didn't believe what that same group always talked about. So then they said, "OK, this guy doesn't want what we have to say. Let's leave him out, by speaking in our second language that he doesn't know." They would be justified for doing this. You don't deserve to hear.

This is what God did by sending tongues.
God used language as an evidence of judgment throughout the Bible:

1) At the Tower of Babel
"The whole earth was of one language, and one speech" (Gen. 11:1). The people did not obey the command given to Noah to "replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1) but became proud (Gen. 11:4) and united without God, so God confused their languages and established the parent languages of the earth (today over 3,000 languages and dialects).

2) **Deut. 28 Blessings & Cursings** - curses were to be a "sign" (v. 46) Deut. 28:49 - "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;"

3) **Jeremiah** the "weeping prophet" preached, and Israel would not repent from her backsliding, so God said He would send judgment. Jer. 5:14-15 - "Wherefore, thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them. Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say."

4) **In the NT** (after Mt. 12 - unpardonable sin), Christ spoke in **parables** because of the hardness of the people's hearts. They would not listen to plain talk, so He veiled His speech by parables. (READ Mt. 13:10-15).

I Cor. 14:22 - Tongues were <u>not</u> for:

1) <u>Self-edification</u> but a sign of judgment
2) <u>Entertainment or amusement</u> but a sign of judgment
3) <u>Spreading the Gospel to other nationalities</u> but a sign of judgment
4) <u>The benefit of the assembly</u> of believers (church) but a sign of judgment
5) <u>private use</u> but for <u>public</u> as a sign of judgment
6) a sign that you finally had the <u>Holy Spirit</u> (Paul said not all spoke in tongues; but all had the Holy Spirit)

Because tongues is a sign of judgment for Israel - it is <u>a sign of **blessing**</u> for Gentiles.

<u>God's judgment of Israel</u>:

1) Rom. 11:13-24 - natural branch (Israel) broken off; wild olive tree (Gentiles) grafted in.
2) Mt. 21:28-22:14 - 3 parables describing God's judgment on Israel (Mt. 21:43 - "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

The sign of tongues was to show that God was going to accept Gentiles

(people of a different tongue). This was a hard lesson for Peter and the apostles to learn.

Peter and the other Apostles would need objective proof that God had accepted the Gentiles on an equal basis with the Jews and that they were given the same Holy Spirit that they received on Pentecost.

--So when the Samaritans were saved, they spoke in tongues (Acts 8:17, 18)
--When the Gentiles were saved, they spoke in tongues (10:46)
--When the proselytes of John were saved, they spoke in tongues (19:6)

No longer would God confine Himself to one people as a channel; no longer would God operate His work of grace through one nation and speak one language.
Tongues ceased when their purpose was done. (it was a temporary sign gift).

ILLUS: If a store kept the signs up saying "Grand Opening Sale" 100 years after it began, we would say the manager was crazy!
The church has bene in existence now for about 2,000 years. Israel does not need God to still give the sign to them for 2,000 years. They got the message long ago!

Ill. Signs to NYC are not needed when you are in NYC.
ex. NYC 100 miles ahead, 75...,50...,25...

Tongues ceased because its specific purpose was fulfilled. In 70 A.D. Titus sacked Jerusalem, killing 1,100,000 Jews and scattering the rest all over the world.

What is Wrong With Speaking in Tongues?

Answer: Nothing was wrong with the gift of "tongues" -- as it was originally given and during the time when it was given by God.

What is wrong is the "tongues" that is practiced and witnessed today.

See article by Roy E. Knuteson, The Discerner, Vol. IV, #4, Oct.-Dec., 1962, Religion Analysis Service, Inc., Minneapolis, MN.

A. Today's "tongues" is wrong, because it is encouraged for everyone.

1. All spiritual gifts are given at the discretion and wisdom of the Holy Spirit - "as He will" (I Cor. 12:11).

2. Not all Christians spoke in tongues (I Cor. 12:30), but all had the Spirit (Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 12:13).

3. Speaking in tongues is never commanded by God.

4. For everyone to speak in tongues in a Church gathering would produce a confusing message to outsiders who visit the assembly (see: I Cor.14:23-25)

B. Today's "tongues" is wrong, because it is interpreted as proof of spiritual maturity.

1. Proof of spiritual maturity does not come from the gifts of the Spirit, but from the "fruits of the Spirit."

   The Corinthian church had all the "gifts" (I Cor. 1:7), but did not have the "fruits" - they were carnal babies (I Cor. 3:1-3).

2. For many contemporary Pentecostals and Charismatics, tongues is a "badge of spirituality." Unfortunately, tongues is often all they base their spirituality on.

C. Today's "tongues" is wrong, because it is claimed to be the sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

1. If tongues were to be the proof of the baptism of the Spirit, why did only some believers have such proof and not all? All believers received the baptism (I Cor. 12:13), but not all spoke in tongues (I Cor. 12:30).

D. Today's "tongues" is wrong, because it is not practiced according to the rules laid down in Scripture.

1. First: Tongues speaking must acknowledge the Lordship of Christ (I Cor. 12:3).

2. Second: There must be an interpreter (I Cor. 14:5, 27, 28).

   Edification was necessary if the gift was to be exercised in the church

(I Cor. 14:3, 4, 5, 6, 17, 19).

3. Third: The "tongues" speaker must realize that "tongues" is not a priority gift (I Cor. 14:19); therefore, boasting of such a gift is unwarranted.

4. Fourth: Tongues should be exercised in the presence of unbelieving Jews (I Cor. 14:21-22).

   Jews require a "sign" (I Cor. 1:22).

   The sign gift of tongues was to "this people" (I Cor. 14:21 - Israel).

5. Fifth: No more than three persons may exercise this gift at any one meeting (I Cor. 14:27).

6. Sixth: Women are not to speak with tongues in church (I Cor. 14:34, 35).

7. Seventh: The gift must be governed by love (I Cor. 13:1), and by orderliness (I Cor. 14:40).

E. Today's "tongues" is wrong, because God said "Tongues would cease" (I Cor. 13:8).

1. The middle voice of the verb "cease" indicates that tongues ended on its own.

2. When did it end? Answer: When its purpose was finished - that is, when the sign of judgment to unbelieving Israel was no longer needed (I Cor. 14:21-22).

CONCLUSION:

Three explanations for modern day tongues:

1. **Intentional counterfeit** (many fake it to receive recognition by their peers)

2. **Psychological counterfeit** (many want "it" so badly, they induce themselves to

utter "tongues")

3. **<u>Satanic</u> counterfeit** (speaking in tongues is not a practice limited to the Charismatics or Pentecostals, but has been widely practiced by spiritists, demon worshippers, and occult groups of many diverse cultures and religions).

ORDER IN THE CHURCH!

I Corinthians 14:23-40

1-7-2024

Introduction: v.33, 40

*** We must always maintain God's order in the Church assembly!**

How does God expect a church service to function?

I. God expects a church to deliver...
An <u>UNDERSTANDABLE MESSAGE</u> (v.23-25)
(Not Madness & Chaos)

II. God expects a church to tailor all activity to...
An <u>EDIFYING MINISTRY</u> (v.26)
(Not show-offs or self-entertainment)

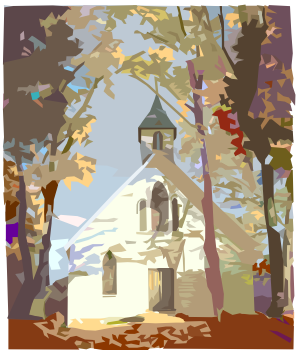
III. God expects a church to follow...
An <u>ORDERLY METHODOLOGY</u> (v.27-33)
(Not commotion & confusion)

IV. God expects a church to submit to...
<u>MALE LEADERSHIP</u> (v.34-35)
(Not women pastors)

Conclusion: v.36-40

ORDER IN THE CHURCH!

I Corinthians 14:23-40
1-7-2024



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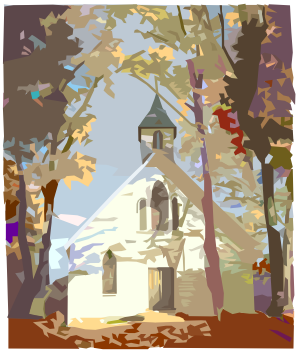
I Corinthians 14:23-40
1-14-2024 *(Part 2)*



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Note four Bible principles establishing <u>male leadership</u> in the church assembly.

A. **The distinct _____ in the family illustrate God's intention for male leadership** (both in domestic and ecclesiastical relationships)
I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-25; Col. 3:18-19

B. **The _____ of the pastor** (*"bishop"* = overseer) **demands male leadership in the church** I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-6

C. **The _____ of I Timothy 2:11-15 prohibit female leadership in the church**
Paul gives two reasons for why women should not lead men in the church:
1. _____ (v. 13)
2. _____ (v. 14)

D. **The _____ of the New Testament pastor** (elders) **evidences male leadership in the church**

Conclusion: v.36-40

ORDER IN THE CHURCH!

I Corinthians 14:23-40
1-7-2024

Introduction: v.33, 40

Since the church is God's institution, He has the right to set the guidelines for how it is to function.

The Lord has allowed much Christian liberty when it comes to a church's "order of service" or "format of worship."

(He did not institute a regimented, ritualistic, "high church," liturgical order of service as some denominations practice--going through the same motions week after week. God didn't do it that way because Christian worship was never intended to be a boxed-in, outward conformity lacking in spontaneity or not allowing for cultural or stylistic variations.)

*** We must always maintain God's order in the Church assembly!**

How does God expect a church service to function?

I. God expects a church to deliver...
An UNDERSTANDABLE MESSAGE (v.23-25)
(Not Madness & Chaos)

V. 23

Some activities go on in churches that you wouldn't even find at a circus, carnival, or psycho ward!

Our testimony before immature believers or the unsaved is vitally important!

No doubt many have rejected Christianity on the basis that the Christians they met were inconsistent with the message they preached. If we preach that Christ changes people and gives light where there was darkness, peace where there was turmoil, order where there was confusion, grace where there was heathenism -- they expect to see a Godly distinctive.

***"Mad"* =** to be crazy; a raving maniac; a lunatic; out of one's mind.

V. 23-24
In many Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, the scene is one of chaos, confusion, and disorder (men and women speaking in false "tongues," being "slain in the Spirit," alleged direct revelations, "holy laughter," "holy barking," etc.).

V. 24

"Prophesy" - To proclaim God's truth in a clear, understandable, intelligible manner.

To give an understandable message, we must always:

1) Engage the brain before you engage the tongue

2) Plan your message; don't "shoot from the hip" (be diligent in preparation - II Tim. 2:15)

3) Speak up; speak out; speak clearly

"Convinced" - convicted by his sin

"Judged" - called into account for his sin

Before anyone gets saved, they must be convicted of sin and be aware of the holy judgment of God against sin - John 16:8.

V. 25

The clear proclamation of God's Word has the power to bring one's hidden sin and concealed wicked motives out in the open for him to clearly see.

"Let your light so shine before men. . ." (Mt. 5:16).

Do people recognize that ***"God is in you"***?

Do they see Him at work in and through your life and ministry?

Someone has said that if the Holy Spirit was removed totally from the average church, 99% of the activity would continue uninterrupted.

V. 23-25

Incidentally, the scenario Paul paints in vv. 23-25 teaches that the church assembly is supposed to be a place where believers congregate. The presence of many unbelievers is not the norm. The church generally scatters to evangelize and gathers to edify.

II. God expects a church to tailor all activity to...

An EDIFYING MINISTRY (v.26)

(Not show-offs or self-entertainment)

"Psalm" - a hymn or Scripture put to song

"Doctrine" - a teaching

"Tongue" - a particular language or dialect unknown to the speaker (a sign gift which ceased)

"Revelation" - a new truth unveiled by God via His Spirit during a time when the Church did not have God's completed written revelation.

"Interpretation" - to translate the meaning of a message

Verse 26 teaches:

--Layman participation in the service

--Diversified types of service

--All with a unified purpose of edifying the hearers

The Body unites each week to build itself up spiritually.

Every one of us needs the verbal encouragement received at a Biblical church service.

Don't *"Forsake the assembly"* (Heb. 10:25) or you may miss out on just what you needed to hear to strengthen you in the faith.

"All things" - All church ministry should have as its goal: edification. If it will not edify, it should not be part of a church service.

"I [Wiersbe] recall being in a testimony meeting where a woman took forty minutes telling a boring experience and, as a result, destroyed the spirit of the meeting. Evangelist D. L. Moody was leading a service and asked a man to pray. Taking advantage of his opportunity, the man prayed on and on. Sensing that the prayer was killing the meeting instead of blessing it, Moody spoke up and said, "While our brother finishes his prayer, let us sing a hymn!" (Wiersbe, p. 615)

III. God expects a church to follow...

An ORDERLY METHODOLOGY (v.27-33)

(Not commotion & confusion)

V. 27

In a day when tongues was operative, God set these rules:

--No more than three could speak in tongues in a service

--Each must take turns (go in order; one at a time)

--There must be a translator

V. 28

"Let him speak to himself, and to God" - Keep it to yourself and God.

Paul is not giving the purpose of tongues here, nor is he teaching that tongues was for self-edification, or a private prayer language. He was saying if there is no interpreter, keep your tongues to yourself!

V. 29

Two or three messages could be given by those who held the office of prophet at a church service (we give two each Sunday).

When they spoke, the people were not to simply soak it in without judging what was said (the listeners were to examine it, scrutinize it, or compare it with known Scripture).

God commands us: I Thes. 5:20-22 - *"Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."*

The church at Corinth, being a new church, evidently did not yet have ordained elders, so prophets and others who prophesied shared the service.

V. 30

Only one speaker at a time. [Never talk when someone else is talking. It is rude (disrespectful) and disruptive (confusing).]

V. 31

"All prophesy" - A type of testimony service

"Learn" - intellectual benefit

"Comforted" - emotional benefit

V. 32

No speaker for God can ever say that he couldn't help saying what he said ("The Spirit just took over"). No! This may be true in demonism and spiritism where the speaker becomes absolutely passive, but it is not true of Bible Christianity. Every man of God must remain in full control of his mental and emotional faculties.

V. 33

Anything God does, He does with order and purpose. (the result being peace, not turmoil)

And He does not work one way in one church and another way in another! He is the Author of peace ***"in all the churches."***

IV. God expects a church to submit to...
MALE LEADERSHIP (v.34-35)
(Not women pastors)

V. 34

The RESTRICTION of I Corinthians 14:34-38 prohibits female leadership in the church.

V. 34

"Keep silent. . . not permitted to speak" -

--In the context this prohibition would definitely apply to speaking in tongues.

--It does not mean that women cannot pray in church or give testimonies (because I Cor. 11:5 speaks of women *"praying"* [not necessarily leading in prayer] and *"prophesying"* or uttering in plain language a truth God has revealed to her).

The *"speaking"* in this verse refers to an authoritative leadership role over men as evident by the qualifying phrase ***"but they are commanded to be under obedience*** (submission) (i.e. to male leadership)."

It is vitally important to note that God's restriction (given via the Apostle Paul) is not one that only applied to his time, generation or culture. He states: *"As also saith the Law"* (v. 34). This reference to the Old Testament shows this New Testament teaching to be an eternal principle [not one limited to Paul's day].

V. 35

The Apostle Paul further applies the *"speaking"* of women to questioning the male leadership in public worship. Such disruptive, divisive questions by women who were flaunting and abusing their Christian liberty would undermine the leadership and cause a divisive, disunited spirit in the church body.

God calls it a ***"shame for women to speak in church"*** (v. 35) (that is: it is a shame for a woman to verbally usurp or interrogate the male leadership of the Church). The women were to hold such questions to ask their husbands at home (v. 35).

*Can women lead a church in the position of elder (pastor or overseer)?

Note four Bible principles establishing male leadership in the church assembly.

A. The distinct ROLES in the family illustrate God's intention for male leadership (both in domestic and ecclesiastical relationships)

I Cor. 11:3 - *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."*

Eph. 5:22-25 - *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husbands is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."*

Col. 3:18-19 - *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."*

Male leadership in the home and church is simply a difference in role (function) and responsibility for the sake of order and unity.

(Even the three Persons of the Triune Godhead have distinctive roles [a headship is seen in the Trinity - I Cor. 11:3] - Example: The Father planned creation, the Son performed Creation.)

With the erosion of male leadership in the home has come the erosion of male leadership in the church (what is happening in the church today is a mirror of what is happening in the home).

Leadership is a servant role; the man is to serve the woman in the home and church by providing unselfish, benevolent, sacrificial leadership.

A leader serves the ones led by providing:
--An example to follow
--Protection
--Direction
--Initiation
--Instruction

B. The QUALIFICATIONS of the pastor (*"bishop"* = overseer) demands male leadership in the church

1. I Timothy 3:1-7
In the New Testament God uses three words to describe the ministry of church leadership:

   1. Bishop (*"episcopos")* (I Tim. 3:1-7; Ti. 1:7)

   2. Elder (*"presbuteros")* (Acts 14:23; I Tim. 5:17; Ti. 1:5)

   3. Pastor (*"poimen")* (I Peter 5:2)

      These three words are used to describe three facets of the same office (three descriptions of the same person).

      In Acts 20, Paul called the *"elders"* ("*presbuteroi")* (v. 17) of the Ephesian Church. He refers to these same men as *"overseers" ("bishops - episcopoi")* (v. 28), and commands them to *"feed" ("poimaino - pastor")* the church of God (v. 28b).

      Peter exhorted the "*elders"* to *"shepherd"* (pastor) the flock by taking the *"oversight"* (I Peter 5:1-2).

      I Tim. 3:1-7 - *"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."*

      "If a man desires the office" (v. 1)
      "The husband of one wife" (v. 2)
      "He (v. 1). . . *he* (v. 5) . . . *he* (v. 6) . . . *he* (v. 7)"
      "If a man know not how to rule his own house..."

   2. Titus 1:5-6 - *"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly."*

      "Ordain elders (v. 5) . . . *the husband of one wife* (v. 6) . . ."
      "He . . . he . . ." (v. 9)

C. The COMMANDS of I Timothy 2:11-15 prohibit female leadership in the church

In the context, Paul is describing true Godliness (by men [v. 8] and women [v. 9-10]).

I Tim. 2:9-10 - *"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.*"

Paul now further delineates how a Godly woman will act in church in verse 11.

V. 11
"Learn in silence" - to be taught without opening her mouth to refute what was taught.

"With all subjection" - Her being taught requires a submissive heart toward the one doing the teaching (she is to have a submissive attitude both toward her reception of truth and in her response or obedience to it).

V. 12
"I suffer not (do not allow or permit) *a woman to teach" –*

The teaching in view is that of teaching *"men"*.
--Women can teach women (Ti. 2:4-5)
--Women can teach children (Lois and Eunice to Timothy - II Tim. 1:5)
--But women are not to teach men

The Bible does not specifically prohibit a woman from *"preaching"* (per se) but from pastoring (or leading an assembly [church] with men present).

Example: In the Great Commission, we are all (male and female) commanded to *"preach* [proclaim] *the Gospel to every creature"* (Mk. 16:15).

Example: Christian women are exhorted to *"teach"* the younger women (Ti. 2:4-5 - *"That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed"*).

--A woman may [with her husband] be involved in the personal discipleship of a man (EX: Priscilla with her husband Aquila - Acts 18:26 - *"And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.")*.

--A woman can serve in many capacities in the church like Phoebe did (Rom. 16:1).

--It is proper for women to teach children and other women in a church setting.

V. 12 - ***"Usurp authority"*** - lit. Does not mean to seize authority (as if, on the other hand, she can have that authority if it is given to her). It means to exercise her own authority over the man (in terms of giving direction or instruction in the church context - 3:15).

It is interesting how many Evangelical Feminists are quick to interpret these verses based on first-century Jewish culture, when the writer himself by-passes his own culture and goes back to the beginning of time (Gen. 2 & 3) to prove his point.

Paul gives two reasons for why women should not lead men in the church:

1) Creation order (v. 13)

"Adam was first formed, then Eve."

By creation order, God is showing which gender was the leader (head) and which was the helper.

Paul's reference to creation order shows that his teaching is not based on temporary cultural norms, but on permanent facts of creation.

2. The Fall (v. 14)
(A woman's proneness to certain deceptions)

Women--being generally more emotional (more feeling oriented), responding with her heart more than her head, responding more to emotion than to reason, to feeling than to fact, to the subjective rather than the objective--are easier victims to Satan's temptations.

--Many cults were founded by women (Ex: Mary Baker Eddy - Christian Science; Ellen G. White - Seventh Day Adventists)

--Many extra-Biblical revelations which have brought so much confusion and chaos to Christianity came about by women seeing apparitions of Mary or receiving the supposed gift of tongues.

D. The EXAMPLES of the New Testament pastor (elders) evidences male leadership in the church

--There is not one example of a woman leading a New Testament assembly.

--Every reference to an *"elder"* is to men in the Bible (Old Testament and New Testament)

--The 70 Elders Moses chose to assist in the leadership of Israel were men (Num. 11:16).

--The 12 Apostles, who also functioned as elders, were men (Lk. 6:13).

--Those who led along with the Apostles were men (Barnabas, Silas, Luke, Timothy, Titus).

--Every elder selected by the local churches was a man (Acts 14:23, 20:17; I Tim. 5:17; Ti. 1:5; Ja. 5:14; I Pet. 5:1).

Didn't God use Deborah to lead Israel (Judges 4)? Yes.

1. Israel was not a "church" and she was not a "pastor" (she was a judge)

2. She lived at a time when *"every man did that which was right in his own eyes"* (Jud. 17:6, 21:25)

The book of Judges is filled with examples of people whose roles and behavior was not necessarily normative.

Note: Deborah prophesied privately, not in public forum.

Doesn't Paul say in Gal. 3:28 that in Christ *"there is neither male nor female"*? Yes, but Paul is not denying the differences of sexuality, he is saying that there is no distinction between how God saves each (the context is soteriological; not describing functional differences).

The issue is not one of ability, but does one fit the qualifications of the New Testament (some women may be very articulate speakers, but this does not decide the issue).

The issue is not one of public acceptance, but does God accept female rule in the church as revealed in His Word (society may say it is okay, but the Bible does not).

The issue is not cultural but Biblical (times and societies may change, but God's principles do not).

The issue is not popularity (many may be filling ecclesiastical positions now though it was never intended by God; but the prevalence of something has never been used as a measuring stick of its rightness).

The issue is not what is traditional but what is Biblical.

The issue is not male chauvinism nor male ego abut being faithful to God established without feelings of superiority.

God's will never contradicts God's Word. He will never lead someone to violate His Holy Scripture. (God

has never called one woman to pastor a church! How do I know? Because His Word prohibits such) (Jer. 23:32 -*"Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord."*)
May God give us Christian women who have the inner qualities of humility, gentleness, holiness, Spirit control, and contentment so that each willingly and gladly submits to her God-given role and utilizes her great God-given gifts and abilities in His way and His will.

Recommended Book: **Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (A Response to Evangelical Feminism)** (Edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL, 1991)

Conclusion: v.36-40

V. 36
To the Corinthians, who thought they knew it all and were the only source of truth, Paul asks two questions:

1) Did God's Word (the Bible) originate with you?
(implied: No it did not!)

2) Are you the only ones who know God's Word? (No)

As your Pastor, I did not write this information; I'm simply reading it and applying it to us today. If we didn't author it, we have no right to change it! But because God did author it, we must submit to it!

V. 37
This book and chapter is not merely the opinions of Paul, but ***"the commandments of the Lord."***

V. 38
If people want to stay in the dark, God says let them!

But for those who want the light, they ought to come to the truth of God's ways.

V. 39
Prophesy is desired because all may benefit by it.

Tongues were not to be forbidden because they were a gift of the Holy Spirit for that time and God's purpose.

V. 40
The summary: Everything in church ought to be done properly and in an orderly manner.

Will you do your part to see that such order is always maintained in every classroom and ministry of this church?

God wants "Order in the church"!

THE GOSPEL

I Corinthians 15:1-4

1-21-2023

Introduction:

*The greatest need for every man, woman, boy, & girl is to hear an adequate, accurate, and compassionate presentation of the "gospel"

WHAT IS THE "GOSPEL"?

I. Jesus DIED (crucifixion) (I Cor. 15:3)

Four key words describe Christ's redemptive death:

A. SACRIFICE (The Essence of the Gospel)
"Christ died"

B. SUBSTITUTE(The Graciousness of the Gospel)
"*For"*

C. SINS (The Necessity of the Gospel)
"our sins"

D. SCRIPTURES (The Foundational Basis for the Gospel)
"According to the Scriptures"

II. Jesus LIVES! (Resurrection) (I Cor. 15:4)

III. BELIEVE IT! (I Cor. 15:1-2)

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C. _____ (The _____ of the Gospel)
"our sins"

D. _____ (The _____ for the Gospel)
"According to the Scriptures"

II. Jesus _____! (Resurrection) (I Cor. 15:4)

III. _____! (I Cor. 15:1-2)

THE GOSPEL

I Corinthians 15:1-4

1-21-2023

Introduction: Hymn: "I love to tell the story"

v.1 - ***"Brethren"*** -Even believers ("brethren in Christ") need to have the gospel repeated to them.

Ex. the Hymn: "Tell me the Old, Old story"

The Gospel is good news (great tidings) to the ears of lost, depraved, helpless and hopeless sinners.

The plight of lost people: We need to have a deep realization that all men without Christ are lost and doomed.

The greatest need for every man, woman, boy, & girl is to hear an adequate, accurate, and compassionate presentation of the "gospel"

WHAT IS THE "GOSPEL"?

Imagine that you are in a hospital room, calling on an unbeliever who is at death's door. You have time for only 25 words to communicate the Gospel. After the 25th word, the patient will pass away. What would you say in this situation?

Are you able to express the Gospel so concisely that if the mortally ill person responds properly, he is saved? Do you comprehend the Gospel sufficiently to put the saving message in these few words?

(This idea originated in Dr. C. Ryrie's Theology class)

It is vitally important to know exactly what the Gospel is for three reasons:

1. We are commanded to preach the Gospel (Mark 16:15).

2. A curse is pronounced upon anyone who would twist, add to or delete from the Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).

   There are so many "gospels" being preached today. Why? Because Satan so as to Muddy the waters", or to "confuse" the world as to the real Christian message has added substitutes o alternatives to the one & only Gospel God has given.

3. A person's eternity depends on it! (II Cor. 4:4)

The Doom of the Lost

1. Luke 16:19-31 -
   --eternal conscious torment
   --eternal unfulfilled desire (v. 24)
   --eternal memory (v. 25)
   --eternal hopelessness (v. 26)
   --eternal loneliness (v. 19-21)
2. Mt. 8:12 - outer darkness
3. Mt. 13:42 - furnace of fire
4. Mt. 25:41 - everlasting fire
5. Mt. 25:46 - everlasting punishment
6. Mk. 3:29 - eternal damnation
7. Rev. 11:7 - bottomless pit
8. Rev. 20:10 - lake of fire and brimstone
9. Rev. 21:8 - second death

The word ***"Gospel"*** (*euangelion*) simply means "good news" or "good announcement" or "good message."

The word *euangelion* is used in the New Testament to describe:

--any good news (II Thess. 3:6)
--good news about the Messiah's arrival and His establishment of the promised Kingdom (Mt. 3:1-2, 4:17, 10:5-7)
*--the good news of the grace of God (Acts 20:24)

What exactly is the Gospel?

Paul in I Corinthians 15:3-4 describes the specific contents of the Gospel message. *"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."*

The Gospel is succinctly this:

Christ died on behalf of people and He arose from the dead.

The two basic facts of the Gospel are these:

Jesus <u>died</u> and Jesus <u>lives</u>!

I. Jesus DIED (crucifixion) (I Cor. 15:3)

"First of all" - first in importance; The priority of Paul's message was "Christ, and Him crucified"

"that which I also received" - Paul's message did not originate with him; Rather it was handed down to him from above.

Four key words describe Christ's redemptive death:

A. SACRIFICE (The Essence of the Gospel)

"Christ died"

His death was pre-figured by the O.T. Sacrificial system.

B. SUBSTITUTE (The Graciousness of the Gospel)

"for our sins"

The word "for" is the Greek word *huper* which means "on behalf of" or "in the place of."

Paul gives a theological explanation of the historical facts of Christ's death. "Many people were crucified by the Romans, but only one "victim" ever died for the sins of the world" (Wiersbe, p.617)

More occurred that dark day than Jesus merely tasting a physical death. He bore our sins in His own body (I Pet.2:24) and became a curse for us (Gal.3:13) as He drank that bitter, horrid cup of sin for the world.

How did "Christ die for my sins?"

Perhaps the most essential part of the Gospel, and the most misunderstood, is the statement that *"Christ died for our sins"* (I Cor. 15:3).

Christ did not die merely to "set an example" as most unbelievers think; His death actually accomplished something. It is important that the soul-winner make it perfectly clear that Christ died as our substitute; He took our place, He paid our punishment; He suffered the equivalent of our eternal damnation; He died on our behalf.

This concept of Christ dying on our behalf is the crux of the Gospel and the emphasis of the New Testament.

Scriptures emphasizing the fact of Christ's substitutionary death
(using the word "huper" [on behalf of]):

"This is my body which is given for you" (Lk. 22:19)
"This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you"
(Lk. 22:20)
"The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51)
"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (Jn.10:11)
"I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:15)
". . . He (Caiaphas) prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. . . and not for that nation only . . ." (Jn. 11:51-52, cp. 18:14)
"Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6)
"Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8)
"He . . . delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32)
"Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3)
"For he hath made him to be sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21)
"Christ . . . gave himself for our sins" (Gal. 1:4)
"Christ . . . loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20)
"Christ [was] . . . made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13)
"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2)
"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25)
"Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . died for us" (I Th. 5:10)
"Who gave himself a ransom for all" (I Tim. 2:6)
"He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9)
"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).
"Christ also suffered for us" (I Pet. 2:21)
"Christ also hath once suffered for sins" (I Pet. 3:18)
"Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh" (I Pet. 4:1)
"He laid down his life for us" (I Jn. 3:16)

Here are some ILLUSTRATIONS
to help you explain how Christ died as our "SUBSTITUTE."

The Judge & the Criminal - Suppose on the streets of our city was a man with a gun. This man one day pointed the gun at an innocent person & shot him and killed him. He then attempted to run away, but a police officer caught him, arrested him, and brought him to jail. The day finally came when he was to go to court to stand trial for his murder. After hearing the evidence, the jury found him clearly guilty of cold-blooded murder. The Judge then rendered this verdict: *"Because of your crime, you will have to pay for it with your life - You will have to die in the electric chair!"* The convicted criminal went back to his prison cell to wait. Finally, the dreaded day came for him to be executed. The guards brought him over to the electric chair, strapped him in, and the officials were about to pull the lever. Suddenly, a stranger entered the room. The officials noticed it was the city Judge, the same one who had found this man guilty and given him the death penalty. They asked the Judge, *"Sir, why did you come here?"* To which he replied, *"Do you see that man? He is guilty of murder, and there is no doubt in my mind that he deserves to pay for it with his life."* With a tear rolling down the Judge's cheek, however, he said, *"But I love that man, and I would be willing to take his place."* The room was silent. The man in the chair could not believe that someone would love him so much. [Rarely would anyone die for a good man; never mind for a criminal - Rom. 5:7-8] But suppose the Law allowed such a transaction. The man in the chair got up, and the Judge sat down in his place. The lever was pulled and the Judge was electrocuted, giving his life for the criminal so that he could go free.

Even though we have never heard of such a thing, that is exactly what Jesus Christ did for you. You see, He is the Judge of the universe. And the judge Himself stepped down from His throne in Heaven, came into this world -- all for the purpose that He might die on the cross and take your place and pay for the sin you committed. He became your substitute. He paid your penalty so that you could be free from the wages of your sin. Jesus died on your behalf so that you wouldn't pay for your sins yourself in the Lake of fire! What love! What a sacrifice!

The Wise & Just Ruler - A wise and just ruler established a series of laws for his people to follow. One day his mother broke one of the laws and was brought to the ruler after being caught. The penalty was twenty lashes. How could the ruler remain just and still fulfill the demands of his love for his mother? He chose to take the lashes on his own back. Justice was satisfied, while love was revealed in full measure.

The Rescue Dog - A man was lost in the Alps. The owner of the lodge where he had been staying sent out his best rescue dog to look for him. The dog found the man half-conscious, grabbed him, and started to shake him in order to wake him up. On coming to his senses the man, seeing the dog and thinking it was a wolf, stabbed the animal. The dog let go and returned to the lodge, where it died shortly thereafter. The dog's owner followed the trail of blood, came to the lost man, and saved him. The dog had given his life so that another might live.

The Burnt Hen - One day a certain farmer saw that a fire had ignited in his wheat fields, and was being blown toward his barns by the wind. To save the stored grain there, he lit a backfire, in hopes that it would impede the progress of the other flames. After both fires had subsided--and the barns had been saved--the farmer walked out through the smoldering ashes of the nearby fields. There he discovered the dead body of one of his hens, which had been caught in the blaze. Sadly, he turned over her black, charred body with his foot--and out from underneath ran four baby chicks. Her sacrifice saved her young ones. Such is the work of Christ on the cross, a place where the love of God dealt with the justice of God, where God's mercy matched God's wrath. Our Lord's sacrifice has saved us." (attributed to Donald Grey Barnhouse)

The Bridge

John Griffith's childhood ambition was to travel. He fantasized about it frequently, but that ambition crashed with the Great Depression of 1929. As the howling winds turned Oklahoma, his native state, into a dust bowl, this young man with his wife and small child packed his belongings in an old car and headed out to try to find a life somewhere else.

They made their way to Missouri and, as Dennis E. Hensley tells the story, John finally found a job as the controller of a great railroad bridge spanning the Mississippi River. Each day at certain hours, this massive bridge was raised so that the great freight and passenger trains could rush across. John found some delight in this because he often wondered what far places these people were visiting; and so he had some joy in their experience.

In the summer of 1937 John Griffith took his eight-year-old son, Greg, with him to work for the first time. Little Greg was understandably thrilled at the great railroad bridge and the stirring and exciting trains that roared across it. He marveled at the control house, filled with all sorts of levers over which his daddy had absolute, sovereign control. His father took him to an observation deck and told him that our here he could watch the boat and trains go by.

At noon, John Griffith but the bridge up to allow for some ships that were coming. Since there would not be a train to some while, he made his way along the catwalk to the observation deck. There he opened his brown bag and he and Greg had lunch. As they ate, John shared with his son some of the stories of various ships that had gone by and of the time the great flood had overflowed the banks of the Mississippi.

Just as John was telling his son that story, he was startled by the shrieking of a train whistle in the distance. He quickly looked at his watch. It was 1:07. He had forgotten the express for Memphis. With four hundred people on board, it would be roaring across the bridge in only a few moments. He leaped from the observation deck to the catwalk.

John raced back to the control tower. He placed his hand upon the massive controls and started to close the bridge. He glanced down under the bridge to see if there were any ships beneath it. A sight caught his eye that brought his heart leaping into his throat. Greg had slipped from the observation deck, and fallen into the gears that operated the bridge.

Greg's left leg was caught in the cogs of the two main gears. John knew if he pushed the lever, his son would be ground between four tons of whining, grinding steel. His mind whirled in panic and desperation. There was no way to free his son before the train would be upon the bridge. Again, the train whistle shrieked. He could hear the clicking for the locomotive wheels and rapid "puffing" of the approaching train. There were four hundred passengers on that train-four hundred souls!

John was a father, and this was his boy. He knew what he had to do. He heaved the lever of the massive gears. The Memphis Express thundered across the bridge. John lifted his face, smeared with tears, and looked into the passing windows of the train. Businessmen were reading their afternoon papers, conductors were looking at their large, vest-pocket watches and finely dressed ladies sipped coffee in the dining car, while children pushed long spoons into dishes of ice cream. With wrenching agony, John Griffith cried out to the steel train, "I sacrificed my son for you! Don't you care?" The train rushed by.

From Coral Ridge Messenger
Fort Lauderdale, FL

C. SINS (The Necessity of the Gospel)

"for our sins"

"our" -This word shows that the sinner is personally responsible and accountable for his own sins

"sins" -This word points to the fact that the sinner has missed the mark of God's perfect moral standard (Rom. 3:23)

D. SCRIPTURES (The Foundational Basis for the Gospel)

"According to the Scriptures"

Our authority as we witness the Gospel is solely God's Word, the Bible. Some Old Testament Scriptures that predicted Christ's death for sinners are Genesis 22:8, Isaiah 53:5-12, Daniel 9:26

II. Jesus LIVES! (Resurrection) (I Cor. 15:4)

Paul's point of emphasis in this chapter centers around the subject of the Resurrection and particularly of Christ's Resurrection.

Why is Christ's resurrection of utmost importance?

If He never arose...

He would lack the greatest credential to His being The Son of God (Rom.1:4), the Messiah and Savior. Christ's resurrection is a vital element of the Gospel because if He did not arise from the dead, His claims of being the Messiah and Savior are invalidated. A messianic prophecy: "*...neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption*" (Psalm 16:10; cp. Acts 2:25-28)

> "A follower of Buddha writes of that religious leader, "*When Buddha died it was with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains."* Mohammed died at Medina on June 8, 632, at the age of 61, and his tomb there is visited yearly by tens of thousands of Muslims. But they come to mourn his death, not to celebrate his resurrection." (MacArthur, p.401)

We however, serve a risen Savior and have Good New to share!

He would have no present power to save anyone (I Cor. 15:17)
How could He be the resurrection and the life if He Himself remained in the tomb? (John 11:25; 14:6)

He would have been a deceiver and a liar
He promised He would arise (See: Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34)

The gospel would be bad news, not good news if Christ never arose. It would mean that the wages of sin were never fully paid by Him if death retained its cold grip on Him.

Note: The reference to Christ being "buried" validates the fact that He literally died, (not "swooned") and that His resurrection was a literal miracle.

"According to the Scriptures" - The O.T. spoke of the Messiah's Resurrection (Psalm 2:7 [cp.Acts 13:32-33]; 16:8-11 [cp.Acts 2:25-28]; Isaiah 53:10; Zech.12:10; Job 19:25;) (Christ taught the disciples on the road to Emmaus many O.T. references to His suffering, death, and resurrection - Luke 24:25 -27)

Christ died in fulfillment of Passover, was buried in fulfillment of Unleavened bread, and arose in fulfillment of firstfruits (which occurred on the day after the Sabbath after Passover week - Lev.23:9-14; cp. I Cor.15:23).

III. BELIEVE IT! (I Cor. 15:1-2)

This Gospel must be genuinely believed (*"received"* - v. 1) in order for one to be saved (v. 2)

"Received" - v. 1. Aorist tense - points to a once and for all personal reception of the Gospel (a whole-hearted taking to oneself; a glad welcoming). No one is converted if they do not personally take into their hearts the Gospel message (Rom. 10:9-10). This involves the exercise of their will. No one is saved against their will (Rev. 22:17).

Important Tips So You Do Not Force a Person Against Their Will

1) Go as far as the Spirit leads in your presentation of the Gospel (if they object, don't persist against their will; try again some other time)

2) Don't manipulate or twist anyone's arm to believe

3) Ask the person if he would be willing to sincerely receive Jesus Christ as His Savior (perhaps remind him: "Don't make this decision to please me or to get me off your back; but if you genuinely want to, you can receive Christ.")

Remember:

"A person convinced against their will remains an unbeliever still."
C. H. Spurgeon

"Wherein ye stand" -Perfect tense - one who genuinely received the Gospel will never forget it, but will remain standing on it and saved by it!

"By which (Gospel - v. 1) ***also ye are saved"*** -

"Are" - presently and continually saved

"Saved" - passively by God; not yourself

The Gospel saves a person, if his faith was not *"in vain."*

How does one *"believe in vain"*? He insincerely "believes" without purpose. He believes without meaning it. He goes through the motions but never really receives the reality (Ex: Simon the Sorcerer - Acts 8:13, 21-23).

One who believes in vain has an intellectual assent of the Gospel but not a personal appropriation. Even the Demons have an intellectual awareness of the facts but are Hell bound (James 2:19)

Marks of someone who has not believed "in vain" but has saving faith:

1) A changed life (II Cor.5:17)
2) A new fruit (Rom. 6:21-22; Mt.7:20; works which follow faith (Ja.2:18)
3) A spiritual desire (Jn.10:27; I Pet.2:2-3)
4) An obedient spirit (I Jn.2:29)
5) A love for God & His children (I Jn.4:7)

True faith evidences itself by persistence in the faith.

"If ye keep in memory" = If you firmly hold on to (cp. Jn. 8:31; Col. 1:23)

Anyone who departs from the faith never really believed it to begin with (I Tim. 4:1). Only those who hold firmly to Christ's Word are His disciples indeed (John 8:31; cp II Cor.13:5; II Jn. 9)

"Our salvation is kept by Christ's holding us fast, not primarily by our holding Him fast. Our holding onto Him is evidence that He is holding onto us" (MacArthur, p.399)

The Gospel presentation must include these three basic ingredients:

1. Man's problem (sin and resultant condemnation)

2. God's provision (Christ died for sin and arose)

3. Your personal reception (you must believe

The Gospel in 25 words:

"Friend, you have sinned.
But Christ died for your sin
and rose again.
Trust Him alone
and He will save you eternally.
Trust Him now!"

A Gospel Acrostic:

G od's
O nly-begotten
S on
P rovides
E ternal
L ife

Spread the Gospel!!!

If you know anything about the "Titanic," you know much of what took place 87 years ago, when the ship that even God couldn't sink, DID sink. Of the 1,528 people who ended up in the icy water, only six were rescued. But did you know that one of those six was actually saved twice that night?

His story is an inspiring reminder that there's more to life than mere survival.

To tell this man's story, though, I have to first tell you about another man, a Scot named John Harper. Harper, a minister of the Gospel, boarded the Titanic with his six-year-old daughter, Nana. He planned to travel to the Moody Church in Chicago, where he'd been invited to preach for three months. When the ship struck the fateful iceberg and began to sink, Harper made sure his daughter was placed into one of the lifeboats. He then began what would be the last evangelistic work of his young life.
As the freezing waters began to fill the ship, Harper was heard shouting, "Let the women, children and the unsaved into the lifeboats." Survivors reported that Harper took off his own life jacket and gave it to another man. "Don't worry about me," he reportedly said, "I'm not going down, I'm going up!"

When the ship began to sink, more than 1,500 passengers jumped or fell into the icy waters. As they gradually drowned or froze to death, Harper was seen swimming from one passenger to another, pleading with them to accept Christ.

Only six of the 1,500 people struggling in the water were later rescued, including a man who later identified himself as Harper's last convert. This young man had climbed up on a piece of debris.

Harper, who was struggling in the water near him, shouted out, "Are you saved?" "No," the man replied. Harper then shouted the words from Scripture: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The man did not answer, and a moment later he drifted away on the waves.

A few minutes later, the current brought the two men back together. Again Harper asked, "Are you saved?" Once again, the answer was "no." With his dying breath, Harper shouted, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." He then slipped under the waves for the last time.

Then and there, the man he had witnessed to, decided to turn his life over to Christ. Four years later, at a Titanic survivors meeting in Ontario, Canada, this man tearfully gave his testimony recounting how John Harper had led him to the Lord. I don't need to tell you that this dramatic story never made it into the movie. We live in a culture that seems to be more interested in fictional stories of romance, illicit sex, and priceless jewelry than in the real romance between God and His people.

When the subject of the Titanic comes up, every year at the anniversary of the sinking, tell your friends the story of the young Scottish minister who witnessed to Christ with his dying breath. And make sure your kids know the story a well. John Harper reminds us of a great lesson, the secret of the ages: that there's more to life than mere survival.

[The information for this BreakPoint commentary came from the book "The Titanic's Last Hero" by Moody Adams (The Olive Press, 1997). The testimonies in this book were originally compiled in 1912 by John Climie of Scotland.]

"WHAT IF CHRIST NEVER AROSE?"

I Corinthians 15:5-20

1-28-2024

INTRODUCTION: (v. 1-11)

***We should greatly appreciate the resurrection of Christ!**
We will gain a greater appreciation for His resurrection when we consider what our life would be like if He never arose.

If Christ never arose, there would be:

I. No Substance to Our Faith (v. 14)

If Christ never arose, there would be:

II. No Truth to Our Message (v. 15)

If Christ never arose, there would be:

III. No Forgiveness of Our Sins (v. 17)

If Christ never arose, there would be:

IV. No Hope for Our Future (v. 18)

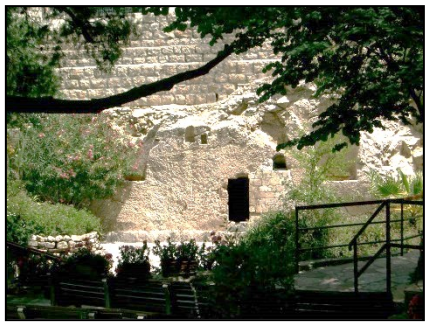
If Christ never arose, there would be:

V. No Purpose to Our Life (v. 19)

CONCLUSION: (v. 20)

"WHAT IF CHRIST NEVER AROSE?"

I Corinthians 15:5-20
1-28-2024



INTRODUCTION: (v. 1-11)

***We should greatly appreciate the resurrection of Christ!**
We will gain a greater appreciation for His resurrection when we consider what our life would be like if He never arose.

If Christ never arose, there would be:
I. No _____ to Our _____ (v. 14)

If Christ never arose, there would be:
II. No _____ to Our _____ (v. 15)

If Christ never arose, there would be:
III. No _____ of Our _____ (v. 17)

If Christ never arose, there would be:
IV. No _____ for Our _____ (v. 18)

If Christ never arose, there would be:
V. No _____ to Our _____ (v. 19)



CONCLUSION: (v. 20)

"WHAT IF CHRIST NEVER AROSE?"

I Corinthians 15:5-20

1-28-2024

INTRODUCTION: (v. 1-11)

The occasion which sparked Paul's defense of the Resurrection in I Cor. 15 was not that the Corinthians were denying Christ's resurrection, but that some at Corinth were denying the reality of a resurrection, period (i.e. the reality of the possibility of resurrection itself).

They, living in Corinth - a Greek city, were swallowing the liberal Hellenistic (Greek) philosophy (cp. v. 33) that there was no such thing as the resurrection of the dead (cp. Athens - Acts 17:32).

v.5

God does not have to prove anything to anyone. But He does list authenticating witnesses to Christ's resurrection.

In the Law, God established that two or three witnesses could authenticate a fact (Dt. 19:15; cp. Mt. 18:16). Here, He lists more than that!

"The twelve" - With Judas having committed suicide, and with Peter (*"Cephas")* already having been mentioned as having seen the resurrected Christ [leaving the 10 other disciples], who were the other two who witnessed His resurrection? Answer: One possibility is that it was the two people on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-43), or the other two could have been Joseph (calls Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus) and Matthias (Acts 1:22-23).

V. 7

"James" - the Lord's half-brother who didn't believe that Jesus was the Christ until after his resurrection (cp. Jn. 7:5; Acts 1:14).

V. 8

"Last of all" - Paul was the last one to visibly see Jesus Christ.

(We today walk pure *"by faith, not by sight"* [II Cor. 5:7], *"whom having not seen, ye love..."* [I Pet. 1:8])

"One born out of due time" - Paul became an apostle several years after Jesus had ordained the twelve and commissioned them.

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is one of the biggest proofs of Christ's resurrection. He was an enemy of Christ who witnessed His resurrection, and was forced to believe by the undeniable evidence which he saw with his eyes and heard with his ears (Acts 9:3).

V. 9

"I persecuted the church of God" - Paul had persecuted the same church he was now part of (cp. Gal. 1:23).

V. 10

The grace that came to Paul was not a wasted investment; he brought forth good dividends.

Note: Paul's humility

Christ's resurrection is fact, not hallucination or deception.

Jesus appeared to:

--Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9)

--The two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-35) and ate with them in their home (Lk. 24:30)

--Peter (Lk. 23:34)

--The eleven disciples (Mk. 16:14). They also handled Him, saw His hands and feet, and saw Him eat in their presence (Lk. 24:36-43).

* At His first appearance, Thomas was missing (Jn. 20:19-25), then again He appeared with Thomas present (Jn. 20:26-31)

* Then to seven of the disciples up in Galilee (Jn. 21:1ff)

--Then to over 500 brethren at once (SEE: I Cor. 15:1-8)

--Then to Stephen (Acts 7:55-56)

--Then to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:5)

**Christ's resurrection is an irrefutable fact of history!*
(a fact which has practical ramifications for you!)

Evidences for Christ's resurrection:

1. The FACT of His BURIAL — Matthew 27:57-61
2. The GUARDING of His TOMB — 27:62-66
3. The TESTIMONY of an ANGEL — 28:1-8
4. The PHYSICAL APPEARANCE of CHRIST — 28:9-10
5. The BRIBE of the JEWS — 28:11-15

Other proofs of Christ's resurrection:

6. The grave clothes were left behind (Jn. 20:5-7)

(If Christ's body had been stolen, there is no way they would have wasted the time to unwrap Him)

7. The cowardly disciples were transformed and were even willing to all die as martyrs for their faith
8. Even Saul of Tarsus, an enemy of Christ, was compelled to believe in Him when he saw the resurrected Savior
9. Jesus is transforming people today, as He has for nearly 2,000 years

Hymn: "You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart"

After Paul gave three factual proofs validating the authenticity of Christ's resurrection (#1 - their salvation (v. 1-2); #2 - the O.T. Scriptures (v. 3-4); #3 - the many witnesses (v. 5-11)) (cp. Wiersbe, p. 617), he now proceeds to answer the unthinkable question: "What if Christ never arose?"

Can you imagine what would be altered for the Christian if Christ never arose? Can you imagine the effect this would have on our beliefs, practices, and hopes for the future?

*We should greatly appreciate the resurrection of Christ!

We will gain a greater appreciation for His resurrection when we consider what our life would be like if He never arose.

If Christ never arose, there would be:

I. No Substance to Our Faith (v. 14)

"Preaching" (Kerygma) does not refer to oral technique, but rather to the words of the proclamation (Gromacki, p. 186).

"Vain" - hollow, empty, void of real substance.

Faith is always based on fact. You do not trust a blind faith - a faith with no reality.

If no resurrection, our faith would be like a shell without the kernel, like husk without the corn, just full of hot air.

"Empty" = "Take out the resurrection, and there is nothing left" to Christianity.

If Christ never arose, there would be:

II. No Truth to Our Message (v. 15)

To be a "false witness" is among the most serious of crimes. It is a breach of the ninth commandment - "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Ex. 21:16).

If being a false witness about another human being is bad, can you imagine how bad it is to be a false witness about God!

If telling a lie about man is wicked, the most hideous sin would be saying that God said something He did not say.

"There is a subtle difference between a liar and a false witness. A liar tells as true what he knows is false. A false witness tells as true what he believes is true, when really it is false" (Gromacki, p. 186).

Note of interest:
"God . . . raised up Christ."
The Bible declares that the entire Trinity was involved in the resurrection:
1. The Father - Ro. 10:9; Acts 2:24
2. The Spirit - I Pet. 3:18
3. The Son - Jn. 10:17, 18

"Vain" - a different word than in v. 14. This word means "useless," "futile," "purposeless," "fruitless."

"A dead Christ cannot do anything for anyone" (Gromacki, p. 187).
A dead Savior is no Savior at all!

If Christ never arose, there would be:

III. No Forgiveness of Our Sins (v. 17)

"Ye are yet in our sins" -

No only does God say "All have sinned" - i.e. that sin is in us, but that all are born in sin (Ps. 51:5).

Sin is that which no only infects the core of unregenerate man's inmost being, but he is overwhelmed by it. It surrounds his whole life. Sin, like quicksand, has man trapped.

Apart from the resurrection of Christ, no one would have life, but would be abiding in the sphere of death.
(NOTE: how our new resurrection life is contrasted with being dead in sin - SEE Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13)
One is either "in Christ" or "in sin and death".

If Christ did not arise, then no one could be joined to His life; hence, all would still be shackled to sin and death.

Christ's resurrection is what justifies (Rom. 4:25 - "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.")

If Christ never arose, there would be:

IV. No Hope for Our Future (v. 18)

"Fallen asleep" = a euphemism for being dead; a softer way of referring to death (cp. v. 6).

When someone dies, they have the appearance of being asleep. God only uses the euphemism of "sleep" in reference to believers, never the lost. The reason is: the believer never dies (Jn. 11:26 - "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die").

Death is not the end,b ut the beginning; it is a mere departure; a transfer of residence; a promotion!

"Asleep in Christ" - SEE I Thes. 4:15, 16
The resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the believer cannot be separated.
To Paul, "they were Siamese twins or two sides of the same coin" (Gromacki, p. 185).

If Christ didn't arise from the dead, we would never see our loved ones again.

If Christ never arose, there would be:

V. No Purpose to Our Life (v. 19)

"Most miserable" = most to be pitied.

If there was no resurrection, the world should feel sorry for us, because we sacrificed, served, witnessed, attended church, prayed, read our bibles, lived pure lives . . . all for nothing!

We would have believed in Christ and hoped for a future eternal life of bliss, only to find it to be a mirage or "pipe dream."

"The conclusion is obvious: why be a Christian if we have only suffering (and a false hope) in this life, and no future glory to anticipate?" (Wiersbe, p. 618).

(SEE Paul's mention of suffering in vv. 29-32).

Paul and his associates gave up "everything (position in life, including prestige, conveniences, and status) to travel all over the Roman world proclaiming a falsehood. They had gambled everything on Him and had lost!" (Gromacki, p. 187).

If Christ never arose, then Easter would be the most meaningless holiday of the year.

CONCLUSION: (v. 20-23)

NOTE: the parallel between the Jewish celebration of firstfruits and the resurrection of Christ as firstfruits (SEE Lev. 23:9-14).

The celebration of firstfruits began on Sunday, 7 days after Passover (typifying His blood shed and death) and unleavened bread (symbolizing how Christ's body did not undergo decay [corruption] in the tomb).

v. 20

"Firstfruits" - referred to the first ripe crops, etc., that were given to God with a promise of a greater harvest yet to follow (Prov. 3:9-10).

Christ being the firstfruits of the dead (cp. Rev. 1:5) is the first portion, first installment, pledge, or guarantee of resurrections yet to come (SEE: I Cor. 15:23).

v. 22

The resurrection is vitally important because Christ does not merely give us life, He is our life!

(Col. 3:4; cp. Gal. 2:20 - "Christ liveth in me.")

Jesus said: "I am the . . . life" (Jn. 14:6).

He proclaimed, "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn. 11:25).

John testified, "In Him was life (Jn. 1:4); "...We are in him that is true, even in His son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." (I Jn. 5:20).

The resurrection of Christ "is like the backbone of the body, for not only is it needed, but it is an absolute essential" (Welsh, "Conduct Becoming Saints" - RBP, p. 102)

If Christ never arose, there would be:

No substance to our faith

No truth to our message

No forgiveness of our sins

No hope for our future

No purpose to our life

Because Jesus arose from the dead. . .

1. He is proven to be the Son of God
   (Rom. 1:4 - *"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"*)

2. His promises are trustworthy
   (Jn. 10:18 - *"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have i received of my Father."*) (cp. Mt. 12:40, 16:21, 17:9, 23)

3. He has power over life and death
   (Rev. 1:18 - *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."*)

4. He can now give eternal life to all who believe
   (Jn. 10:28 - *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."*) (cp. Rom. 10:9-10)

5. He can intercede as our High Priest
   (Heb. 7:25 - *"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them")*

6. He can empower us to live victoriously
   (Rom. 6:4 - *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life")*

7. Our labor for Him is not in vain
   (I Cor. 15:14 - *"And if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain"*) (I Cor. 15:58 - *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord")*

8. We are assured that we, too, shall rise from the dead
   (Jn. 11:25 - *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"*) (Jn. 14:19 - *"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also"*)

9. He is coming back again
   (I Th. 4:13-18)

10. He will one day judge the world
    (Acts 17:31 - *"Because He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he ordained;; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"*)

At the University of Chicago Divinity School each year they have what is called "Baptist Day". It is a day when all the Baptists in the area are invited to the school because they want the Baptist dollars to keep coming in. On this day each one is to bring a lunch to be eaten outdoors in a grassy picnic area. Every "Baptist Day" the school would invite one of the greatest minds to lecture in the theological education center.

One year they invited Dr. Paul Tillich.

Dr. Tillich spoke for two and one-half hours proving that the resurrection of JESUS was false. He quoted scholar after scholar and book after book. He concluded that since there was no such thing as the historical resurrection the religious tradition of the church was groundless, emotional mumbo-jumbo, because it was based on a relationship with a risen JESUS, who, in fact, never rose from the dead in any literal sense. He then asked if there were any questions.

After about 30 seconds, an old, dark skinned preacher with a head of short-cropped, woolly white hair stood up in the back of the auditorium. "Docta Tillich, I got one question," he said as all eyes turned toward him. He reached into his sack lunch and pulled out an apple and began eating it.

"Docta Tillich..." CRUNCH, MUNCH... "My question is a simple questio," CRUNCH, MUNCH..."Now I ain't never read them books you read... " CRUNCH, MUNCH... "and I can't recite the Scriptures in the original Greek... "
CRUNCH, MUNCH... "I don't know nothin' about Niebuhr and Heidegger..." CRUNCH, MUNCH...he finished the apple. "All I wanna know is this apple I just
ate...was it bitter or sweet?"

Dr. Tillich paused for a moment and answered in exemplary scholarly fashion: "I cannot possibly answer that question, for I haven't tasted your apple."

The white-haired preacher dropped the core of his apple into his crumpled paper bag, looked up at Dr. Tillich and said calmly, "Neither have you tasted my JESUS."

The 1,000 plus in attendance could not contain themselves. The auditorium erupted with applause and cheers. Dr. Tillich thanked his audience and promptly left the platform.

Have you tasted Jesus? In Psalms 34:8 we read,
"Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in HIM." If you have, rejoice in the hope of the
resurrection that your faith in HIM brings!

DEATH will be DESTROYED

I Corinthians 15:20-34

2-4-2024

Introduction:

*** The believer's hope of his/her future bodily resurrection cannot be denied**
(You can be sure that the "last enemy" to be destroyed by God will be DEATH!)

I. ***The hope of our future resurrection is...***
ANCHORED IN OUR <u>RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST</u> (v.20-22)
(Death will be destroyed IN CHRIST)

II. ***The hope of our future resurrection...***
WILL TURN TO REALITY AT <u>GOD'S APPOINTED TIME</u> (v.23-28)
(Death will be destroyed IN GOD'S "ORDER" (TIMING))

III. ***The hope of our future resurrection...***
GIVES US COURAGE TO FACE <u>DEATH WITHOUT FEAR</u> (v.29-32)
(Death will be destroyed FOR SURE!)

IV. ***The hope of our future resurrection...***
IS A BLESSED TRUTH <u>NO ONE SHOULD STEAL AWAY FROM US</u> (v.33-34)
(Death will be destroyed NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE ELSE SAYS)

DEATH will be DESTROYED

I Corinthians 15:20-34

2-4-2024

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(Death will be destroyed IN CHRIST)

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(Death will be destroyed IN GOD'S "ORDER" (TIMING))

III. ***The hope of our future resurrection...***
GIVES US COURAGE TO FACE _____ (v.29-32)
(Death will be destroyed FOR SURE!)

IV. ***The hope of our future resurrection...***
IS A BLESSED TRUTH _____ (v.33-34)
(Death will be destroyed NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE ELSE SAYS)

DEATH will be DESTROYED

I Corinthians 15:20-34

2-4-2024

Introduction:

Every time I attend a funeral, I am reminded of the shortness of life and the reality of death.

Quote Ron Hamilton's hymns: "Now I am Born Again" and "Then Jesus Came."

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (v. 26).

*** The believer's hope of his/her future bodily resurrection cannot be denied**
(You can be sure that the "last enemy" to be destroyed by God will be DEATH!)

I. ***The hope of our future resurrection is...***
ANCHORED IN OUR RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST (v.20-22)
(Death will be destroyed IN CHRIST)

V. 20

In order to fulfill the Old Testament festivals:

--Christ died during - Passover (Lev. 23:4-5)

--Christ was buried during - Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6-8)

--Christ arose on the day of - First Fruits (Lev. 23:9-14)

On "First Fruits" the first portion of the barley harvest (a *"sheaf"* - 2 quarts of barley) would be waved before the Lord on the Sunday after unleavened bread (Lev. 23:11). This dedication of that grain which came up out of the earth's ground was a foreshadowing of Christ coming out of the grave. This first-fruits anticipated a larger crop which would be harvested after. Christ's resurrection marks the first resurrection unto incorruption (a glorified body), which promised more glorified resurrections to follow.

V. 21
Adam was the firstfruits of death for those related to him; whereas Christ was the firstfruits of eternal life for those related to Him.

One earthly man brought death, whereas one heavenly Man brought life.

Adam, whose name means "from the earth (ground)," reminds us that the human race came from the ground and will return to the ground. However, Christ (a title of Messiahship) will bring us out of our bondage of sin and suffering and save our souls by His grace.

V. 22
We are all related to Adam via our bloodline link to him as the head ("*father*") of the human race. We are all linked to him seminally (in seed).

Everyone linked to Adam bears his sin nature and the consequences for sin, which is death (Rom. 5:12-19).

Just as our bloodline to Adam connected us to his sin and death, so our faith line to Jesus connects us to His righteousness and life.

The resurrection to life is: ***"in Christ"*** (only those related to Him will arise to eternal life in glory. Are you in Christ? He is our "ark of protection." You must be "born" to be "in Adam." You must be "born again" to be *"in Christ."* Not everyone is "in Christ" - cp. Jn. 8:44)

The resurrection to life is: **future** (*"shall. . . be")*

The resurrection to life is: **for *"all"* believers** (*"all")*

The resurrection to life is: **God's work** (*"made alive")*
(the passive verb indicates it is God not man who is the power behind the resurrection).

--Christ is our life (Col. 3:4)

--Christ will return to receive us (Jn. 14:1-3)

--Christ will summon those who hear His voice (Jn. 5:21, 25)

--Christ will gather His elect (Mk. 13:27)

--Christ will rapture us into the clouds of His glory (I Th. 4:16-17)

ILLUS: The funeral director who said to my grandfather: "You're looking good. . . who's your undertaker?" -- I'm not looking for the undertaker, but the Upper Taker!

II. ***The hope of our future resurrection...***
WILL TURN TO REALITY AT <u>GOD'S APPOINTED TIME</u> (v.23-28)
(Death will be destroyed IN GOD'S "ORDER" (TIMING))

V. 23

There is no such thing as one all inclusive general resurrection as Amillennialism espouses.

God has a <u>sequence</u> to the Resurrection.

"Every man in his own order" - order = turn, timing, or sequence

Three glorified resurrections:

1. Christ's (*"Christ the firstfruits")*

2. The saints of this age (at Christ's return)
(*"they that are Christ's at his coming"* [appearing, presence])

3. The people of the second resurrection at the end of the Millennium (v. 24 - *"then the end"* - "end" = *telos*, meaning culmination, conclusion; refers to the completion of mortal history)

Pretribulationism generally holds to the idea that the Resurrection will occur <u>before</u> the Tribulation (for church-age saints) and <u>before</u> the Millennium (for Old Testament saints and Tribulation martyrs). According to Paul's order here, such is not the case.

V. 24

For the first and second resurrections, see: <u>Rev. 20:4-6</u>

V. 25

"For He must <u>reign</u>" - This future reign will occur according to Rev. 20:4-6 and will fulfill Psalm 2!

(Note: Ps. 2:8-9)

> The word "millennium" is the Latin derivative from the Greek word "chilia" which means 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-7)

3 views of the Millennium:

1. **Post-Millennialism** - (social gospel view) Man through social effort will usher in a utopian period of peace on earth, after which time Christ will return
2. **A-Millennialism** - (covenant theology view) There is no 1,000 year kingdom. The 1,000 years of Rev. 20:1-7 are only figurative. They symbolize the time period from the cross until the imminent return of Christ (According to this view, there is no literal 7 year Tribulation either). At the cross Jesus defeated Satan and he has been bound ever since.

*3. **Pre-Millennialism** - (dispensational view) Christ will literally return for judgment and then will establish he promised, long-awaited Messianic Kingdom.

Proofs for the literal establishment of the Millennial Kingdom:

a. The Scriptures **teach** it (Rev. 20:1-7)
b. God **detailed** it (Is. 11, etc.)
c. Christ **promised** it (Mt. 26:29)
d. The Apostles **expected** it (Acts 1:6-7)
e. Creation **awaits** it (Rom. 8:19-22)
f. We are expected to **pray** for it to come (implying that it hasn't come yet-Mt. 6:10)

[Important Note: The Millennium (1,000 year Kingdom) will be the first phase of Christ's eternal kingdom - Dan. 2:44; Ezek. 37:24-28.]

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM
(in general)

The 1,000 year Kingdom will be a time of:

1. Christ's sovereign reign (Rev. 20:4-7; Zech. 14:9; Haggai 2:7; Is. 9:6-7, 11:1-5, 10)
2. Believers reigning with Christ (Rev. 20:4-7; Obad. 21)
3. Holiness & righteousness (Zech. 8:3, 14:20; Is. 32:1-5)
4. Justice & peace (Is. 2:1-4, 9:6-7; Micah 4:1-5)
5. Longevity of mortal life (Zech. 8:4)
6. Worship via a new temple (Haggai 2:7-8; Ezek. 40)
(sacrifices will be memorials of Christ's finished work)
7. Peace, spirituality, & prosperity (Micah 4:4-8; Is. 60:17-20; Joel 2:18-27)
8. Rejuvenated water (Ezek. 47:1-12)
9. Storms & rain (Is. 4:6; Zech. 14:18-19)
10. No external temptation or deception (Rev. 20:1-3)
11. No violence or destruction (Is. 11:6-10)
12. Spiritual blessing (Is. 32:15-19)
13. Renovated land and desert (Is. 40:3,4; Is. 35:1-8)
14. Gentile & Jewish inhabitance (Is. 60:14-16)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM
(specifically related to Israel)

For Israel, the 1,000 year Kingdom will be a time of:

1. Unity (among the tribes of Israel) (Is. 11:13; Ezek. 37:15-22; Jer. 3:19)
2. Comfort & joy (Is. 12:1-6; 40:1ff)
3. Rest (Is. 14:3, 7-8)
4. Respect (by other nations) (Zech. 8:23; Is. 60:14-16)
5. Much land (Obad. 19-20)

V. 27

Everything will be under Christ with the exception of God the Father who is the Head of the Trinity (I Cor. 11:3).

V. 28

After Christ's Millennial reign, He will deliver His Kingdom to the Father and remain subjected to the Father, who subjected all things under Christ, so that the Father will be eternal glorified.

III. ***The hope of our future resurrection...***
GIVES US COURAGE TO FACE <u>DEATH WITHOUT FEAR</u> (v.29-32)
(Death will be destroyed FOR SURE!)

V. 29

"Baptized for the dead" - Paul is <u>not</u> teaching vicarious baptism for dead people so as to save them from sin. (He could be speaking <u>hypothetically</u>; note the *"they"* not "we"). One implied point is this: Why be identified with Christ and others who have died in Christ, if the dead are not raised? Baptism, which pictures death and resurrection (Rom. 6), is pointless if there is no resurrection.

The word translated "for" is *huper*, which means "because of" or "on behalf of" or "in the place of." Every time someone is baptized, that person is showing that he is willing to step into the ranks of those who have gone on before us (whose faith we are following - Heb. 13:7). Why is it that new converts would be willing to take the place of older ones who had died through the last 20 centuries of there was no resurrection to look forward to?

V. 30

Paul says: "If there is no resurrection, why should I jeopardize (risk, endanger) my life for a dead Savior and a dead religion?" Every day Paul's life was threatened as people hated him for his hour-by-hour testimony for Christ.

V. 31

Paul says in effect: "Just as <u>surely</u> as I am glad about how God saved you, I tell you the truth that for His cause *"I die daily."* (for the Gospel's sake, I die to self-ambition and selfish pursuits, and I am willing to die for Christ any day He chooses.)

V 32

Paul, as it were, was "thrown out to the lions" at Ephesus, when he went there and preached the Gospel. People were converted and turned from their idolatry, which killed business in Ephesus because of the silversmiths losing money over Diana figurines which saved people would no longer purchase. Hence, a riot occurred at Ephesus (cp. Acts 19:17=41).

Paul endured much for Christ (SEE: II Cor. 11:23-28).

If there is no future life to look forward to, we might as well live it up (high and wild) now, since we will soon die and that will be the end of it!

The Greek historian Thuscydides reported that when a deadly plague came to Athens, "people committed every shameful crime and eagerly snatched at every lustful pleasure." They believed life was short and there was no resurrection, so they would have to pay no price for their vice. The Roman poet Horace wrote, "Tell them to bring wine and perfume and the too short-lived blossoms of the lovely rose while circumstance and age and the black threads of the three sisters fate still allow us to do so. Another Roman poet, Catullus, penned the lines, "let's live my Lesbia and let's love, and let's value the tales of austere old men at a single half penny. Suns can set and then return again, but for us when once our brief light sets there is but one perpetual night through which we must sleep." (MacArthur, p. 429)

IV. ***The hope of our future resurrection...***
IS A BLESSED TRUTH <u>NO ONE SHOULD STEAL AWAY FROM US</u> (v.33-34)
(Death will be destroyed NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE ELSE SAYS)

V. 33

Bad company ruins good morals

If you listen to false doctrine, it will result in corrupt living.

The Corinthians were listening to teaching which denied the believer's future hope. Because of this, some believers were in danger of losing the greatest incentive to avoiding the high and wild worldly party life: that incentive being our future hope.

V. 34

those who have heard the truth and know the truth have no excuse for not allowing that truth to impact their lives unto holiness. Some pagans had better lifestyles and yet had no hope of a future resurrection.

Conclusion:

"A NEW YOU!"

I Corinthians 15:35-57
2-18-2024

***If you are in Christ, a new body awaits you on Resurrection Day!**

On Resurrection day what will we be like?

On Resurrection day we will have. . .

I. A <u>DIFFERENT</u> Body (v. 35-44a)
(Not the <u>same version</u> as our earthly body)

Our new body will be . . .

A. As different as <u>seeds</u> look from <u>crops</u> (v. 35-38)

B. As different as one <u>creation</u> is from <u>another</u> (v. 39-41)

C. As different as <u>earth</u> is from <u>Heaven</u> (v. 42-44a)

On Resurrection day we will have. . .

II. A <u>CHRIST-LIKE</u> Body (v. 44b-49)
(Not made from earthly <u>Adamic dust</u>)

On Resurrection day we will have. . .

III. An <u>INCORRUPTIBLE</u> Body (v. 50-53)
(Not capable of decay or the effects of sin -- such as <u>aging</u>, <u>illness</u>, or <u>injury</u>)

On Resurrection day we will have. . .

IV. An <u>IMMORTAL</u> Body (v. 54-57)
(Not subject to <u>death</u>)

"A NEW YOU!"

I Corinthians 15:35-57
2-25-2024 (Part 2)



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On Resurrection day we will have. . .

II. **A _____ Body** (v. 44b-49)
(Not made from earthly _____)

On Resurrection day we will have. . .

III. **An _____ Body** (v. 50-53)
(Not capable of decay or the effects of sin -- such as <u>aging</u>, <u>illness</u>, or <u>injury</u>)

On Resurrection day we will have. . .

IV. **An _____ Body** (v. 54-57)
(Not subject to _____)

"A NEW YOU!"

I Corinthians 15:35-57

2-18-2024

INTRODUCTION:

If you don't like what you look like now, wait awhile; a new look is coming soon!

***If you are in Christ, a new body awaits you on Resurrection Day!**

On Resurrection day what will we be like?

On Resurrection day we will have. . .

I. A <u>DIFFERENT</u> Body (v. 35-44a)
(Not the <u>same version</u> as our earthly body)

Our new body will be . . .

A. As different as <u>seeds</u> look from <u>crops</u> (v. 35-38)

V. 35

Note: Wiersbe ILLUS: p. 620.

> Some heretics at Corinth who denied the resurrection from the dead perhaps mockingly asked: "How can a dead, decayed corpse rise from the grave, and if so, what would it look like?"

V. 36

The ***"fool"*** thought he had asked a question which could not be answered.

> Paul (under inspiration) answers it with an analogy from farming. For a seed to germinate and produce a living plant or crop, it must first die (it must be planted in the earth, undergo decay ("die"), the formerly hard shell breaks off and new life sprouts upward.
>
> Jesus spoke of His life being like a kernel of wheat which would be put into the ground and die to then sprout and produce much fruit (Jn. 12:24 - *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit"*).

V. 37

The seed you plant bears no resemblance to the crop it will produce (a seed is totally different in size, shape, and color from the plant which grows out of it).

Therefore, in the same way, the body which is resurrected is totally different than the old body (*"seed"*) that died and germinated.

V. 38

Just as God has determined the appearance of each species, He has determined what we will look like in the future.

Just as God gave each seed its own unique appearance when it becomes a full-grown crop, so He has given each person his own unique appearance (differentiating people from the rest of creation and giving each person a distinct appearance from others -- even identical twins have differences in looks).

B. As different as one creation is from another (v. 39-41)

V. 39

"All flesh is not the same flesh" - We are not all the same species (each reproduces after its own kind - Gen. 1:24, 25, keeping the species distinctly different).

This truth denies the evolutionary "circle of life" theories which hypothesize that people and animals are relatives with common ancestors down the evolutionary scale.

The DNA differences in each species disproves evolution and prevents a species from blending with another.

Paul's point is this: "If God is able to make different kinds of bodies for men, animals, birds, and fish, why can He not make a different kind of body for us at the resurrection? (Pet lovers, take note: Paul did not teach here that animals will be resurrected; he only used them as an example)" (Wiersbe, p. 620).

V. 40

"Celestial" - heavenly (the creations existing in the first and second heavens: ie. the sky and space).

"Terrestrial" - earthly (i.e. of the terrain on this planet).

There are vast distinctions between what God has created in outer space and what He has created on earth (earth's gravity, water cycle, rotation and orbit, size, shape, temperature, features, etc., are distinct from all other planets).

If scientists are looking for life in outer space like that on earth, they might as well give up, because they will not find it!

V. 40-41

The sky, the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars each radiate a distinct glory and each uniquely manifests the power, wisdom, and glory of God, who created them.

V. 41

Even the ***"stars"*** differ from each other. This two millennia old Bible truth is now substantiated by astronomical science and recent space shuttle discoveries.

V. 42

"So also is the resurrection" - Just as there are differences in God's creation, there are differences between a dead person and a resurrected person.

C. As different as <u>earth</u> is from <u>Heaven</u> (v. 42-44a)

V. 42

As is true of all seeds and plants, the plant is more beautiful than the seed (EX: a tulip bulb is ugly compared to the tulip it produces - Wiersbe, p. 620).

No matter how nice the mortician cosmetically dresses up the body, and no matter how well they embalm or mummify the body, it will eventually decompose and decay.

V. 42-43

Note the contrasts. Our bodies will undergo a change in:

1) Character (quality)

--"sown (planted in the grave) ***in corruption"*** (subject to rot and ruin)

--***"raised in incorruption"*** (not subject to decay)

2) Value (dignity)

--***"sown in dishonor"*** (the body is worthless at death)

--***"raised in glory"*** (beaming with value)

V. 43-44a

3) Strength (integrity)

--***"sown in weakness"*** (a corpse has no strength)

--***"raised in power"***

4) Essence (nature)

--***"sown a natural body"*** (back to earthly dust from which it was made)

--***"raised a spiritual body"*** (a literal body but with supernatural ability)

> [Our natural body came from a natural source - the earth via Adam; however, our spiritual body will come from a spiritual source - heaven via Christ.]

On Resurrection day we will have. . .

II. A <u>CHRIST-LIKE</u> Body (v. 44b-49)
(Not made from earthly <u>Adamic dust</u>)

V. 45

"It is written" in Gen. 2:7 - *"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."*

"The last Adam" - Jesus Christ was eternally a life-giving spirit.

Note the contrast between ***"soul"*** and ***"spirit"*** (man's soul is that immaterial invisible aspect which relates to this life; whereas man's spirit. . . relates to God and heaven).

V. 46

Scripture teaches that man goes from ***"natural"*** (soulish - *psuche*) to ***"spiritual"*** -- not as some pagan beliefs teach, that pre-existing spirits become trapped in natural mankind.
(It is interesting to note that people also do <u>not</u> begin spiritual, but begin <u>natural</u> and then become spiritual via the new birth of the Holy Spirit.)

V. 47

"First man" - Adam (whose name means "from the ground, dirt, or dust") - came from the earth

"Second man" - Christ did not come into existence as Adam did; rather, He is the <u>eternal ***"Lord"***</u> who came ***"from Heaven"***

V. 48

"Earthly" **=** Adam

"Heavenly" **=** Christ

As Adam was, so are they who are related to Adam -- We take after him being natural, earthly creatures of dust fitted for the earth.

As Christ is, so are they who are related to Christ -- We will take after Him and be supernatural, heavenly creatures fitted for Heaven.

Via our first birth, we inherited the natural (earthly); however, via our second birth, we inherit the spiritual (heavenly).

V. 49

Just as we took after (resembled) Adam, so we will take after (resemble) <u>Jesus Christ</u>.

I John 3:2 - *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."*

Romans 8:29 - *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

God will take the Adamic dust into which the dead have decayed, and will transform it or change it (just as He will do to living saints at Christ's return - v. 51.).

"In His resurrection body, Jesus was able to move quickly from place to place, and even walk through locked doors; yet He was also able to eat food, and His disciples were able to eat food, and His disciples were able to touch Him and feel Him (Lk. 24:33-43; Jn. 20:19-29) (cited by Wiersbe, p. 620).

On Resurrection day we will have. . .

III. An INCORRUPTIBLE Body (v. 50-53)
(Not capable of decay or the effects of sin -- such as aging, illness, or injury)

v. 50

Unless a drastic transformation was to occur to our bodies, we could never stand in the presence of Heaven.

Human flesh and blood would be incinerated in the presence of a holy God (no one could stand in the immediate, unveiled presence of the glory of God and live (Exod. 33:20, God said to Moses, "*And He said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."*)

This is why John had to be transported *"in the spirit,"* not in the flesh, into the presence of the Lord (Rev. 1:10). Paul, though still living in the body, was out of the body when he was caught up into the third Heaven (II Cor. 12:2-3).

"The only way we can enjoy the glory of heaven is to have a body suited to that environment" (Wiersbe, p. 620).

(EX: You can't go into the environment of outer space without a space suit; you can't go into the depths of the ocean without head gear that can take the water pressure and oxygen masks to breath)

This is why the new birth is essential to entering the kingdom of Heaven (Jn. 3:3-5). Without the new birth, one does not possess the Holy Spirit and without Him, no one experiences the resurrection of the just (Rom. 8:11 - *"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the death dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.")*

"Corruption" cannot inherit ***"incorruption"*** - To do so would be like saying:

--A mobster (crime boss) can work as a church treasurer.

--A pimp can work for the child welfare department.

--A drug addict can be hired at the local pharmacy.

Such are contradictory! No on with corrupt flesh can inhabit an incorrupt Heaven.

V. 51

"Mystery" - That which has been concealed but now is revealed.

The mystery is <u>not</u> the <u>resurrection</u>
(since this truth was known in the Old Testament -

> Is. 26:19 - *"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."*
> Job 19:26 - *"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"*
> Daniel 12:2 - *"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."*

The mystery is the <u>rapture</u> of living saints along with the resurrection of the dead.

"Not all sleep. . . all be changed" - Does <u>not</u> refer to infants in the nursery (!), but means not every believer will die (some will be alive at Christ's second coming), but all (dead and living) will be altered (transformed) by God.

V. 52

The dead saints actually are raised moments before the living saints at Christ's return (I Th. 4:15-17 - *"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.")*

V. 51 - *"changed" -* Phil. 3:20-31 - *"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."* Job 14:14-15 - *"If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands."*

V. 52

"In a moment" - *in an indivisible, small, flash of time*

"In the twinkling of an eye" - As quick as a glance, as rapid as a blind; some have defined the speed as the time it takes for light to pass from the outer eye to the retina.

"The last trump" - Many Bible students with good reason view this "last trump" to be the seventh trumpet of Rev. 11:15-18. It is stated that at the seventh trumpet the "mystery" of God will be complete (Rev. 10:7), and that God's wrath would come (11:18), and that the dead would be judged and rewarded (11:18; cp. II Tim. 4:1).

However, this trump will evidently be one that God Himself blows (*"the trump of God"* - I Th. 4:16), whereas an angel blows the seventh trumpet in Rev. 11:15).

This *"trumpet"* will be a sound to summon the people together; to break camp with this earth; and to announce the judgment of God on His enemies. The trumpet was used in these three ways in the Old Testament (Exod. 19:13; Num. 10:1-2; Josh. 20:7; cp. Is. 27:13).

V. 53

Our bodily change is essential at the rapture, because corruption must be replaced with incorruption in order to inherit incorruption.

To live forever without pain, suffering and death, we must have a body which s not subject to such. The Scripture speaks of this in Rev. 21:4-5.

On Resurrection day we will have. . .

IV. An <u>IMMORTAL</u> Body (v. 54-57)
(Not subject to <u>death</u>)

V. 54

"Mortal" - refers to that which is subject to death.

On Resurrection day, Scripture will be fulfilled which says: *"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it."* (Is. 25:8)

SEE: II Cor. 5:1-4

V. 55

"Sting" - "The word represents death as a venomous creature, a scorpion, or a hornet which is rendered harmless" (RP, cited by Reinecker, p. 445).

Death will be rendered stingless and powerless to those resurrected. This grim reaper will no longer be feared.

The ***"Law"*** shows man to be sinful and ***"sin"*** leads to ***"death"*** But one day sin's sting of death will be abolished for the child of God.

V. 57

"Giveth" - present tense - emphasizing that our victory over death is a <u>present</u> and <u>certain</u> reality.

All the credit goes to God, who gives us the triumphant conquest over the grave through the person and work of none other than Jesus Christ.

Through out eternity we will thank God for His free gift of salvation and eternal life.

CONCLUSION:

It is vital to note that just as God will give believers bodies suited for Heaven, "the lost will be given bodies suited to their environment in hell. They will suffer forever in darkness and pain (Mt. 25:41; II Thes. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:11-15)" (Wiersbe, p. 621)

Trust Jesus before it's too late!

"Your Labor is Not in Vain!"

I Corinthians 15:58
3-3-2024

INTRODUCTION:

* YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT **YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD!**

THE LORD'S WORK IS WORTH EVERY OUNCE OF ENERGY YOU PUT INTO IT!

If you believe that your labor is not vain in the Lord you will make 3 resolutions regarding your service for Jesus Christ:

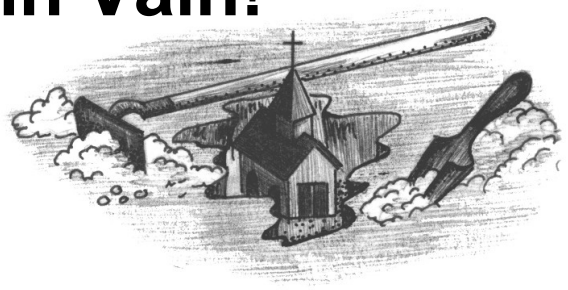
I. I WILL NOT QUIT in my service for Christ!
("Steadfast")

II. I WILL NOT MOVE from my service for Christ!
("Unmovable")

III. I WILL NOT BECOME COMPLACENT in my service for Christ
("Always abounding")

"Your Labor is Not in Vain!"

I Corinthians 15:58
3-3-2024



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("_____")

II. I WILL NOT _____ from my service for Christ!
("_____")

III. I WILL NOT BECOME _____ in my service for Christ
("_____")

"Your Labor is Not in Vain!"

I Corinthians 15:58
3-3-2024

In adversity, trials etc. are you ever tempted to just give up? Quit? Has this thought ever entered your mind: "Living the Christian life - its just not worth it" Or you may ask yourself "does my labor for Christ really matter?" "Is it worth the effort I put into it?"

Context of I Cor.15:58: The Church at Corinth was listening to false teaching. Teaching that denied the resurrection. Not just the resurrection of Christ, but the concept of the resurrection itself. (The Greeks viewed the body as evil and therefore a resurrection of such a literal body was viewed as the most ungodly thing imaginable)

The result of such a Satanically inspired false doctrine would be to quit (give up). Verse 33

- Wrong friends lead to wrong beliefs, & wrong beliefs end in wrong actions.

After all, if Christ did not rise from the dead our preaching would be vain, and our faith would be vain (v.14). We would still be in our sins (v.17).

If Christ did not rise again - what right would you have to think you would? (we would have no living savior, no deliverer from sin & Hell).

What proof would we ever have that Jesus Christ was who He said he was (God incarnate)?

Read - I Cor.15:51-57: We have victory over death!
(v.57 - "giving" = present tense, emphasizing certainty)

Verse 58: "therefore" giving the conclusion; "because we have the victory over death and corruption....."

* YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT **YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD!**

THE LORD'S WORK IS WORTH EVERY OUNCE OF ENERGY YOU PUT INTO IT!

"labor" = That which leads to exertion and results in fatigue & exhaustion.
cp. I Cor.15:15,16 "fellow laborers with Paul"
cp. I Tim. 5:17 "to labor in preaching & teaching"
cp. I Th. 1:3 "labor of love"

Paul said that he did not run in vain or toil in vain. Phil.2:16

"The Lord's chosen ones shall not toil in vain" (Is.65:23)

"vain" = Empty, without content, without result or profit, fruitless, ineffective.

ex. Giving a cup of cold water in Christ's name will bring with it a reward.

- Serving Christ's children is serving Christ Himself (Read Mt.25:31-46; *v.40,45.)
- Mary's anointing of Jesus with a years wages worth of perfume was not in vain. (Mt. 26:6-13).
  (Note: the disciples' response: "Why this waste?" and Jesus' answer)
- Israel who did not want to rebuild God's temple after the Babylonian captivity. They lived for self-interest (which proved to be vain; ex. "putting wages in bags with holes) The prophet Haggai calls on them to "consider your ways" (See Hag.1:2-8).

If you believe that your labor is not vain in the Lord you will make 3 resolutions regarding your service for Jesus Christ:

I. I WILL NOT <u>QUIT</u> in my service for Christ!
("Steadfast")

Steadfast = settled, solid, permanent stable, persistent.
An ability to withstand assault.
This word is translated "settled" (Col.1:23) and "steadfast" (I Cor.7:37) in describing a strong determination in the heart. And the noun form is translated "ground" in I Tim.3:15 describing the Local Church as the pillar and ground (secure protector) of the truth.

We often use the expression to our children when they are fidgety: "Stay right where your are and don't move"; This is the idea Paul has in mind when commanding us to be steadfast, and unmovable.

BECAUSE WE SERVE A LIVING, RESURRECTED SAVIOR OUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN! THEREFORE <u>HANG IN THERE!</u> <u>STICK TO IT!</u> <u>DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!</u> <u>DON'T QUIT!</u> "Be not weary in well doing...we shall reap..."

How does one receive the ability to remain steadfast (to have such determination?) Does it come by ones own strength? No!

When King David trusted in his own self-sufficiency he wrongly said in his prosperity "I shall never be moved" (Ps. 30:6)
He later admitted "He (God) only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved" (Ps.62:2) Again in verse 6 he states "**I shall not be moved**". He said in Ps.13:4 that his enemies would rejoice if he was moved. (Ps.13:4)

II. I WILL NOT MOVE from my service for Christ!

("unmovable")

"unmovable" = to not change direction, or go from one place to another, to flee (Is.22:3), or to remove - ex. removing the ancient landmarks (Dt.19:14).

Today we a living in a society that thrives on change (everything needs to be new or different) The media is pumping into our minds one word - dissatisfaction (ex. with yourself "you need to buy this product to really be glamorous, masculine etc.) The grass is described as being greener on the other side of the fence, and dissatisfaction is the result - either with ones wife, job, parents, standards, etc.)

Some things do need changing. And some things must never change. You must never be distracted (even with good things) from your service to Christ.

You must lay your all on the altar and leave it there!

"The only problem with "living Sacrifices" (Rom.12:1,2) is that they keep crawling off the alter." - Dr. Joseph Aldrich

Don't detour off of the straight and narrow road to serving Christ! "Someone is reported to have asked a concert violinist in New York's Carnegie Hall how she became so skilled. She said that it was by `planned neglect'. She planned to neglect everything that was not related to her goal." - John MacArthur

One test of a man's character is determined by what it will take to move him from what he believes and practices.

When faithfulness is most difficult, it is most necessary.

III. I WILL NOT BECOME <u>COMPLACENT</u> in my service for Christ
("Always abounding")

"**Always abounding** in the work of the Lord"

To "abound" = To do more than enough. To excel, to exceed profusely, beyond measure, surplus, overflowing, to overflow the boundaries.

ex. Just as Paul was <u>exceedingly</u> zealous in the persecution of the church (Acts 26:11) and the traditions of the Law (Gal.1:14), he pursued with the same zeal the saving work of Christ in the building up and sanctification of the churches (Phil.1:9,26; I Th.3:12; 4:1,10).

The churches of Macedonia and how they overflowed in giving (II Cor.8:2,8; 9:8).

The widow in giving her last mite, gave all she possessed, while others gave out of their abundance (Lk.12:15).

We ought to give <u>more than enough</u> to Christ since He has given more than enough to us! He not only gave us eternal life - He gave us <u>abundant</u> life! (Jn.10:10).
He taught the Disciples this lesson by multiplying the loaves & fish & having much (12 Baskets life <u>over</u> (same word).

If we have ever done more for Christ than we are presently doing, then we are backslidden. We should be doing more for God this year than last year.

Another reason we ought to "abound" in our service for Christ is because it is not our work, it is the "<u>work of the Lord</u>". He is our master, our boss. Ill. of workers who while on the job look for opportunities to goof off - waste time - look for ways to just get by.

Conclusion:

If we could ask Noah: "was it in vain to build the Ark?"
If we could ask Moses: "was it in vain to lead Israel?"
If we could ask Daniel: "was it in vain to stand up for God?"
If we could ask Paul: "was it in vain to plant over 100 churches?"
They would all respond **no!** It was worth every ounce of energy I invested in it!

No one will ever waste His time, energy, money etc. while involved in the work of the Lord!
(Note: it is His work, not ours; for ex. this is not my church it is His-I Pet.5)

Vain pursuits in life: living for self, pleasure, fame, money, career. They will all come to a screeching halt one day! You need to invest in that which will last for eternity!

* There are no regrets from those who are faithful to the Lord!

Because Jesus lives, my labor is not in vain!
He is coming back! And His "reward is with Him"

Ex. the song: "I wonder if I've done my best for Jesus..."

Personal testimony

Giving to the Lord's Work

I Corinthians 16:1-4
3-10-2024

Introduction: The Bible has much to say about money:
It teaches us to earn it honestly (Prov. 10:2, 4)
To invest it wisely (Prov. 10:5, 30:25)
To pay our debts promptly (Prov. 3:27-28, 22:7)
To view it soberly (Prov. 8:10-12, 16:16)
& To give it cheerfully (2Co 9:7)

**** How should Christians GIVE to the work of the Lord?***

I. Give UNSELFISHLY
("the collection for the saints" - v.1)

II. Give REGULARLY
("upon the first day of the week" - v.2a)

III. Give PERSONALLY (Individually)
("let every one of you..." - v.2b)

IV. Give DECISIVELY
("lay by him in store" - v.2c)

V. Give PROPORTIONATELY
("As God hath prospered him" - v.2d)

Bible Principles about Giving

The Principle of the Tithe (10%) (Gen.14:18-20; Lev.27:30; Mal.3:8-10; Mt.23:23)
The Principle of the First Fruits (Prov. 3:9-10)
The Principle of Sowing and Reaping (II Cor. 9:6; Gal. 6:7)
The Principle of Cheerfulness (II Cor. 9:"7; II Chron. 24:f10)
The Principle of Faith (II Cor. 9:8-15)
The Principle of Sacrifice (Lk. 21:1-4)

VI. Give ANONYMOUSLY
("that there be no gatherings when I come" - v.2c)

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Giving to the Lord's Work

I Corinthians 16:1-4

3-10-2024

Introduction: In light of the fact that "*your labor is not in vain in the Lord"* (I Cor. 15:58), how can you do your part in the Lord's work?

In this last chapter of I Corinthians, the Apostle Paul describes:

How to GIVE to the work of the Lord (16:1-4)
How to SERVE in the work of the Lord (16:5-24)

Whereas chapter 15 was doctrinal, chapter 16 is practical. Our doctrine should always affect our duty. Our beliefs will always influence our practice.

Because we serve a risen savior, nothing we do for Him is in vain.

Having exhorted the Corinthians to diligent service for Christ (15:58), Paul now gives some practical instruction as to how they might have a part in the Lord's work.

Give God YOURSELF, before you give Him your money

Paul gave this testimony of the churches of Macedonia:

And this they did, not as we hoped, but **first gave their own selves to the Lord**, and unto us by the will of God. (2 Cor.8:5)

Don't give him money thinking you can earn your salvation or appease Him with gifts (obedience is better than sacrifice).

The Bible has much to say about money:

It teaches us to earn it honestly

Proverbs 10:2
Treasures of wickedness profit nothing

Proverbs 10:4
He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

To invest it wisely

Mt. 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

To pay our debts promptly (Prov. 3:27-28, 22:7)

Proverbs 3:27-28
Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. [28] Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

Proverbs 22:7
The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

To view it soberly (Prov. 8:10-12, 16:16)

Proverbs 8:10-12
Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. [11] For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. [12] I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

Proverbs 16:16
How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

Money will Buy:
A bed but not sleep.
A steak but not an appetite.
Books but not wisdom.
A house but not a home.
Medicine but not health.
Luxuries but not peace.
Amusement but not joy.
A crucifix but not Salvation.
A church pew but not heaven.

Proverbs 10:22
The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

Wisdom regarding money:

1. The Principle of <u>Ownership</u>
   You and your possessions are God's.
   Psalm 24:1
   The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. 1
   Psalm 50:12
   If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.
   Chron. 29:11
   Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.
   Isaiah 43:1
   But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.
   Isaiah 43:7
   Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.
   1 Cor. 6:19
   What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

2. The Principle of <u>Dependency</u>
   Your power to derive wealth comes from God.
   Deut. 8:18
   But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

3. The Principle of <u>Stewardship</u>
   You are God's manager/steward.
   (Lk. 16:1-13)
   1 Cor. 4:2
   Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)

All of us likes to receive gifts, presents, help, etc.
Receiving is a blessing!

Many times we have stingy hearts

However, Jesus said that the giver is more blessed than the receiver.

Ill. The dead sea (takes, takes & takes but never gives) it receives water from the Jordan river and other sources but because of its depth nothing flows out. Therefore, nothing can live in the dead sea.

When you give, you are <u>ACTING LIKE GOD</u>, who gives & gives
James 1:17 - Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning

God created the earth to give: The Sun gives of it's energy; Flowers give nectar to bees; the Clouds give rain; the trees give off oxygen; the ground produces crops etc.

We as Christians ought to be givers!

Nothing God expects of us is without instruction. God gives us a spiritual plan for how we ought to give.

**** How should you <u>GIVE</u> to the work of the Lord?***

I. Give <u>UNSELFISHLY</u>
("the collection for the saints" - v.1)

"<u>The</u> collection" - A particular contribution that both Paul and the Corinthians knew about.

"Order" - An express command. Paul, being an apostle, had the authority under God to command the church he had planted to take up a contribution for the needy saints at Jerusalem.

"Saints" - Holy ones; people set apart by the grace of God. Set apart from sin and its consequences and set apart unto God.

These saints were believers who lived in ***"Jerusalem"*** (v. 3). Because of <u>persecution</u> (Acts 8:1-3; I Thes. 2:14) and because of a <u>famine</u> that affected Palestine (Acts 11:27-30), many of God's people had great needs. These needs were met by themselves sharing any abundance some of them had (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37), and also by the gifts that came their way from others believers in Asia Minor, etc.

While we should *"do good unto all men,"* we are exhorted especially to do good *"unto them who are of the household of faith"* (Gal. 6:10). After all, we are family in the Lord, members one of another, joint-heirs with Christ.

For the Corinthians to give to the saints at Jerusalem would indeed be an act of love and unselfishness. Why? They would perhaps be giving to people whom they never met before and people who could never repay them. Of course, God in Heaven would repay (Mark 9:41 - *"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.)* SEE: Matthew 25:34-40

One reason God gives us money is to help others in need.

> Prov. 19:17 - *"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."*
>
> Prov. 21:13 - *"Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard."*
>
> Prov. 22:9 - *"He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor."*
>
> Prov. 28:27 - *"He that given unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth is eyes shall have many a curse."*

The Athenian statesman Aristides wrote the following of Christians living in the second century: "They walk in humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them and they love one another. They despise not the widow and they grieve not the orphan. He that hath, distributeth liberally to him that hath not. If they see a stranger, they bring him under their roof and they rejoice over him as if he were their brother. For they call themselves brethren, not after the flesh but after the Spirit and in God. But when one of their poor passes away from the world and any of them see him, then he provides for his burial according to his ability. And if they hear that any of their number is in prison or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs. And if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver him. And if there is among them a man that is poor and needy and they have not an abundance of necessity, they will fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with his necessary food." (MacArthur, p. 456-7)

Any giving which comes into a local church should by one way or another be funnelled to reaching <u>people</u> with God's Gospel.

If "things" are bought with the church income, these things must in some way help us minister to the needs of people.

(One look at a church's annual report will reveal if God's money is being invested in people or not.)

II. Give <u>REGULARLY</u>
("upon the first day of the week" - v.2a)

The ***"first day of the week"*** = Sunday, also called *"the Lord's day"* (cp. Rev. 1:10), in commemoration of Christ's resurrection triumph over death (Lk. 24:1ff) and the Holy Spirit's descent to begin the church on Pentecost (Acts 2).

Sunday became a regular day of worship as evident by Acts 20:7, which states: "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."*

Paul's charge is that the Corinthians form a consistent practice of dedicating a portion of their income to the Lord each and every week.

"Giving should not be spasmodic, done only when we feel generous or "as the Spirit leads..." Our giving should not be based on periodic emotional appeals or feelings, or on bonus income, but on regular, willing, and grateful commitment of our possessions to the Lord, to His people, and to His work." (MacArthur, p. 451-52).

III. Give <u>PERSONALLY</u> (Individually)
("let every one of you..." - v.2b)

"Every one" - Giving to God is <u>not</u> merely for <u>some</u> of God's people, but for <u>all</u>.

From the youngest to the oldest, male and female, saved Jew and Gentile, black or white, upper class or lower class, rich and poor. Every blood-bought child of God should desire to give to the God who gave you eternal life.

Parents should teach their children at a very early age about the importance of giving to God's work.

IV. Give <u>DECISIVELY</u>
("lay by him in store" - v.2c)

Unless you determine what you will give and set it apart as "*holy unto the Lord,"* you will not give much, nor will you give consistently.

"Lay by him in store" - to put aside and save. This statement conveys the idea of a deliberate decision to save a portion of one's income so as to not spend it, but to give it to God.

"If paul were here referring to Christians storing their offerings privately at home, what he says at the end of the verse--*"that no collections be made when I come"*--would not make sense" (MacArthur, p. 453).

V. Give <u>PROPORTIONATELY</u>

("As God hath prospered him" - v.2d)

"As God hath prospered him" - Our giving should be proportionate to our income. The more God blesses us with, the more we should bless others with.

What proportion of our income should we give to God? I believe this is a matter of Christian liberty. However, God gives some principles to help us to determine what percentage of our income should be voluntarily given.

1. The Principle of the <u>Tithe</u> (10%) and <u>Offering</u>

   Gen. 14:18-20 - *"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And he gave him tithes of all."*

   Lev. 27:30 - *"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD."*

   Mal. 3:8-10 - *"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be root enough to receive it."*

   Matt. 23:23 - *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint nd anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done and not to*

leave the other undone."

2. The Principle of the First Fruits
Prov. 3:9-10 - *"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."*

3. The Principle of Sowing and Reaping (II Cor. 9:6; Gal. 6:7)

4. The Principle of Cheerfulness (II Cor. 9:7; II Chron. 24:f10)

5. The Principle of faith (II Cor. 9:8-15)

6. The Principle of Sacrifice (Lk. 21:1-4)
The Old Testament Israelite gave 10% proportionate to his income for the support of the Temple and Levites.

We ought to give *"better"* than the Old Testament saints. A key word in Hebrews is "better." God's expectations of us are higher than the Old Testament. God does not say, "Get out a calculator and limit yourself right down to the penny!" What if God gave to you the same way you give to Him?! Does He get out a calculator and say, "I need to stop pouring out blessings because this one has received over 10%?" NO

Becoming rich should never be the goal of a believer (SEE: I Tim. 6:6-10, 17-18).

VI. Give ANONYMOUSLY
("that there be no gatherings when I come" - v.2c)

Paul did not want collections to be made in his presence, lest people give to impress him. He wanted their giving to be noticed only by God (SEE: Matt. 6:1-4).

NOTE: To give in an offering envelop for tax write-off purposes does not violate this principle.

VII. Give RESPONSIBLY
("whomsoever ye shall approve...them will I send" - v.3-4)

"Whomsoever ye shall approve" - Not just anyone can be trusted with a church's finances.

Only faithful men can act as treasurers or deacons. Men whose life and character has been tested and proven to be gold (Note: the deacons chosen in Acts 6).

In Paul's day, money could not be "wired" via Western Union. A certified check could not be sent overnight via Fed-Ex or Express mail. The heavy coins had to be hand-delivered by faithful people.

Paul here is not talking about how the money would leave Corinth, but how it would be transported safely and efficiently to Jerusalem.

How would the money be brought to Jerusalem and would all of it (right down to the last shekel) arrive?

II Cor. 8:16-24 gives more information on the "finance committee" which assisted Paul. The offering did eventually make it (Acts 24:17).

The New Testament teaches ecclesiastical giving. The Corinthians' giving was through the local church (when they assembled on the first day of the week) and was via officially designated church representatives (money handlers had to have spiritual credentials).

Before a Christian gives to any charity, they ought to agree with that charity's or church's:

--doctrine and practice
--financial management practices
    --do they supply the giver with a receipt if requested?
    --do they have a budget and spend wisely?
    --do they report on their income and expense?
    --how much of their income goes to actually meet the need they are requesting help for, and how much goes for "overhead" (salaries, promotion, etc.)?

    In other words, is there financial integrity and accountability?

Beware, there are many rip-off artists who deceptively come dressed in Christian garments.

CONCLUSION:

Before God wants any of your money, He wants you.

Don't give him money thinking you can earn your salvation or appease Him with gifts (obedience is better than sacrifice).

SERVING in the Lord's Work

1 Corinthians 16:5-24

3-17-2024

Introduction:In light of the fact that "*your labor is not in vain in the Lord"* (I Cor. 15:58), how can you do your part in the Lord's work?

In this last chapter of I Corinthians, the Apostle Paul describes:
How to GIVE to the work of the Lord (16:1-4)
How to SERVE in the work of the Lord (16:5-24)

**** How should you SERVE in the work of the Lord?***

I. Serve by INVESTING TIME IN GOD'S PEOPLE (v.5-7)

II. Serve by SEIZING GREAT OPPORTUNITIES (v.8-9)

III. Serve by SHOWING KIND HOSPITALITY (v.10-12)

IV. Serve with STEADFAST COURAGE (v.13)

V. Serve with a SERVANT'S DEVOTION (v.15)

VI. Serve with a SUBMISSIVE ATTITUDE (v.16)

VII. Serve with an ENCOURAGING SPIRIT (v.17-20)

VIII. Serve with the MOTIVE OF LOVE (v.14, 21-24)

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IV. Serve with _____ (v.13)

V. Serve with a _____ (v.15)

VI. Serve with a _____ (v.16)

VII. Serve with an _____ (v.17-20)

VIII. Serve with the _____ (v.14, 21-24)

SERVING in the Lord's Work

1 Corinthians 16:5-24

3-17-2024

Introduction:

Some encouragement for weary servants:

1. *Serving the Lord*…Returns the Greatest <u>Gratitude</u>

Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

2. *Serving the Lord*…Fulfills Life's Greatest <u>Purpose</u>

1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

3. *Serving the Lord*…Meets People's Greatest <u>Needs</u>

2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;
2 Cor. 9:12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

4. *Serving the Lord*…Taps into the Greatest <u>Power</u>

Col. 1:29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

5. *Serving the Lord*…Receives the Greatest <u>Honor</u>

John 12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

6. *Serving the Lord*…Pays the Greatest <u>Rewards</u>

1 Corinthians 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

7. *Serving the Lord*…Fills the Heart with the Greatest <u>Joy</u>

1 Thessalonians 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?
John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

8. *Serving the Lord*…Brings God the Utmost <u>Pleasure</u>

2 Cor. 5:9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

In light of the fact that "*your labor is not in vain in the Lord"* (I Cor. 15:58), how can you do your part in the Lord's work?

In this last chapter of I Corinthians, the Apostle Paul describes:
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**** How should you <u>SERVE</u> in the work of the Lord?***

I. Serve by INVESTING TIME IN GOD'S PEOPLE (v.5-7)

V. 5

Paul established the church at Corinth during his second missionary journey. Now he promises a return visit (which did take place during his third missionary journey). he would first pass through the northern province of Macedonia and spend time with the churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea.

V. 6

"It may be" - Paul allows for the will of God to change his plans ("Men rule, God overrules"(.

*"I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will" (*I Cor. 4:19; cp. Ja. 4:15).

"I will abide" - The Apostle determined to stay with these brethren for a while (they needed more than a quick visit). Paul purposely planned a winter visit so that he could spend more time with them during difficult travel months.

V. 7

"I will not see you now" - "I do not wish to see you now just in passing" (NASV).

Paul did not want to make a mere "passing visit." He new they needed his time and attention (in the interim he would give the Holy Spirit time to use this Epistle to work on their hearts).

"I trust to tarry a while" - Paul was not a "fly by night" evangelist. He was a man who invested time in God's people. Although he was an itinerant church planter, he did not ever abandon a people who needed him.

Some contemporary problems in ministries:

--Short-term pastorates
--Pastors who have no time for people (too busy playing golf)

The ministry is <u>people-oriented</u>.

If someone is pursuing the ministry, but does not like people, they should choose another career.

The greatest investment is an investment in the greatest thing, and there is no greater investment you can make than in God's people.

II. Serve by SEIZING GREAT OPPORTUNITIES (v.8-9)

V. 9

"A great door" - A big, wide door (an opportunity to reach many souls).

"Effectual" - Effective, active, powerful (an opportunity to see life-changing ministry take place).

"Is opened" - God does the opening of doors.

"Unto me" - God personally uses specific individuals for specific tasks at a specific time.

Hence, the need to *"be ready always*." When the Spirit moves, be ready to be used.

We must "strike while the iron is hot"; "get while the getting is good"; "make hay while the sun shines."

"Redeem the time because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:16).

Ask yourself: "What opportunities is God giving me to serve Him today?"

"Many adversaries" - Whenever God is moving (doing a great work), the devil is the first to find out about it. He quickly utilizes his co-workers to oppose God's work (EX: Sanballat & Tobiah, who sought to hinder Nehemiah's work; Elymas the Sorcerer, who sought to hinder Sergius Paulus from becoming saved).

Expect confrontation. If you never experience opposition, maybe it is because you are doing nothing for God.

III. Serve by SHOWING KIND HOSPITALITY (v.10-12)

V. 10

Preacher Timothy, being timid by nature, would need encouragement from the Corinthian church.

Those who do the work of God ought to be honored for their work's sake (I Thes. 5:12-13 - *"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves."*).

V. 11

Don't ***"despise him"*** - to look down upon or consider as nothing.

These carnal people, who were enamored with the big personalities, might have a tendency to belittle someone like Timothy and neglect to be as hospitable.

Remember, whatever you do for one of the least of Christ's brethren, you do for Him (Mt. 25:40).

"Conduct him forth" - Meet his needs then send him on his way fully supplied.

V. 12

Apollos did not want to come yet, perhaps because they were divided over him (1:12; 3:4). If Apollos was a carnal man, this would be great timing for him to go to Corinth. He had a cultish following. Such man-following did not excite him, however; it sickened him.

However, when he did come, they were to take care of him. We, too, need to be hospitable toward God's servants.

IV. Serve with STEADFAST COURAGE (v.13)

"Watch ye" - Be on the alert; stay awake spiritually (I Peter 5:8 - *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."*)

"Stand fast" - Stand firm; take a stand for what you believe and don't move! There is much vacillating Christianity today. Don't be blown about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14).

"Stand fast in the faith" - That which should anchor us is <u>not</u> our pet ideas or viewpoints, but <u>the</u> body of doctrine which has once and for all been delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

The test of a man's character can be measured by what it takes to move him.

"Quit you like men" - (a term of encouragement - cp. LXX - Josh. 1:6, 7, 9). Act like men (cp. 14:20). Don't be faint-hearted, but be courageous as a man.

Don't quit like a boy or give up like a little girl -- Be mature! Satan will try his best to get you to slacken off, become complacent or quit your ministry, but don't let him win!

"Be strong" - lit. "be strengthened" (by God).

"Be strong <u>in the Lord</u> and in the power of <u>His might</u>" (Eph. 6:10).

V. Serve with a SERVANT'S DEVOTION (v.15)

"First fruits" - The first converts, the first ones to accept the Gospel in the province of Achaia (to see "charter members" be faithful through thick and thin is a rich blessing).

To be addicted to cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs is not good. But it's good to be <u>addicted</u> to a good thing!

An addict is one who is hooked on something. He is devoted to it. What should we be devoted to?

Answer: The service to the saints. The humble waiting on God's set- apart people.

The word translated "addicted" (KJV) means that these believers viewed service to God's people as a <u>duty</u> they were joyfully committed to. No one made them serve; no one appointed them. Rather, they, of their own will, voluntarily gave themselves over to a life of enlistment in "saint service." God give us a servant's heart!

VI. Serve with a SUBMISSIVE ATTITUDE (v.16)

Stephanas and company, having received leadership authority and delegated responsibility (perhaps the ones who would deliver this Epistle to Corinth), were to be <u>submitted</u> to.

In the absence of pastoral leadership, these interim ministers were to take a leadership role and the church people were to submit to their oversight (Heb. 13:17 - *"Obey them that have the rule over you,a nd submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.")*

To serve Christ means to take your place under the authorities He has established; not be a rebellious Korah, who usurped authority. You will never be a leader, if you have trouble following.

VII. Serve with an ENCOURAGING SPIRIT (v.17-20)

V. 17

That which the Corinthians could not or would not give to meet Paul's need, these people gave. Such sacrifice was a real encouragement.

V. 18

"They refreshed my spirit" - The word "refresh" means to send relief; to cause a toiling soul to breath a sigh of relief ("Ahhhh...")

Make it your goal to be an encourager.

V. 19

"Salute you much" - To send warm, hearty greetings. Why would the Holy Spirit inspire Paul to write regarding a personal greeting? No doubt to encourage us to do the same. A greeting card, a phone call, a visit or just a quick "Hello" mean alot!

V. 20

"An holy kiss" - A set-apart kiss, not a sensual embrace. It is evident that in Paul's day, the men kissed the men and the women kissed the women as a form of greeting (EX: the Italian culture). Do you express any affection to God's people?

If Paul were writing to Western churches, he would say, "Shake hands with one another" (Wiersbe, p. 625).

VIII. Serve with the MOTIVE OF LOVE (v.14, 21-24)

V. 14

Do all you do in love.

That which should fuel and drive every word we say, every act we do, every gift we give, should be agape love.

Examine your motives. Why do you do what you do?

The driving, propelling, motivating incentive for too many of the Corinthians was not love, but a selfish desire to uplift themselves.

V. 22

"Love" = *phileo* (affection).

A curse is pronounced on anyone who does not have a heart for Jesus.

Everyone who gets saved will have *agape & phileo* love for Christ.

Note: the rhyming, transliterated words ***"Anathema, Maranatha"***

If a person loves Jesus Christ, he will also love His appearing (II Tim. 4:8). If he cannot say "Maranatha" ("Our Lord, come"), perhaps it is because he loves the world, or his flesh and not the Lord.