

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS  
1 CORINTHIANS





# *1 CORINTHIANS*

## *for growing believers*

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### **Bible Study Guide**

*From the leadership development ministry  
of*  
Fellowship Bible Church Global Missions

# Acknowledgments

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## Progression Toward Maturity

- Phase 1 – Relationship with God – (Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 1:9) – Call of God is first to Himself - “Creation to Christ” - (Foundation for salvation)
- Phase 2 – Position with Christ (1 Cor. 1:30a) New Creation (2 Cor. 5:17) – “Positioned in Christ” and “New Birth Explained” – (Foundation for Sanctification)
- Phase 3 – Dependence upon the Spirit – (2 Cor. 3:17-18) – (Holy Spirit is the Spirit-of-Truth – John 16:13-14) – Introduction of the Church - (Church is the Pillar and foundation of Truth – 1 Tim. 3:15) - “Acts for Growing Believers”
- Phase 4 – Practical sanctification - Identification with Christ/Co-crucified with Christ/ Conformed to image of Christ – (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:28-29) – Romans to Revelation for Growing Believers, “Principles of Spiritual Growth”, God’s Masterpiece the Cross,” and “Looking unto Jesus” lessons
- Conclusion – Recommended order of study

## Detailed Explanation of Each Phase

### Phase 1 – Foundation for Salvation - (“Creation to Christ”)

The Christian life is a relationship; therefore our desire is to lead our readers into a deep and intimate relationship with God. In order to grow into that level of relationship with God, there are foundational truths that must be clearly taught and understood. These foundational truths include the following;

- The attributes of God - His love, power, grace, omniscience, omnipotence, justice, immutability, hatred of sin, faithfulness.

- The sinfulness of man, his helplessness to save himself, and his need for a Savior.
- Only God can provide a way of salvation
- The Gospel.

## **Phase 2 – Foundation for Sanctification - (“Positioned in Christ” and “The New Birth Explained”)**

The moment someone is born again, there is an immediate change of position that takes place in his or her life. At that very moment, one becomes a child of God, and is taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. All that Christ is, and all that Christ has, becomes ours. Therefore, before service to God is considered, one must be grounded in an understanding of who we are in Christ. Some important foundational truths that should be emphasized in phase 2 teaching, includes the following;

- Placed into Christ
- Justified (declared righteous) and accepted in Christ.
- Child of God
- Restored to oneness with God
- Eternally secure in Christ
- His Divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness through His finished work on the cross.
- Our part is to believe.

## **Phase 3 – Dependence upon the Spirit and introduction of the church – (“Acts for Growing Believers”)**

The position change that takes place in every believer's life at salvation, is immediate and complete. The daily "living out" of that position, on the other hand, is a growth process. It is the progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is working all believers through in His process of conforming us to the image of Christ.

In order for believers to move on to maturity, we must learn to walk and depend upon the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our purpose in phase 3 teaching is to reveal the Holy Spirit's ministry, and His faithfulness to lead, guide, feed, and protect God's children, as well as to introduce the church.

Some of the important foundational truths that should be emphasized include the following.

- The Holy Spirit's ministry to lead, guide, feed, protect, and establish us in truth.
- To emphasize the FAITHFULNESS of the Spirit to fulfill all that Jesus promised.
- To reveal the early church's dependence upon the Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit is as faithful in our lives today, as He was to the early church in the book of Acts.
- Introduction of the church and her role.

**Phase 4 – Practical sanctification; Identification with Christ; Conformed to the image of Christ – (“Romans to Revelation for Growing Believers,” Principles of Spiritual Growth, God’s Masterpiece the Cross of Christ,” and “Looking Unto Jesus” lessons.)**

The Holy Spirit is teaching us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit, with Christ becoming more and more the object of our hearts.

In phase 4, we will study through the epistles with the purpose of learning to rest in our identification with Christ and His finished work. As we, by faith, begin to appropriate identification truths, our co-crucifixion with Christ, our lives will become more and more conformed to the image of Christ, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

Some of the important truths that will be emphasized in Phase 4 includes the following.

- The believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (Crucified with Him, and raised to newness of life)
- Sanctification is the process of walking less and less in the flesh and more and more in the Spirit.
- Our part in the process is faith in the finished work of Christ, and our identification with it.
- What it means to truly walk in the Spirit



- Putting off the old and putting on the new.
- Manifesting the life of Christ/ fruit of the Spirit.

### **Conclusion: Recommended Order of Study:**

Being that there truly is a progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is taking all believers through, therefore our Bible lessons have been developed and arranged to line up with that work of the Spirit in our lives. Each set of lessons contain the foundational truths that must be in place in a person's heart in order to facilitate their growth unto the next stage of spiritual growth. Therefore, we believe that it is important to teach the lessons in the following order:

1. Creation to Christ
2. Positioned in Christ
3. *Acts for growing believers*
4. *Romans for growing believers*
5. *Ephesians for growing believers*
6. *1 Corinthians for growing believers*
7. *1 Timothy for growing believers*
8. *Titus for growing believers*
9. *1 & 2 Thessalonians for growing believers*
10. *Revelation for growing believers*
11. *Galatians for growing believers*
12. *Colossians for growing believers*
13. *2 Corinthians for growing believers*
14. *Philippians for growing believers*
15. *Philemon for growing believers*
16. *2 Timothy for growing believers*
17. *1 & 2 Peter for growing believers*

18. 1, 2 & 3 John *for growing believers*
19. Hebrews *for growing believers*
20. James *for growing believers*
21. Jude *for growing believers*
22. The Old Testament *for mature believers*
23. Acts through Revelation, *verse by verse for mature believers*

# **I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS**

## **LESSON 1**

### **A. Introduction**

- This letter was written to the church at Corinth. We first learned of Corinth while studying the book of Acts.
- Paul originally visited Corinth during his second missionary journey.
- When Paul first traveled to Corinth, many people believed in Christ and Paul stayed with them for a year and a half, teaching the Word of God.

### **B. Paul's Reason For Writing to the Corinthians**

- While Paul was in Ephesus, members of Chloe's family shared some things about the Corinthians which were a great concern to Paul. This letter to the Corinthians was not written to teach doctrine, but rather as a letter of correction.
- In chapters one through four we see divisions in the church; in chapter five they were tolerating adultery; in chapter six they are quarreling before pagan courts. In chapter ten they were feasting in idol's temples; chapter eleven we find them drunk and disorderly at the communion table; and chapters fourteen and fifteen the Corinthian church is in heresy regarding the resurrection, uninstructed in public ministry, and the role of women.

### **C. An Apostle By the Will of God**

***“Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,” (I Corinthians 1:1)***

- Paul begins by reminding the Corinthians that he is an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God; Paul did not choose this position for himself.
- It was God who chose Paul to be an apostle (*sent one*); his message, therefore, was from God and was not his own.



- Sosthenes was a man who traveled with and helped Paul while he was in Ephesus; possibly the same Sosthenes who was beaten in **Acts 18:17**.
  - As we have previously studied through Acts, Romans, and Ephesians, we have seen that Paul would most often have someone traveling with him. Why?
- So that others would have an opportunity to learn from Paul and could assist him in the work.
  - When we go out from the church to teach in other places, it would be good to take another believer along.

#### **D. Set Apart in Christ**

***“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” (I Corinthians 1:2, 3)***

- Paul had a twofold audience in mind as he wrote to those in Corinth who had been set apart in Christ, as well as all believers everywhere.
- Paul desired for all believers to enjoy the grace and peace of God.
- It might be good to remember that, although each book of the Bible was written to someone specifically, the Holy Spirit also intended God’s words to be His message for all people of all times.
- God does not change. Today He wants to teach us as He taught the people to whom the Bible was originally written.

***“I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;” (I Corinthians 1:4)***

- Paul thanked God for all the grace that He had poured out on the Corinthian church.
- They had been sinners, separated from God, deserving hell, but through God's grace Christ saved them and made them His children, positionally righteous and accepted in His sight.

***“That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:” I Corinthians 1:5-7***

- Paul encouraged the Corinthians to consider that the Lord had gifted them with much knowledge and the ability to communicate; He had given them everything pertaining to life and godliness (**2 Peter 1:3**).
- They were lacking no spiritual gift.
- They had received everything positionally, whether they knew it or not, but by knowing it they would be able to believe it and receive it conditionally.

#### **E. Blameless Before God**

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

- Because of our position in Christ, we are blameless before God, but when Christ returns He will establish us before the Father as blameless and holy in our condition.
- It is God Who has called us into this relationship with His Son and therefore, we can be confident that it will happen, because God is faithful.
- At the time of Paul's writing this letter, the Corinthians were experiencing divisions and other fleshly sin.

- But their position and acceptance before God was secure and not based on their faithfulness to live the “Christian” life, but on the faithfulness of God Who called them into the relationship. (**Romans 8:1, 28, 29**)
- It was God Who loved the world.
- It was God Who sent His Son to die.
- It was God Who showed us that we needed a Savior and that we could trust in the death of His Son.
- It is God Who now totally accepts us in the righteousness of His own Son.
- It is God Who has given us the Holy Spirit to reveal these things so that we can experience them now.
- Just as it was the faithfulness of God that brought all of this about, so we can rest assured that His faithfulness will see us through to the end when we will stand in His presence, totally accepted as His beloved child.

#### **F. God Always Finishes What He Starts**

- God doesn’t start something and then not finish it.
- After the Lord had set the Israelites free from bondage in Egypt, it appeared to them at the Red Sea that God would allow the Egyptians to kill them, but He didn’t.
- Later, when they were without food and feared starvation, He sent them food from heaven.
- When they were without water, He gave them water from a rock.
- When they were confronted by multiple enemies in the Promised Land, God defeated them.
- God is still the same today; He will finish in each of our lives what He has begun. (**Philippians 1:6**)
- One day, we will find ourselves standing blameless and accepted before the Lord God Almighty.

#### **G. Divisions in the Church**

- Paul first assured the people of their standing and position before God. This was important for two reasons:

1. It reconfirmed to the Corinthian believers that their acceptance before God was not based on their performance; even though they were having problems, it did not change their standing before God.
2. It helped put into perspective the “pettiness” of their arguing and divisions. When we realize all that is ours before a holy and righteous God, how could anything else matter?

*“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.” (I Corinthians 1:10-12)*

- These believers were carnal and therefore following a man; they argued over who was the best teacher: Paul, Apollos, or Peter, and then identified themselves with that individual for the purpose of exalting themselves.
- There was also a group who claimed to be following no man, only Christ.
- Surely we should follow Christ and not men. But the problem was their desire to exalt themselves. They were “more right” than the others because they were following Christ. (An interesting verse to ponder is **I Corinthians 11:1**.)
- Now this sounded like a very spiritual answer, but the flesh is very good at disguising itself to look “spiritual.”
- Beneath their spiritual answer was the self-exalting flesh desiring to glorify self.
- Instead of thanking God for each of the men that He was using to teach His Word, they were exalting their preferred teacher and thereby exalting themselves.
- In the Spirit, our desire will be to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. (**2 Peter 3:18**)

- God has many servants who He will use in our lives at various times; however in the Spirit our focus will be on the power and sovereignty of God and not on the abilities of His servants.

## **H. Ridiculous Divisions**

***“Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (I Corinthians 1:13)***

- Paul begins to ask them questions to expose the ridiculousness of their divisions and to show them the depravity of their flesh.
- “Was Christ divided?” ***“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, and through all, and in you all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6)*** All believers have been unified in Christ, but remember what Paul said in Ephesians 4:3: ***“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*** Unity can only be preserved through peace, which is part of the fruit of the Spirit. Only when we walk in the Spirit will our unity be preserved.
- Divisions in the church come when the people walk in the flesh; hence the Corinthian dilemma.
- Was Paul crucified for you? Of course not.
- Were you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not.
- Paul is asking these questions to reveal to the Corinthians their earthly minded “carnality.”

***“I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.” (I Corinthians 1:14-16)***

- Paul’s comments about baptism were intended to show that the act of baptism, in and of itself, accomplishes nothing in our lives.
- But what is important is that water baptism symbolizes our identification into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.





- Our positional placement into Christ and ultimately into His death, burial, and resurrection, happens whether we ever get baptized in water or not. The act of water baptism only symbolizes that “spiritual” baptism (placement into Christ).

## **I. Paul Walked in the Spirit**

- Paul reminds the Corinthians that his ministry to them was centered in Christ and that he did not depend on human wisdom and ability, but on the wisdom and power of God through the gospel.

***“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” (I Corinthians 1:17, 18)***

- Paul walked in the Spirit and functioned in ministry out of his position in Christ.
- His dependence for the salvation of souls was on the Holy Spirit and not upon himself or his wisdom.

***“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” (Romans 1:16)***

- When the Holy Spirit reveals the truth of the gospel to a heart, only then can that person believe and be saved.
- When we are walking in the Spirit, our dependence for the salvation of others will be on the Holy Spirit, but when we are walking in the flesh our dependence will be in our efforts and worldly wisdom to convince, convict, and convert people.
- “For the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.”
- By writing this, Paul was again bringing the Corinthians back to the foolishness of their divisions.

- What enabled them to become saved and to grow in Christ was the Holy Spirit using the truth of the cross in their lives, not the wisdom and illustrations of those whose teaching they may have received.
- The deeper truth regarding the cross is often unknown in Christian circles. Christ went to the cross alone to pay the penalty for our sin (**Romans 5:8**); we went to the cross with Christ to be set free from the power of sin (**Romans 6:6-14**).

# I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

## LESSON 2

### A. The Wisdom of the Wise is Foolishness to God

*“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (I Corinthians 1:19, 20)*

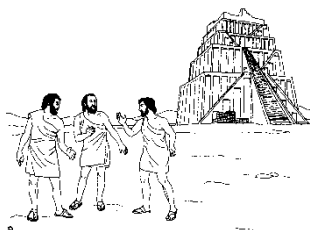
- Paul continues with the thought that he only preached the gospel, not his opinions and not with the wisdom of the world.
- God said in **Isaiah 29:13** that He destroys the wisdom of the wise.
- We can see many examples of God destroying man’s wisdom:



1. When Cain brought his own sacrifice, he thought he could come to God in his own way.



2. The Tower of Babel: God commanded man to spread out and fill the earth. They rejected God’s command and leaning on their own understanding decided to gather themselves together and make a name for themselves.



3. Joseph’s brothers thought they were wise in their plan to get Joseph out of their lives. They sold him as a slave, but God raised him to be the second in command over all of Egypt, and his brothers bowed down.

4. Pharoah: planned to destroy God's people; but God destroyed his land, killed his first-born son, and drowned his army in the sea.
5. The greatest example of God destroying man's wisdom is through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus: when Jesus was on earth, the Pharisees and Sadducees were considered to be very wise men who knew the ways of God. They rejected Jesus' teaching, for they were wise in their own eyes. They saw Jesus as a liar and a blasphemer; therefore, they were convinced that their plan to kill Him was the will of God. They arrested Jesus, turned Him over to the Romans where he was beaten, spit upon, mocked, and finally crucified on a cross.



After He died, in their wisdom, they put a guard and a seal over His tomb so that the body could not be stolen. So man carried out his plan to destroy Jesus, but God used His death to pay for our sins. God raised Him back to life, took Him to heaven and seated Him at His very own right hand, demonstrating to the world His acceptance of His payment for sin.

- God is so wise and powerful that He can take man's foolish wisdom and use it to make a way of salvation for sinners.

## **B. God Uses the Foolishness of Preaching to Save Those Who Believe**

***“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (I Corinthians 1:21)***

- The Jews were God's chosen people, and during the time of Paul, the Jews became very proud.

- God had given them the law, the prophets, and the Old Testament, and they really believed that they knew God.
- But even though they had all these advantages and considered themselves to be wise in knowing God, they still missed the truth regarding salvation through Christ.
- The Greeks and Romans were in a similar situation. They had their wise men and also claimed to know the truth.
- None of them, through their wise men, ever came to know God or ever came to establish a right relationship with Him.
- God in His wisdom has never permitted man to know Him through man's own wisdom.
- However, God has made Himself known through the preaching of His Word.
- From the beginning of the world God has simply required people to believe His Word if they are to know Him.

***“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;” (I Corinthians 1:22, 23)***

- God has not chosen to use signs or miracles, in these days, to persuade people to believe in Him. He saves by bringing us to believe in the simple preaching of the gospel.
- However, to the Jews, the gospel was an offense because they saw Jesus as a liar and a blasphemer.
- In their minds they thought, “How could salvation come through someone who has blasphemed God?”



- On the other hand, to the Greeks seeking worldly wisdom, the gospel was simply foolishness. In their minds, Jesus was a poor Jewish carpenter's son who was rejected and crucified by His own people. “How could salvation come through such a One as this?”

- Therefore for the most part, neither the Jews nor the Greeks were willing to take the gospel at face value, believe it, and be saved.
- Remember Noah: God did not give him any special signs or miracles to perform, just preach the truth.
- Only Noah and his family believed and were saved. The rest of the world rejected it and were destroyed.
- Paul said that the “Jews require a sign.” It is interesting to consider that the Jews had already seen Jesus perform many miracles, but they continued to ask for more signs and wonders so that they would believe that He really was the Deliverer.
- The Jews knew that God was going to send a Deliverer, but they thought He would deliver them from Roman rule, not their sin.
- In their eyes, Jesus was a poor carpenter, the leader of a band of uneducated fishermen, who didn’t even have the power to keep Himself from being crucified as a criminal. How could He be the Deliverer?
- There are still people today who desire to see a sign in order to believe the truth.
- But God isn’t in the habit of giving signs; He has given His Word and people must believe it.
- Paul said that the “Greeks look for wisdom.”
- The Greeks were looking for some wise human plan that would save the world from all its troubles.
- The thought that the answer to all the world’s problems would be found through trusting in a poor Jew called Jesus, who had been rejected by His own people and crucified by the Romans, was ridiculous.
- There are still people all over the world who continue to think that they are wiser than God.
- God says that if they believe the gospel, they will be saved, but they continue to depend upon other things for their acceptance before God.
- They have their own ideas about how the World began and how they can make peace with God, and where they will go when they die.

- But no one in their own wisdom can come to know God. God and His Truth can only be known through the teaching of His Word, as the Holy Spirit reveals it to our hearts.

***“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” (I Corinthians 1:24)***

- Unbelieving Jews and Gentiles saw Jesus as a deceiver who was crucified.
- But to those who have been chosen by God to believe His message by faith, know that through the Lord Jesus’ death, God has worked His all-wise and powerful plan to save us from the power of Satan, sin, and death.

### **C. God’s Plans Are Wise**

***“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (I Corinthians 1:25)***

- God’s plans, which unbelievers call foolishness, are far wiser than the wisest of man’s plans.
- The thought that God would permit His Son’s enemies to crucify Him seemed extremely foolish.
- But in the end this was God’s wise plan through which man could receive eternal salvation.
- Then Paul commented that, “The weakness of God is stronger than men.”
- When Jesus was hanging on the cross, it appeared that He was beaten and helpless and that God couldn’t save Him.
- ***“And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.” (Mark 15:29-32)***

- Even though Jesus appeared to be helpless, God was still in complete control as He was working out His mighty plan of providing salvation for mankind.
- God has chosen the foolish things of this world to show the proud, unbelieving world that their wisdom is worthless.

***“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.” (I Corinthians 1:26-29)***

- God could have chosen some mighty and beautiful angels to proclaim the gospel.
- But had He done that, the focus would have been on the greatness of the messenger and not the greatness of the message.
- Therefore, God has chosen to use ordinary people.
- When Jesus was on earth the majority of His followers were not people who had great authority in the community, nor were there many who were rich and well educated.
- The apostles of Jesus for the most part, were not influential or well-educated men. Most of them had been poor fishermen when they were called to follow Him. **(Acts 4:13)**
- The educated rulers of their time would have considered them to be unimportant, but Jesus used them to proclaim His message of grace to an unbelieving world.
- Natural man is born into this world with a self-sufficient and independent mindset. And the wiser and stronger that he considers himself to be, the more blind he becomes to his need for a savior.
- Therefore, it makes sense that God would choose those, who in the world’s eyes, are foolish, weak, and ignorant to proclaim His message. For then the acceptance of the message will not



be because of human wisdom, strength, or knowledge in communicating it, but because of the Holy Spirit's work in the heart of man.

- Therefore, as Paul wrote in verse 29, there is no reason for man to boast; his boasting will be in God.

## **D. In Christ, Believers Have Been Given Wisdom and All Other Spiritual Blessings**

***“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” (I Corinthians 1:30, 31)***

- Notice the first few words in this verse: “But of Him are ye in Christ.” God took us and He placed us into Christ.
- Now it is interesting to consider that Paul tells us that Jesus is our wisdom, and our righteousness, and our sanctification and our redemption.
- Wisdom can only be called wisdom if it is in line with truth.
- Because God is God, He has and knows all truth. Therefore, He is “all-wise;” anything that is not in accordance with His perspective cannot be called wisdom, but rather is foolishness.
- In John 14:6: ***“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*** Jesus is the TRUTH, and we are positioned in Him.
- Therefore, as we walk in the Spirit and the Spirit produces the life of Christ in us, His life will be our enablement to see and agree with all that God says is truth. Therefore, JESUS IS OUR WISDOM.
- Next, Paul said that Jesus is our righteousness.
- Romans, chapter 6 teaches that we have been baptized into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.
- In His death, our flesh was co-crucified with Christ, thereby freeing us from the reign of “daily” sin in our lives.
- As His death to sin is also our death to sin, so His new life has also become our new life.

- Therefore, God sees Jesus as being righteous before His sight, so we have received that same righteousness.
- Paul also said that Jesus is our sanctification, or holiness.
- Again, Jesus is our holiness because we are positioned in Him and have been given His very life which includes His holiness.
- Right now positionally before God we are declared to be holy and blameless children of God. (**Ephesians 1:4**)
- As we walk in the Spirit and the life of Christ is reproduced in us and lived out through us, the result will be a holy lifestyle. For His holy life can only produce holiness.
- Furthermore, Paul wrote that Jesus is our redemption, which means *set free by the payment of a ransom*.
- Because we have been set free from hell, Satan, the penalty of sin, judgment, and the daily reign of sin over our lives and have been positioned in Christ and given His wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, there is only one thing that we can boast in; **GOD AND HIS GRACE TO SINFUL MAN.**

# I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

## LESSON 3

### A. Paul's Manner of Preaching in Corinth

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

*And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God”. (I Corinthians 2:1-5)*

- Paul is reminding the Corinthian believers that they had originally trusted in Christ, not because of Paul's wisdom or great ability to speak, for he was weak, fearful, and unimpressive; but rather they came to Christ because of the Holy Spirit's work and the power of the gospel (**Romans 1:16**).
- The Holy Spirit demonstrated power and communicated the truth of Christ and His crucifixion to their hearts so that the Corinthian's faith was resting on the power of God and not the wisdom of men.
- In **Galatians 5:20** Paul writes that part of the works of the flesh are “*dissensions and factions*,” which could be translated as opinions that are different from the truth.
- In the flesh, the desire to teach our “views” of truth or opinions is very strong, and our dependence will be on our own wisdom and persuasive speech, rather than on the power of the Spirit.
- In the Spirit, we realize that this is God's work and it is solely dependent upon the Holy Spirit to communicate truth to hearts and not upon what we say or how we say it.
- We will simply share the truth with people, trusting the Holy Spirit to use it in lives as He sees fit.

- In verse 3 Paul said that he was fearful and weak when he was with them proclaiming the gospel.
- This is where God wants all of us to live life: recognizing how weak and insufficient we are without Him.
- To the degree that we think we are wise, strong and good, we will trust in ourselves.

## **B. Paul's Reason For Preaching as He Did**

***“That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” I Corinthians 2:5***

- This is the reason that Paul depended upon the Holy Spirit in preaching the Word and not upon his own abilities, He knew that only the Holy Spirit could convince people's hearts of truth.
- If people believe in the gospel because we do such a good job of communicating, then if someone were to come along who is a better communicator, they may be tempted to follow their teaching.
- But someone who believes the gospel because the Holy Spirit has convinced their heart of the truth, they won't turn from their belief.

## **C. The Wisdom of God Was Unknown to This World, but God Revealed His Wise Plans**

***“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought.” I Corinthians 2:6***

- The preaching of the Word of God that the world calls foolish, is actually the wisdom of God.
- It is a wisdom that is different from worldly wisdom, and only those to whom the Holy Spirit reveals it, are able to

understand. For God's wisdom can only be understood spiritually.

- For example, John 6:47-52, 66-69: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”*
- When Jesus said He was the Bread of Life, the majority of the people did not understand and left. Notice how different Peter's words are because the Holy Spirit had revealed to him the truth.

*“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. I Corinthians 2:7-10*

- The wisdom of God that we preach is a wisdom that God established even before the creation of the world.
- It is a wisdom that the rulers (those considered to be the wisest and most important) of this world don't understand.

- Had the rulers of Jesus' day understood it, they would have trusted in Christ and not rejected and murdered Him.
- This wisdom contains truths that are so wonderful and amazing in regards to God's children, that no man has ever seen, heard, or ever thought of such things.
- Verse 10 tells us that we know and understand this wisdom because the Holy Spirit, who knows the deep things of God, has revealed them to us.
- That same Spirit, who fully comprehends and knows God and knows His wisdom, has been given to us so that we can know His wisdom also. ***"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 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 show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."*** (John 16:12-14)
- It is the Spirit, who fully knows the depths of God, and will lead us into truth. Therefore, there is no limit to the amount of truth that we can know.
- The flesh is the only hindrance to our growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

***"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."*** I Corinthians 2:11-13

- Just as only a man's spirit can know the hidden, secret things in his life, so only the Holy Spirit knows the hidden, secret wisdom of God.
- Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the only One who can reveal these things to us.

- The human intellect CANNOT understand or comprehend the things which God has freely given to us, therefore, the Spirit of God must communicate truth to our spirits.

#### **D. The Natural Man and the Spiritual Man**

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

- A natural man is an unbeliever who is controlled by *the sensuous nature with its subjection to appetite and passion.*
- A carnal believer is also be controlled by the sin nature and would be subject to appetite and passion.
- Man in the flesh is unable to understand the things of God because verses 11-13 tells us that the things of God can only be understood through the Spirit of God.
- Man in the flesh, whether he be a carnal Christian or unbeliever, is dependant upon his fleshly mind for understanding.
- Man in the Spirit receives his understanding through the Spirit *who knows the depths of God.”*
- In verse 16 Paul writes that we have the mind of Christ.
- At salvation we were given the life of Christ. As we walk in the Spirit, He will cause the life of Christ to flow through us, and our minds will be renewed. **Ephesians 4:23**
- In that we have received the life of Christ, we have also received the mind of Christ. In the Spirit we will experience His perspective and view of things.
- In the flesh we will perceive things through our own fleshly mind.

# I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

## LESSON 4

### A. The Corinthian Believers Were Still Carnal

*“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?” I Corinthians 3:1-4*



- In chapter 1 Paul told the Corinthians that he had heard they were having divisions.
- Now in chapter 3, Paul tells them why they are having the problems.
- Notice verse 1; Paul writes that he was not able to talk to them as spiritual men or men who are being led by the Spirit, for they were walking in the flesh.

- Remember what Paul had said about receiving the truth in **I Corinthians 2:13-14**.
- Spiritual truth can only be spiritually understood. That means in order for us to understand, it has to be communicated to our human spirit by the Holy Spirit.
- Since these believers were walking in the flesh, there was no communion or fellowship with the Holy Spirit, and spiritual truth could not be communicated to their hearts.
- Paul had to continue teaching fundamental truths that they should have known long ago.
- Positionally, the Corinthian believers were spiritual, for they had already received salvation.
- But conditionally, they were not spiritual. They were born again believers with an indwelling Holy Spirit, but were walking in the flesh.



- Therefore, Paul was not able to teach them as spiritual people.
- In verse 3 Paul said that he had given them milk to drink rather than meat to eat.
- Babies can only drink milk.
- Paul writes that these believers were spiritual babies in regard to the type of truth they could receive and understand.
- Their divisions were proof of their carnality and fleshly-mindedness. **Galatians 5:19-21**
- At the time of Paul's writing to the Corinthians, they had been believers for six years. They should have been well into the appropriation of the identification truths; those deeper truths that can only be spiritually understood.



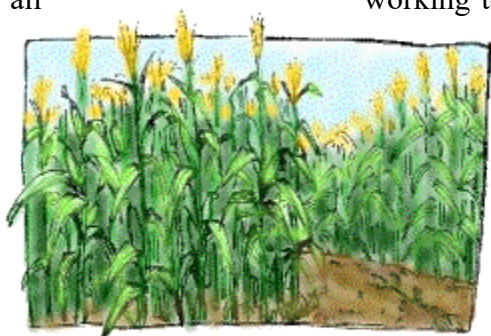
## **B. Preachers Must Not Be Exalted; They Are Only God's Servants**

***“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?”***

***I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.” I Corinthians 3:5-8***

- These verses are proof of Paul's comments regarding the immaturity of the Corinthians.
- Paul was forced to spend time telling them things that they should have known, understood, and walked in long ago.
- Had the Corinthian believers been walking in the Spirit, there would have been no division problem among them.
- It is interesting to consider that the fruit of the Spirit is peace. Peace promotes unity, not division.

- But because they were carnal, Paul was forced to point out their wrong in order to expose their fleshly condition.
- Every mature Christian knows that it is not right to exalt men, that man without God is nothing, knows nothing, and can do nothing.
- But Paul had to point out this very elementary truth to the Corinthians as though they were babes in Christ who had never been taught.
- Paul explains in this passage, that the work of evangelization and the discipleship of God's children is God's work.
- In God's work, He uses His servants. He uses some to do the planting, and others to do the watering, but ultimately, it is God who produces the growth.
- When it is the growing season, the ground is prepared and seeds are planted. In order for there to be a crop, both of these jobs are important, but only God can cause the crop to grow.
- It will be the same for us. God is using some of us to plant (evangelize) and others to water (disciple). Ultimately, we're all working together for the same goal



and it will be God who produces the growth.

- Therefore, it is He in whom our trust should be, and not ourselves.

***“Now he that planteth and he that watereth***

***are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour .For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be***

*made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”*  
**I Corinthians 3:8-15**

- Paul writes that each of God’s servants must be careful how he is “building” (teaching or discipling) in this work of God (evangelism and discipleship).
  - Is it according to fleshly human wisdom and ways, or according to the truth that only the Spirit can communicate?
  - Paul makes some rather interesting comments in **Romans 8:5-6**.
  - The flesh promotes “death”, or separation from God.
  - The Spirit produces life and peace.
  - In verse 11 of I Corinthians 3, Paul writes that there is only one true foundation which can be laid and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - There are two ways in which we can build upon the foundation of the finished work of Christ: according to the flesh or according to the Spirit.
  - Whichever one is the source of the building will become evident.
  - If we are building in the flesh, our focus will be earthly, depending upon human wisdom to communicate truth rather than the Holy Spirit.
  - If we are indeed earthly-minded, we will not be able to receive spiritual truth from the Spirit, and therefore will be unable to pass it on to our disciples.
  - We may be able to imitate spiritual growth and teach others to imitate it, but it will be a false growth, one in which our flesh is the source, and thereby making it unacceptable to God, regardless of how “good” it may appear.
  - If we are building in the Spirit, our focus will be heavenly and the fruit of the Spirit will characterize our life and teaching.
- Galatians 5:22-24**

- According to **I Corinthians 2:12-13**, we receive spiritual truth from the Spirit, and therefore our growth will be genuinely spiritual, in which the Spirit is the source, thereby making it acceptable to God.

## I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

### LESSON 5

#### A. The Second Evidence of Walking in the Flesh

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

- Paul writes that it was reported to him that there was immorality within the church at Corinth.
- He said that it is a type of immorality that not even the unbelievers do; that a man would have his father's wife.
- They were carnal and allowed this immorality to continue with no attempt to minister to this man.
- Had they been more mature spiritually, through love they would have desired to discipline this man for the purpose of restoring him to fellowship with God.
- But in the flesh, there was no concern that this brother's fellowship with God was broken.
- Had they been walking in the Spirit, they would have had the mind of Christ, and would have seen the situation as Christ sees it: hating the sin, but loving the sinner and giving of themselves to see this brother's relationship restored to God.

#### B. Paul's Command to Minister to the Immoral Brother

*“For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,” I Corinthians 5:3-4*

- Paul makes clear that the whole church, not just the leadership, was to gather as one body in order to minister to this brother.
- Secondly, their ministry to this brother was to be done in Jesus' name and under His authority.
- In order for something to be done in Jesus' name and under His authority, it stands to reason that Jesus would have to be in agreement with it.
- As believers, we have been given the mind of Christ, however unless we walk in the Spirit we will not daily be of the same mind with Christ.
- For in the flesh, we can only be one mind with the flesh; seeing things according to our flesh.
- In the Spirit, they will be of the same mind as Christ and therefore will know what His will is, thereby enabling them to minister to him in Jesus' name and under His authority.
- Notice Paul's strong words to the Galatians regarding ministering to those who have fallen into sin: ***"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."*** Galatians 6:1
- When a brother or sister falls into sin, the goal is to see them restored, not judged and condemned.
- Notice Paul said that it is those who are walking in the Spirit who can do the restoring.
- How could a man who is walking in the flesh with his own fellowship broken with God, restore another to fellowship?
- In the flesh, our dealing with a sinning brother will be critical, judgmental, and the motivation will not be love, but rather a desire to exalt oneself by making others look bad.
- But in the Spirit, the love of Christ compels/controls us (**2 Corinthians 5:14**) and our desire will be to see our brothers and sisters restored to fellowship with God.

***"I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."*** 1 Corinthians 5:5

- What Paul writes here seems to contradict what he wrote in Galatians 6:1.
- But notice his purpose for turning this person over to Satan.
- Apparently, this man's heart was so hard that he was not willing to accept the ministry of the church in his life.
- Therefore, Paul wrote that the Lord would have them excommunicate this person from the church and that God would use Satan to bring about "destruction" in his physical life.
- The goal in this destruction would be for this brother to see the wretchedness of his flesh, and to bring about his restoration and fellowship with the Lord.
- The Amplified Version actually translates this verse in this way: ***"You are to deliver this man over to Satan for physical discipline (to destroy carnal lusts which prompted him to incest) that his spirit may yet be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."***

### C. The Purpose of Church Discipline

- The purpose of church discipline is not to judge and punish believers for their sin.
- Sin's punishment has already been settled by Jesus' death on the cross.
- However, when believers sin, it is because they are walking in the flesh, and because they are walking in the flesh and because the wages of sin is still death, they have caused a separation between themselves and God (**Isaiah 59:2**); their fellowship with God and His Spirit is broken.
- They are no longer of the same mind as Christ. They don't see things from God's perspective, but actually see things opposite, thereby causing them to live in opposition to God.
- The purpose of church discipline is to enable the carnal believer to see his or her carnality or fleshliness, thereby enabling them to return to the truths of Romans 6; reckoning his flesh as dead and thereby restoring him to walking in the Spirit and fellowship with God.

## **D. Judging the Sin of Believers and Unbelievers**

*“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.*

*But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” I Corinthians 5:9-13*

- The sins that Paul lists here: immorality, covetousness, idolatry, reviling, drunkenness, and swindling are common in the world.
- Paul writes that if any believer is known by any of these sins (the sin is a predominant part of his life) that he should be excommunicated from the church for the purpose of God using Satan to bring destruction into his physical life.
- Hopefully, his spiritual life will be restored.
- Notice Paul emphasizes that this is only in regard to believers.
- Unbelievers have no other choice than to walk in sin.
- They are to be left for God to judge.

## **E. Conclusion**

- Our part in all this is to walk by faith and in the Spirit, presenting ourselves to God for His possession and use. God loves every believer and intimately knows their heart and He knows what each one needs. As we walk in the Spirit, presenting ourselves to Him, He will orchestrate what is needed in the lives of those with whom we come in contact. It is not our job to scrutinize every believer or to convict and convince them of their wrong doing, but rather



we are to walk in the Spirit and God will enable us to do whatever it is that He desires to accomplish in and through us.

## I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

### LESSON 6

#### A. Lawsuits Between Believers

*“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.” I Corinthians 6:1-8*

- And now Paul addresses the problem of believers taking believers to court.
- Please keep in mind that the reason this church was having so many problems was because they were carnal and could not receive the meat of the Word.
- Therefore, Paul continually was forced to point out their sin, so as to expose the carnality.
- In verses 1-3, Paul points out that it does not make sense for the Corinthian believers, who are accepted as righteous before God, to go to those who are not accepted as righteous before God, to have their disputes settled.
- One day all believers will return with Christ to judge the world and the angels.
- How much more should we be able to judge the little petty issues that we have on this earth?

- In this scripture, Paul wants to show the Corinthians how ridiculous their actions are, thereby revealing their carnality and the kind of lives they are leading as a result.
- In verses 4-6, Paul continues addressing them on an earthly level, wanting to reveal their foolishness.
- He asks the question in verse 5 of all the Christians in the Corinthian church, “is there not one who would be wise enough to decide on these earthly matters so you would not have to go to the unbelievers?”
- Let’s read verse 7 again: ***“Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?”***
- Just the fact that they even had these lawsuits against one another was a defeat for them as a sanctified body.
- It is proof of their carnality.
- The lawsuits aside, just the fact that they were walking in the flesh was already a loss for them, regardless of what actions it produced.
- Then Paul asks, *“Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?”*
- Here is another revelation of the wretchedness of their flesh, for in the flesh, we can only be self-centered and seek revenge or fight for our rights.
- In the flesh, we will not consider allowing ourselves to be wronged.
- But had these believers been walking in the Spirit, there would not have been these lawsuits among the brethren.
- They would have been dead to self, thereby willingly accepting the wrong (2 Corinthians 12:15).

***“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God .And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye***

***are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” I Corinthians 6:9-11***

- Having spent the first 8 verses speaking on an earthly level, now in verses 9-11, Paul begins to re-focus on the spiritual, drawing all attention above the earthly circumstances to our heavenly position.
- Paul points out that the unbelievers who they are depending on to solve their problems are not saved and have not received eternal life.
- He reminds them that they themselves were once in that position before God, but now they have been washed, sanctified, and justified before the eyes of God.
  - \*Washed: through the blood of Christ; all of their sins have been forgiven.
  - \*Sanctified: set apart for God’s possession and use.
  - \*Justified: they have been declared righteous and therefore are acceptable to God.
- By God’s grace they were washed, sanctified, and justified; they no longer had to go on in the flesh living like the unsaved. Because of their new position, they could now rise above all of that.

## **B. Misunderstanding Christian Liberty**

***“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.***

***What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man***

*doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 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? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." I Corinthians 6:12-20*

- Paul had taught these believers that as Christians they were free from the law and therefore free to eat any kind of food they desired.
- This was true, but the Corinthian believers were apparently misunderstanding what Paul meant by being free from the law.
- They seemed to think that being free from the law gave them license to sin. (**Galatians 5:13**)
- They concluded that as the stomach was made for food and food for the stomach, without restrictions, so the body was made for sexual relations without any restrictions as well.
- Notice again verse 12. Paul said that all things are lawful.
- This means that as Christians, there is nothing that we can do, no matter how terrible, that the law can condemn us, because Jesus paid it all.
- But Paul went on to say that not everything is profitable.
- Just because the law can no longer condemn us for our wrongdoing, that does not mean that it is a good thing to do.
- Though the law can no longer condemn me, to remain enslaved by sin's power is to continue living in the flesh as if I've never been delivered. (**Romans 6:6 & 14**)
- Christ's death did not free us from the law so that we can be slaves to sin, but He freed us from the law and sin's power so that we can live a holy and righteous life.
- In verses 13-14 Paul writes God created our stomachs for food and food for our stomachs in order to sustain our bodies while on this earth. Once we go to heaven and receive a new body, our body will no longer be sustained by food therefore that will be done away with.

- Though our stomachs were made for food and food for our stomachs, Paul said that our bodies were not made so that we could indulge in sexual relations with just anyone.
- Ultimately our bodies were made for the Lord, for Him to use as He sees fit.
- Therefore, just as God raised Jesus to new life, so we have received that very life and have the opportunity to experience it even on this earth as we walk in the Spirit.
- In verses 15-17 Paul says the moment that we were saved we were made members of Christ. We were placed into Christ (**I Corinthians 1:30a**), and placed into His death, burial, and resurrection (**Romans 6:1-4**), and given His very life.
- Therefore, Paul makes clear that when a Christian commits immorality, he is literally joining Christ with a prostitute.
- However, verse 17 points out that those who walk in the Spirit become one with the Lord.
- Positionally, we are one with Christ at the moment of salvation, and as we walk in the Spirit, we will also become conditionally one with Him.
- Verse 18 is similar to what Paul wrote in Romans 6:11-13: *“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”*
- Our bodies have been bought by the blood of Christ and made the temple of the Holy Spirit.
- Therefore, our bodies no longer belong to the world, the flesh, and the devil to be used for their sinful purposes.
- Our bodies now belong to God and are to be used for His purposes.
- Glorifying Him, as the Holy Spirit manifests the life of Christ in and through us, can only be done as we walk in the Spirit.

## I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

### LESSON 7

#### A. Taking the Lord's Supper Lightly

***“When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.” I Corinthians 11:20-22***

- We must keep in focus the context of what Paul was communicating to the Corinthian church.
- They were carnal and as a result their lives were extremely sinful.
- In these verses, Paul is once again writing in regard to another manifestation of the Corinthian's carnal lives.
- When they met together to have the Lord's Supper, the purpose was to remember the Lord's death. However, the Corinthians were gathering for the purpose of feeding their fleshly desires. Some were hungry and others were drinking so much wine that they were getting drunk.
- Therefore, Paul said that although the Corinthians claimed to be coming together to remember the Lord Jesus by partaking in the Lord's Supper, their motives were incorrect.
- What had started out as a time to remember and worship turned into a time of self-indulgence.
- Again we see the carnality of these Corinthians.
- In the flesh we can only care for and think about ourselves.
- In the flesh, not only could the Corinthians NOT think of others, but it was also impossible for them to partake of the Lord's Supper as a true memorial to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Because of the flesh, what had been intended to be a serious time of reflection upon Christ, His death, and all that was theirs

in Him, was turned into a light-hearted time of self-indulging drunkenness and gluttony.

- Paul understood that this was just a manifestation of the flesh.
- It is clear from verse 22 that this deeply grieved his heart. (**Galatians 4:19**).
- Even though Paul understood that the flesh is incapable of honoring the Lord, it still grieved him to see the children of God despising the remembrance of His death for them.

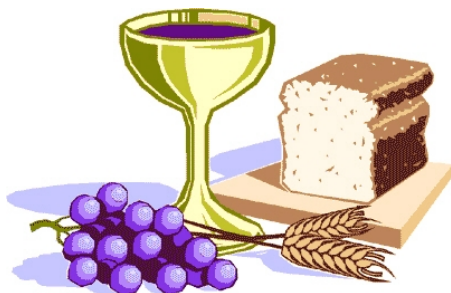
## **B. The Lord's Supper as Revealed to Paul by the Lord**

***“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.” I Corinthians 11:23-26***

- Paul is reminding the Corinthians what the Lord had revealed to him regarding the Lord's Supper.
- The bread symbolizes His body that was broken. We are to eat the bread remembering that all of this was for us.
- The wine was to symbolize His blood that was shed for the payment of our sins.
- Verse 26 clearly states that this is something that the Church of Jesus Christ will do in remembrance of Him until He returns.
- As the Church is continually kept in remembrance of His death for us, we will also be kept in remembrance of our death with Him, (**Romans 6:6**).
- It's interesting to consider in verse 23, Paul's comment that this teaching on communion had already been delivered to the church at Corinth. Apparently he had to remind them.



- The reason for this is what Paul wrote previously; because of their carnality, he had to continue teaching fundamental truths that should have already been settled in their hearts.
- Keep in mind that the root problem at hand wasn't the Corinthians' sins, but their carnality.
- Therefore, in order to open their eyes to see the fleshliness, Paul pointed out their sin so that they could return to reckoning their flesh as dead, thereby enabling them to walk in the Spirit, which in turn would manifest itself by partaking of the Lord's Supper in true remembrance of Him; His body, and His blood.



### C. Partaking of the Lord's Supper in an Unworthy Manner

***“Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” I Corinthians 11:27-32***

- In verse 27 Paul clearly states that anyone who partakes of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, thereby is an offense to the body and blood of the Lord.
- Then he goes on to explain the phrase “unworthy manner”. First, the believer (in partaking of communion) is told to examine himself. This word “examine” has the idea of “deeming worthy.” In other words, before partaking of

communion, Paul is saying to “declare ourselves worthy.” Let’s not lose sight of the context of this passage. The Corinthians were taking the Lord’s supper with wrong motives. They were hungry and getting drunk. Communion is a time of remembering the Lord’s death. In so doing, we are also aware of our death with Him and all that is ours in Him. By remembering His death and what it entails on our behalf, we will have right motives and be made worthy.

- Paul goes on to explain that to partake in communion with a wrong motive is to partake in an “unworthy manner”. In partaking in an “unworthy manner”, we are not “discerning” the Lord’s body. The word “discerning” means “to determine or give judgment.” It can also mean “to withdraw from.” To partake of communion in an unworthy manner is basically to partake in “unbelief.” To “not discern the Lord’s body” then, is to NOT determine its effects on us, thereby causing us to “conditionally” walk in separation from it.
- Paul goes on to say in verse 30-32 that by partaking of communion in an “unworthy manner,” God may use sickness and even death in our lives as a means to reveal to us our flesh and ultimately bring about growth in the Spirit which will produce right motives.
- Basically, Paul is saying that the Lord’s Supper is to be partaken in the “determination” of (knowing and believing of) the effects that Christ’s death (and we could add our death with Him) has in our lives.
- Paul’s last comment in verse 34 is rather interesting. “And if any man hungers, let him eat at home that you come not together unto condemnation.” He brings it all back to the original problem of coming to the communion table with wrong motives.

## I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

### LESSON 8

#### A. Ministry of the Holy Spirit

*“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.” I Corinthians 12:1-2*

- Paul reminds the Corinthians that before they were saved they were “carried away” by dumb idols.
- Can idols made of wood and stone that can’t see, hear, or speak, really physically “carry” anyone away or control them?
- No. Idols have no life or power, however, Paul was explaining that Satan had deceived the Corinthians into worshipping dead idols. And just as the Corinthians were held in spiritual bondage by Satan through idols, so we ourselves, before we were saved, were also held as prisoners by Satan.
- But, as we have heard the Word of God, the Holy Spirit has taught us the truth regarding Jesus.

*“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” I Corinthians 12:3*

- Because of the Holy Spirit’s ministry, we are no longer deceived by Satan; we know that Jesus is Lord.
- Without the teaching of the Holy Spirit, through the Word, no one could ever know and believe that Jesus is Lord (**Matthew 16:13-17**).

#### B. Different Spiritual Gifts

*“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there*

***are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” I Corinthians 12:4-6***

- As we study through this lesson, it is important once again, to remember what Paul’s goal has been through all we have studied in I Corinthians thus far: ***to reveal to the Corinthians their carnality for the purpose of seeing them walk by faith.***
- All throughout this letter, Paul has been endeavoring to expose the Corinthian’s sin in order to show them they were carnal; now Paul begins pointing out to them another manifestation of the flesh.
- Although they knew that the Holy Spirit had given many different gifts, because of their carnality their focus and understanding of the truth was askew.
- In regard to these gifts from the Spirit, rather than their focus being on the good of others, their focus was on themselves; desiring the gift that would glorify themselves the most.
- Because the Corinthians were carnal, Paul once again was forced to go back to the basics, teaching what they should have already known.
- The same Spirit has given many gifts, and no gift should be viewed more important than another.

***“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” I Corinthians 12:7***

- Paul is revealing the purpose for which the Holy Spirit has bestowed various gifts upon believers: “for the profit of all.”
- Because the Corinthians were carnal, they were using their gifts for their own profit to exalt themselves.
- This is what the flesh does: it causes misunderstanding of truth, it misplaces focus, and misuses gifts and abilities.
- In verse 8 Paul begins to list the many different gifts that the same Holy Spirit has given, and to show how each gift is to benefit the entire body.

***“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;” I Corinthians 12:8***

- The Holy Spirit gave these two gifts (wisdom and knowledge) to the Church in the beginning, before the Word of God was written.



- In John 16, Jesus promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would lead them into truth.

- At that time, there was no written Word of God, so the Holy Spirit gave these gifts to certain individuals so that they could pass on truth to the rest of

the Body.

- Now that truth which was passed on through certain individuals has been written down in the Word of God.
- Today, we no longer depend upon people in the church with these gifts so that we can know truth, but our dependence is upon the Holy Spirit Who now uses the written Word of God to teach us.
- Please understand that God uses pastors and Bible teachers in our churches to teach the Word of God, but it is only the Holy Spirit who can open our hearts and minds to truth and lead us into God's wisdom and knowledge. **Ephesians 4:11-15**



***“To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;” I Corinthians 12:9-10***

- The gifts of faith and healing were also gifts that were given only to the early church and for the Jews.
- At the time of Pentecost just after Jesus was crucified and had ascended to heaven, and before the Word of God was written, neither the Jews nor the Gentiles believed that Jesus was Deliverer.

- Therefore, in the early church the Holy Spirit bestowed the gift of faith upon certain individuals so there would be those who were totally convinced of the truth that Jesus is the Messiah.
- The Holy Spirit used the conviction and faith that those individuals had regarding the truth, to encourage others.

***“To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:” I Corinthians 12:9-10***

- The Holy Spirit bestowed these gifts upon the early church before the Word of God was completed to prove that the teaching was truly THE message from God.
- It was similar to what God did when He sent Moses to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt. ***“And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.***

***And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:***

***That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow.***

***And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither***

*hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.*

*And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.” Exodus 4:1-9*

- In a similar way, God gave the gifts of faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, and tongues. In **I Corinthians 1:22** we read, ***“The Jews require a sign.”***
- So, God gave “signs” to Moses to prove that he was chosen by God to deliver His people and likewise, the Lord gave “sign gifts” to the early church to prove that the message given to the apostles was from Him, and not a deception of men.
- It’s interesting to look at some of the things that God enabled the Apostles to do in **Acts 4:29-31; 19:11, 12**: ***“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.”***
- When we were told God’s message, did those who told it do great miracles or healings to prove that it was the truth?
- No. We were pointed to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit revealed the truth of His Word to us in our hearts.
- Today, this is how God reveals truth to people; but before the Word of God was written, the Holy Spirit used miracles to prove that the message was the truth.

- In this verse, Paul mentions the gift of prophecy. This gift was given to the early church before the Word of God was written, so that the church could know God's message.
- But today, we have all of the truth written down in the Word of God. There is no longer a need for this gift as it was known in the early Church.
- The next gift Paul mentions in verse 10 is the gift of "discerning of spirits." Again, this gift was given to the early Church. At that time believers did not have the written Word of God to compare against a man's teaching in order to see if it lined up with the truth. Therefore, the Holy Spirit gifted certain men with the ability to make that discernment.
- Today, if someone whom we don't know comes into our church and teaches, we do not depend upon someone in our church with this gift in order to know if his teaching is the truth.
- Instead, we compare his teaching with the Word.
- Paul also mentions the gift of tongues.
- This gift we saw bestowed on the disciples in **Acts 2:1-12** on the Day of Pentecost.
- The Holy Spirit enabled them to teach the gospel in known languages that they had never learned before.
- Again, this was a gift given to the early church and is no longer in effect today. We will learn more about this gift when we study chapter 14.
- The last gift that Paul mentions in verse 10 is the gift of interpreting tongues.
- In the early church, after the Holy Spirit enabled someone to speak in another language for the benefit of "visitors," etc., He would also enable someone else to interpret for the others who did not know that language so they, too, could benefit from it.
- This is another gift that the Holy Spirit no longer gives to the Church, for the gift of tongues is no longer in effect.
- Paul was listing many different gifts in order to show the Corinthians that all of the gifts are important because all are from the Holy Spirit.





- Therefore, their self-exaltation regarding the ability to speak in tongues was foolish and proof of their carnality.

***“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” I Corinthians 12:11***

- Because the Corinthians were walking in the flesh, they were striving for the gift that they thought would most exalt them, but notice Paul’s comment: *each gift is given to an individual as the Holy Spirit wills.*
- This means two things: there is not one gift that all should be trying to obtain, for Paul said that the Holy Spirit gives to each individually, and secondly, they are all distributed as He wills, not as we will.

### **C. Many Members, All One Body in Christ**

***“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” I Corinthians 12:12-13***

- Just as our physical bodies have many parts, but still remains one body, so there are many different members in the Church, but we are all joined together in Christ as one body. ***“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, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:4-6***
- How were all believers joined to Christ to become one body?
- When we trusted Christ as our Savior, the Holy Spirit baptized us all into Christ. ***“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,” Ephesians 1:13 “Know ye not, that so***

*many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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.” Romans 6:3-4*

#### **D. All Members Are Necessary For Proper Function of the Body**

*“For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body .And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” I Corinthians 12:14-26*

- Because the Corinthians were walking in the flesh, they saw certain gifts as being more important than others.
- They didn’t understand that it is the Holy Spirit who bestows gifts according to His will, and because they are from the Holy Spirit, they are all necessary and important.

- If every part of our body was the same part, we wouldn't have a body and couldn't do all that a body can do.
- Likewise, if all of us had the same gift, then we, too, wouldn't be able to function as a spiritual body, doing all the many different things that a true, functioning spiritual body can do.
- Because the Corinthians were walking in the flesh, they could only focus on themselves and what would bring themselves glory.
- They were blind to what would be best for the body of Christ as a whole.

***“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” I Corinthians 12:27-28***

- Just as God designed our physical bodies, assigning to each member its own work, so He has delegated to each member of His body the work He has chosen for each individual to do.
- But because the Corinthians were carnal, their focus was not on what God intended for them, but on what they wanted for themselves. Therefore, because they saw the gift of tongues as being the more important, they all were striving for it.
- You will also notice in these verses two more gifts that Paul has not previously mentioned: helps and administrations.
- Those with the gift of helps have a God-given burden to serve and help others.
- The gift of administration is the ability which the Holy Spirit gives to some for the purpose of managing, or guiding and directing the church in an orderly fashion.
- We saw through creation how God did everything orderly and appropriately.
- This also is how God desires His body to function (**I Corinthians 14:40**). God has bestowed this gift of administration upon some of its members.

***“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?” I Corinthians 12:29-30***

- Paul asks these questions to reveal the Corinthians’ foolishness and carnality.
- When we walk in the flesh, we are blind to the truth (**Ephesians 4:17-18**) sometimes it is good for people to ask obvious questions in order that we might wake up to our carnal condition.

***“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.” I Corinthians 12:31***

- Paul writes that there are even greater gifts that we should desire rather than those he has listed.
- He doesn’t tell us in this chapter what those greater gifts are, but he does in chapter 14.
- Paul also mentions something that is even greater than all the very best gifts, and we will see what he means by that in chapter 13. We will see what Paul meant by, “...a more excellent way.”

# I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

## LESSON 9

### A. Introduction

- In chapter 12, the Corinthians were walking in the flesh and they thought the gift of tongues was the most important gift, and therefore everyone wanted to speak in tongues.
- But Paul shared that the Holy Spirit has given many gifts and all are profitable and needed by the Church.
- Because they were carnal/fleshly, they could only think of exalting themselves. Their concern was not for the entire body of Christ.
- At the end of chapter 12, Paul mentioned some gifts that were of greater value for the church.
- He said that these “greater” gifts are what the Corinthians should be desiring.
- The last thing Paul said was, “*but I will show you a more excellent way.*” Chapter 13 is all about “the more excellent way of God’s love flowing through us.”
- The way of God’s love through walking in the Spirit is a more excellent way of living than walking in the flesh and living to exalt self, even though the way of self-exaltation may seem rather spiritual at times.

### B. Without God’s Love, Works Are Worthless

***“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” I Corinthians 13:1***

- Paul writes that even though we may speak “*with the tongues of men and of angels;*” we may speak God’s Word, and even speak it in tongues (another language), but if we don’t have love, it is an annoyance to those who hear it.
- It is just like noisy children who bang and clang, yell and scream. That noise teaches people nothing.

- In a similar way, noisy Christians will not help anyone grow in the knowledge of God.
- Because the Corinthians were walking in the flesh, their “tongue-speaking” was not coming from God and therefore was offensive to those who heard it.

***“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing”. I Corinthians 13:2-3***

- Paul lists some things that we Christians see as being very benevolent; even spiritual.
- If we were given the gift of prophecy and had great knowledge of God and the scripture, plus had faith to move a mountain, but had no love, we would be nothing.
- And if we gave everything we have to help the poor, and sacrifice our lives, but have no love, it will profit us not one thing.
- Paul comments that even though someone may do all these things, if they are not done in love (in the Spirit), they are useless and not pleasing to God.

## **C. God’s Love**

***“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” I Corinthians 13:4-7***

- And now Paul gives the characteristics of true Biblical love.
- Biblical love is vastly different from the fleshly love of man. Biblical love is not a feeling, but an action.

- We often say we love someone, but when offended by that person, quite often our fleshly love turns into anger, hatred, and vengeance.
- Biblical love, flowing in and through us, will cause us to overlook and forgive people's offenses. When we walk in the Spirit, God's love will cover over all sin. ***"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."** Ephesians 4:31-32*
- God's love is unconditional and does not love people because they love Him, like the fleshly love of man.
- God freely and unconditionally gives His love to people even though no one deserves it.
- Jesus is our greatest example of agape love. ***"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."** Romans 5:6-8*
- Our flesh can only act naturally and do that which is according to its nature.
- Therefore, God's love will not naturally flow from our flesh, but only fleshly conditional love.
- We have been given a new nature; the nature of Christ.
- Therefore, in the Spirit, Christ's love will be natural and will flow freely.

#### **D. The Characteristics of God's Love**

***"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," I Corinthians 13:4***

- **True biblical love is patient.** ♥ Fleshly love quickly turns to resentment, but God's love patiently endures insults and does not retaliate. We can see many examples of God's love being manifested through the life of Christ. ***"And the chief priests***

*accused him of many things: but he answered nothing. And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.” Mark 15:3-5*

- **God’s love flowing through us is kind.** ♥ Because God’s love is kind even when the other person does not deserve our kindness. As we walk in the Spirit, kindness will characterize our lives regardless of how we are treated.
- **God’s love being lived out in our lives, does not envy.** ♥ In the Spirit, our concern will be for the well being of others, and therefore our desire will be to see them prosper, rather than being jealous because life is going well for them.
- **God’s love vaunts not itself.** ♥ In the Spirit, our focus will be on who we are in Christ, and not “who we are to men.” It is when we are in the flesh that we need to be praised and exalted. Love is not inflated with self-importance.
- **God’s love in us is not puffed up.** ♥ In the Spirit, our focus is on He who is everything and not on we who are nothing.
- **(verse 5)God’s love does not behave itself unseemly.** ♥ In the Spirit, we will be sensitive to the needs of others, and not be offensive. Love does not act unbecomingly.
- **God’s love seeks not its own.** ♥ In the Spirit, we will be “self-sacrificing.” The true essence of Christianity is not to have either high or low thoughts of oneself, but rather not to think of self at all.
- **God’s love thinks no evil.** ♥ In the Spirit, there is no plan of retaliation for wrongs incurred, but only forgiveness, kindness, and peace.
- **God’s love rejoices not in iniquity.** ♥ In the Spirit, we will not enjoy seeing others falling into sin, etc., but we’ll desire to see all walk in the Spirit.
- **God’s love rejoices in the truth.** ♥ In the Spirit, our desire will be for the true spiritual growth of God’s children.
- **God’s love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.** ♥ In the Spirit, we will kindly, sweetly, and quietly endure all troubles and



annoyances, riding out the storms of life with great faith and hope in our loving, heavenly Father.

- **As we follow the Lord Jesus' life through the gospels, we see these characteristics of love in His life.**
- We have been given the life of Christ and to the extent that we walk in the Spirit, what is characteristic of His life will also be manifested in our lives, naturally and without effort.

## **E. Faith, Hope, and Love Will Continue**

***“Love never fails; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish.” I Corinthians 13:8***

- Paul now shows them the foolishness of their carnality.
- In the flesh, the Corinthians' focus was on exalting themselves through things that would soon be taken away; things which the church would no longer need.
- However, the love of God will never end.
- In the flesh, our focus will be on our circumstances and not on Christ. We will misunderstand truth and be focused on the less important, rather than that which has eternal value.

***“For we know in part and prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” I Corinthians 13:9-10***

- Paul is speaking here of truth. In John 16 Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would come and lead the disciples into truth and beginning at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit did come to lead believers into truth.
- At the time of Paul's writing of I Corinthians, the Holy Spirit was still revealing truth to the Church.
- But when the truth was fully revealed through the Bible, those gifts that the Spirit was using to reveal it, would be done away with.



- Today, the Holy Spirit has revealed all of God's truth to the Church, and it has become the Word of God.
- Today, the Holy Spirit is not revealing new truth to the Church, but is revealing to us the truth that has already been written down in the bible.
- Therefore, those gifts that He once used to reveal truth are no longer necessary.

***“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” I Corinthians 13:11-12***

- Paul is giving two illustrations of the church's standing in regard to “revealed” truth.
- First, he compares it to the knowledge of a child, and the knowledge of a man.
- When God was revealing His truth to the Church, He used the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge.
- But once truth had been revealed, the Church put away those things that were needful while it was still “immature” (without God's revealed truth).
- Secondly, Paul compared the Church's possession of revealed truth to a person looking into a mirror.
- In Paul's day, mirrors were made of polished metal. A person looking at himself only saw a dim reflection of himself.
- Paul said that this is what it was like for the Church before the Spirit had revealed all of God's truth.



- However, the time was coming when all truth would be revealed and made clear through the Word of God.
- The limited understanding that people received from the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge, are like the limited reflection of their mirrors.
- Once all of God's truth was revealed, that which provided a limited understanding was done away with.

***“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” I Corinthians 13:13***

- Upon saying that these gifts will pass away (verse 10), Paul now tells them what will remain: faith, hope, and love.
- And the greatest is love, for it will abide forever.
- Faith and hope will one day pass away; once we enter heaven, we will no longer need faith and hope, for we will be in God's presence, physically seeing all His promises.
- What is most important is that which will abide forever. God's love will be characteristic of our lives and manifested throughout eternity.

# I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

## LESSON 10

### A. Introduction

- It is important to once again be reminded of the main point of this letter to the Corinthians. The Corinthians were walking in the flesh, and missing the true purpose of the giving of the gifts of the Spirit to the Church; their desire was to use the gifts to exalt themselves, rather than to edify the church.
- Therefore, all throughout the book we see Paul pointing to their sin and teaching them things that should have been obvious, in order to help them see their carnal condition and turn back to a walk of faith and grace.
- At the end of chapter 12, Paul said, “covet the best gifts.” I think as we combine the teaching of chapter 13 and the teaching in this lesson, we will begin to see what the phrase “best gifts” really means.

***“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” I Corinthians 14:1***

- Remember what Paul taught regarding spiritual gifts in chapter 13: that though we might be able to do great and spiritual things, if it is not done in love, it is worthless.
- Therefore, Paul is saying that their pursuit of spiritual gifts is fine, but the pursuit should be done in the Spirit and then the fruit will be edifying to the entire body.
- To the degree that our spiritual gifts are carried out in the Spirit, and in love, these gifts will be used according to the Spirit’s intended purposes, rather than to exalt oneself.
- Notice again of verse 1: “to desire spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” Why did Paul say this?

***“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh***

*unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.” I Corinthians 14:2-5*

- Because the gift of prophecy edifies and teaches the entire church, therefore the church can benefit by this gift. But when speaking in tongues, only God and the one who is speaking can understand. And if people cannot understand, they will not be edified and encouraged.
- When we chew and swallow food, is it so that our mouth only can be strengthened?
- No. When we eat, it is so that our whole body can receive nourishment, not just one member.
- It is the same for the Church, which is the body of Christ. The gifts of the Spirit were given for the profit of the entire church, not just for the one who is using the gift.
- Again, Paul’s intention here is to reveal the carnality of the Corinthian believers.
- When in the flesh, our focus fades from the spiritual to earthly and our dependence moves from Christ to our circumstances and therefore we become blind to truth (**Ephesians 4:17-18**).

*“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe..” I Corinthians 14:20-22*

- In verse 22 Paul writes that tongues is meant for unbelievers and that prophecy was for believers.

- Because the Corinthians walked in the flesh, they were taking that which was meant for unbelievers and using it in the church.
- That which was used to edify, teach, and encourage the church was not being sought after.
- Because they were carnal and self-focused, they were not able to have God's perspective on the truth.

***“How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, and hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.” I Corinthians 14:26***

- It is the Holy Spirit's ministry and purpose to edify the Church by leading it into truth.
- The gifts and abilities that He has given are for that purpose. Therefore, as each individual believer walks in the Spirit, he will function in the gift that he has received from the Holy Spirit, and the Church will receive what it needs and will thereby be edified, encouraged and strengthened in the truth.
- Today, even though we have the complete Word of God and those early gifts that were used to reveal new truth are no longer necessary, the Holy Spirit's ministry and purpose remains the same: to edify the Church by leading her into truth.
- Today, His purpose is the same, but He's using different gifts to accomplish it.

***“Let all things be done decently and in order.” I Corinthians 14:40***

- The Corinthians were walking in the flesh and their church services were chaotic, as was their partaking of communion (chapter 11).
- In the worship services, they were seeking to draw attention to themselves and were blind to the direction and leading of the

Spirit. Things got out of line with God's purposes and quickly became chaotic.

- Paul writes that all things should be done decently and in an orderly manner. This can only be done through the direction and leading of the Spirit.

## I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

### LESSON 11

#### A. The Gospel That Paul Preached

*“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 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:” I Corinthians 15:1-4*

- Because the Corinthians were walking in the flesh, the next area where it manifested itself was in regard to the resurrection of the dead.
- The Corinthians were blind to truth because they were leaning on their own understanding rather than looking to the Holy Spirit to teach them new and deeper truth.
- Paul wanted to remind them of the gospel that he had preached, and through which they had been saved; that Jesus died for their sins, and rose again on the third day.
- Notice Paul’s comment in verse 3, *“I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received.”*
- God had given the gospel to Paul and he in turned passed it on to the Corinthians.
- It wasn’t of his own thinking and ideas; the Holy Spirit had led him into truth just like Jesus promised in **John 16:13-14**.

*“And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.” I Corinthians 15:-7*



- Paul now reminds them of all who had seen the Lord Jesus after He had risen from the dead.
- After He had risen from the dead, they talked with Him, ate with Him, and were taught by Him (**Acts 1:3**).
- Paul goes on to say that the last person to see Him on earth was himself:

*“And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.” I Corinthians 15:8-11*

- Notice Paul’s humble statement, *“I am the least of the apostles, that am not fit to be called an apostle.”*
- Paul realized his unworthiness to receive the grace of God.
- God by His grace had blessed Paul with so much when he was deserving of so little.
- He said that it was the grace of God/unmerited favor from God, that motivated him to serve Him.
- Paul makes similar comments in **Colossians 1:29; Philippians 2:13**.

*“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*

***Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” I Corinthians 15:12-19***

- Once again, Paul is addressing the false teaching of the carnal Corinthian church.
- Paul’s comment is designed to get them thinking; if they were taught that Jesus was raised from the dead, then how can they say that the dead in Christ do not rise; that would mean that Jesus did not rise either.
- If Jesus did not rise, our preaching is empty and our faith is in vain; for what good would it do to teach about, and believe in a dead savior? If Jesus did not rise, then the apostle’s claim that they saw, listened, and ate with Him was not true, thereby making them liars.
- Also, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then He did not pay for our sins and we are still unforgiven, separated from God, and those who have already died believing in Him, have gone to hell and will be eternally separated from God.
- In verse 19, Paul wrote that if the only hope we have in Christ is in this life alone, then we of all men are the most to be pitied, and all the hatred and persecution that the Church endures from the world would be for nothing.

***“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” I Corinthians 15:20***

- We Christians do have hope that is beyond this life and it is all because Jesus was raised from the dead.
- He is the “first fruits” of the harvest that is to come. Because He has risen, we know that we are risen with Him positionally and that one day our bodies will be resurrected, as well.

***“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” I Corinthians 15:21-22***

- Through our first father Adam, we were all born spiritually dead and separated from God, living in cursed bodies that are subject to physical death (**Romans 5:12**).
- But now all who have trusted in Christ as Savior have been taken out of Adam and placed into Christ.
- The moment we believed, the Holy Spirit placed us into Christ and we became one with Him; sharing everything with Him. *“Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” I Corinthians 12:2-3; “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:” Ephesians 1:11; “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” Ephesians 5:30-32*

- In Adam we received his death, but now in Christ we have received His life.

*“But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.” I Corinthians 15:23*

- Paul is giving the order of the resurrection. First, Christ is raised from the dead and then, when He returns, the bodies of His children will also be raised.

*“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” I Corinthians 15:24-26*

- Now comes the end when the Lord does away with all other power and authority, all His enemies, and lastly, death is destroyed. Later, we will study the end times in more detail.

## **B. Conclusion**

- Because the Corinthians were walking in the flesh, they walked in their own understanding and lost sight of the truth regarding the raising of the dead.
- Again, Paul was pointing to these things in order to show the Corinthians how they had deviated from truth as a result of walking in the flesh.

## I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

### LESSON 12

#### A. Our Bodies Changed in the Resurrection

***“But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” I Corinthians 15:35***

- Paul knew what some people were thinking regarding the dead being resurrected. How could a decayed body come to life?

***“Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:” I Corinthians 15:36***

- Only a fool would question whether or not God is able to raise the dead.



- In the beginning, He made man out of the dust of the earth. Could He not also bring back to life a dead body regardless of how long it was in the grave?
- Nothing is impossible for God.
- Notice Paul’s comment, “What you sow is not made alive unless it dies.”
- In order for a seed to bear fruit, it must fall into the ground, rot, and die; then will it grow up and bear fruit (**John 12:24**).
- Paul’s point here; just like the seed, so the

bodies of believers must die, but God will raise them up and change them.

***“And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:” I Corinthians 15:37***

- When we plant any kind of seed, does the plant that grows from it look like the seed we planted? No. It changes.

***“But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.” I Corinthians 15:38***

- From every seed grows the type of plant which God decided it should be.
- Each type of plant has a different shape, size, and color.
- The type of plant that each seed produces was decided by God when He first created it.



***“All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.” I Corinthians 15:39***

- God has given different types of bodies to different forms of life on earth.
- To people, He has given one type of body.
- To animals, He has given another; to fish another; birds, yet another.



***“There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.” I Corinthians 15:40***

- Consider the earth; there are rivers, oceans, trees, and many other beautiful things.
- But the moon is much different from the earth.
- Thick dust covers the moon and nothing grows there; there are no rivers and oceans.
- The sun is even different from the earth and the moon. It is a burning mass of gas. Nothing can live on it.



***“There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.” I Corinthians 15:41***

- The sun shines brighter than the moon, and the light of the moon is different from that of the light of the stars.
- Even the stars differ one from another in brightness.
- What these illustrations reveal is that the resurrected bodies of believers will be changed and therefore, will be different from our earthly bodies.
- It is like the transformation that a caterpillar goes through in becoming a butterfly.

***“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:” I Corinthians 15:42-43***



- Here Paul makes clear that our resurrected bodies will be changed for the better.
- Our earthly bodies were born into a sinful human race, therefore, they have been corrupted by sin.
- But our resurrected bodies will be given to us new from God; they will not be corrupted by sin.

***“It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” I Corinthians 15:44***

- Our bodies will die and decay a natural, earthly body; a body that receives its life from air, food, water, sunshine, etc.,
- But then it will be raised a spiritual body; a body that receives its life from the Spirit of God.

***“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.***

***Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.***

***The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” I Corinthians 15:45-49***

- When God created Adam, He gave him life and the ability to produce offspring.
- We received our natural, sin-corrupted bodies through Adam, who is the father of the human race.
- But in order for us to be saved from the power of death, God chose and appointed a second man, Jesus Christ.
- He is the beginning of a new type of people; those resurrected unto new life.
- And just as our human bodies were like Adam’s; corrupted by sin, so our resurrected bodies will be like the body of Jesus; untouched by sin.
- We were born from Adam and received bodies like his.
- Our bodies will be resurrected and changed and we will then bear the image of Jesus.

***“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” I Corinthians 15:50***

- Our earthly bodies have been corrupted by sin and cannot live forever in heaven.
- Therefore, our bodies must be changed into heavenly bodies that are not corrupted by sin and are not under the curse of death.
- It will then be possible to live in heaven forever.

***“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,” I Corinthians 15:51***



- Paul is saying that not all believers will die before the resurrection, but the bodies of all believers will be changed into resurrection bodies.
- Paul said that this was a mystery because no one knew of this until Jesus returned to heaven and the Holy Spirit revealed it to the apostles.

***“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.***

***For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” I Corinthians 15:52-53***

- Paul makes clear that at the last trumpet sound, the body of every believer no matter where they are, dead or alive, will be raised and changed into a new resurrection body.
- Notice how long he said this change will take. In the twinkling of an eye our bodies will be changed.

***“When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” I Corinthians 15:54-57***

- Paul writes that when our bodies have been resurrected and changed, then the victory over death will be complete.
- Sin is like death’s weapon that causes pain and separation in our lives, and through the law, sin receives its power, for without the law there is no sin.
- But when we receive our new resurrection bodies, two things will change; we will have received a new body that has not been corrupted by sin; and we will be in heaven, separated from sin for all time.

- Paul writes that all of this was accomplished for us through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Romans 6 teaches that through our identification with Christ, this victory is already ours positionally, but we have not received conditionally all that Jesus' death provides for us (we have not yet physically entered heaven with our new bodies).

***“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” I Corinthians 15:58***

- As mentioned before, the struggles that the Corinthians were having were a result of their carnality.
- Had they been walking in the Spirit, they would not have fulfilled the lusts of the flesh and they would not have struggled with unbelief.
- Paul is making clear that because all these things are true, the Corinthians now have the power and desire to remain firm and fixed in their position in Christ, which will produce a fruitful life for Christ, rather than a fruitless, empty life.

# I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

## LESSON 13

### A. Tithing

*“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.*

*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.” I Corinthians 16:1-3*

- Before ending his letter to the Corinthians, Paul addresses the financial need of the Jerusalem church.
- Possibly the believers in Jerusalem were poor because of the persecution that they had endured.
- Paul had already visited the churches in Galatia, and was presently in Ephesus.
- Upon leaving Ephesus, he planned to go to Corinth.
- Therefore, he asked the Corinthian believers to collect an offering for the Jerusalem church, and then he gave them some guidelines for “giving.”
  - a. “Collection for the saints.” (purpose for giving)
  - b. “Upon the first day of the week.” (periodic)
  - c. “Let every one of you,” (personal)
  - d. “Lay by him in store,” (private)
  - e. “As God has prospered;” (proportionately)
  - f. “That there be no gathering when I come,” (pressureless)
- How does this apply to us?
- All believers are brothers and sisters in Christ.



- Just as in our physical families we have concern for one another, so in our spiritual family we will have concern for our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- As we walk in the Spirit, the Spirit will reveal to us those in the body of Christ who are in need.
- Just as Paul was asking the other churches to help the Jerusalem church, so we too will help our needy brothers and sisters in Christ.

## **B. Timothy**

***“Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.” I Corinthians 15:10***

- During this period of time, there were many believers in different places who were meeting together in churches.
- But they all were in need of encouragement and good, sound teaching and leadership.
- There was much too much teaching needed in the churches for Paul to do it all.
- So he disciplined other men to help with the teaching and leadership development.
- Timothy was one of those men whom Paul had disciplined and prepared for ministry.

***“Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.” Acts 16:1-3***

- When Paul was unable to go to help another needy church, he would send someone whom he knew was walking in the Spirit.

- Timothy was one of those men who Paul had discipled and had confidence in his spiritual condition.
- Because Timothy was walking in the Spirit, Paul knew that if he were to send Timothy in his place, that people would be shepherded and cared for.

***“Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.,” I Corinthians 16:10-11***

- Paul knew that the Corinthians were carnal and he wanted them to know how much he thought of Timothy, hoping that they, too, would respect him.
- Often times when we are in the flesh, we tend to be critical of those who are spiritual and desire to help us; we refuse their ministry.
- Paul wanted the Corinthians to accept what the Lord had to share with them through Timothy.

### **C. Conclusion**

- Paul addressed two issues here; giving for the purpose of helping to meet the needs of others and receiving and respecting those whom God sends to minister to us.
- Can we do these things in the flesh? Of course not.
- Keep in mind that in the flesh, we only care about ourselves; we do not care about the needs of others. We only desire to see our own needs met, and therefore do not have a desire to give.
- Also, in the flesh our tendency will be to be critical and disrespectful toward those who are spiritual and who God desires to use in our lives.
- Our flesh wants to be recognized and exalted and not appear to be needing the help of others.

## I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

### LESSON 14

#### A. Paul's Final Instructions

- In verse 13 Paul begins his final remarks which are based on all that he has said previously.

***“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” I Corinthians 16:13***

- Paul now encourages the Corinthians to be alert.
- Paul's consistent message throughout the book is to reveal the carnality and to watch for signs of fleshly living.
- Next, Paul encourages the Corinthian believers to “stand fast in the faith” of the truth that the Holy Spirit has revealed to them.
- In the flesh, the Corinthians were being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, but in the Spirit, it would be possible for them to remain anchored in truth.
- Paul goes on to say, “be brave” or act like men.
- Back in chapter 3, Paul revealed to them that they were like babies who could not handle solid food.
- Now he is telling them to stand fast; act like men; be strong. How could it be possible for them to make such a change? Only as they rest in their co-crucifixion with Christ, and walk in the Spirit.
- Where were they to find their strength? ***“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” Ephesians 6:10***
- As we live our lives in the Spirit, the life of Christ will be reproduced in us and He will be our source of life; therefore, we will be strong in Him Who is our life.
- But in the flesh, we can only walk in our own strength and wisdom. Our source of life will not be Christ's life.

***“Let all your things be done with charity.” I Corinthians 16:14***

- Think back now to Paul's comment in **I Corinthians 13:1-3**. Anything that we do apart from love means that it was done in the flesh and therefore is not pleasing to God.
- Paul's words, *"let everything be done in love,"* really means, *"let everything be done in the Spirit, for this is the only way that anything can be done in love. For love is a part of the fruit of the Spirit."* (**Galatians 5:22**)

***"I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)***

***That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." I Corinthians 16:15-16***

- In the Province of Achaia, Stephanas and his family were the first to be saved through Paul's teaching.
- Here, Paul points to the life of Stephanas, showing the Corinthians what a man's life is like who is walking in the Spirit. He is devoted to ministering to people.
- Paul tells them to submit to the leadership of people such as this, who manifest the dead to self Christ-life.

***"I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such". I Corinthians 16:17-18***

- It would be good to take note of why Paul was exalting these men: was it because of their teaching or other great things that they had done? No.
- It was because of their willingness to serve others. Paul commented that he was refreshed by them.
- God has given many different gifts and abilities to His children.
- No matter what gift we have been given, if we walk in the Spirit, He will use this gift in us to minister to His children as He sees fit. **I Corinthians 12:12-27**

***“The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.” I Corinthians 16:19-20***

- Paul sent greetings to the Corinthians from the other churches in Asia.
- The people in the Asian churches may have never met the Corinthian believers, but because they were one in Christ, they had a genuine love and concern for one another.
- It will be the same for us. As we walk in the Spirit, we will have a love and concern for all believers, even though we have never met them before.
- It is because the Spirit has united us as one in Christ.
- Paul then encourages the Corinthians to greet each other with a holy kiss.
- In Paul’s day, women greeted women and men greeted men with a kiss on the cheek. This was a part of their culture.

***“The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.” I Corinthians 16:21-24***

- Paul makes it very clear that this letter is from him.
- And now, “let those who do not love Christ be accursed, but, you who are God’s, may the grace of Christ be with you.”
- Paul ends by letting the Corinthians know of his love for them.
- Throughout this book, Paul made many strong statements, but he also wanted them to know that it was all because of his love for them and a desire to see them walk in the Spirit.
- Often times, this may be the situation in our lives; when we walk in the flesh, God may send someone to say some hard things, but it is only so that we will see our carnality and turn back to Christ.



# I CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

## LESSON 15

### THE CHARISMATIC QUESTION

#### A. Introduction

- What about the baptism by the Holy Spirit? What about the gift of tongues? What about healings? What about casting out demons?
- The main reason why so many Christians are caught up in this teaching today is because of carnality.
- Remember Paul wrote in **I Corinthians 2:13-14**: *“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*
- The Bible was written by the Holy Spirit, and therefore cannot be understood through man's intellect; it can only be spiritually understood.
- Biblical truth can only be understood through the Holy Spirit communicating it to our spirit.
- If a man is not walking in the Spirit, he is unable to understand the deeper truths of God's Word.
- Even if he fervently studies the Word, in the flesh, he will not understand the deeper truths of God's Word.
- Paul said that the “natural man” does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. That phrase, “natural man” definitely refers to unsaved man, however, it also could apply to a carnal Christian.

***“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Colossians 2:8***

- The word, “philosophy” actually means “the highest form of intellect.” Paul writes, “*watch out lest you be taken captive through the highest form of intellect.*”
- We need to be very careful to make sure that the teaching we are hearing is according to biblical truth, not worldly wisdom.
- But, how will we know if someone’s teaching is according to the truth?
- We can only know truth as we walk in the Spirit. As we walk in the Spirit, He will communicate the meaning of the scriptures to our hearts. We can then compare it to what we are hearing.

## B. Tongues

- Those who believe that speaking in tongues is still in effect, believe it is a sign that they are spiritually mature.
- But consider this: there are at least five heathen groups in the world today who practice speaking in tongues. They are people who have never heard of Jesus.
- Therefore, we could conclude that speaking in tongues is not necessarily a sign of the Holy Spirit coming upon someone. In some cases, it exists apart from God and the Bible.
- How are we going to know if the Church’s practice of speaking in tongues is of the Holy Spirit?
- In order to know this, we must look at the Word of God and see what it teaches about tongues.
- There is not one mention of speaking in tongues in the Old Testament.
- In the gospels, even though the Word clearly says that Joseph, Mary, John the Baptist and John’s parents were all under the power of the Holy Spirit, there is still no mention of them ever speaking in tongues.
- Speaking in tongues is mentioned only between Acts 2 and I Corinthians. In fact, there are only five times when tongues are mentioned. (**Mark 16; Acts 2; Acts 10; Acts 19; I Corinthians**)
- Outside of that time period, tongues is not mentioned at all.

- Consider this: Peter, James, John, and Jude were all church leaders who were present at Pentecost. Between them they wrote seven books of the Bible.
- They all mention the Holy Spirit and His work, but not one of them mentions speaking in tongues.
- Paul wrote thirteen books of the New Testament, but only mentions tongues in I Corinthians, and was not teaching tongues as a doctrine, but was correcting the Corinthians' misuse of the gift.
- In writing about it, Paul was not telling anyone to do it, but was only correcting the Corinthians' misunderstanding of it.

***“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover..” Mark 16:15-18***

- Here Jesus promised His disciples that those who would believe their message would be able to do many things.
- In Acts, we see those things being done just like Jesus said.
- But notice that not any of these signs and wonders are mentioned anywhere in the epistles after I Corinthians.
- Here in Mark 16, we hear Jesus tell His disciples that they would be able to heal the sick and they did (Acts 9:11-12).
- However, consider the following scriptures as we work our way through the New Testament:

***“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 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.” 2 Corinthians 12:8-9***

***“Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.” Galatians 4:12-14***

***“Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.” Philippians 2:25-30***

***“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities..” I Timothy 5:23***

***“Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” 2 Timothy 4:20***

- It happened just like Paul said it would in ***I Corinthians 13:8: “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”***
- Paul clearly stated that tongues would cease, and it did.
- Some groups of Christians continue to try and produce it today because they are deceived by the flesh.
- God promised the Jews in the Old Testament that the truth about the Messiah would come with signs. (***I Corinthians 1:22***)

- Therefore, when Jesus promised His disciples in Mark 16 that they would do miracles, it was for the purpose of proving to the Jews that their message was the one that God had promised in the Old Testament.
- In Acts 2 when the Jews heard the gospel and believed it for the very first time, they spoke in tongues.
- The next time we see people speaking in tongues is in Acts 10 when the first Gentiles were converted.
- The Jews always looked down on the Gentiles, so in order for God to make it clear to the Jews that He also accepted the Gentiles the same as the Jews, He gave them the gift of tongues at the beginning (**Acts 11:15**).
- The last time we read of anyone actually speaking in tongues is in **Acts 19:1-7**. Twelve men said they had heard of John the Baptist's teaching, being baptized with a baptism of repentance.
- They said that they did not know anything about Jesus or the Holy Spirit.
- Upon hearing and believing the gospel, they, too, spoke in tongues to show that they had definitely received salvation.
- Here is something to consider: in each of the three mentions of people speaking in tongues in Acts, it is always people who were just saved; we only read of them speaking in tongues at that time.
- Another thought to ponder is that in each of these situations, their tongue speaking was a known language. It was not noises and sounds that no one could understand.
- Lastly, in each instance, those who spoke in tongues were not seeking the gift, but it actually seemed to catch them by surprise.





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