

## INTRODUCTION TO FIRST CORINTHIANS

The success of Christianity in the Gentile world of the first century becomes a miracle, when you look closely at what happened. For a Gentile to turn to Christ, he had to repudiate the worship of idols *and all they represented!* He had to reject a large part of his native society (of which idols were an integral part); clean up his life (*compare 1 Pet. 4:3-5*); and *disbelieve* most of what he had been taught was true! The fact that so many Gentiles did come to Christ is a strong testimony to the power of the Good News. The message of the Cross is *offensive* to the Jews, and *nonsense* to the Gentiles - yet it is *the power of God to salvation!!!*

In a world where immorality was the *normal* way of life, Corinth stood out like a "sore thumb." So bad was its reputation, that "to Corinthianize" meant to live a wicked life. The temple of Venus-Aphrodite-Artemis had 1,000 prostitutes who were its "priestesses." Temples of Serapis and Isis spread Egyptian mysticism. The sea-god Poseidon was the "sponsor" of the famous Isthmian games (similar to the Olympics). It was in this city, the capital of Roman Greece, probably fourth in size in the empire, that Paul planted the church of Christ on his second tour of missions (*see Acts 18*).

Paul wrote First Corinthians from Ephesus during his three year work there (*1 Cor. 16:8; Acts 19:1-41; 20:31*), probably in the spring of 55 A.D. He had written them before this (*1 Cor 5:9; 2 Cor. 6:14 - 7:1*), and they had answered back before he wrote this letter. It is worth notice that Paul did not write the "faithful few" to split off and start a "faithful church." Instead he commands *unity*. Many serious problems existed in the church at Corinth, yet Paul writes to them as the "*church of God which is in Cor-*

*inth.*” Paul’s letter was to answer their questions, to scold them in some things, and to encourage them to “be *one* in Christ.” These questions and problems will be examined carefully in the notes on this letter.

There is a unity of thought in First Corinthians. The gospel which Paul preaches is fully able to meet the arrogant claims of Gentile “wisdom” and the evil desires of human nature. From the height of the Cross, the piercing ray of Truth shines into the depths of pagan sin. This is the *letter* of “the Cross in its social application.”

# THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

**1** From Paul, who by the will of God was called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Sosthenes—

**2** To the church of God which is in Corinth, to all who are called to be God's holy people, who belong to him in union with Christ Jesus, together with all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

**3** May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

## Blessing in Christ

**4** I always give thanks to my God for you, because of the grace he has given you through Christ Jesus. **5** For in union with Christ you have become rich in all things, including all speech and all knowledge. **6** The message about Christ

**1** Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ their Lord and ours: **2**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **3**

## Thanksgiving

I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. **4**  
**5**  
**6**

**1. Who by the will of God.** After Paul had left Corinth, some of the "Circumcision party" had come to the church and tried to destroy his authority as an apostle. They said he had not been made an apostle by God, as had the Twelve. He states his authority as an apostle in strong terms (see also *1 Cor.* 9:1; *2 Cor.* 12:12). **Sosthenes.** He may be the synagogue-leader of *Acts* 18:17, who is now a Christian. [Compare Crispus in *verse* 14.] He is not writing this letter for Paul, but only sends his greetings. However, as an ex-leader of the synagogue, his approval of what Paul writes would carry some weight with the Jewish Christians.

**2. To the church of God.** This is the most common name for Christ's church in the New Testament. [*Names of the church:* see note on *2 Thess.* 1:3-5.] **To all who are called.** The technical word is "sanctified." See note on *Rom.* 8:29-30. All Christians are "called" to be God's holy people. The least important Christian is as much one of God's holy people as is Peter or Paul. **Together with.** This letter is intended for the entire messianic community. **Who call upon the name.** *Eph.* 6:24. **Their Lord and ours.** In contrast to the "party spirit" of the Corinthian church, Paul stresses our ONENESS in the One Lord.

**3. Give you grace and peace.** See note on *Rom.* 1:7. This is Paul's "word of blessing."

**4. I always give thanks.** Before Paul scolds them, he first praises the good things in their lives. Along with their faults, he could see the rich blessings of Christ in their lives. A good example for all critics!

**5. For in union with Christ.** This points back to the "grace he has given you" of *verse* 4. The actual grace which they already have received in being joined to Christ. **Including.** The Corinthians were excessively proud of their speaking ability and their knowledge. The reference here includes those supernatural gifts from the Spirit (*1 Cor.* 12:8-10; *2 Cor.* 8:7; 11:6).

**6. Has become so firmly fixed in you.** The reality and truth of it were clearly shown to them. Compare *1 Thess.* 1:5-6 and note.

has become so firmly fixed in you, <sup>7</sup>that you have not failed to receive a single blessing, as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. <sup>8</sup>He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be found without fault in the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is to be trusted, the God who called you to have fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Therefore you do not lack <sup>7</sup> any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to <sup>8</sup> the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellow- <sup>9</sup> ship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

### Divisions in the Church

<sup>10</sup>I appeal to you, brothers, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ: agree, all of you, in what you say, so that there will be no divisions among you. Be completely united, with only one thought and one purpose. <sup>11</sup>For some people from Chloe's family have told me quite plainly, my brothers, that there are quarrels among you. <sup>12</sup>Let me put it this way: each one of you says something different. One says, "I am with Paul"; another, "I am with Apollos"; another, "I am with

### Divisions in the Church

I appeal to you, brothers, <sup>10</sup> in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My <sup>11</sup> brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is <sup>12</sup> this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

7. **That you have not failed to receive.** There are no "second-class Christians!" These had the *present truth* firmly fixed in them, and the Spirit had given gifts to the community of believers (compare *Eph. 4:7-13*). **As you wait.** They had received the *present good*, but expected far greater blessing when Christ Comes!

8. **Keep you firm to the end.** Compare *Phil. 1:6*; *1 Thess. 5:23*. Paul does not say they are *without fault* now, he hopes they will be *then*.

9. **God is to be trusted.** Paul's trust is in God! God has already acted in history, through Christ, to set men free. God will not withdraw his offer of salvation! Both God and Christ guarantee the offer of salvation!!! **To have fellowship with.** God calls everyone to come and be part of the church (messianic community) of which Christ is head. Compare *Gal. 3:26-29*.

10. **I appeal to you, brothers.** Paul could not in honesty give thanks for the condition of the Corinthian church! **Agree, all of you.** The Christians at Corinth were competing with one another. Compare *verse 12*. **Be completely united.** Christians are ONE in Christ! However, the Mysterious Wickedness (*2 Thess. 2:7*) was already at work. The church of the first century had every problem which the church of today has!!!

11. **From Chloe's family.** This is his authority for making such a serious charge against them. Paul had an eyewitness to all that was happening there. **That there are quarrels.** Differences of opinion which were forming parties within the church.

12. **One says.** Paul shows that there were four parties in this church. **Paul.** Some looked to Paul as their hero, since he had planted the church there. **Apollos.** He was an eloquent speaker (*Acts 18:24*), but Paul was not (*2 Cor. 11:6*). This made Apollos a hero to some. **Peter.** The "Circumcision party" made a hero out of Peter, as they tried to destroy the influence of Paul. **Christ.** See *2 Cor. 10:7*. *MacKnight* thinks these were Jews who had heard Christ preach during his earthly ministry, and who now made this fact a thing of *pride*. *Rice Haggard* writes: "When the followers of Christ are divided into different parties, and choose to be called by different names, a great deal of the preacher's time and studies is

Peter"; and another, "I am with Christ."<sup>13</sup> Christ has been divided into groups! Was it Paul who died on the cross for you? Were you baptized as Paul's disciples?

<sup>14</sup>I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius. <sup>15</sup>No one can say, then, that you were baptized as my disciples. <sup>16</sup>(Oh yes, I also baptized Stephanas and his family; but I can't remember whether I baptized anyone else.) <sup>17</sup>Christ did not send me to baptize. He sent me to tell the Good News, and to tell it without using the language of men's wisdom, to keep Christ's death on the cross from being robbed of its power.

### Christ the Power and the Wisdom of God

<sup>18</sup>For the message about Christ's death on the cross is nonsense to those who are being lost; but

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

### Christ the Wisdom and Power of God

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the

spent in inventing and vending arguments to draw persons over to their respective parties. Hence the holy scriptures must be bent and twisted in support of them: to which purpose those divine materials will never submit. For who does not know, that if the Scriptures are consistent, they never can support so many parties, and those too so widely different?"

13. **Christ has been divided into groups!** [The TEV follows Lachmann, Westcott and Hort, Meyer, Beet, et. al., and reads this as an *exclamation*.] The church is the body of Christ (*1 Cor. 12:12-13*). Can that body be cut up into pieces which are assigned to human leaders??? The Cross brings us into union with Christ alone. Compare *Rom. 6:3-4*.

14. **That I did not baptize.** Paul shows horror at the thought of any being baptized in his own name as his disciples! He *thinks God* that he personally did not baptize very many of them. "*And many other people in Corinth heard the message, believed, and were baptized*" (*Acts 18:8*). But it was the associates of Paul who did the actual work of baptizing. He did this so that no one could claim he baptized in his own name (*verse 15*). **Crispus.** Formerly the synagogue-leader at Corinth (*Acts 18:8*). **Gaius.** See *Rom. 16:23*.

15. **No one can say.** Paul wanted none of the glory for himself! The Good News was about God's act in Christ!!!

16. **(Oh yes.)** He may have been reminded by Stephanus himself. See *1 Cor. 16:15-17*. On the meaning of "family," see note on *Rom. 16:10*.

17. **Christ did not send me to baptize.** If traditional views of Paul's physical condition are true, he did not have the strength to do much baptizing (since it was immersion). The point here is that his helpers could take care of the work of baptizing, while he spent his time telling the Good News. [The apostles were sent to baptize, *Matt. 28:19*. But after baptizing the first few converts, they turned that matter over to them.] **Without using the language of men's wisdom.** This is in contrast with the *philosophical style* of the Greek philosophers. The Good News of Christ is not an *ideology* to be dissected and argued over. It is a message from God to be believed! Good News only needs to be told. God's power is in the **FACTS** of his historical act in Christ. See *verse 21*.

18. **For the message.** The gospel of a Crucified Savior. **Is nonsense.** Both Greek philosopher and Jewish teacher of the Law rejected the whole idea of a Savior who had been put to death on a cross. **It is God's**

for us who are being saved, it is God's power.

<sup>19</sup>The scripture says,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and set aside the understanding of the  
scholars."

<sup>20</sup>So then, where does that leave the wise men?  
Or the scholars? Or the skillful debaters of this  
world? God has shown that this world's wisdom  
is foolishness!

<sup>21</sup>For God, in his wisdom, made it impossible  
for men to know him by means of their own  
wisdom. Instead, God decided to save those who  
believe, by means of the "foolish" message we  
preach. <sup>22</sup>Jews want miracles for proof, and  
Greeks look for wisdom. <sup>23</sup>As for us, we pro-  
claim Christ on the cross, a message that is offen-  
sive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles;

power of God. For it is writ- 19  
ten:

"I will destroy the wisdom  
of the wise;  
the intelligence of the in-  
telligent I will frus-  
trate."

Where is the wise man? 20  
Where is the scholar?  
Where is the philosopher of  
this age? Has not God made  
foolish the wisdom of the  
world? For since in the wis- 21  
dom of God the world  
through its wisdom did not  
know him, God was pleased  
through the foolishness of  
what was preached to save  
those who believe. Jews 22  
demand miraculous signs and  
Greeks look for wisdom, but 23  
we preach Christ crucified: a  
stumbling block to Jews and

**power.** People divide themselves into two groups on the basis of Christ. Those who are *being lost* make fun of the whole idea. Those who are *being saved* see the Cross as "*God's act to set men free!*"

19. **I will destroy.** *Isaiah 29:14 Septuagint.* It is not wisdom and scholarship which saves, but God's power!

20. **So then?** Paul uses some of the language of *Isa. 19:11-12 LXX* to challenge those who are so proud of this world's wisdom. **Wise men.** Such as Pharaoh's advisers. **Scholars.** Such as the Jewish teachers of the Law. **Skillful debaters.** The Greek philosophers liked nothing better than to argue and dissect theories. The public enjoyed hearing this kind of thing also. **God has shown.** God's Truth is deliberately made contrary to what the world *thinks* is wisdom!

21. **For God.** The Greek philosophers were some of the most intelligent men ever to live on this earth. With no tools but their own minds, they explored the limits of our creation and developed some startling concepts, over 2,000 years ago, that form the basis of our modern science. Yet with all their genius, they did not search out the True God (compare *Acts 17:22-32*)! **By means of.** It is by the "foolish message" of a crucified Savior that God saves those who believe.

22. **Jews want miracles.** They wanted some spectacular miracle from heaven that only God could do, as proof (compare notes on *Matt. 16:1-4*). **Greeks look for wisdom.** Some complex and elaborate system of ideology [doctrine] (compare note on *Acts 17:18*).

23. **We proclaim Christ on the cross.** Compare *1 Cor. 15:1-4*. This was "God's ACT in Christ to set men free!" Note: not "Christ the crucified," nor "Christ crucified," but *Christ on the cross!* [The TEV correctly translates *ESTAUFOMENON* as a *predicative adjunct* emphasizing the verbal action.] Not a warrior Messiah, flashing signs of great power from the sky, but a Messiah dying helplessly in shame and disgrace. Compare *2 Cor. 4:10; 13:4*. The Jewish *Talmud* calls him *HATTALUY - the hanged* (compare *Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13*). **Offensive to the Jews.** Because they expected a warrior Messiah who would free them from Roman oppression. **Nonsense to the Gentiles.** The Eternal Logos dying helplessly on the cross was an impossible idea to them.

<sup>24</sup>but for those whom God has called, both Jews and Gentiles, this message is Christ, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For what seems to be God's foolishness is wiser than men's wisdom, and what seems to be God's weakness is stronger than men's strength.

<sup>26</sup>Now remember what you were, brothers, when God called you. Few of you were wise, or powerful, or of high social standing, from the human point of view. <sup>27</sup>God purposely chose what the world considers nonsense in order to put wise men to shame, and what the world considers weak in order to put powerful men to shame. <sup>28</sup>He chose what the world looks down on, and despises, and thinks is nothing, in order to destroy what the world thinks is important. <sup>29</sup>This means that no one can boast in God's presence. <sup>30</sup>But God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made Christ to be our wisdom; by him we are put right with

foolishness to Gentiles, but <sup>24</sup> to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of <sup>25</sup> God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

Brothers, think of what <sup>26</sup> you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the <sup>27</sup> foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He <sup>28</sup> chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no <sup>29</sup> man may boast before him. It is because of him that you <sup>30</sup> are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from

24. **But for those.** *MacKnight* sees the *called* as those who have heard and responded to the message of the Cross. **This message is Christ** = we proclaim Christ on the cross. **Who is** both the *miracle* the Jews want and the *wisdom* the Greeks look for. "*The power of God,*" and "*the wisdom of God*" were synonyms of the *Logos* in the Alexandrian-Jewish philosophy (in which Apollos was an expert). There is a triumphant note to Paul's words in the balance of this chapter! The believing Jew found in the cross God's greatest miracle! The believing Greek found in the cross the deepest wisdom of God!

25. **For what seems to be.** Things are not always what they seem to be! If the *foolishness* and *weakness* are God's, these will be *wiser* and *stronger* than anything man has!

26. **Now remember what you were.** Most Christians were from the common people. **Few of you.** Note he says "few," which means that some were from each class he names. Compare *John 12:42*. Paul's reasoning here: (1) brings down the conceit of his readers (*1 Cor. 6:9-11; 4:7-13*); (2) reveals the true mission of the gospel.

27. **God purposely chose.** The Greek philosophers were saying that the gospel was *nonsense* and *weakness*. Paul imitates their language and turns it against them! *The pride* of the cultured and ruling classes of paganism was to be put to shame by the powers and blessings which Christianity gave to *its social outcasts*.

28. **He chose.** Compare *1 John 2:15-17*. Through the "weakness" of the gospel, the religions, governments, and even civilizations of the world were to be overturned! Not through armed violence, but by changing people (*Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17*).

29. **That no one can boast.** Compare *Rom. 3:27-28; Eph. 2:8-10*. "The source of your salvation is God's act in Christ, not your own wisdom and strength."

30. **But God has brought you.** *MacKnight* sees this emphasizing God's side of salvation, in which he alone is said to bring us into union with Christ. See notes on *Rom. 8:29-30*. **To be our wisdom.** Paul's whole line of reasoning is based on this fact. We see God change human wisdom into foolishness (*verses*

God, we become God's holy people, and are set free. <sup>31</sup>So then, as the scripture says, "Whoever wants to boast must boast of what the Lord has done."

### The Message about Christ on the Cross

**2** When I came to you, my brothers, to preach God's secret truth to you, I did not use long words and great learning. <sup>2</sup>For I made up my mind to forget everything while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and especially his death on the cross. <sup>3</sup>So when I came to you I was weak and trembled all over with fear, <sup>4</sup>and my teaching and message were not delivered with skillful words of human wisdom, but with convincing

God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

**2** When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's

20-25). he did this for our salvation (*1 Cor. 2:7*) - to prove and demonstrate his own wisdom (*verse 24*), and give it to us [all Christians] in Christ. This wisdom is a life-giving moral force direct from God himself (*James 3:17-18*). *Wisdom* stands by itself; the other three things define it. **Put right** = Counted as righteous through Christ. **We become** = a new being (*2 Cor. 5:17*). **Are set free** = we will be raised from death (*Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; 4:30*). Christ is all of these to us!!!

31. **As the scripture says.** [*Jer. 9:23*.] By "the Lord," we can only understand Christ. Whoever wants to boast cannot boast in the messengers who proclaimed the Good News to them, but in the Lord Jesus Christ who has brought them into his church!!!

1. **When I came to you.** In *chapter 1*, Paul showed that God purposely chose what the world considers nonsense and weak, to put to shame and to destroy what the world thinks is important. To the Corinthian Christians he says: (1) the gospel is no philosophy; (2) you are no philosophers. He returns to his starting point: that Christ sent him to tell the Good News - in contrast to men's wisdom (*1 Cor. 1:17*). [MUSTERION = something secret which has now been made known.] Paul explains this in *verses 7-10*. **Long words and great learning.** He did not use these on the Areopagus either (see *Acts 17:22-31*). Paul's style of preaching was determined by the message. His emphasis was on the fact of God's act in Christ, not on eloquence and men's wisdom.

2. **Except Jesus Christ.** If Paul were to proclaim a different message, he would use a different style. But he was simply telling the Good News of Christ. Therefore, he used a simple, direct style, because he did not want anything to detract from the power of "Christ on the cross!"

3. **So when I came to you.** *Verses 1-2* tell how Paul *did not come*. *Verses 3-5* tell how he *did come*. **Weak and trembled.** The Greeks evaluated their philosophers by the power and style of their speaking. Paul deliberately used a style that was "weak and trembled all over with fear." [Some think his physical condition had something to do with this.] *Verse 5* shows why he did this.

4. **Were not delivered.** He did not use the skillful words that brainwash a person without really teaching him anything. **But with convincing proof.** The Truth was made known by the Spirit and proved by supernatural powers. Compare *1 Thess 1:5* and note.



proof of the power of God's Spirit. <sup>5</sup>Your faith, then, does not rest on man's wisdom, but on God's power.

### God's Wisdom

<sup>6</sup>Yet I do speak wisdom to those who are spiritually mature. But it is not the wisdom that belongs to this world, or to the powers that rule this world—powers that are losing their power. <sup>7</sup>The wisdom I speak is God's secret wisdom, hidden from men, which God had already chosen for our glory even before the world was made. <sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this world knew this wisdom. If they had known it, they would not have nailed the Lord of glory to the cross. <sup>9</sup>However, as the scripture says,

"What no man ever saw or heard,

power, so that your faith <sup>5</sup> might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

### Wisdom from the Spirit

We do, however, speak <sup>6</sup> a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, <sup>7</sup> we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the <sup>8</sup> rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it <sup>9</sup> is written:

"No eye has seen,  
no ear has heard,  
no mind has conceived  
what God has prepared  
for those who love him"

5. **Your faith, then.** This whole paragraph grows out of "When I came" in *verse 1*. He points back to his original work at Corinth. Paul was God's spokesman; therefore he acted so that God alone would receive the glory (see note on *1 Cor. 1:31*). If he had persuaded the Corinthians with skillful words and blended Christianity with Greek philosophy, his work would have been destroyed with the wisdom of this world (see *1 Cor. 1:19; 3:18-20*).

6. **Yet I do speak wisdom.** So far Paul has said that his message is "nonsense," *out of step* with the wisdom of this world. Yet at the same time, he makes it plain that his message (the gospel) is in the truest sense: "God's wisdom!" But, he points out, *only to those qualified to understand it!* **Spiritually mature.** *Evans* writes: "The curtain must be lifted with a caution measured by the spiritual intelligence of the spectators." See *verse 14*. **Powers that rule this world.** *Locke* understands these to be the Jewish rulers and their distorted form of Judaism (*as Gal. 1:14*). Probably all human rulers can be included in this. [Some think evil spirits are meant, since they are the source of idolatry, false religions, etc. (*Eph. 6:12*), but *verse 8* speaks of the rulers of this world who crucified Jesus.] **That are losing their power.** Wise in their own ways, but not in God's, they must fall and lose their power.

7. **God's secret wisdom.** The world does not understand the value of God's wisdom in "Christ on the cross," because they are completely unqualified to do so. The Corinthian Christians only partly understood, because they were "spiritual babies" (*1 Cor. 3:1-3*). **Hidden from men.** *MacKnight* sees in this Paul showing that none but the apostles had the authority to reveal the Good News in an infallible manner; and that the false teachers were impostors who had no truth to reveal. **Which God had already chosen.** This shows that "Christ on the cross" was God's Plan even before Creation!

8. **None of the rulers.** This points to the Jewish and Roman rulers who nailed Christ to the cross. They were completely ignorant of God's wisdom and plan. The stupidity of the philosophers in rejecting "Christ on the cross" was only surpassed by the stupidity of the politicians who nailed him there.

9. **As the scripture says.** Paul paraphrases *Isa. 64:4* Septuagint. This describes "Christ on the cross," that is, *God's secret wisdom*. No one ever expected God to act in history by sending the Eternal Logos in human form and having him die on the cross as the means of salvation! The TOTAL glory of God's act in Christ is still beyond human understanding!!!

what no man ever thought could happen, is the very thing God prepared for those who love him."

<sup>10</sup>But it was to us that God made known his secret, by means of his Spirit. The Spirit searches everything, even the hidden depths of God's purposes. <sup>11</sup>As for a man, it is his own spirit within him that knows all about him; in the same way, only God's Spirit knows all about God. <sup>12</sup>We have not received this world's spirit; we have received the Spirit sent by God, so that we may know all that God has given us.

<sup>13</sup>So then, we do not speak in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, as we explain spiritual truths to those who have the Spirit. <sup>14</sup>But the man who does not have the Spirit cannot receive the gifts that come from God's Spirit. He really does not understand them; they are nonsense to him, because their value can be judged only on a spiritual

—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are

10. **But it was to us.** That is, *to we who love him*. Those things which human talents could not discover, God made known by means of his Spirit (compare *John 14:26*). **The Spirit searches everything.** That is, the Spirit knows the deep, unrevealed things of God, and he made them known to the apostles, who in turn reveal them to us through their writings.

11. **It is his own spirit.** He uses this as an illustration: your own spirit knows things about you which no one else can know. **In the same way.** Nothing of God's Plan and secret knowledge is unknown to God's Spirit. And, only God's Spirit can make these things known to us.

12. **We have not received this world's spirit.** Paul contrasts *this world's spirit* (the demonic inspiration of the pagan prophets, such as *Acts 16:16*), with the Spirit sent by God. **So that we may know all.** Compare *Eph. 1:17-18*. **That God has given us.** This points directly to the historic gifts which God has already given to men in Christ.

13. **So then.** The apostles *passed on to mankind* all the Spirit made known to them. Paul has no esoteric secrets to be whispered only to a select circle. If only the spiritually mature understand, it is not because he limits the number who hear. **But in words taught by the Spirit.** *Evans* writes: "with spiritual phrase matching spiritual truth." **As we explain spiritual truths.** [The TEV follows Bengel, Ruckert, Hofmann, Stanley, Alford, Schmiedel, et. al., in translating this phrase as it does.] This best ties in with *verse 14*.

14. **But the man.** [PSUCHIKOS = unspiritual, non-spiritual, not possessing the Spirit of God.] Paul is saying that human nature at its very best, such as seen in the Greek philosophers, the highest aims and thoughts of natural life, still has no ability to evaluate, understand, and receive the gifts (*verse 10*) that come from God's Spirit. **Only on a spiritual basis.** The spirit must be stirred from its paralyzed condition, and born of water and the Spirit (*John 3:5 and note*), before we can evaluate God's wisdom as the Spirit makes it known to us. We thank God that the "A B C's of the gospel," which all can understand, are enough to produce faith in us and prepare us for spiritual knowledge! [*Faith*: see *James 2:19* and note.]

basis. <sup>15</sup>The man who has the Spirit is able to judge the value of everything, but no one is able to judge him. <sup>16</sup>As the scripture says,

"Who knows the mind of the Lord?

Who is able to give him advice?"

We, however, have the mind of Christ.

### Servants of God

**3** As a matter of fact, brothers, I could not talk to you as I talk to men who have the Spirit; I had to talk to you as men of this world, as children in the Christian faith. <sup>2</sup>I had to feed you milk, not solid food, because you were not ready for it. And even now you are not ready for it, <sup>3</sup>because you still live as men of this world. When there is jealousy among you, and you quarrel with one another, doesn't this prove that you are men of this world, living by this world's standards? "When one of you says, "I am with Paul," and another, "I am with Apollos"—aren't you acting like worldly men?"

spiritually discerned. The <sup>15</sup> spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

"For who has known the <sup>16</sup> mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?"

But we have the mind of Christ.

### On Divisions in the Church

**3** Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you <sup>2</sup> milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For <sup>3</sup> since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men? <sup>4</sup>

**15. The man who has the Spirit.** The Spirit is God's gift to each Christian (see notes on Acts 2:39; 5:32). The man who has the Spirit is not blinded and biased by his human nature; therefore he has the ability to clearly see the true value of everything. **But no one is able to judge him.** The spiritual man stands on a height from which he scans the world, but only God is higher than he! [This is an ideal, since it implies a perfect development of maturity (compare 1 Cor. 3:1).]

**16. As the scripture says.** Paul paraphrases Isa. 40:13 Septuagint. He uses this to illustrate his statement in verse 14-15. The greatest of the Greek philosophers, who were the most intelligent of "unspiritual man," could not give advice to God. [MacKnight understands this to mean that they had no ability to teach anything to a spiritual man.] **Have the mind of Christ.** Christ lives and thinks in the ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΟΣ (those who have the Spirit)! See 1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Cor. 13:3-5; John 15:1-8.

**1. I could not talk to you.** Compare 1 Cor. 2:6, 14. MacKnight says: "From what is said in this chapter it appears, that the false teacher had represented St. Paul either as ignorant or as unfaithful, because he had not fully instructed the Corinthians before his departure. The same teacher had also boasted concerning himself, that he had given them complete instructions." **As Children.** This was a severe blow to the pride of the Corinthians. They thought they "knew it all" already, but he tells them they were "children." After one is put right with God, he must co-operate with the Spirit (see 1 Thess. 5:19; Gal. 5:13-18; and see notes on "law" at the end of Rom. 3).

**2. I had to feed you milk.** "I had to give you the elementary teachings of Christ, not the more difficult doctrines we teach to the spiritually mature." **And even now.** They still are spiritually immature. The proof of this is the lives they live.

**3. Because you still live.** Their lives are no different from the unconverted. **Doesn't this prove?** They are jealous and quarrel like men of the world. Compare Gal. 5:19-21.

**4. When one of you says.** The competition between them that grew out of their "party spirit" was proof of their worldly motives.

<sup>5</sup>After all, who is Apollos? And who is Paul? We are simply God's servants, by whom you were led to believe. Each one of us does the work the Lord gave him to do: <sup>6</sup>I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plant, but it was God who made the plant grow. <sup>7</sup>The one who plants and the one who waters really do not matter. It is God who matters, because he makes the plant grow. <sup>8</sup>There is no difference between the man who plants and the man who waters; God will reward each one according to the work he has done. <sup>9</sup>For we are partners working together for God, and you are God's field.

You are also God's building. <sup>10</sup>Using the gift that God gave me, I did the work of an expert builder and laid the foundation, and another man is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds. <sup>11</sup>For God has already placed Jesus Christ as the one and only founda-

What, after all, is Apollos? 5  
And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos 6  
watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who 7  
makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded 8  
according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow 9  
workers; you are God's field, God's building.

By the grace God has 10  
given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and others are building on it. But each one should be 11  
careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus

5. **After all?** Neither Paul nor Apollos were "the Lord" in matters of religion. They were simply God's servants, working together to proclaim the Good News. The "party spirit" of the Corinthians contrasts sharply with the *unity* of Paul and Apollos. [*MacKnight* thinks the false teacher was taught and baptized by Peter, whom he honored instead of Paul (see note on *1 Cor. 1:12*); and that Paul here uses "Apollos" as a symbol of the false teacher.]

6. **I planted the seed.** "I planted you in God's field, Apollos (and others) watered you, by teaching you, but it was God who made you grow." [This shows there are two basic kinds of preachers: *planting* preachers and *watering* preachers.]

7. **Really do not matter.** The power and message come from God. The ones who proclaim it are only "common clay pots" (*2 Cor. 4:7*). **It is God who matters.** He is the only important one, because he acted in history to make it all possible, and he makes the plant grow.

8. **There is no difference.** That is, in rank or importance. The work of each is equally important, and both are God's servants. Neither one deserves any special honor. **God will reward each one.** Paul contrasts individual and community relationships. He forbids the man to either defy the community or to merge himself into it (and lose his individuality). Compare *1 Cor. 12:5-11; 15:10-11; Gal. 6:2-5; Rom. 14:7-10. According to the work. We are saved to do good works. Compare *Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-28.**

9. **For we are partners.** They are not *rivals*, as the Corinthians seemed to think. They are God's workers, carrying out God's mission. **God's field.** Compare *Matt. 13:3-30. God's building. God's temple is built of living stones (*1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:19-22*).*

10. **That God gave me.** God himself made Paul an apostle. **I did the work.** As an apostle, Paul laid *the foundation* everywhere he went. He did this by proclaiming the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free. **Another man.** Apollos and the other teachers *built on the foundation* which Paul laid. **Must be careful.** The false teacher was also building on *the foundation*.

11. **For God has already placed Jesus Christ.** By God's decree, Jesus Christ is *the foundation*, the **CORNERSTONE** (*Eph. 2:20*) upon which the whole spiritual temple is constructed.

tion, and no other foundation can be laid. <sup>12</sup>Some will use gold, or silver, or precious stones in building on the foundation; others will use wood, or grass, or straw. <sup>13</sup>And the quality of each man's work will be seen when the Day of Christ exposes it. For that Day's fire will reveal every man's work; the fire will test it and show its real quality. <sup>14</sup>If what a man built on the foundation survives the fire, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup>But if any man's work is burnt up, then he will lose it; but he himself will be saved, as if he had escaped through the fire.

<sup>16</sup>Surely you know that you are God's temple, and that God's Spirit lives in you! <sup>17</sup>So if anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you yourselves are his temple.

Christ. If any man builds on <sup>12</sup> this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will <sup>13</sup> be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, <sup>14</sup> he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer <sup>15</sup> loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Don't you know that you <sup>16</sup> yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys <sup>17</sup> God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

12. **Some will use.** Christ's church is not built of doctrines, but people. *MacKnight* says the building materials represent disciples of Christ. *Gold, silver, precious stones* symbolize sincere believers. *Wood, grass, straw* symbolize those who have been taught false things.

13. **And the quality.** The real proof of each man's work will be clearly demonstrated by the fire of persecution. **The Day of Christ.** *MacKnight* sees this as the severe persecution which would shortly come. Compare *Luke 21:22*. **For that Day's fire.** *MacKnight* says: "That the fire of which the apostle speaks is the fire of persecution, I think evident from *1 Pet. 4:12* . . ." The false teacher had built into the church some who were still wicked, such as the man guilty of incest, others who said the dead would not be raised, etc. Such would *go back to the world* when tested by persecution (unless they repented, as the man guilty of incest did).

14. **Survives the fire.** [Some, misunderstanding and thinking the Day of Christ to mean the Judgment, have taught that both the righteous and wicked will be burned in the fires of hell (purgatory); the wicked burnt up, and the righteous made pure.] If the disciples he has taught are faithful when persecuted, he will receive the reward mentioned in *Dan. 12:3*. See also notes on *Matt. 20:13-15*.

15. **Is burnt up.** If the disciples he has taught are unfaithful when persecuted, he will lose his reward (see *verse 14*). **But he himself will be saved.** This seems to imply the false teacher was sincere in his efforts, even though he was not properly preparing the disciples which he taught. **Escaped through the fire.** As a man who runs out of a burning house, losing everything but his own life.

16. **You are God's temple.** You = the church of God in Corinth. **God's Spirit lives in you.** See *Eph. 2:22*.

17. **So if anyone destroys.** Here Paul speaks of those who purposely distort the truth of God (*Gal. 1:6-9*), but also of those who destroy the messianic community by their "party spirit" (see *verses 3-4*). Compare *1 Tim. 6:3-5*.

<sup>18</sup>No one should fool himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is a wise man by this world's standards, he should become a fool, in order to be really wise. <sup>19</sup>For what this world considers to be wisdom is nonsense in God's sight. As the scripture says, "God traps the wise men in their cleverness"; <sup>20</sup>and another scripture says, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are worthless." <sup>21</sup>No one, then, should boast about what men can do. Actually everything belongs to you: <sup>22</sup>Paul, Apollos, and Peter; this world, life, and death, the present and the future; all of these are yours, <sup>23</sup>and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Do not deceive yourselves. 18  
If any one of you thinks he is  
wise by the standards of this  
age, he should become a  
"fool" so that he may be-  
come wise. For the wisdom 19  
of this world is foolishness in  
God's sight. As it is written:  
"He catches the wise in their  
craftiness"; and again, 20  
"The Lord knows that the  
thoughts of the wise are  
futile." So then no more 21  
boasting about men! All  
things are yours, whether 22  
Paul or Apollos or Cephas or  
the world or life or death or  
the present or the future—  
all are yours, and you are of 23  
Christ and Christ is of God.

### Apostles of Christ

**4** You should look on us as Christ's servants who have been put in charge of God's secret

### Apostles of Christ

**4** So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those en-

**18. No one should fool himself.** The false teacher at Corinth thought himself to be *wise* because he was able to get people to come to Christ through not telling them all the teachings of Christ, and misrepresenting some things. But as poor as this false teacher's work might be, he *did* build on *the foundation* (verses 14-15). But what he was doing was especially dangerous to him personally, because those who follow men's wisdom may turn away from God. Read the warning in *Heb. 6:4-6*. **He should become a fool.** By preaching "*Christ on the cross*" and all the other things that make up the Good News. See note on *1 Cor. 1:23*.

**19. For what this world.** See *1 Cor. 1:20* and note. **As the scripture says.** Paul paraphrases *Job 5:13* Septuagint. God lets men outsmart themselves! Compare *1 Cor. 2:6*.

**20. And another scripture says.** Paul paraphrases *Psalms 94:11* Septuagint. "Man schemes, and God laughs."

**21. About what men can do.** Since Paul, Apollos, and Peter are all God's servants, no one should boast about being followers of one specific teacher. But especially, they had no reason to boast about the false teacher who brought "wicked men" into the church (*verse 18* and note). **Actually everything belongs to you.** From here through *verse 23*, Paul shows the *reason* why no one should boast about what men can do. By God's decree, all things good and bad, present and future, belong to his people in the sense of helping them grow in this life, and making them happy in the next!

**22. Paul, Apollos, and Peter.** See *verse 5*. **This world is the servant of God's people** (*1 Cor. 6:12*). **Life and death.** Our time on earth, and even death, becomes our servant in Christ. **The present and the future** stretches it out over all possible times. **All of these.** Paul jubilantly repeats the thought that the totality of Creation is our blessing in Christ!!! See *Rom. 8:28*.

**23. And you belong to Christ.** This is the climax! In Christ they have union with God!!! How foolish, then, the jealousy and quarrels of rival parties. This also is a statement of irony. "Lords of Creation, you are His slaves. All Creation does belong to you, but you are slaves of the true owner, the God of heaven." No boasting here, because we are caretakers of God's riches!

**1. As Christ's servants.** Paul goes back to the question of how much honor should be given to Christian teachers. Because of the almost divine honors which Greeks gave to the philosophers who were their leaders, Paul must tell them strongly that the apostles are only servants, not rulers. "Just

truths. <sup>2</sup>The one thing required of the man in charge is that he be faithful to his master. <sup>3</sup>Now, I am not at all concerned about being judged by you, or by any human standard; I don't even pass judgment on myself. <sup>4</sup>My conscience is clear, but that does not prove that I am really innocent. The Lord is the one who passes judgment on me. <sup>5</sup>So you should not pass judgment on anyone before the right time comes. Final judgment must wait until the Lord comes; he will bring to light the dark secrets and expose the hidden purposes of men's hearts. And then every man will receive from God the praise he deserves.

<sup>6</sup>For your sake, brothers, I have applied all this to Apollos and me. I have used us as an example, so that you may learn what the saying means, "Observe the proper rules." None of you

trusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore, judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At the time each will receive his praise from God.

Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written."

clerks watching the store while the boss is away." But when he tells them this, he does not want them to misunderstand and think that Christ had not given them authority. **Who have been put in charge.** To understand this properly, you must know that in the ancient world, a man of wealth would have a *family* which included his servants and /or slaves as well as his children, and that he would appoint one servant to be in charge of and be responsible for the business affairs of the *family*. The servant would be given his instructions, which he would then carry out. Using this symbolism, Paul and the other apostles are *put in charge* (by Christ) of God's secret truths (the Good News, see *1 Cor. 2:7-10*), to give these to the members of the *family*.

2. **Is that he be faithful.** Paul was faithful in giving out God's secret truths, and he did this on the basis of their ability to understand (*1 Cor. 3:1; Heb. 5:11-14*). God's servant must be faithful (*James 3:1*). The false teacher accused Paul of being unfaithful, because after teaching the first principles, he did not immediately give them all the deep truths of God.

3. **About being judged by you.** It is God who will decide who has been faithful, not the Corinthians or any human being. **On myself.** That is, he himself has no right to set up a standard by which to pass judgment on himself. Only God has that right! [However, Paul does intend us to measure ourselves by God's standard (*1 Cor. 11:31; 2 Cor. 13:5*).]

4. **My conscience is clear.** He has no reason to feel unfaithful in what he has done at Corinth. But that **does not prove.** His self-approval is not proof. **The Lord.** Only He has the right to judge! See *Rom. 14:4*.

5. **So you.** This statement is not to be applied in general to everything, since neither church nor state could maintain order and peace, if rulers did not pass judgment on the disobedient. Two things stand out here: (1) The Corinthians were not to pass judgment on Paul's work as an apostle, until Jesus comes and judges him. (2) We have no right to pass judgment on the eternal destiny of anyone (*Rom. 14:10*), although it is our obligation to take Jesus to our fellow man (*Matt. 28:19-20*). **And then every man.** "The Lord of all will do right!" The motives of each man's life will be clearly seen!

6. **For your sake, brothers.** To teach the lesson of humility, and to show how much honor ought to be given to a teacher, Paul used himself and Apollos as examples (see note on *1 Cor. 3:5*). **Observe the proper rules** = Do not go beyond what is written. Paul gives the proper rules in *1 Cor. 3:5-9; 4:1*. "I

should be proud of one man and despise the other. <sup>7</sup>Who made you superior to the others? Didn't God give you everything you have? Well, then, how can you brag, as if what you have were not a gift?

<sup>8</sup>Already you have everything you need! Already you are rich! you have become kings, even though we are not! Well, I wish you really were kings, so that we could be kings together with you. <sup>9</sup>For it seems to me that God has given us apostles the very last place, like men condemned to die in public, as a spectacle for the whole world of angels and of men. <sup>10</sup>For Christ's sake we are fools; but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! We are despised, but you are honored! <sup>11</sup>To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty; we are clothed in rags; we are beaten; we wander from place to place;

Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? 7

Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings—and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you! For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored! To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, 8 9 10 11

have used Apollos and myself as examples, in my warning you against division, (I do not mention the names of those causing this division), that in our example you might learn to avoid the rivalry and jealousy of forming parties." **None of you.** He warns them against being proud of one teacher and trying to destroy another.

7. **Who made you superior to the others?** *MacKnight* understands Paul to be speaking to the false teacher. "What gift do you have that wasn't given to you by God through we apostles? How, then, can you brag that you are superior to us?"

8. **Already you have everything!** Paul speaks in *irony!* "Your followers have made you rich with their gifts to you. You have ruled as a *king*, and despise us. I would be happy if you were real kings and priests with Christ." **So that we could be kings together.** So that together with the apostles, they could bring honor to Christ, and receive from Christ the honor which He gives to his servants.

9. **The very last place.** Paul's experiences at Ephesus (*1 Cor. 15:32*) probably make him think of this. See also *2 Cor. 2:14*. Paul is showing the Corinthians the contrast between the false teacher and the apostles. The false teacher had riches (*verse 8*), while the true apostles suffered (*John 16:33*). Gladiators fought and died in the hot sun, while the crowds sat in their comfortable seats and watched. Condemned men fought naked, and any who escaped only faced death another day. **As a spectacle.** Compare *Eph. 3:10-11; Luke 15:10; Psalm 90:8; Heb. 12:1*. Both men and angels were amazed to see how the apostles suffered.

10. **For Christ's sake.** What the apostles did, can only be explained by their *LOVE* for Christ! Paul speaks in *irony*, as he repeats what his enemies at Corinth were saying about him. In the same spirit of *irony*, he *honors* them. If the apostles are *fools*, the Corinthians are *wise*; if the apostles are *weak*, and *despised*, the Corinthians are *strong* and *honored*.

11. **To this very hour.** Compare what Paul says in these verses with *Heb. 11:32-40*. He tells more about his suffering in *2 Cor. 6:3-10*.



<sup>12</sup>we work hard to support ourselves. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; <sup>13</sup>when we are insulted, we answer back with kind words. We are no more than this world's garbage; we are the scum of the earth to this very hour!

<sup>14</sup>I write this to you, not because I want to make you feel ashamed; I do it to instruct you as my own dear children. <sup>15</sup>For even if you have ten thousand guardians in your life in Christ, you have only one father. For in your life in Christ Jesus I have become your father, by bringing the Good News to you. <sup>16</sup>I beg you, then, follow my example. <sup>17</sup>For this purpose I am sending Timothy to you. He is my own dear and faithful son in the Lord. He will remind you of the principles which I follow in the new life in Christ Jesus, and which I teach in all the churches everywhere.

<sup>18</sup>Some of you have become proud, thinking

we are homeless. We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.

I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not

12. **We work hard.** See note on *1 Cor. 9:6*.

13. **When we are insulted.** Paul always returned good for bad, as Jesus said to do (*Matt. 5:44*; compare *Rom. 12:17-21*). **Garbage . . . scum.** Paul is still using the symbolism of "men condemned to die in public" (*verse 9*). It was the custom in Athens to offer a human sacrifice in times of crisis. Certain "worthless persons" were seized and thrown into the sea, in the belief that this would remove the guilt which caused the "gods" to curse the nation. Paul is saying that the world sees the apostles as men only fit to be sacrificed to the anger of the "gods."

14. **I write this to you.** Paul says he has not made this contrast between himself and the false teacher just to make them ashamed. Rather, he writes as a father to his own dear children, to instruct them in the truth.

15. **You have only one father.** PAIDAGOGOS = guardian, one who took care of a child from the time it was a baby, feeding, clothing, and teaching it, and taking it to and from school when it is that age. Paul is gently scolding them (compare *Gal. 3:25*). **I have become your father.** The teachers of the Law said: "Whoever teaches the Law to the son of his friend, it is as if he has become his father."

16. **Follow my example.** Children imitate their parents. They should imitate their spiritual father, by humility and unselfishness.

17. **For this purpose.** Timothy was Paul's "son in the Lord" (*Acts 16:1-3*). Probably he was already on the way to Corinth (*1 Cor. 16:10*), but this letter would arrive first. **Of the principles which I follow.** Paul's new life in Christ Jesus was based upon the things taught in the Good News. Paul changed neither his teachings nor his life to please wicked men. He taught the same gospel everywhere he went!!!

18. **Some of you.** There were some at Corinth (in the church) who were hostile to Paul. He warns them not to see any weakness in the fact that he sends Timothy to them.

that I would not be coming to visit you. <sup>19</sup>If the Lord is willing, however, I will come to you soon, and then I will find out for myself what these proud ones can do, and not just what they can say. <sup>20</sup>For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of words, but of power. <sup>21</sup>Which do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or with a heart of love and gentleness?

### Immorality in the Church

**5** Now it is actually being said that there is sexual immorality among you so terrible that not even the heathen would be guilty of it. I am told that a man is living with his stepmother! <sup>2</sup>How, then, can you be proud? On the contrary, you should be filled with sadness, and the man who has done such a thing should be put out of your group. <sup>3</sup>As for me, even though I am far away from you in body, still I am there with you in spirit; and in the name of our Lord Jesus I have already passed judgment on the man who has done this terrible thing. As though I were

coming to you. But I will <sup>19</sup> come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of <sup>20</sup> God is not a matter of talk but of power. What do you <sup>21</sup> prefer? Shall I come to you with punishment, or in love and with a gentle spirit?

### Expel the Immoral Brother!

**5** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And <sup>2</sup> you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though <sup>3</sup> I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present.

19. **If the Lord is willing.** We all should say this! Compare *James 4:13-17*. I will come to you soon. Compare *1 Cor. 16:7-8*. Paul intends to come in person and to punish those who will not turn away from their sin [repent].

20. **For the Kingdom of God.** Note the identity of church and Kingdom (compare *Matt. 16:18*). **But of power.** As an apostle, Paul had the miraculous gifts from the Spirit, which included the power to punish.

21. **Which do you prefer?** He is speaking to the false teacher and the group which follows him. The choice is theirs!!!

1. **That there is sexual immorality.** Immorality [fornication] was the *normal* way of life among the Gentiles. The temple of Venus at Corinth had 1,000 prostitutes who served as "priestesses" in worship which we would describe as a sex-orgy. Immorality was always a serious problem in the church, because of the need to live a holy life. See notes on *Rev. 2:6,20*. **That not even the heathen.** Even the Gentiles who permitted almost anything, would not allow this to happen! *MacKnight* thinks this man was living with his stepmother in the incestuous relationship during the lifetime of his father.

2. **How then, can you be proud?** This implies the false teacher influenced them to permit this to continue. See note on *1 Cor. 3:13*; and compare *Rom. 6:1-2*. **You should be filled with sadness.** Compare *2 Cor. 7:10*. **Put out of your group.** To remove this source of *bad influence* from the group. The woman is not mentioned. She likely was not a believer, therefore not subject to their discipline.

3. **Even though I am far away.** Distance separated them, yet he was there with them in *spirit* through his interest in them and his knowledge of their actions. **I have already passed judgment.** As an apostle, he could do this. The man, however, had already *judged* himself by his sin.

there with you. <sup>4</sup>As you meet together, and I meet with you in my spirit, by the power of our Lord Jesus present with us, <sup>5</sup>you are to hand this man over to Satan for his body to be destroyed, so that his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord.

<sup>6</sup>It is not right for you to be proud! You know the saying, "A little bit of yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise." <sup>7</sup>You must take out this old yeast of sin so that you will be entirely pure. Then you will be like a new batch of dough without any yeast, as indeed I know you actually are. For our Passover feast is ready, now that Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>Let us celebrate our feast, then, not with bread having the old yeast, the yeast of sin and wickedness, but with the bread that has no yeast, the bread of purity and truth.

<sup>9</sup>In the letter that I wrote you I told you not to

When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that his sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. 4  
5

Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. 6  
7  
8

I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 9

4. **As you meet together.** This was to be a solemn act of the whole community of believers. Compare *Matt. 18:15-17*. **And I meet with you.** Paul, by his authority, had commanded what they were about to do. **Of our Lord Jesus.** Christ, as the head of the church, is the source of authority.

5. **Over to Satan.** This means to expell him from the messianic community. **For his body to be destroyed.** The shame of being put out of the church would cause the man to repent. His pride would be destroyed. *MacKnight* thinks the language implies a painful physical disease was part of the judgment which Paul placed on the man. *Johnson* argues that when Paul tells them to take the man back into the church (*2 Cor. 2:7*), nothing is said about any physical disease. But *1 Cor. 4:21*; *2 Cor. 13:1,2,10* are good reasons to adopt *MacKnight's* thinking. **So that his spirit.** This is the reason for discipline in the church. Compare *Jude 22-23*; *2 Cor. 2:5-11*.

6. **It is not right.** They were proud of their (false) teacher, and though he understood the gospel better than Paul; and were (perhaps) proud of the way this man defended the incestuous relationship. **You know the saying.** This man's example would poison the whole community of believers.

7. **You must take out.** The church as a group must act to remove this source of "bad example." **A new batch of dough.** Paul uses the "unleavened bread" of Passover as a symbol of *purity*. During Passover week, Jews got rid of every trace of yeast from their houses, so that the Passover bread would be completely without leaven. **Our Passover lamb.** The Jewish day began at 6 P.M. (see note on *Acts 20:7*). In Jewish practice, all the yeast would have been carefully removed before the Passover lamb was killed. Paul is saying: "Our Passover lamb is already killed, but you have not removed the leaven (yeast) of sin from your lives. This is a contradiction!" Three symbolic realities were in each Passover: (1) *the blood* of the lamb (compare *Matt. 26:28*); (2) *the flesh* of the lamb (compare *Heb. 10:20*); (3) *the continued feast*, an act of fellowship (compare *1 Cor. 10:16-22*).

8. **Let us celebrate our feast.** The Greek implies *continuous action*. Paul's intention is to show the Corinthians (and us) that the Christian's "Passover feast" includes the whole Christian conduct of life! **The yeast of sin and wickedness.** It is always our obligation to take out the old yeast. In being sacrificed *once and for all*, we ALWAYS see "Christ on the cross" (see note on *1 Cor. 1:23*).

9. **In the letter.** He had written a short letter, which we do not have. **Not to associate with immoral people.** The Corinthians thought he meant the people of the world only, and they did associate with the man in *verse 1*.

associate with immoral people. <sup>10</sup>Now, I did not mean pagans who are immoral, or greedy, or thieves, or who worship idols. To avoid them you would have to get out of the world completely.

<sup>11</sup>What I meant was that you should not associate with a man who calls himself a brother but is immoral, or greedy, or worships idols, or is a slanderer, or a drunkard, or a thief. Don't even sit down to eat with such a person.

<sup>12-13</sup>After all, it is none of my business to judge outsiders. God will judge them. But should you not judge the members of your own fellowship? As the scripture says, "Take the evil man out of your group."

### Lawsuits against Brothers

**6** If one of you has a dispute with a brother, how dare he go before heathen judges, instead of letting God's people settle the matter? <sup>2</sup>Don't you know that God's people will judge the world? Well, then, if you are to judge the world,

not at all meaning the 10 people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I 11 am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

What business is it of 12 mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will 13 judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from your number."

### Lawsuits Among Believers

**6** If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? Do you not 2 know that God's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are

10. **Now I did mean pagans.** "I say this plainly, so that you cannot misunderstand me." It would be impossible to make a living at Corinth (or any other place) without daily contact with such sinners. Yet see Paul's warning in *2 Cor. 6:14*. **To avoid them.** "To get out of the world" would not agree with what Jesus said in *Matt. 5:14-16*. Christians cannot take Christ to people they will not talk with!

11. **What I meant.** This points directly at the man in *verse 1*, and the false teacher. This man called himself a *brother*. To associate with him is to show approval of his sins. Business transactions are not a sign of friendliness, but eating together is! [This implies the false teacher was saying it was all right for a Christian to be immoral, greedy, and worship idols. See notes on *1 Cor. 3:18; 10:14-17*.]

12-13. **To judge outsiders.** It is none of Paul's business, or ours, to judge those outside the messianic community. They are in the hands of God. **Of your own fellowship.** The church is a voluntary group, and its discipline is for those who are part of the group. **Take the evil man out of your group.** Paul paraphrases *Deut. 19:19; 22:21, 24; 24:7*. This is his decree of punishment on the incestuous man. Compare note on *verse 2*.

1. **How dare he.** It was the custom at Corinth to sue each other in the heathen courts of justice over wordly matters, often over unimportant things. After becoming Christians, they had continued to do this. This showed a lack of trust in the church-leaders, and gave the heathen reason to think that the Christians were hostile to each other. [Paul himself did not hesitate to use his Roman citizenship and appeal his case to Roman justice. Yet he did not do this in matters between brother and brother, nor to accuse his persecutors (*Acts 28:19*), only for his defence.]

2. **Don't you know?** This question is repeated six times in this chapter, which implies Paul is scolding them because of their ignorance, when they boast that the false teacher has given them wisdom. **That God's people will judge the world.** This can mean: (1) That Christians actually judge the world by

aren't you capable of judging small matters? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that we shall judge the angels? How much more, then, the things of this life! <sup>4</sup>If, then, such matters come up, are you going to take them to be settled by people who have no standing in the church? <sup>5</sup>Shame on you! Surely there is at least one wise man in your fellowship who can settle a dispute between the brothers. <sup>6</sup>Instead, one brother goes to court against another, and lets unbelievers judge the case! <sup>7</sup>The very fact that you have legal disputes among yourselves shows that you have failed completely. Would it not be better for you to be wronged? Would it not be better for you to be robbed? <sup>8</sup>Instead, you yourselves wrong one another, and rob one another, even your very

you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead, one brother goes to law against another—and this in front of unbelievers!

The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.

preaching the Good News of Christ (see note on *Matt. 19:28*); (2) That Christians judge the world by their *faith* (compare *Luke 11:31*; *John 3:18-20*; *Rom. 8:3*); (3) That Christians will sit with Christ, after they have been judged, as He judges the world (compare *Matt. 25:34, 41*). [Johnson favors #3.]

3. **We shall judge the angels?** *Godet* writes: "Paul does not wish to mark out this or that class of angels, but to awaken in the Church the sense of its competence and dignity by reminding it that beings of this lofty nature will one day be subject to its jurisdiction." [*MacKnight* thinks it speaks about Christians foretelling the judgment and punishment of bad angels.]

4. **Who have no standing in the church?** [The Greek of this verse can be translated three ways. The TEV follows Meyer, Heinrich, W & H, Tisch., et. al. The NIV follows the Vulgate, Beza, KJV, et. al. *Whitby* translates it: "If ye use the heathen secular judgment-seats, ye constitute those who are despised in the church your judges."] See *1 Cor. 2:15* and note. Paul writes with some degree of anger. They, who are spiritual men, bring shame to themselves and to the church, when they go to unspiritual men to settle these matters.

5. **At least one wise man.** "With all your boasting about wisdom, you ought to be able to find one wise man!"

6. **Instead.** "Your action shows there is no wise man in the Church at Corinth, or he would surely have been called upon to settle the matter." See note on *verse 1*.

7. **Shows that you have failed completely.** The lawsuits were only symptoms of something far more serious. There was unchristian resentment; but even more, there was antisocial behavior on the part of the aggressors (*verses 9-10*). **Would it not be better?** It would be better to be wronged or robbed, rather than to bring shame and division into the church. The rule is: (1) better to be wronged than to go to law in the civil courts; (2) if a settlement is required, get a wise man in the church to make it. See what Jesus said in *Matt. 5:38-42*.

8. **Even your very brothers.** We are ONE in Christ. This makes it even more sinful when we destroy each other!

brothers! <sup>9</sup>Surely you know that the wicked will not receive God's Kingdom. Do not fool yourselves; people who are immoral, or worship idols, or are adulterers, or homosexual perverts, <sup>10</sup>or who rob, or are greedy, or are drunkards, or who slander others, or are thieves—none of these will receive God's Kingdom. <sup>11</sup>Some of you were like that. But you have been cleansed from sin; you have been dedicated to God; you have been put right with God through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

### Use Your Bodies for God's Glory

<sup>12</sup>Someone will say, "I am allowed to do anything." Yes; but not everything is good for you. I could say, "I am allowed to do anything"; but I am not going to let anything make a slave of

9  
wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of 10  
you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

### Sexual Immorality

12  
"Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered

9. **Will not receive God's Kingdom.** The church is God's Kingdom on earth, and all who die in Christ will receive the Eternal Kingdom! **Do not fool yourselves.** No unholy person will receive the Eternal Kingdom. But see *verse 11*. **Immoral.** See note on *Matt. 19:9*. **Worship idols.** See note on *1 Thess. 1:9*. **Adulterers.** See *verse 16*. **Homosexual perverts.** The Greek specifies both passive and active roles in this.

10. **Who rob.** Who break in and steal. **Greedy.** Covetous persons. **Drunkards.** The Bible severely condemns drunkenness. **Slander.** Compare *Matt. 5:22* and note. **Thieves.** Extortioners, blackmailers. **None of these.** To gain the favor of the Greeks, the false teacher had taught that opulence and immorality were permitted by the gospel; and he had used all the standard arguments to justify his claim. Paul makes it plain that this is not true!

11. **Some of you were like that.** This shows the amazing power of the gospel! Faith in "Christ on the cross" leads bad people to become transformed! See *1 Pet. 4:3-5*. **Cleansed from sin.** Literally: "But you washed yourselves!" This certainly points to baptism (see *Acts 22:16; Titus 3:4-5; Heb 10:22; Eph. 5:26*). **Dedicated.** The TEV does not use "sanctification, sanctify, or saint," because the average person understands these words in an unbiblical way. "Sanctification: the work of the Holy Spirit by which the believer is 1) *set free from sin*; 2) *exalted to holiness of life*." This dictionary definition is accurate, if you recognize: 1) Christ's finished work for us - made clean by His bloody-death and dedicated to God; 2) the Holy Spirit's work in us, as we co-operate with Him to become progressively holy (*1 Pet. 1:2, 16, 22, 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13*). "Sanctification is the believer-taking Justification seriously! Sanctification is Justification translated into action." *To be holy is to take being put right with God seriously!* **Put right with God.** The bloody-death of Christ was to change sinners! We reach out through faith to seize His sacrifice, to be put right with God by His imputed righteousness. See *Acts 22:16* and note. **Through the name.** See *Acts 4:12*. **And by the Spirit.** We are buried with Christ in the liquid grave so our sins will be forgiven, and to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. See notes on *Acts 2:38; 5:32; 1 Cor. 12:13*.

12. **I am allowed to do anything.** Paul taught that a Christian was free from human rules that said: "Don't handle this, Don't taste that, Don't touch the other" (*Col. 2:21*). Some thought this gave them the right to live in opulence and sensuality as the Epicureans taught. Paul says: "Yes, you are free, but not everything is good for you. You must not let anything make you its slave." "I am allowed to do anything" must have been a slogan used by the Corinthian Christians, since Paul uses it twice here, and twice again in *1 Cor. 10:23*.

me. <sup>13</sup>Someone else will say, "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food." Yes; but God will put an end to both. A man's body is not to be used for immoral purposes, but to serve the Lord; and the Lord serves the body. <sup>14</sup>God raised the Lord from death, and he will also raise us by his power.

<sup>15</sup>You know that your bodies are parts of the body of Christ. Shall I take a part of Christ's body and make it part of the body of a prostitute? Impossible! <sup>16</sup>Or perhaps you don't know that the man who joins his body to a prostitute becomes physically one with her? The scripture says quite plainly, "The two will become one body." <sup>17</sup>But he who joins himself to the Lord becomes spiritually one with him.

<sup>18</sup>Avoid immorality. Any other sin a man commits does not affect his body; but the man who commits immorality sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you, and was given to you by God? You do not belong

by anything. "Food for the 13 stomach and the stomach for food"—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his 14 power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not 15 know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that 16 he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But he who unites himself 17 with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

Flee from sexual im- 18 morality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually 19 sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your

13. **Food is for the stomach.** Paul follows what Jesus said in *Mark 7:15-23*. Food is neutral, neither good nor bad. But neither food nor stomach are eternal matters. A **man's body**. Greek thought viewed man as "a soul imprisoned in a body of flesh;" the soul valuable, the flesh worthless. Jewish thought saw man as a *unity* - all parts equally valuable. Compare Paul's statement in *1 Thess. 5:23*. Paul makes it plain here that a man's body is to be used to serve the Lord. **And the Lord serves the body.** By raising it from death and changing it! Compare *Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:35-57; 1 John 3:1-3*.

14. **And he will also raise us.** "Raising our bodies from death" is an integral part of the Good News (*Acts 17:18, 31-32*). Our bodies are too important to throw away in sensuality!

15. **You know.** Current religious thought says man is only valuable because he has a *soul*. Paul says the Christian's body is part of the body of Christ. See *verse 19*. **The body of a prostitute?** This would defile the holy!

16. **The two will become one body.** Paul quotes *Gen. 2:24* to prove that the man and the prostitute become physically one in the sex act. [This does not mean that the man and the prostitute are now married to each other.] Jewish thought did not see a marriage as solemnized until the physical union took place. God himself blessed marriage, but union with a prostitute is a perversion.

17. **But he.** Paul uses the marriage relationship (the physical union) to symbolize the spiritual union to Christ. Compare *Eph. 5:25-33; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:27*.

18. **Avoid immorality.** Idolatry and immorality go along together. They are to be avoided (*1 Cor. 10:14*). **Sins against his own body.** This sin defiles his body, because in it he becomes physically one with the other person.

19. **Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.** Every Christian is a "Spirit-filled Christian" (*Acts 2:38; 5:32; Eph. 2:22; John 7:38-39*). **But to God.** When you became a Christian, you gave yourself to God. You no longer have the right to use your body to serve sin.

to yourselves but to God; <sup>20</sup>he bought you for a price. So use your bodies for God's glory.

### Questions about Marriage

**7** Now, to deal with the matters you wrote about. A man does well not to marry. <sup>2</sup>But because there is so much immorality, every man should have his own wife, and every woman should have her own husband. <sup>3</sup>A man should fulfill his duty as a husband and a woman should fulfill her duty as a wife, and each should satisfy the other's needs. <sup>4</sup>The wife is not the master of her own body, but the husband is; in the same way the husband is not the master of his own body, but the wife is. <sup>5</sup>Do not deny yourselves to each other, unless you first agree to do so for a while, in order to spend your time in prayer; but then resume normal marital relations, to keep you from giving in to Satan's temptation because of your lack of self-control.

own; you were bought at a <sup>20</sup> price. Therefore honor God with your body.

### Marriage

**7** Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good <sup>2</sup> for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. <sup>3</sup> The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup> The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. <sup>5</sup> Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your

**20. He bought you.** *John 3:16.* The Cross stands as God's estimate of YOUR value!!! **So use your bodies for God's glory.** By holy living and good actions. Compare *Matt. 25:31-40.*

**1. You wrote about.** In the first six chapters, Paul with specific problems of sin in the group. Now he begins to answer questions which they had written to him. To understand this chapter, you must know that Jewish thought believed marriage to be an obligation, and saw celibacy as a *sin against God*. The false teacher, being a Jew, would be expected to teach this. Some of the Greek philosophers, however, thought of marriage as "legalized lust," and taught that the only holy life was celibacy. Remember that Paul is here answering specific questions, and that he qualifies all that he says in *verse 26*. **A man does well not to marry.** Note: Paul does not denounce marriage. What he is doing is to defend celibacy as an option. But he points out that this is a *gift* in *verse 7*.

**2. But because.** Unless you have the special *gift from God*, celibacy exposes you to unnecessary temptation, especially if you live in Corinth. Remember: God himself is the *author* of marriage. "And God the Eternal said: It is not good, that the man is alone; I will create to him a companion-counterpart to him." [*Gen. 2:18 Zamenhof.*]

**3. And each should satisfy the other's needs.** God's original marriage-law (see note on *verse 2*) shows that by His decree, husband and wife are to satisfy each other's physical and emotional needs. No Jewish High Priest would ever have imagined the sexual union in marriage to be an unholy thing! This shows how much Greek thought has influenced Christianity down through the centuries.

**4. But the husband is.** He is the *master* of her body; she is the *master* of his body! This not only forbids adultery, but removes the "need" for it.

**5. Do not deny yourselves.** "If you believe you should suspend normal marital relations to be able to spend more time in prayer, that is permissible. But make it a short time, and then resume normal relations. Don't expose yourself to unnecessary temptation from the Devil."



<sup>6</sup>I tell you this not as an order, but simply as a permission. <sup>7</sup>Actually I would prefer that all were as I am; but each one has the special gift that God has given him, one man this gift, another man that.

<sup>8</sup>Now, I say this to the unmarried and to the widows: it would be better for you to continue to live alone, as I do. <sup>9</sup>But if you cannot restrain your desires, go on and marry—it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

<sup>10</sup>For married people I have a command, not my own but the Lord's: a wife must not leave her husband; <sup>11</sup>if she does, she must remain single or else be reconciled to her husband; and a husband must not divorce his wife.

<sup>12</sup>To the others I say (I, myself, not the Lord): if a Christian man has a wife who is an unbeliever and she agrees to go on living with him,

lack of self-control. I say <sup>6</sup>this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all <sup>7</sup>men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

Now to the unmarried and <sup>8</sup>the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot <sup>9</sup>control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

To the married I give this <sup>10</sup>command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But <sup>11</sup>if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

To the rest I say this (I, <sup>12</sup>not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not

6. **Not as an order.** This may mean: (1) what he just said in *verse 5 (Johnson)*; (2) what he said in *verse 2 (Exp. Grk. Test.)*; (3) what he now says in *verse 7 (MacKnight)*.

7. **Actually I would prefer.** There is strong evidence that Paul had at one time been married. Many think he is a widower as he writes this, that he never remarried, and that he is living a celibate life. **The special gift.** There are many different talents and gifts in the messianic community. Paul was unique (*1 Cor. 9:5*).

8. **Now, I say this.** He restates his answer of *verses 1-2*. Considering the present distress (*verse 26*), it would be better for the unmarried and the widows to live alone. Celibacy is a moral option.

9. **But if you cannot restrain.** Celibacy is not an option for everyone. Compare *Matt. 19:11-12* and notes. **It is better to marry.** The unsatisfied desire is a constant source of temptation, and by the rule of *verse 35*, it is better to marry than to burn with passion; however, when marriage is impossible, it is infinitely better to burn, than to *sin!*

10. **I have a command.** "From what I have said about preferring all to be unmarried, you must not misunderstand and think it would be best to abandon your marriage partner. The Lord commands that you not do this."

11. **If she does.** Note Paul's emphasis on the woman leaving the man. Christianity had strongly affected the feminine mind (*1 Cor. 11:5-7; 14:34-35*). *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "In some cases, not so much incompatibility as ascetic aversion [pseudo-spirituality] (compare *verses 3-4*) caused the wish to separate." An Asian church-leader forged a letter, in which he claimed Paul taught: "*There can be no future resurrection, unless ye continue in chastity, and do not defile your flesh.*" **She must remain single.** The Lord's command is: "a wife must not leave her husband." If she does it anyhow, she must either remain single or else be reconciled to her husband. This is because the marriage is not broken by her leaving. [For two exceptions to this, see *Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:15*.]

12-13. **To the others I say.** The Lord gave no commands about mixed marriages, yet remember Paul speaks by inspiration. **Who is an unbeliever.** Often only one of a couple is converted to Christ. It may be the false teacher taught that such a mixed marriage was unholy, and that the Christian ought to

he must not divorce her. <sup>13</sup>And if a Christian woman is married to a man who is an unbeliever, and he agrees to go on living with her, she must not divorce him. <sup>14</sup>For the unbelieving husband is made acceptable to God by being united to his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made acceptable to God by being united to her Christian husband. If this were not so, their children would be like pagan children; but as it is, they are acceptable to God. <sup>15</sup>However, if the one who is not a believer wishes to leave the Christian partner, let it be so. In such cases the Christian partner, whether husband or wife, is free to act. God has called you to live in peace. <sup>16</sup>How can you be sure, Christian wife, that you will not save your husband? Or how can you be sure, Christian husband, that you will not save your wife?

### Live as God Called You

<sup>17</sup>Each one should go on living according to the Lord's gift to him, and as he was when God called him. This is the rule I teach in all the

divorce her. And if a woman <sup>13</sup> has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be "unclean," but as it is, they are holy.

But if the unbeliever <sup>15</sup> leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Nevertheless, each one <sup>17</sup> should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.

escape from such a union. But Paul by inspiration teaches that this difference in religion neither makes the marriage unholy (*verse 14*), nor gives any right to break it (except as he says in *verse 15*).

**14. Is made acceptable.** MacKnight says this should be understood in a Jewish sense - things clean and unclean (as *Acts 10:14-15*). Paul is not talking about salvation here. Remember the false teacher at Corinth was a Jew. Paul says the marriage is *clean* and the children of such a marriage are *clean*.

**15. However.** This is the "Pauline privilege." Note that it only covers the specific condition of an *unbeliever* deserting the Christian partner. There was and is much controversy about Christianity (compare *Matt. 10:34-36*), and sometimes the unbelieving partner is so fanatically opposed to Christianity that he or she refuses to continue the marriage. **Is free to act.** The Christian partner **ABANDONED** by the unbeliever is free from the former relationship. The marriage has terminated. **To live in peace.** Being set free in this way is not the best thing. The Christian partner is to do their best to live in peace with the unbelieving partner.

**16. How can you be sure?** Be kind, gentle, loving, and you may bring your unbelieving wife or husband to Christ. Compare *1 Pet. 3:1-2*.

**17. Each one should go on.** The false teacher at Corinth (who was probably one of the Circumcision Party) taught that when you became a Christian, all former moral and political obligations vanished. This caused some wives to abandon their marriages (*verse 10-11*), and some men to quit their jobs and beg the church to support them (*1 Thess. 4:11-12; 2 Thess. 3:6-15*). Paul says that every Christian should fulfill all the moral and political obligations which he had before becoming a Christian, unless he can change his condition lawfully.

churches. <sup>18</sup>If a circumcised man has accepted God's call, he should not try to remove the marks of circumcision; if an uncircumcised man has accepted God's call, he should not get circumcised. <sup>19</sup>Because being circumcised or not means nothing. What matters is to obey God's commandments. <sup>20</sup>Every man should remain as he was when he accepted God's call. <sup>21</sup>Were you a slave when God called you? Well, never mind; but if you do have a chance to become a free man, use it. <sup>22</sup>For a slave who has been called by the Lord is the Lord's free man; in the same way a free man who has been called by Christ is his slave. <sup>23</sup>God bought you for a price; so do not become men's slaves. <sup>24</sup>Brothers, each one should remain in fellowship with God in the same condition he was when he was called.

Was a man already circum- 18  
cised when he was called?  
He should not become un-  
circumcised. Was a man un-  
circumcised when he was  
called? He should not be cir-  
cumcised. Circumcision is 19  
*nothing and uncircumcision*  
is nothing. Keeping God's  
commands is what counts.  
Each one should remain in 20  
the situation which he was  
in when God called him. 21  
Were you a slave when you  
were called? Don't let it  
trouble you—although if  
you can gain your freedom,  
do so. For he who was a 22  
slave when he was called by  
the Lord is the Lord's freed-  
man; similarly, he who was  
a free man when he was  
called is Christ's slave. You 23  
were bought at a price; do  
not become slaves of men.  
Brothers, each man, as re- 24  
sponsible to God, should re-  
main in the situation God  
called him to.

18. **If a circumcised man.** Paul applies the principle of *verse 17* to a specific case. Circumcision was a *live issue* (see *Acts 15:5-21*). If you are already circumcised, don't try to *undo* it. If you are uncircumcised, stay that way. [It was surgically possible at that time to remove the condition of circumcision.]

19. **Means nothing.** Under the rule of the gospel, these human distinctions have no influence on our salvation. See *Gal. 3:28*. **God's commandments.** Not The Law of Moses, but the *law of Christ!* Compare *Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; Matt. 7:21-23*; and notes on "law" at the end of *Rom. 3:31*.

20. **Every man should remain.** "Since the gospel makes no change in your political and social status and obligation, you should remain as you were when you accepted God's call."

21. **Were you a slave?** Perhaps *half* the people of the first century were slaves, and the economy of the Roman world was based on slave labor. The changed attitudes of Christians removed the "sting" of slavery (and in time set all the slaves free). **Well, never mind.** Paul could not emphasize more strongly the fact that human distinctions of politics and society mean nothing! **But if you do.** "If you can gain your freedom by legal means, do it!"

22. **For a slave.** "If you must remain a slave, don't be sad about it, because you are really free in Christ!" **In the same way.** "If you are a free man, don't *look down on* the brother who is a slave, because you are Christ's slave!"

23. **God bought you for a price.** Compare *Acts 20:28; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21*. God buys us from our old owner, *sin*, through the DEATH of his Son! **So do not become men's slaves.** "Do not let human influence turn you away from service to God, or infringe on the devotion which you owe to your Savior!" Paganism put a lot of pressure on Christians! See *1 Pet. 4:3-5; Rev. 2:6,20* and notes.

24. **Brothers, each one should remain.** This is the third time he says this (also *verses 17 & 20*). It may be that Christian slaves at Corinth believed they had no responsibility to their Christian owners (as the false teacher probably taught). Read the Letter to Philemon.

### Questions about the Unmarried and the Widows

<sup>25</sup>Now, the matter about the unmarried: I do not have a command from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is worthy of trust.

<sup>26</sup>Considering the present distress, I think it is better for a man to stay as he is. <sup>27</sup>Do you have a wife? Then don't try to get rid of her. Are you unmarried? Then don't look for a wife. <sup>28</sup>But if you do marry, you haven't committed a sin; and if an unmarried woman marries, she hasn't committed a sin. But I would rather spare you the everyday troubles that such people will have.

<sup>29</sup>What I mean, brothers, is this: there is not much time left, and from now on married men should live as though they were not married; <sup>30</sup>those who weep, as though they were not sad; those who laugh, as though they were not happy; those who buy, as though they did not own what they bought; <sup>31</sup>those who deal in worldly goods, as though they were not fully occupied with them. For this world, as it is now, will not last much longer.

Now about virgins: I have 25  
no command from the Lord,  
but I give a judgment as one  
who by the Lord's mercy is  
trustworthy. Because of the 26  
present crisis, I think that it  
is good for you to remain as  
you are. Are you married? 27  
Do not seek a divorce. Are  
you unmarried? Do not look  
for a wife. But if you do 28  
marry, you have not sinned;  
and if a virgin marries, she  
has not sinned. But those  
who marry will face many  
troubles in this life, and I  
want to spare you this.

What I mean, brothers, 29  
is that the time is short.  
From now on those who  
have wives should live as if  
they had none; those who 30  
mourn, as if they did not;  
those who are happy, as if  
they were not; those who buy  
something, as if it were not  
theirs to keep; those who use 31  
the things of the world, as if  
not engrossed in them. For  
this world in its present form  
is passing away.

25. Now, the matter about the unmarried. *Virgin* is a technical term which can mean *either* a man or a woman (compare *Rev. 14:4* PARTHENON). *Verse 27* makes this plain. In *verses 25-35* Paul uses a new point of view to reinforce his instructions of *verses 8-16*. **But I give my opinion.** He has no direct word from the Lord, but this is his opinion *as an inspired apostle*.

26. **Considering the present distress.** "It will be much easier to meet the persecutions and miseries of the present distress if we have no wives and children to worry about."

27. **Do you have a wife?** If you are married, the Lord decrees that you must not abandon her (see notes on *verses 10-11*). **Are you unmarried?** Either a bachelor or a widower. **Then don't look for a wife.** "Considering the present distress." Note *verse 35*.

28. **But if you do marry.** Even though it might be best not to marry at all, under the circumstances, yet it was no sin if you did! **But I would rather spare you.** "I would like to see you avoid the everyday troubles which marriage and family will certainly bring you, during this time of persecution."

29-31. **There is not much time left.** Paul may mean: (1) the persecutions which Nero would bring against Christians (in less than ten years); (2) the Jewish Wars (in which armed terrorists would rise against Roman rule) which would end in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.; (3) the shortness of life in general. Within half a generation, civil war convulsed the Roman Empire, three emperors in succession were assassinated, and Jerusalem was razed. **As though they were not.** "Those who are aware of the coming crisis *will from this time on* think of all human relationships, conditions, and occupations as temporary and transient." **For this world, as it now is.** "Like the changing scenery of a theater, the pleasures, pains, and glories of this life pass us by."

<sup>32</sup>I would like you to be free from worry. An unmarried man concerns himself with the Lord's work, because he is trying to please the Lord; <sup>33</sup>but a married man concerns himself with worldly matters, because he wants to please his wife, <sup>34</sup>and so he is pulled in two directions. An unmarried woman or a virgin concerns herself with the Lord's work, because she wants to be dedicated both in body and spirit; but a married woman concerns herself with worldly matters, because she wants to please her husband.

<sup>35</sup>I am saying this because I want to help you. I am not trying to put restrictions on you. Instead, I want you to do what is right and proper, and give yourselves completely to the Lord's service without any reservation.

<sup>36</sup>In the case of an engaged couple who have decided not to marry: if the man feels that he is not acting properly toward the girl; if his passions are too strong, and he feels that they ought to marry, then they should get married, as

I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you. I want you to live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married.

32. **To be free from worry.** See verse 26. **An unmarried man.** The unmarried man is responsible only for himself, and can give himself to the Lord's work.

33. **But a married man.** This man also is concerned about the Lord's work, but he must take into account his family - how he can please his wife and protect her. [But do not carry this too far. See 1 Cor. 9:5.]

34. **And so he is pulled.** See note on verse 26. **An unmarried woman.** Either a widow or one who has been abandoned (verse 15). **A virgin.** One who has never been married. **Concerns herself.** She is responsible only for herself, and can give herself to the Lord's work. **But a married woman.** She also is pulled in two directions by her concern for the Lord and her concern for her family. [But do not carry this too far. See 1 Cor. 9:5.]

35. **Because I want to help you.** "I am not trying to put restrictions on your right to marry (all the apostles but me are married). But considering the present distress, I am trying to give you the best advice I can." *MacKnight* says: ". . . the apostle recommended to both a single state, if they could therein live contently; because, being fastened to the world with fewer ties, they would leave it with less regret, when called to die for the gospel."

36. **In the case of an engaged couple.** In these next verses, Paul discusses the right to marry. He has strongly defended and recommended celibacy because of the present distress. But he does not forbid marriage! He finds no sin in marriage, and leaves the final decision in each case to the responsible parties involved. Some see in this verse "partners in celibacy," where a couple live together in celibacy like brother and sister, without marriage. The same principle holds true in either case: when physical needs are too strong, it is better to marry than to burn with passion (verse 9). **There is no sin in this.** He is not talking about premarital sex (which is sin), but about getting married! "Partners in celibacy" may have believed marriage to be an unholy thing (see note on verse 1). But God himself decreed marriage (see note on verse 2).

he wants to. There is no sin in this. <sup>37</sup>But if a man, without being forced to do so, has firmly made up his mind not to marry; if he has his will under complete control, and has already decided in his own mind what to do—then he does well not to marry the girl. <sup>38</sup>So the man who marries his girl does well, but the one who does not marry his girl will do even better.

<sup>39</sup>A married woman is not free as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, then she is free to be married to the man she wants; but it must be a Christian marriage. <sup>40</sup>She will be happier, however, if she stays as she is. That is my opinion, and I think that I too have God's Spirit.

### The Question about Food Offered to Idols

**8** Now, the matter about food offered to idols. It is true, of course, that "all of us have knowledge," as they say. Such knowledge, however, puffs a man up with pride; but love builds

But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better.

A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I have the Spirit of God.

#### Meat Sacrificed to Idols

**8** Now about meat sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up,

37. **Without being forced to do so.** Times would come when some would force celibacy on Christians (see *1 Tim. 4:1-3*). **Has firmly made up his mind.** He is doing this because he believes it is the best thing for him to do. **His will under complete control.** See note on *verse 9*. **Then he does well not to marry the girl.** To live a celibate life.

38. **Will do even better.** Both are right and proper: to marry, or not to marry. But *not to marry* is better *considering the present distress (verse 26)*.

39. **A married woman.** The letter from Corinth must have asked about widows. While her husband lives, she is not free. But, if he dies (or is divorced scripturally, *Matt. 19:1-9*; or abandons her, *verse 15*), she is free to marry again. **But it must be a Christian marriage.** Not only would the Christian of this century not marry a non-Christian, but the question came up of whether, when one became a Christian, they could go on living with an unbelieving partner (*verses 12-14*).

40. **She will be happier.** See note on *verse 26*. His answer is based on pragmatic considerations. Under different conditions, he recommends marriage (see *1 Tim. 5:14*). **I think that I too have God's Spirit.** He says this in *irony* to the false teacher who questions his inspiration and apostleship.

1. **Food offered to idols.** The temple of an idol (*verse 10*) was a meeting-place for feasting. Constant sacrifices on the idol's altars provided a source of meat. Much of the meat sold in markets and found on the dinner-tables of ordinary citizens, came from the idol's temple. And unless you were told, you could not know the source of the meat (*1 Cor. 10:25-29*). But, can a Christian eat such meat without sinning? In theory, Paul is for *freedom*, based on the *TRUTH* that there is only the one God. In practice, he is for severely restricting the use of meat sacrificed to idols, because of the weak brother who did not understand. [*Holy water* may have grown out of an attempt to *make clean* meat sacrificed to an idol; the idea being that the holy water would remove the ritual impurity of the idol from the meat.] **"All of us have knowledge."** He says this in *irony*. Compare *verse 7*. The Corinthians were proud of their

up. <sup>2</sup>The person who thinks he knows something really doesn't know as he ought to know. <sup>3</sup>But the man who loves God is known by him.

<sup>4</sup>So then, about eating the food offered to idols: we know that an idol stands for something that does not really exist; we know that there is only the one God. <sup>5</sup>Even if there are so-called "gods," whether in heaven or on earth, and even though there are many of these "gods" and "lords," <sup>6</sup>yet there is for us only one God, the Father, who is the creator of all things, and for whom we live; and there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created, and through whom we live.

<sup>7</sup>But not everyone knows this truth. Some people are so used to idols that to this very day when they eat such food they still think of it as food that belongs to an idol; their conscience is weak and they feel they are defiled by the food. <sup>8</sup>Food, however, will not improve our relation with God; we shall not lose anything if we do not eat, nor shall we gain anything if we do eat.

but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God. 2 3

So then, about eating meat sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. 4 5 6

But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such meat, they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. 7 8

knowledge. **Puffs a man up with pride.** When they boast about their knowledge, it leads them to despise others (compare *Rom. 14:3-4*). **But love builds up.** Love is the mortar which holds the "living stones" together to build God's temple (*Eph. 2:19-22*).

2. **Who thinks he knows.** Loveless knowledge is destructive. See notes on *Rev. 2:4-5*. True knowledge always makes you humble and loving.

3. **But the man who loves God.** Love means to act toward God as he has already acted toward you. **Is known.** Paul substitutes this for the "has come to know" which we might expect. Compare *2 Tim. 2:19*.

4. **We know that an idol.** "Most of we Christians know that an idol has no reality or power. There is only one God. There can be no other. (See note on *Rom. 16:27*.)"

5. **Even if there are.** The pagan world worshiped many false gods and goddesses.

6. **Yet there is for us.** This affirms what *verse 4* said negatively. "We Christians acknowledge only one God the Father and only one Lord, Jesus Christ. This contrasts with the many gods and lords of paganism." Compare *1 Tim. 2:5; Col. 1:15-17*.

7. **But not everyone knows this truth.** The weak brother believed the idol was just as real as God Himself! For this man to eat the meat which had been sacrificed to an idol, he would feel he was participating in the idol's sacrifice and feel defiled.

8. **Food, however.** The false teacher must have said: "Since the gospel allows us to eat this meat which has been sacrificed to idols, and since eating it does not make us either better or worse, it is part of our Christian liberty to eat it if we please."

<sup>9</sup>Be careful, however, and do not let your freedom of action make those who are weak in the faith fall into sin. <sup>10</sup>Suppose a man whose conscience is weak in this matter sees you, who have "knowledge," eating in the temple of an idol; will not this encourage him to eat food offered to idols? <sup>11</sup>And so this weak man, your brother for whom Christ died, will perish because of your "knowledge"! <sup>12</sup>And in this way you will be sinning against Christ by sinning against your brothers and wounding their weak conscience. <sup>13</sup>So then, if food makes my brother sin, I will never eat meat again, so as not to make my brother fall into sin.

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

### Rights and Duties of an Apostle

**9** Am I not a free man? Am I not an apostle? Haven't I seen Jesus our Lord? And aren't

### The Rights of an Apostle

**9** Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my

9. **Be careful, however.** The false teacher might have said: "You have taught us that God will not judge us by these trivial things that have no reality, such as idols. Eating or not eating, then does not change our relationship to God." Paul says: "Yes, this is true, but be careful of the results of your action." [What Paul permits here, must *modify* the Jerusalem decision in *Acts 15:29*.] If a weak brother eats it thinking he is doing wrong by eating it, he sins (*Rom. 14:23*).

10. **Suppose a man.** "Your example may have great influence over a weak brother, and encourage him to do something which he believes to be wrong."

11. **And so this weak man.** Because he sins in eating (*Rom. 14:23*), he may perish; or he might be led back into idolatry.

12. **And in this way.** Each Christian is a *proxy* of Christ. See note on *Acts 9:4*. If you sin against your brother, you sin against Christ!

13. **So then.** The rule of love prevents creating a fuss over things which are not important and only matters of opinion. If food is the problem, Paul will give up meat altogether, rather than be the cause of his brother sinning! See what Paul says in *1 Cor. 9:19-22*.

1. **Am I not a free man?** The false teacher at Corinth was a Christian (see note on *1 Cor. 3:5*), but his motives were not right. He thought the gospel was a way to get rich (*1 Tim. 6:5*), although it would not be right to say that he was totally wicked. But because of his attitude toward money, he was amazed to find that Paul had not taken one cent from the Corinthians when he preached there. See note on *2 Cor. 11:8*. Because he did intend to take money from them, he believed he had to destroy Paul's authority as an apostle. "If Paul is an apostle, why didn't he use the rights of an apostle? Why is he living a celibate life when the other apostles, especially Peter, are married?" The Corinthians must have asked about these things when they wrote to Paul. Paul says he is a free man - free to demand they pay him a salary, and free not to take a cent from them if he chooses. **Am I not an apostle:** God himself called Paul to be an apostle. See note on *1 Cor. 1:1*. **Haven't I seen Jesus our Lord?** Paul saw Jesus in person, and this made him a witness to the resurrection (see *Gal. 1:10-17*). **And aren't you the result?** The church (messianic community) at Corinth proved that he was *their* apostle.



you the result of my work for the Lord? <sup>2</sup>Even if others do not accept me as an apostle, surely you do! You yourselves, because of your life in the Lord, are proof of the fact that I am an apostle.

<sup>3</sup>When people criticize me, this is how I defend myself: <sup>4</sup>Don't I have the right to be given food and drink for my work? <sup>5</sup>Don't I have the right to do what the other apostles do, and the Lord's brothers, and Peter, and take a Christian wife with me on my trips? <sup>6</sup>Or are Barnabas and I the only ones who have to work for our living? <sup>7</sup>What soldier ever has to pay his own expenses in the army? What farmer does not eat the grapes from his own vineyard? What shephard does not use the milk from his own sheep?

<sup>8</sup>I don't have to limit myself to these everyday examples, because the Law says the same thing. <sup>9</sup>We read in the Law of Moses, "Do not tie up the mouth of the ox when it treads out the

work in the Lord? Even <sup>2</sup> though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

This is my defense to <sup>3</sup> those who sit in judgment on me. Don't we have the right <sup>4</sup> to food and drink? Don't we <sup>5</sup> have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? Or is it only I and Barnabas <sup>6</sup> who must work for a living?

Who serves as a soldier at <sup>7</sup> his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who <sup>8</sup> tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say <sup>9</sup> this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For <sup>9</sup> it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned?

2. **Surely you do!** He had worked among them with power and the Holy Spirit. Compare *2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Thess. 1:5*. **You yourselves.** The Corinthian Christians were living proof of Paul's preaching and power.

3. **This is how I defend myself.** By pointing to the Corinthian Christians as living proof!

4. **Don't I have the right?** Even though he did not use this right, he had it. Compare *2 Thess. 3:9* and note.

5. **And take a Christian wife with me?** The other apostles did this, and asked the church to pay their bills wherever they went. **The Lord's brothers,** who would be of special interest to the false teacher, also did this. **And Peter.** [*Cephas* is the Aramaic version of *Peter*.] Peter was a married man and continued to live with his wife as an apostle, taking her along with him on his tours of mission. Compare note on *1 Cor. 7:3*.

6. **Or are Barnabas and I?** Both Barnabas and Paul refused to take money from the people they were teaching the gospel (*but see note on 2 Cor. 11:8*). As an apostle, Paul had the right to: (1) receive a salary from the church; (2) have a wife; (3) not have to work at other things for his living. [This mention of Barnabas shows they were still close friends in spite of their difference of opinion over John Mark (*Acts 15:39*).]

7. **What soldier?** He uses three examples to show his right to receive a salary from them: (1) soldiers were paid to go on a campaign; (2) farmers ate their own produce; (3) shepherds used milk from their own sheep.

8. **Because the Law says the same thing.** The Law was terminated as a means of salvation (*Rom. 3:19-21*); but it remains a revelation of truth and right (*Rom. 7:12-14*), and Paul uses it to teach a lesson to us.

9. **We read.** *Deut. 25:4*. The people of the East threshed their grain by making cattle walk on the heads of grain to free the individual grains from the stalk. See note on *Matt. 3:12*. **Now, is God?** "Does God speak here only about humane treatment of oxen?"

grain." Now, is God concerned about oxen? <sup>10</sup>Or did he not really mean us when he said this? Of course this was written for us. The man who plows and the man who reaps should do their work in the hope of getting a share of the crop. <sup>11</sup>We have sown spiritual seed among you. Is it too much if we reap material benefits from you? <sup>12</sup>If others have the right to expect this from you, don't we have an even greater right?

But we haven't made use of this right. Instead, we have endured everything in order not to put any obstacle in the way of the Good News about Christ. <sup>13</sup>Surely you know that the men who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who offer the sacrifices on the altar get a share of the sacrifices. <sup>14</sup>In the same way, the Lord has ordered that those who preach the gospel should get their living from it.

<sup>15</sup>But I haven't made use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this now in order to claim such

Surely he says this for us, <sup>10</sup> doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we have <sup>11</sup> sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have this right of <sup>12</sup> support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. Don't you know that <sup>13</sup> those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the <sup>14</sup> same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

But I have not used any of <sup>15</sup> these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that

10. **Of course this was written for us.** To teach us that we ought to support those who work to help us. *Material gain* is not in itself a *bad motive!* Both the man who plows and the man who reaps expect to get a share of the crop. Not *money*, but the *love of money* is a source of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10). The difference between the *hired man* and the *shepherd* (John 10:11-13) is not receiving a profit (both receive a profit from the sheep), but in *attitude*. The *hired man* has no love for the sheep; the *shepherd* does!

11. **We have sown.** They brought the Good News to them, made them disciples of Christ, and made them strong in the faith. **If we reap material benefits?** "Some food and drink - a salary, in other words."

12. **If others have the right?** The false teacher and his associates demanded financial support from the Corinthian church. If they thought these had the right to these things, didn't they understand Paul had an even greater claim on their resources??? **But we haven't made use.** Paul felt that taking a salary from the people he was preaching to, might be misunderstood by the pagans, who might accuse him of preaching such things only to make himself rich. For this reason, he often supported himself by working at some other kind of work (Acts 18:3), or drew a salary from another church (2 Cor. 11:8). In some situations a "tent-making" preacher has the best chance of success.

13. **Surely you know.** The Temple teaches the same lesson. Part of the sacrifice was burnt on the altar, and part went to the Priests and Levites.

14. **In the same way.** It is the Lord himself who has ordered that those who preach should be supported by the group (church). Compare Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7; Gal. 6:6.

15. **But I haven't made use.** "Even though I have shown you that both the Law and the gospel authorize these rights for me, I have purposely not used them!" From here on Paul finishes this chapter writing in the first person singular, telling us his thoughts, motives, and reasons for his actions. **Nor am I writing this now.** Compare what he says in 2 Cor. 11:7-10. Paul would rather starve to death, than to

rights for myself. I would rather die first! Nobody is going to turn by rightful boast into empty words! <sup>16</sup>I have no right to boast just because I preach the gospel. After all, I am under orders to do so. And how terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the gospel! <sup>17</sup>If I did my work as a matter of free choice, then I could expect to be paid; but since I do it as a matter of duty, it is because God has entrusted me with this task. <sup>18</sup>What pay do I get, then? It is the privilege of preaching the Good News without charging for it, without claiming my rights in my work for the gospel.

<sup>19</sup>I am a free man, nobody's slave; but I make myself everybody's slave in order to win as many

you will do such things for me. I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of this boast. Yet when I <sup>16</sup> preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I <sup>17</sup> preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. What then is my reward? <sup>18</sup> Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it.

Though I am free and be- <sup>19</sup> long to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to

allow the Corinthian church to pay his way! **My rightful boast.** He never will be dependent on Corinthian pay, because this would destroy his rightful boast. The key to this is found in *2 Cor. 11:12*. Those who opposed Paul demanded the church support them in luxury! But because they will be compared to Paul, they must discredit him. Paul *undermines* their claims by refusing support from the Corinthian church. If he accepted its money, he would be doing his enemies a favor and help prove their claims.

**16. Just because I preach the gospel.** Being a teacher gives Paul no right to boast about it. The false teacher boasted very much about himself, so Paul makes a strong statement that he is Christ's slave (*verse 17*; see note on *1 Cor. 4:1, 6*). **And how terrible it would be!** As an apostle, Paul is a "soldier under orders," and if he did not fulfill his mission, he would expect to be punished. [Some see in *Phil. 3:12* Paul saying that he is an enemy taken captive, who must serve his captor. (1) Paul was trying his best to serve God when he met Jesus; (2) We are all enemies who have been taken captive and changed into friends of God.]

**17. As a matter of free choice.** Here again we see Paul contrasting himself with the false teacher who was a "self-appointed apostle." Paul emphasizes that he is a slave of Christ, only doing his duty. Therefore he had no reason to boast about it (compare *Luke 17:7-10*). [Don't read too much into what Paul says. The special circumstances at Corinth called for special action. Paul did receive money for his work (*2 Cor. 11:8*), but he would not accept one cent from the Corinthian church. See note on *verse 15*.]

**18. What pay do I get then?** Only the satisfaction felt by the generous mind who does volunteer service (compare *Acts 20:33-35*). Paul "boasts" that while the Corinthians spend nothing on him, he spends himself on them! Compare *2 Cor. 12:14-15*.

**19. I am a free man.** See *verse 1* and note. **In order to win.** There is a special beauty in this verse. Slaves worked for their masters without pay, and jumped to obey their every wish! Paul, in preaching the Good News, makes himself a slave by refusing to take pay from those he works to turn to Christ, also he limits his own freedom by following their prejudices and weaknesses (where he can do this without violating the Law of Christ). He does this to win as many to Christ as possible!

as possible. <sup>20</sup>While working with the Jews, I live like a Jew in order to win them; and even though I myself am not subject to the Law of Moses, I live as though I were, when working with those who are, in order to win them. <sup>21</sup>In the same way, when with Gentiles I live like a Gentile, outside the Jewish Law, in order to win Gentiles. This does not mean that I don't obey God's law; I am really under Christ's law. <sup>22</sup>Among the weak in faith I become weak like one of them, in order to win them. So I become all things to all men, that I may save some of them by any means possible.

<sup>23</sup>All this I do for the gospel's sake, in order to share in its blessings. <sup>24</sup>Surely you know that in a race all the runners take part in it, but only one of them wins the prize. Run, then, in such a way as to win the prize. <sup>25</sup>Every athlete in training submits to strict discipline; he does so in order to be crowned with a wreath that will not last; but

win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown of laurel that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last for-

**20. While working with the Jews.** Paul shows us how he *identified* with those he worked among. When he worked with Jews, he was as Jewish as anyone could be. He followed their dietary laws, attended their feasts (*Acts 21:26*), and had Timothy circumcised (*Acts 16:3*). But in doing this, he did not compromise *one truth* of the gospel! [Compare *Gal. 2:3-5, 14.*]

**21. When with Gentiles.** Only the Jews had The Law, so everyone else was a Gentile. Neither Paul nor any Christian preacher, was an *enforcer* of the Law (*compare Acts 15:19-21*). When Paul was in Athens (*Acts 17*), he spoke to the people there as a *Gentile!* He "forgot" his *Jewishness*, yet he never forgot Christ's law!

**22. Among the weak in faith.** Who still believe some things are sins which are perfectly lawful. An example of this is the vegetarian (*Rom. 14:1-3*). Paul advised the *strong* to adapt themselves to the *weak* (*1 Cor. 8*). So I become all things to all men. Paul speaks of no unchristian compromise with human wisdom, but in things which were harmless and pure, he became like them. Anyone who expects to turn people to Christ, must share their culture and customs, but not their sins.

**23. All this I do for the gospel's sake.** When Paul made himself everybody's slave, it was for one purpose: to promote the gospel! Compare *Phil. 3:7-14*. Every Christian ought to have this as their highest priority of life: *to promote the gospel!*

**24. Surely you know.** Paul uses symbolism that they understand. In a race, only the winner gets the prize. The Isthmian Games (*see introduction*) were held at Corinth. "If you run in the race, you run to win the prize!" [But in the Christian Race, the success of one does not disqualify the others.]

**25. Submits to strict discipline.** "If you expect to have a chance to win in the games, you must go into training to develop and strengthen your body." **That will last forever.** The wreath of flowers or pine leaves would soon wither and dry up. We expect to win a crown that is *eternal* (*1 Pet. 5:4*).

we do it for one that will last forever. <sup>26</sup>That is why I run straight for the finish line; that is why I am like a boxer, who does not waste his punches. <sup>27</sup>I harden my body with blows and bring it under complete control, to keep from being rejected myself after having called others to the contest.

### Warning against Idols

**10** I want you to remember, brothers, what happened to our ancestors who followed Moses. They were all under the protection of the cloud, and all passed safely through the Red Sea. <sup>2</sup>In the cloud and in the sea they were all baptized as followers of Moses. <sup>3</sup>All ate the same spiritual

ever. Therefore, I do not run <sup>26</sup> like man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man shadow boxing. No, I beat <sup>27</sup> my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

### Warnings From Israel's History

**10** For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into <sup>2</sup> Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the <sup>3</sup>

**26. That is why.** Paul has a definite goal! He runs straight for the finish line, and ignores all else! As a boxer, he wastes no time *shadow boxing!* In the games, the judges watched each contestant closely.

**27. And bring it under complete control.** Paul accepts as necessary the strict discipline of his own body, if he is to win the race. Compare *2 Cor. 12:7; 1 Pet. 4:1-2*. **To keep from being rejected.** I cannot believe that Paul had any great fear of this, even though it was a possibility. **After having called others.** At the beginning of the games, a herald called out the names of the contestants, who were then examined to be certain they were qualified to compete. After the contest, each of the competitors was again examined and judged on the basis of how well they had competed. If the judges felt they had not done their best, they were disqualified and lost the prize. Even though the victory is already won in *Christ on the cross*, we personally can be disqualified. We must try hard to make God's choice of us a permanent experience (*2 Pet. 1:10*).

**1. I want you to remember, brothers.** In the final verse of the previous chapter, Paul mentioned the possibility of himself being rejected. This is not an *unreal fear*, as the history of Israel shows. The false teacher at Corinth had taught that when you turned to Christ, you became such a *favorite* of God that He would not be angry with you if you joined in the feasts in the idol's temple. "In this way you would build good will, and save yourself from persecution." The Corinthians must have asked Paul: (1) Is it all right to join in the feasts in the idol's temple? (2) Is it all right to buy meat in the market, which has been sacrificed to idols? (3) When invited to the home of an unbeliever, could they eat meat there which had been sacrificed to an idol? *Schaff* says: "It is worthy of note that he selects his examples from that part of Israelitish history which has an analogy in the baptismal commencement and the eucharistic nourishment of the Christian life."

**2. They were all baptized as followers of Moses.** Scholars see in *being under the cloud* and *passing safely through the sea* the double-process of SUBMERSION and EMERGENCE in baptism. Compare note on *Acts 8:38-39*. In this act, they committed themselves to the leadership of Moses, showed their belief in his *divine* mission, and entered through him into fellowship with God. All this is symbolic of the one who becomes a Christian by escaping from the slavery of sin, who commits himself to the leadership of Christ, and shows his belief in the *divine* mission of Christ by being "buried with him in baptism" (see *Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27*).

**3. All ate.** The *manna* (*Exod. 16:15*) is called "spiritual bread" because it was given to them in a supernatural way, and because it was symbolic of the spiritual bread of Christians (the words of Christ, see note on *John 6:51*).

bread, <sup>4</sup>and all drank the same spiritual drink. They drank from that spiritual rock that went along with them; and that rock was Christ himself. <sup>5</sup>But even then God was not pleased with most of them, and so their dead bodies were scattered over the desert.

<sup>6</sup>Now, all these things are examples for us, to warn us not to desire evil things, as they did, <sup>7</sup>nor to worship idols, as some of them did. As the scripture says, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to dance." <sup>8</sup>We must not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them fell dead. <sup>9</sup>We must not put the Lord to the test, as some of them did—and they were killed by the snakes. <sup>10</sup>You must not complain, as some of them did—and they were destroyed by the Angel of Death.

same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, so their bodies were scattered over the desert.

Now these things occurred as examples, to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some 10 of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

4. **And all drank.** Water was given to them in a supernatural way (*Exod. 17:6; Num. 20:11*). **That went along with them.** From this rock (Christ) they drank *in spirit*, while their bodies drank from the water flowing at their feet. The rock that went along with them was *not symbolic* of Christ, but was *Christ himself!* See *John 7:37*.

5. **But even then.** "All" were baptized, "all" ate, "all" drank. But in spite of the blessing from God, most of them did not please God, as Paul goes on to show us in *verses 7-10*.

6. **All these things are examples for us.** We clearly see human nature in the things these people did! They turned away from God, and ran after evil. They had been slaves for four centuries in Egypt. They still thought like slaves, and desired the evil things of Egypt. The application is that we have all been slaves to sin, but we must not allow our desire for the evil of sin to turn us away from God!

7. **Nor to worship idols.** Israel turned to idols in the desert. (*Exod. 32:1-6*), and worshiped the golden calf. The Corinthians had turned from idols to become Christians (compare *1 Thess. 1:9* and note). There was real danger to them from their old ways. **To eat and drink.** At a feast honoring the golden calf. **And got up to dance.** This dancing was one of the rituals by which the pagans worshiped their gods. The Israelites worshiped the golden calf in this way (*Exod. 32:19*).

8. **We must not commit sexual immorality.** *Immorality* is a sex act involving someone other than the lawful spouse. It includes acts between woman and woman; between man and man; and between a man and a woman who are not married to each other. The technical term is "fornication." This was a very common sin in Corinth. See note on *1 Cor. 5:1*. [The incident Paul refers to is found in *Num. 25:1-10*.]

9. **We must not put the Lord.** [The Latin Vulgate has "Christ."] See *Num. 21:4-6* for this incident. The point is we must not allow our hardships to make us discontent, nor yearn for the sinful pleasures of the old life.

10. **You must not complain.** This happened when the spies reported the size and strength of the inhabitants of Canaan. See *Num. 13:30 - 14:14*. The real problem was that they did not really believe God.

<sup>11</sup>All these things happened to them as examples for others, and they were written down as a warning for us. For we live at the time when the end is about to come.

<sup>12</sup>Whoever thinks he is standing up had better be careful that he does not fall. <sup>13</sup>Every temptation that has come your way is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your power to resist; at the time you are tempted he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out.

<sup>14</sup>So then, my dear friends, keep away from the worship of idols. <sup>15</sup>I speak to you as sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. <sup>16</sup>The cup of blessing for which we give thanks to God: do we not share in the blood of Christ when we

These things happened to 11 them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No 12 temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

#### Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper

Therefore, my dear 14 friends, flee from idolatry. I 15 speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. Is not the cup of thanks- 16 giving for which we give thanks a participation in the

11. **All these things happened to them as examples.** Compare *verse 6*. The story of these things serves as a lesson for all time. We may not sin expecting that because we are God's people, he will not punish us. After he had rescued Israel from Egypt, he still punished those who sinned. **For we live at a time.**

(1) The end or termination of the Jewish Age was about fifteen years away. (2) Both Jewish and Gentile history converged (under God's direction) in Christianity (*Acts 15:15-18; 17:26-28*). (3) *The Last Days* began at Pentecost (*Acts 2:16-17*). This is the *New Age of Matt. 19:28* (see note there).

12. **Whoever.** The one who stands with such confidence on the grace of God, that he thinks he can sin and *get away with it*, is in for a *fall!* The one who turns inward to his own personal experience and trusts in that, will have little to sustain him in the time of hard testing! The only safe way is to put our faith in *Christ on the cross!*

13. **Every temptation.** The Corinthians may have thought their temptations were unusually severe. To show they had no excuse for joining in the feasts in the idol's temple to escape persecution, Paul says this is only the kind of temptation that normally comes to people. **But God keeps his promise.** Temptation does not come from God (*James 1:12-15*), but God *limits it*. **Beyond your power to resist.** "God will not allow anything to come your way that you and He together cannot overcome." **With a way out.** With each temptation comes a way to either bear it or escape it. "*Every problem contains an opportunity, and every opportunity contains a problem.*" Compare note on *Acts 28:16*.

14. **Keep away from the worship of idols.** Drunkenness and immorality were part of the idol's worship. The only way to deal with this was to *keep away* from it!!!

15. **I speak to you as sensible people.** "I want to show you that eating the sacrifice in the idol's temple is real worshiping of the idol."

16. **The cup of blessing.** By this he means the fruit of the grape which is used in the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal). [At this point in time, *any Christian man* had the *AUTHORITY* to give thanks to God for the cup and the bread.] **Do we not share?** We share or participate in all the blessings bought for us by the

drink from this cup? And the bread we break: do we not share in the body of Christ when we eat this bread? <sup>17</sup>Because there is the one bread, all of us, though many, are one body, because we all share the same loaf.

<sup>18</sup>Consider the Hebrew people; those who eat what is offered in sacrifice share in the altar's service to God. <sup>19</sup>What do I mean? That an idol or the food offered to it really amounts to anything? <sup>20</sup>No! What I am saying is that what is sacrificed on pagan altars is offered to demons, not to God. And I do not want you to be partners with demons. <sup>21</sup>You cannot drink from the Lord's cup and also from the cup of demons; you cannot eat at the Lord's table and also at

blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of

blood/death of Christ. [If the contents of the cup became *literal blood*, this would conflict with *Acts 15:20*.] Paul shows that by sharing and participating in the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal), they were by this proclaiming they had the same object of worship, the same faith, the same hope, and the same character as those with whom they united in this act of religion. **The body of Christ** is his church (*Eph. 1:23*). See what Paul says in the next verse.

17. **Because there is one bread.** Pauls shows here how vital to the church is the sharing/participating in the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal). This was being *defiled* by their taking part in the idol's feasts. [Since Jesus built only *one church* (one spiritual congregation of the saved), the *one bread* and *one cup* are a symbolic/reality of the *oneness* with God which we have through the death of Christ.] *Lipscomb* says: "We who partake [participate] are members individually, but we constitute one body of Christ because we all draw our life from the blood and partake of one bread, the body of Christ. So we are *one* body in Christ."

18. **Consider the Hebrew people.** Part of each sacrifice was eaten by those who served in the temple, and part burnt on the altar to God. By doing this they shared with God, in the sacrifice. The false teacher (who was also a Jew) had advised the Corinthian Christians to eat the idol sacrifices (in the idol's temple). Those who did this were *sharing* in the idol's sacrifice.

19. **What do I mean?** "Am I saying that an idol is a real "God," or that a sacrifice to an idol is a sacrifice to a real "God?"

20. **No!** He strongly denies the *reality* of the idol (see *1 Cor. 8:4-6*). **Is offered to demons.** The demons were the spirits of dead men. The "gods" of the Gentiles were mostly dead kings and heroes who had been "*made gods*." In the minds of those who worshiped them, they were *real*!

21. **You cannot drink.** In the pagan sacrifices, before the priests poured the wine on the sacrifice, they tasted it themselves and held it out to those who brought the sacrifice, for them to taste it also, and so share in the sacrifice. Sharing in the one prevents sharing in the other! **You cannot eat.** The idol's sacrifices were eaten on a table in the idol's temple, which was the *table of demons* in contrast to the *Lord's table* [from which the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) was served]. God is worshiped out of a holy life; the idol is worshiped out of an unholy life!



the table of demons. <sup>22</sup>Or do we want to make the Lord jealous? Do we think that we are stronger than he?

<sup>23</sup>"We are allowed to do anything," so they say. Yes, but not everything is good. "We are allowed to do anything"—but not everything is helpful. <sup>24</sup>No one should be looking out for his own interests, but for the interests of others.

<sup>25</sup>You are free to eat anything sold in the meat market, without asking any questions because of conscience. <sup>26</sup>For, as the scripture says, "The earth and everything in it belong to the Lord."

<sup>27</sup>If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you decide to go, eat what is set before you without asking any questions because of conscience.

<sup>28</sup>But if someone tells you, "This is food that was offered to idols," then do not eat that food, for the sake of the one who told you so and for conscience' sake—<sup>29</sup>that is, not your own conscience, but the other man's conscience.

"Well, then," someone asks, "why should my freedom to act be limited by another person's

demons. Are we trying to <sup>22</sup>arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

#### The Believer's Freedom

"Everything is permissible"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is constructive. No <sup>24</sup>body should seek his own good, but the good of others.

Eat anything sold in the <sup>25</sup>meat market without raising questions of conscience, for, <sup>26</sup>"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

If some unbeliever invites <sup>27</sup>you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. But <sup>28</sup>if anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience' sake—the other <sup>29</sup>man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by a-

22. Or do we want to make the Lord jealous? As sensible men, they must see the *absurdity*, as well as the *danger*, in such double-dealing. Jehovah is a jealous God (*Exod. 20:5*). He will not share his worshipers with demons!

23. We are allowed to do anything. This was a *slogan* of the Corinthian church (see note on *1 Cor. 6:12*). Yes, but. Christian liberty must be limited to make it both kind and helpful. Even though we may be allowed to do something, the effect on others could make it a sin (*1 Cor. 8:1-3, 9, 12, 13*).

24. But for the interests of others. Selfishness will destroy us; unselfishness will make us strong! Compare *1 Cor. 13:5; Rom. 14:7; 15:2; Gal. 6:2; Phil. 2:1-4*.

25. Anything sold in the meat market. No one could be suspected of idol worship because he bought meat in the meat market. This was completely separated from the idol's temple and the worship of demons. Without asking any questions. Do not make yourself worry needlessly.

26. For, as the scripture says. He quotes *Psalms 24:1* to show that no demon has any claim on the earth and everything in it! Compare *1 Tim. 4:3-5*.

27. If an unbeliever. The Christian is not required to cut himself off from society (see *1 Cor. 5:9-13* and notes). Without asking any questions. Because of your knowledge that the earth belongs to the Lord (verse 26).

28. But if someone tells you. Then don't eat it; not because the food is *defiled*, but because of the conscience of the *unbeliever*.

29. But the other man's conscience. "You know that eating such food is not worshipping the idol. But if the unbeliever (or a weak brother) sees you do this when you *know* it has been sacrificed to the idol, he will think you a hypocrite and you cannot lead him to Christ."

conscience? <sup>30</sup>If I thank God for my food, why should anyone criticize me about food for which I give thanks?"

<sup>31</sup>Well, whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all for God's glory. <sup>32</sup>Live in such a way as to cause no trouble either to Jews, or Gentiles, or to the church of God. <sup>33</sup>Just do as I do; I try to please everyone in all that I do, with no thought of my own good, but for the good of all, so that they might be saved.

**11** Imitate me, then, just as I imitate Christ.

### Covering the Head in Worship

<sup>2</sup>I praise you, because you always remember me and follow the teachings that I have handed on to you. <sup>3</sup>But I want you to understand that Christ is supreme over every man, the husband is supreme over his wife, and God is supreme

another's conscience? If I <sup>30</sup>take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

So whether you eat or <sup>31</sup>drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to <sup>32</sup>stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—even as I try to please <sup>33</sup>everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

**11** Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

### Propriety in Worship

I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you.

Now I want you to realize <sup>3</sup>that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the

30. **If I thank God?** "If I can eat this with a clear conscience, why should I allow someone else to limit my freedom to act?"

31. **Do it all for God's glory.** This is the answer to the whole question of Christian ethics. (1) Do it with thanks to God; (2) Be helpful to weak brothers; (3) Follow God's rules.

32. **As to cause no trouble.** Do nothing that would cause a scandal or create prejudice.

33. **Just do as I do.** Where no principle of Truth was involved, Paul tried to please everyone! See *1 Cor. 9:19-23* and notes.

1. **Just as I imitate Christ.** Christ alone is the perfect model. This ties in with verse 33 of chapter 10.

2. **I praise you.** Paul's praise for them is sincere and truthful. But there may be some irony in it, and he may be quoting something which they said in their letter to him. In the next verses, he scolds them strongly. [From the things Paul writes, it seems that some of the Corinthian women prayed and spoke God's message as teachers, in the Christian assemblies. MacKnight thinks they only pretended to be inspired, but compare *Acts 2:17; 21:9* and notes. At Corinth, decent women wore a face-veil which covered both their head and face. (Among the Jews, it was usually only prostitutes who did this. See *Gen. 38:14-15*.) While teaching in public, these women had thrown off their face-veils, like the prostitute-priestesses in the idol temples. This caused trouble (see Paul's instruction in *1 Cor. 10:32*.)

3. **Christ is supreme.** He is the "one Lord" of created nature (*1 Cor. 8:6*), therefore superior to every created thing, including the man (male). **The husband is supreme.** This is God's decree: "And he will rule over you" (*Gen. 3:16*). However, notice that both are *one* in Christ (*Gal. 3:28*). The order of rank stands: God / Christ / man / woman.

over Christ. <sup>4</sup>So a man who prays or speaks God's message in public worship with his head covered disgraces Christ. <sup>5</sup>And any woman who prays or speaks God's message in public worship with nothing on her head disgraces her husband; there is no difference between her and a woman whose head has been shaved. <sup>6</sup>If the woman does not cover her head, she might as well cut her hair. And since it is a shameful thing for a woman to shave her head or cut her hair, she should cover her head. <sup>7</sup>A man has no need to cover his head, because he reflects the image and glory of God. But woman reflects the glory of man; <sup>8</sup>for man was not created from woman, but woman from man. <sup>9</sup>Nor was man created for woman's sake, but woman was created for man's sake. <sup>10</sup>On account of the angels, then, a woman should have a covering over her head to

head of Christ is God. Every 4  
man who prays or prophesies with his head covered 5  
dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head 6  
uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved. If a 7  
woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a 8  
disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her 9  
head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; 10  
but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither 1  
was man created for woman, but woman for man. For 2  
this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority 3  
on her head.

4. **So a man.** At Corinth, a man who prayed or spoke God's message with his head covered (with a face-veil) would disgrace Christ. Pagan priests covered their heads. [However, Jewish priests did too. See *Exod. 28:40*.] Both men and women ought to dress in such a way that they do not violate the customs and standards of decency in whatever country they live in.

5. **And any woman.** Paul does not forbid their praying or speaking in public worship, but he does say they disgrace their husbands by doing it unveiled, when they live in Corinth. **There is no difference.** Eastern women were very proud of their long hair. It would be a disgrace to shave their head.

6. **If the woman does not cover her head.** "If a woman prefers to have her head bare, she should remove her hair also. If doing that would disgrace her, then she should wear the face-veil." At Corinth, women wore two coverings on their heads: their hair (*verse 15*) and a face-veil (*verse 5*). Jewish women wore only the covering of hair. [See C. R. Nichol's book: *God's Woman*.]

7. **A man has no need.** At Corinth, the face-veil was symbolic of being lower in rank. In this whole section, we must remember Paul deals with Eastern ideas of the relationship of men and women. At Corinth it would be as wrong for a man to have his head veiled, as it would be for a woman to have hers unveiled. [Yet Jewish men covered their heads at prayer (compare *2 Cor. 3:14-16*), and it is probable that some Christian Jews continued to do this.]

8. **But woman from man:** In Creation, the male was first and the female was made from him. Paul also says this in *1 Tim. 2:13-14*. [Yet BOTH are in the image of God (*Gen. 1:26-27*).]

9. **But woman was created for man's sake.** "And God the Eternal said: It is not good, that the man is alone; I will create to him a companion-counterpart to him." (Zamenhof's version of *Gen. 2:18*) Compare also *1 Cor. 7:3-5* and notes.

10. **On account of the angels.** This phrase has puzzled scholars. It may mean: (1) Because Eve was seduced to sin by evil angels (*1 Tim. 2:14*). [*MacKnight*.] (2) To show respect to the preacher/church leader - who is called the angel in *Rev. 1:20*. (3) Because the good angels watch with interest all that is done by Christ's servants (*1 Cor. 4:9*). (4) If we change AGGELOUS to AGGELLAS, the phrase would read *during the preaching*. But there is no authority to do this! **That she is under her husband's authority.** At Corinth, a woman wore a face-veil *everywhere* (except the privacy of her own home) to show she was under the man's authority. This custom has been kept up in Arab lands until just recently.

show that she is under husband's authority. <sup>11</sup>In our life in the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. <sup>12</sup>For as woman was made from man, in the same way man is born of woman; and all things come from God.

<sup>13</sup>Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God in public worship with nothing on her head? <sup>14</sup>Why, nature itself teaches you that long hair is a disgraceful thing for a man, <sup>15</sup>but is a woman's pride. Her long hair has been given her to serve as a covering. <sup>16</sup>But if anyone wants to argue about it, all I have to say is that neither we nor the churches of God have any other custom in worship.

In the Lord, however, <sup>11</sup>woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as <sup>12</sup>woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Judge for yourselves: <sup>13</sup>Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not the <sup>14</sup>very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long <sup>15</sup>hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. If anyone wants to <sup>16</sup>be contentious about this, have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

11-12. **In our life in the Lord.** By God's decree, the one cannot exist without the other. Woman is subordinate, but not inferior. In the pagan world, woman was a slave, often not much better off than an animal. In Christ she is raised to her rightful place and stands with man as his *counterpart*. See note on *1 Tim. 2:15*. The terms of salvation are the same for both!

13. **Judge for yourselves.** "You are sensible people. Think how this looks to others." **Is it proper?** By your own standards of conduct and custom. [Note that Hannah prayed in the temple without a face-veil (*1 Sam. 1:12-13*).]

14. **Why, nature itself teaches you.** PHYSIS - nature - is translated *own free will* in *Rom. 2:14*. Thayer says it means here: *the native sense of propriety* [decency]. *Short* and *long* are relative terms, but it is universal that men wear their hair shorter and women longer. [Some think the *homosexual prostitutes* (male) at Corinth wore long, flowing hair. But so did the *Nazarites* in the Jewish world (*Num. 6:5*).] At Corinth, it would have violated *1 Cor. 10:32* for a man to wear long hair, or a woman to go outside her house without wearing a face-veil.

15. **But is a woman's pride.** This is in contrast to what he says in *verse 14*. While long hair would disgrace a man, it is a source of pride to a woman. **As a covering.** To identify her as a woman and to show her relationship to man. C. R. Nichol writes: "Custom today calls for shorter hair than it did in the days of my boyhood; yet women's hair dressed in the style of today is as identifying and serves as a covering as it did when women wore it long. In Corinth there were some who would dictate the length of woman's hair, and today there are some who speak as though they were authority, and dictate the length necessary for a woman to have her hair, else she will never enter heaven." [This whole question of woman's role in Christianity is discussed in C. R. Nichol's book, *God's Woman*.]

16. **But if anyone wants to argue about it.** Paul says this to the false teacher and his party. They argued that Christian freedom allowed the women who prayed and spoke God's message in public worship to do this without wearing the face-veil. John Wesley writes: "The several churches that were in the apostles' time had different customs in things that were not essential; and that under one and the same apostle, as circumstances, in different places, made it convenient. And in all things merely indifferent the custom of each place was of sufficient weight to determine prudent and peaceable men. Yet even this cannot overrule a scrupulous conscience, which really doubts whether the thing be indifferent or not. But those who are referred to here by the apostle were contentious, not conscientious, persons."

### The Lord's Supper

<sup>17</sup>In the following instructions, however, I do not praise you; because your church meetings actually do more harm than good. <sup>18</sup>In the first place, I have been told that there are opposing groups in your church meetings; and this I believe is partly true. <sup>19</sup>(No doubt there must be divisions among you so that the ones who are in the right may be clearly seen.) <sup>20</sup>When you meet together as a group, you do not come to eat the Lord's Supper. <sup>21</sup>For as you eat, each one goes ahead with his own meal, so that some

### The Lord's Supper

In the following directives 17 I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first 18 place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there 19 have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. When you come together, it 20 is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of 21 you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, an-

17. **In the following instructions, however.** He cannot praise their attitude. **Actually do more harm.** One purpose of their church meetings was to unite them more closely to the Lord, and to each other. But their church meetings were disrupted by "feuding and fussing"

18. **In the first place.** First was "opposing groups in your church meetings;" second was misuse of spiritual gifts (*chapter 12*). **Opposing groups.** This is the key to what he says about the Lord's Supper. It also helps if we will remember that the church of the first few centuries ate the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) in the context or setting of a fellowship meal (see note on *Acts 20:7*). *Tertullian* describes these ancient fellowship meals (love suppers). *MacKnight* says: "Christ having instituted his Supper after he had eaten the passover, his disciples very early made it a rule to feast together before they ate the Lord's Supper. The feasts were called (AGAPAI, Charitates) *Love feasts*. They are mentioned in *Jude ver. 12*, and also by some of the ancient Christian writers." These fellowship meals were continued in the church until the middle of the fourth century. At that time they were prohibited. The Roman Catholic church developed the idea of "fasting communion" (no food between midnight and the taking of the Communion).

19. **(No doubt there must be divisions.)** Because of human nature, such things could not be avoided, but this did not make them right. However, by our reaction to such things, we demonstrate our faith and love for God and our fellow Christians to clearly see! Compare *1 Cor. 1:10-17* and notes.

20. **As a group.** In scripture, the *church* is NEVER the building, but always the *group* of people. **You do not come.** When they came together as a group, normally they would first eat their fellowship meal; then later they would eat the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) as part of their worship (see note on *verse 18*). **You do not come.** This can mean: (1) They omitted the Lord's Supper; (2) Their conduct disqualified their eating the Lord's Supper.

21. **For as you eat.** *Johnson* says: "It was customary in Corinth to eat a meal together as did Christ and his disciples the night of the Lord's Supper. After this came the Lord's Supper. At this meal each party in Corinth sat apart and ate when it [the party] was ready. The result was that some began before others. One would be hungry and *another drunken*. This last phrase means that he had eaten and was satisfied." This distorted the very purpose of the fellowship meal. *Benson* writes: "They were called *love feasts* or suppers, because the richer Christians brought in a variety of provisions to feed the poor, the fatherless, the widows, and strangers, and ate with them to show their love to them." Due to conditions in the first century, the fellowship meal would be the only "square meal" many of the poor would have during the week!

are hungry while others get drunk. <sup>22</sup>Don't you have your own homes in which to eat and drink? Or would you rather despise the church of God and put to shame the people who are in need? What do you expect me to say to you about this? Should I praise you? Of course I do not praise you!

<sup>23</sup>For from the Lord I received the teaching that I passed on to you: that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took the bread, <sup>24</sup>gave thanks to God, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in memory of me." <sup>25</sup>In the same way, he took the cup after the supper and said, "This cup is God's new covenant, sealed with my blood. Whenever you

other gets drunk. Don't you <sup>22</sup> have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!

For I received from the <sup>23</sup> Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he <sup>24</sup> had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after <sup>25</sup> supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it,

**22. Don't you have your own homes?** It is plain from *Jude 12* that Paul is not here condemning "eating in the church building." What he condemns is the fact that they split up into groups and so distort the very purpose of the fellowship meal and the *Lord's Supper*. **Despise the church of God.** This causes problems only because our English language uses *church* to mean "the building in which you worship." If you will substitute *group* for *church*, you will get the correct meaning. *Lipscomb* says: "If they had a feast in public, brotherly love for each other would have suggested a common table at which all would have fared alike, and as a consequence those without food at home would have had their wants supplied. The course pursued caused shame to the poor and left them hungry." See note on *verse 33*.

**23. For from the Lord.** Paul repeats this account of the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) to show that their competitive spirit (*verse 19*) was out of harmony with the holy purpose of this rite. **That I passed on to you.** He had told them this while he was at Corinth. **That the Lord Jesus.** He himself founded this rite. **Was betrayed.** Compare *Luke 9:31*. **Took the bread.** Both the bread and the wine commonly used in Passover formed the elements of this new rite.

**24. Gave thanks to God.** EUCARISTESAS = gave thanks. *Eucharist* is a good Bible word. It appears some fifty-five times in its various forms in the Greek Testament. Applied to the Lord's Supper, it paints a picture of "looking up to Christ in praise and thanksgiving for what He has done!" **This is my body.** Jesus says this as he stands before them. Therefore we take these words as symbolic (see *verse 26*). See notes on *John 6:53-56*. **Which is for you.** See *Heb. 10:20*. **Do this in memory of me.** The Holy Meal (Lord's Supper) is a living memorial to *Christ on the cross!* We should also think of it as a "fellowship meal with CHRIST" in much the same sense as the meal of *John 21:12-13*. It is also a VICTORY CELEBRATION!

**25. This cup is God's new covenant.** Jesus says this as he stands before them. Therefore we take these words as symbolic (see *verse 26*). **Sealed with my blood.** See *Heb. 9:15*. *MacKnight* says: "Our Lord did not mean, that the new covenant was made at the time he shed his blood; it was made immediately after the fall, on account of the merits of his obedience to the death, which God then considered as accomplished, because it was certainly to be accomplished at the time determined." Compare *Rom. 5:18* and note.

drink it, do it in memory of me." <sup>26</sup>For until the Lord comes, you proclaim his death whenever you eat this bread and drink from this cup.

<sup>27</sup>It follows, then, that if anyone eats the Lord's bread or drinks from his cup in a way that dishonors him, he is guilty of sin against the Lord's body and blood. <sup>28</sup>So then, everyone should examine himself first, and then eat the bread and drink from the cup. <sup>29</sup>For if he does not recognize the meaning of the Lord's body when he eats the bread and drinks from the cup, he brings judgment on himself as he eats and drinks. <sup>30</sup>That is why many of you are sick and weak, and several have died. <sup>31</sup>If we would examine ourselves first, we would not come under God's judgment. <sup>32</sup>But we are judged and punished by the Lord, so that we shall not be condemned together with the world.

in remembrance of me." For <sup>26</sup>whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Therefore, whoever eats <sup>27</sup>the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man <sup>28</sup>ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For <sup>29</sup>anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many <sup>30</sup>among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we <sup>31</sup>judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the <sup>32</sup>Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

**26. For until the Lord comes.** Christians are to share in the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) **PERPETUALLY** until Jesus comes and the dead are raised to life! **You proclaim his death.** *Christ on the cross* is the center of Christianity (see note on *1 Cor. 1:23*). The bread symbolizes his body of flesh; the fruit of the grape symbolizes his blood.

**27. It follows, then.** "Because this is a holy rite." **In a way that dishonors him.** We can do this by: (1) eating it as a *common meal*; (2) eating it as the *bond of a faction* (party, schism); (3) eating it to promote some *wordly purpose*. **He is guilty of sin.** To share in this rite with an *unholy frame of reference* is to profane or blaspheme the Lord's body and blood!

**28. Everyone should examine himself first.** To be certain that his frame of reference is holy. *MacKnight* says: "First, whether he comes to this service [rite] to keep up the memory of Christ: Secondly, whether he is moved to do so by a grateful sense of Christ's love in dying for men: Thirdly, whether he comes with a firm purpose of doing honor to Christ, by living in all respects conformably to his precepts and example."

**29. For if he does not recognize.** If he is not aware of the true religious meaning of *Christ on the cross* memorialized in the bread and wine. **He brings judgment on himself.** Punishment. See *verse 30*.

**30. That is why.** The judgment mentioned in *verse 29*. *MacKnight* and others think that God was bringing physical punishments on them because of their unholy attitude (such as *Acts 5:5*). *Lipscomb* says: "Some commentators have applied the expression to physical disease and death; but spiritual neglect must bring spiritual penalties. Many had grown indifferent and some had lost interest in Christ and their duties to him."

**31. If we would examine ourselves first.** As sensible people we can each examine ourselves, using God's Word as the *yardstick*. In this way we can correct our own lives and avoid God's judgement.

**32. But we are judged and punished.** Because God does love us and wants us to succeed in the Christian life, he judges and punishes us in many ways. This certainly sounds like physical punishments (see note on *verse 30*), and we can find a parallel in Paul's own life (*2 Cor. 12:7*). But be careful that you understand this is God's love in action, not his wrath. Compare *Heb. 12:5-11*; *1 Thess. 3:3* and notes. "I know that your rules are righteous, Lord, and that you punished me because you are faithful!" (*Psalms 119:75*).

<sup>33</sup>So then, my brothers, when you gather together to eat the Lord's meal, wait for one another. <sup>34</sup>And if anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that you will not come under God's judgment as you meet together. As for the other matters, I will settle them when I come.

### Gifts from the Holy Spirit

**12** Now, the matter about the gifts from the Holy Spirit.

I want you to know the truth about them, my brothers. <sup>2</sup>You know that while you were still heathen you were controlled by dead idols, who always led you astray. <sup>3</sup>You must realize, then, that no one who is led by God's Spirit can

So then, my brothers, <sup>33</sup> when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If <sup>34</sup> anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

And when I come I will give further directions.

### Spiritual Gifts

**12** Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. You know that when you <sup>2</sup> were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to dumb idols. Therefore I tell you <sup>3</sup> that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says,

**33. So then, my brothers.** *The Lord's meal* includes both the fellowship meal and the Lord's Supper. Although they were separate and distinct from each other, both were holy. *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "TO PHAGEIN embraces the entire Church Supper." **Wait for one another.** As soon as they entered the meeting-place with their food, they immediately began to eat it, like diners in a restaurant; and the *rich* (verse 22) ate as fast as they could to avoid sharing with the poor! This means: (1) do not split up into competing groups; (2) the fellowship meal is for fellowship, and is *holy* as it unites the group; (3) you should *unite* in eating the Lord's Supper to *memorialize* Christ. See notes on verses 18 & 22.

**34. And if anyone is hungry.** *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The Church Supper is for good-fellowship, not for bodily need; to eat there like a famished man, absorbed in one's food - if nothing worse happens - is to exclude Christian and religious thoughts." **As for the other matters.** *MacKnight* takes this as other problems about the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal). *Edwards* thinks these were other *different* matters (points of external order?) which could wait until Paul came there in person.

**1. The matter about the gifts.** Supernormal gifts from the Holy Spirit were needed in the beginning, because: (1) they did not yet have the New Testament to guide them; (2) they were racing against time (*Matt. 24:14*). Many at Corinth took a superstitious view of the "gifts from the Spirit," especially the ability to speak in strange tongues. They viewed these gifts as being similar to those seen in the pagan temples, but with much greater power. [There have always been *counterfeit* gifts and miracles. Compare *Exod. 7:10-12*.] But the biggest problem at Corinth was their *competitive spirit!* Each one said his *gift* was the greatest and tried to seize the glory for himself!! And since *speaking in strange tongues* gave the most opportunity to *show off*, that was the one which everybody wanted!!! Paul's purpose is to: (1) lay down a rule-of-thumb to separate gifts from the Holy Spirit from gifts given by evil spirits (demons); (2) to show the diversity in the gifts from the Spirit.

**2. While you were still heathen.** The pagans were led by no intelligent, conscious guidance (which the Holy Spirit gives), but by an occult power (*of demons, 1 Cor. 10:19-21*) through the idol. [See introduction to First Corinthians.]

**3. A curse on Jesus.** This implies that some who claimed to have God's Spirit had said that Jesus was a phony (an impostor) who deserved the death he died. *MacKnight* thinks these might have been Jewish Exorcists (see note on *Acts 19:13*). Probably the pagan priests and priestesses did this. The experiences of their old life had not prepared the Corinthians to understand the workings of God's Spirit. They knew how men could be "carried away" by supernatural influences. They want a criterion, a *yardstick*



say, "A curse on Jesus!", and no one can confess "Jesus is Lord," unless he is guided by the Holy Spirit.

"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. <sup>5</sup>There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. <sup>6</sup>There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to everyone for their service. <sup>7</sup>The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each one, for the good of all. <sup>8</sup>The Spirit gives one man a message of wisdom, while to another man the same Spirit gives a message of knowledge. <sup>9</sup>One and the same Spirit gives faith to one man, while to another man he gives

"Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

Now to each man the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the ability to speak with wisdom, to another the ability to speak with knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to

to test those who claimed inspiration. *A curse on Jesus, Jesus is Lord* are the battle cries of the spirits of error and truth. Only an evil spirit will say *a curse on Jesus*. Only the Holy Spirit leads one to say *Jesus is Lord*. *MacKnight* limits this verse to those who speak under supernatural circumstances. "But a person who only speaks, as a passive instrument, what is supernaturally suggested to him, cannot declare *Jesus Lord*, except the suggestion comes from the Holy Spirit."

4. **There are different kinds.** "Because the spiritual gifts all come from the one Spirit, they are all equally *divine*, even though different."

5. **Different ways of serving.** Each of the *gifts from the Spirit* makes it possible for the one who has them to serve both God and the messianic community. As they *serve*, all who have *gifts from the Spirit* are equal.

6. **Different abilities to perform service.** The same God is the source of authority for each who has the *gifts from the Spirit*, therefore all are equal. The whole point of *verses 4-6* is that (1) there are different gifts; (2) there are different ways of serving; (3) there are different abilities to perform service; (4) but since these things come from the *one* God and the Holy Spirit, all who have these are equally honored by them. No one can feel his gift is more important than all the others.

7. **For the good of all.** No gift from the Spirit is intended to bring glory to the one who has it. The purpose for these gifts is *for the good of all* (compare *Eph. 4:12-13*). [*2 Tim. 1:6* implies that: (1) the spiritual gifts came through the apostles; (2) that each was given only *one* gift. The apostles had all the gifts. In each congregation, the total variety of gifts would be shared by different individuals.] See note on *verse 11*.

8. **The Spirit gives one man.** Remember: the New Testament as we have it did not yet exist. Supernormal gifts were needed to permit the church to grow rapidly. **A message of wisdom.** The commands of Christ. See *Matt. 28:20*. **A message of knowledge.** A complete knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures. The true meaning of the Old Testament was given to them, so they could use this to prove the claims of Christ. Compare *1 Pet. 1:10-12*.

9. **Gives faith.** Not the faith which comes through hearing the gospel (*Rom. 10:17*). Faith, as a gift from the Spirit, was: (1) supernatural boldness and courage (*Matt. 10:19-20; Luke 21:15; Acts 4:31; 6:10*); (2) faith which led spiritual men to perform miracles (*Matt. 17:20; 1 Cor. 13:2; 1 Thess. 1:5*). **The power to heal.** The ability to heal diseases was used to authenticate the message of Christ. Compare *Acts 19:11-12* - but notice also those whom Paul did not heal (*2 Tim. 4:10; Phil. 2:25-27; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Cor. 12:7-9*).

the power to heal. <sup>10</sup>The Spirit gives one man the power to work miracles; to another, the gift of speaking God's message; and to yet another, the ability to tell the difference between gifts that come from the Spirit and those that do not. To one man he gives the ability to speak in strange tongues, and to another he gives the ability to explain what is said. <sup>11</sup>But it is one and the same Spirit who does all this; he gives a different gift to each man, as he wishes.

### One Body with Many Parts

<sup>12</sup>Christ is like a single body, which has many parts; it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts. <sup>13</sup>In the same way, all of us, Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free men, have been baptized into the one body by the same Spirit, and we have all been given the one Spirit to drink.

another gifts of healing by 10 that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits; to another the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the 11 work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each man, just as he determines.

### One Body, Many Parts

The body is a unit, 12 though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all bap- 13 tized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

10. **The power to work miracles.** MacKnight understands this to be the ability to confer spiritual gifts on others. Only the apostles seem to have had this gift from the Spirit (see *Acts 8:14-17* and notes). **Of speaking God's message.** *Prophecy = God's message.* The prophet, under divine control, spoke the message given him (or her) by the Holy Spirit. See *Acts 15:30-32*. Sometimes the prophet told about the future (*Acts 21:10-12*). **To tell the difference.** This gift from the Spirit made it possible to *know* whether someone who claimed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit *actually was!* (Some would claim inspiration just to get glory for themselves.) Also, this gift from the Spirit made it possible to *know* which messages were true, and which were false. Not having the New testament, they needed a miraculous way to *check up* on the things that were said. **To speak in strange tongues.** By means of this gift, preachers could go into a foreign country and *immediately* speak the local language like a native. Compare *Acts 2:4-11* and notes. **The ability to explain.** This served as a check on those who spoke in strange tongues, because they could translate and verify the things which had been said. Also, they could translate the Scriptures from the *strange tongues* of Hebrew and Greek into their own languages.

11. **But it is one and the same Spirit.** These gifts, though different, came from the ONE Spirit. Each gift was necessary to *build up* the body of Christ. Each gift conferred equal honor. No one had any right to boast that his (or her) gift made them more spiritual and holy than other people. [ἑκαστὸ = *each* (man and woman).] **As he wishes.** The Spirit deals with each one receiving a gift on an individual basis. Paul wants the Corinthians to understand that it is the Holy Spirit himself who makes the choice to give or withhold each spiritual gift. Compare *verse 7*.

12. **Christ is like a single body.** Paul uses the example of the human body to show the nature of Christ (and his church). The point is *variety in unity*. Diversification of function makes possible human life. The unity of the Church is the *oneness* of a living organism where each individual has his or her own *unique* function. No one has any right to be jealous of what anyone else can do; and without this ONE, the body is not complete.

13. **In the same way.** That the body is the sum of all the parts. **Have been baptized into the one body.** The point is, that in spite of our differences of race, nationality, and social status, we all become ONE in Christ. **By the same Spirit.** See notes on *John 3:5-7*. **The one Spirit to drink.** God's gift, the Holy Spirit, which *every* Christian *drinks in*. See *Acts 2:38; 5:32* and notes.

<sup>14</sup>For the body itself is not made up of only one part, but of many parts. <sup>15</sup>If the foot were to say, "Because I am not a hand, I don't belong to the body," that would not make it stop being a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear were to say, "Because I am not an eye, I don't belong to the body," that would not make it stop being a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were just an eye, how could it hear? And if it were only an ear, how could it smell? <sup>18</sup>As it is, however, God put every different part in the body just as he wished. <sup>19</sup>There would not be a body if it were all only one part! <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many parts, and one body.

<sup>21</sup>So then, the eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" Nor can the head say to the feet, "Well, I don't need you!" <sup>22</sup>On the contrary, we cannot do without the parts of the body that

Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,

**14. For the body itself.** The human body is made up of many different parts, with different abilities and different functions.

**15. If the foot were to say.** If the foot complains because it must walk in the dust and dirt, it doesn't *change* anything because it grumbles.

**16. And if the ear were to say.** Again complaining doesn't *change* anything, because the *fact* of its function is still the same! [Bengelius thinks the *foot* symbolizes the common people in the church; the *hand*, the leaders; the *eyes*, the teachers; and the *ears*, the learners.]

**17. If the whole body.** Paul shows how absurd their jealousy of each other is, by showing what would happen to the human body if the subordinate parts were omitted.

**18. God put every different part.** In both the human body and the Church, God assigns function to each part for the good of the whole.

**19. There would not be a body.** It is only because of the different functions of each part, that the *body* can be a body.

**20. As it is.** "Facts are stubborn things!" Paul firmly states: there are many parts, and one body. Compare *1 Cor. 10:17* and note. The happiness of the *one body* results from the existence of all its parts.

**21. So then!** The hands need the guidance of the eye, and the eye needs the help of the hands. Every member of the *body* has his or her place and is *needed* by every other member of the body. And it is also true that Christ the *head* needs every *member* of his Church. This also includes the *weak* member and *bad* member because in reacting to them and disciplining them, the good members are *built up* and *matured*.

**22. We cannot do without.** In our human bodies, the brain, lungs, and intestines are easily injured, but we could more easily get along without an arm, leg, or eye, than one of these.

seem to be weaker; <sup>23</sup>and those parts that we think aren't worth very much are the ones which we treat with greater care; while the parts of the body which don't look very nice receive special attention, <sup>24</sup>which the more beautiful parts of our body do not need. God himself has put the body together in such a way as to give greater honor to those parts that lack it. <sup>25</sup>And so there is no division in the body, but all its different parts have the same concern for one another. <sup>26</sup>If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness.

<sup>27</sup>All of you, then, are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it. <sup>28</sup>In the church, then, God has put all in place: in the first place, apostles, in the second place, prophets, and in the third place, teachers; then those who perform miracles, followed by those who are given the power to heal, or to help others, or to direct them, or to

and the parts that we think <sup>23</sup>are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unrepresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part <sup>26</sup>suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of <sup>27</sup>Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of

**23. Aren't worth very much.** Certain parts of our bodies we hide from sight. **Which don't look very nice.** The generative organs.

**24. Which the more beautiful parts.** We beautify our bodies by covering up certain parts and decorating others with items of clothing. But our head, face, and hands don't need such coverings. The point is that the strong members of the church ought to work for the good of the weak, and the weak should get rid of all jealousy and envy, to work for the good of the strong. When you help the other person, you are helping yourself, since you are part of the *body*. **God himself.** This strong statement of God's work in structuring the physical organs of the human body was (and is) necessary when many thought matter was totally evil and looked at physical needs as degrading. Compare *1 Tim. 4:3; Col. 2:23; 1 Cor. 6:13; 7:3-5.*

**25-26. And so there is no division in the body.** The physical body becomes both a symbol of and a basis for the spiritual group. *Chrysostom* writes: "When the head is crowned, the whole man feels itself glorified; when the mouth speaks, the eyes laugh and are filled with gladness."

**27. Are Christ's body.** "By your baptism into union with Christ, you become part of the **ONE** church or body, of which Christ is the head, soul, and ruler; and considers things done to parts of that body as done to himself."

**28. In the church, then.** Nine spiritual gifts were named; nine positions in the church are now given. **God has put all in place.** Compare *verse 18*. **Apostles.** The Twelve, plus Paul. From them all must receive the knowledge of the gospel. They have no *replacements*, and even though dead, they still speak to us through the New Testament writings. **Prophets.** Who spoke God's message by inspiration (see note on *verse 10*). **Teachers.** Who had the gift from the Spirit to teach God's Truth. **Miracles.** Who confirm the gospel by means of miracles. **To heal diseases.** **To help.** Compare *Acts 4:36; 9:27*. Spiritual ability to encourage and to help others. **To direct.** The spiritual ability to *organize*. This might be the church-elders (leaders), or one who has the gift of being able to *tell the difference* (see *verse 10*). **To speak in strange tongues.** This is last on the list, but the Corinthians rated it the highest. See note on *verse 10*. All Paul mentions here have the spiritual gifts. Compare *Eph. 4:11*.

speaking in strange tongues. <sup>29</sup>They are not all apostles, or prophets, or teachers. Not all have the power to work miracles, <sup>30</sup>or to heal diseases, or to speak in strange tongues, or to explain what is said. <sup>31</sup>Set your hearts, then, on the more important gifts.

Best of all, however, is the following way.

**Love**

**13** I may be able to speak the languages of men and even of angels, but if I have not love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell. <sup>2</sup>I may have the gift of inspired preaching; I may have all knowledge and understand all secrets; I may have all the faith needed to move mountains—but if I have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>I may give away everything I have, and even give up my body to be burned—but if I have not love, it does me no good.

administration, and finally those speaking in different kinds of tongues. All are <sup>29</sup>apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have <sup>30</sup>gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire <sup>31</sup>the greater gifts.

**Love**

And now I will show you the most excellent way.

**13** If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I <sup>2</sup>have the gift of prophecy, and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give <sup>3</sup>all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

29-30. **They are not all.** Paul once again shows the wide variety of abilities, and the fact that each has his own special part to play in the *body*.

31. **On the more important gifts.** "Even though God has put all in place, we should eagerly desire the more important gifts. We should not be content to *speak in strange tongues*, when we could *speak God's message*, etc." **Best of all, however.** "The gifts from the Spirit are good, but there is something even better than them!"

**Chapter 13. LOVE** Love is the route to spiritual power in the church!!! Paul shows us that all talents, all gifts from the Spirit, all sacrifices - have no meaning at all UNLESS they are qualified (authenticated) by LOVE!!!

1. **To speak the languages.** The Corinthians thought the ability to speak in *strange tongues* was God's greatest gift to them. If Paul can speak every human language and even speak the language of angels, but has no love, this is worthless! Without love, the *strange tongues* are only senseless noise (such as the gong and bell which did not make a musical tone). Compare *1 Cor. 14:6-11, 23, 27, 28*.

2. **Inspired preaching** = prophecy. See note on *1 Cor. 12:10*. **All knowledge.** The secrets of the Old Testament. See note on *1 Cor. 12:8*. **Faith.** See note on *1 Cor. 12:9*. **But if I have not love.** Then I am nothing, either in the sight of God or man!

3. **I may give away.** [The NIV adds: *to the poor* - which is implied.] **Even give up my body.** To be burned for my religion. The language of this comes from *Dan. 3:28*. It points to those Christians who would die rather than turn away from Christ. **But if I have not love.** "If I am not motivated by love in this action, it does me no good, because I will be only a hypocrite!"

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous, or conceited, or proud; <sup>5</sup>love is not ill-mannered, or selfish, or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; <sup>6</sup>love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. <sup>7</sup>Love never gives up: its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

<sup>8</sup>Love is eternal. There are inspired messages, but they are temporary; there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease; there is knowledge, but it will pass. <sup>9</sup>For our gifts of knowledge and of inspired messages are only partial; <sup>10</sup>but when what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when 10 perfection comes, the im-

4. **Love is patient and kind.** Love is the *grace* which makes men most like (similar to) God. Love best prepares men to live with God in Eternity. *Milton* writes: "[love is] The golden key which opens [opens] the palace of eternity." Compare *1 John 4:17-18*. One who loves, will be patient and kind to those who do him wrong! **Love is not jealous.** It does not envy the success or blessings which others receive. **Or conceited.** It does not *show off*. **Or proud.** One who envies others, often is arrogantly proud and boastful as a defence. Love does not act this way!

5. **Love is not ill-mannered.** Does not behave in such a way as to shock good manners and morals. Love is polite. **Or selfish.** Selfishness causes irritability. One who centers all his thoughts on himself, will find no place for God. **Or irritable.** Love is not exasperated (does not "fly off the handle") at every little thing! **Does not keep a record.** This means: (1) does not hold grudges; (2) does not take revenge; (3) does not *read evil motives* into everything that people do.

6. **Not happy with evil.** Love is not pleased with the evil others do, even when it results in an advantage to itself. **Is happy with the truth.** Love is pleased by the good which others do, even when it results in a lost opportunity to itself.

7. **Love never gives up.** Even though others fail, or are weak, love does not give up, and also works to help the others. The symbolism in this verse is a *stout-hearted soldier* who helps his buddies toward the common goal. **Faith.** Here it means *faith in others*. Love looks for the best in others, and does not expect the worst. **Hope.** Hopes for the best, rather than fears the worst. **Patience.** Love *puts up with* whatever comes its way and stands firm. **Never fall.** Like a good soldier or a successful athlete, Love doesn't quit until the prize is in hand!

8. **Love is eternal.** That is, love does not terminate at some predetermined point. Paul shows us the *gifts from the Spirit* will terminate at some time. **Inspired messages** (prophecies) are temporary. **Gifts of speaking** (tongues) will cease. **Knowledge** (gifts of knowledge) will pass.

9. **Are only partial.** Our gifts are limited by the limitations placed on them. Compare *1 Pet. 1:10-11* for an example of this.

10. **But when what is perfect comes.** Most scholars believe the *perfect* will come with the *Second Coming* of Christ and our entrance into that eternal world. So Johnson, MacKnight, Expositor's Greek Testament, et. al. Paul's statement in *verse 12* points to this. But Lipscomb, et. al, take the completion of the New Testament (or the coming to maturity of the church) as the time when the *partial* will disappear. Some think the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) was the cut-off point for the gifts from the Spirit.

<sup>11</sup>When I was a child, my speech, feelings, and thinking were all those of a child; now that I am a man, I have no more use for childish ways.

<sup>12</sup>What we see now is like the dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be as complete, as God's knowledge of me.

<sup>13</sup>Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love.

### More about Gifts from the Spirit

**14** It is love, then, that you should strive for. Set your hearts on spiritual gifts, especially

perfect disappears. When I <sup>11</sup> was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child, When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor <sup>12</sup> reflection; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three <sup>13</sup> remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

#### Gifts of Prophecy and Tongues

**14** Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the

11. **When I was a child.** This verse illustrates the partial disappearing as the perfect comes. As a child, his thinking, feelings, and speech were all childishly imperfect. With manhood, his need or use of the childish terminates. [The childish is needed, because it involves growth.]

12. **Like the dim image in a mirror.** This is another example. Mirrors then were polished metal, and gave only a dim reflection. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "Divine revelation opens up fresh mysteries; advanced knowledge raises vaster problems. With our defective earthly powers, this is inevitable." **Then we shall see face to face.** *MacKnight* says: "*but in the life to come we shall see them face to face, clearly.* But *Lipscomb* says: "While in the state of childhood, with only the partial knowledge made known through the spiritually gifted, they saw as in a mirror darkly; but when the perfect revelation should be made known, they would know the things revealed through all. So that the knowledge we possess through the completed will of God is greatly more than any one of the gifted or inspired ones possessed, since the revelations made to and through all are given in the Scriptures." **What I know now is only partial.** Since Paul is an inspired apostle as he says this (*John 14:26; Gal. 1:15-17*), he would already know all the Truth taught in the New Testament, even though he does not understand everything. **Then it will be complete.** When the curtain of our *humanity* is taken away, and the full revelation has come in the presence of Christ. **As God's knowledge of me.** There are no limitations on God's knowledge!! Compare what Paul says in *Gal. 4:9*. In all this Paul shows us that the gifts from the Spirit, although very valuable, are temporary and will not survive this present world. But *love* is permanent, and will never terminate!!! Love is **BEST OF ALL** (*1 Cor. 12:31*).

13. **Meanwhile these three remain.** These three are eternal. They, along with the church, will never terminate, but will extend on into eternity. **The greatest of these is love.** It is the greatest because it is the one quality that is *divine*. "God is love." It *authenticates* both faith and hope. [*MacKnight* thinks that faith, hope, and love are necessary for our present existence, but that only love will survive this world. He sees faith terminating as it becomes *sight*, and hope terminating as it is *fulfilled*. Therefore, love is greatest because it alone will exist in eternity.]

1. **It is love then.** Love is the "best of all," even greater than faith and hope! The Greek paints a picture of "hunters in the chase." "Strive for love with every means in your power!!!" Yet love does not replace the spiritual gifts. **Set your hearts.** Striving for love does not mean forgetting everything else. But love opens the true way to everything else! As Paul said in *1 Cor. 12:31*: "*Set your hearts, then, on the more important gifts.*" **The gift of speaking God's message.** Because we use "prophecy" to mean "predicting the future," it is not the best word of translation. To *prophecy* is to speak God's message by inspiration.

the gift of speaking God's message. <sup>2</sup>The one who speaks in strange tongues does not speak to men but to God, because no one understands him. He is speaking secret truths by the power of the Spirit. <sup>3</sup>But the one who speaks God's message speaks to men, and gives them help, encouragement, and comfort. <sup>4</sup>The man who speaks in strange tongues helps only himself, but the one who speaks God's message helps the whole church.

<sup>5</sup>I would like for all of you to speak in strange tongues; but I would rather that all of you had the gift of speaking God's message. For the man who speaks God's message is of greater value than the one who speaks in strange tongues—unless there is someone present who can explain what he says, so that the whole church may be

gift of prophecy. For anyone <sup>2</sup> who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. But <sup>3</sup> everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. He who <sup>4</sup> speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I <sup>5</sup> would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.

2. **In strange tongues.** Because the gift of languages gave the most chance to *show off*, the Corinthians rated it the highest. Because they considered this gift the most honored, those who had it would *show off* in the public meetings by speaking long and loud in foreign languages (strange tongues). Others who were much better qualified to *instruct* the group were forced to *remain silent*. Sometimes many would speak in strange tongues at the same time, trying to shout down the others, creating confusion. **Does not speak to men.** No one could understand what they were saying. **He is speaking secret truths.** It was by the Holy Spirit's power that he spoke. Therefore, what he said was inspired, even though it did not benefit those who heard it.

3. **Who speaks God's message.** When Peter preached on Pentecost (*Acts 2*), he spoke God's message. This was done in understandable language. Those who heard, were taught by it. **Help.** To make their faith stronger. **Encouragement.** To stir them up to spiritual activity. **Comfort.** To help them endure the problems of life.

4. **Helps only himself.** Speaking in strange tongues made this person feel close to God and gave him a sense of power (compare *2 Cor. 12:1-10*). **Helps the whole church.** By speaking God's message in a form which they can understand. This also included inspired prayer (*verse 14*) and inspired singing (*verse 15, 26*).

5. **To speak in strange tongues.** The tongues were a real and desirable gift. Paul could wish that each one had this gift. **But I would rather.** Better is superior to good. The gift of speaking God's message (prophecy) serves the church better. **Is of greater value.** Because it communicates instruction. **Unless.** If someone there can translate it into understandable form, it then becomes useful. **Note.** There is much confusion about tongues (languages). Some think they were "ecstatic speech" in no language at all. Others think they were gifts of the knowledge of languages. (1) We see these at work on Pentecost (*Acts 2:5-13*). (2) The one who spoke in tongues did not understand what he was saying (*verses 13-14*). So it could not be just a gift of knowledge. (3) They were intended as proof for unbelievers, but only for those unbelievers who spoke the tongue (*verse 23*).



helped. <sup>6</sup>So when I come to you, brothers, what use will I be to you if I speak in strange tongues? Not a bit, unless I bring you some revelation from God, or some knowledge, or some inspired message, or some teaching.

<sup>7</sup>Even such lifeless musical instruments as the flute and the harp—how will anyone know the tune that is being played unless the notes are sounded distinctly? <sup>8</sup>And if the man who plays the bugle does not sound a clear call, who will prepare for battle? <sup>9</sup>In the same way, how will anyone understand what you are talking about if your message by means of strange tongues is not clear? Your words will vanish in the air! <sup>10</sup>There are many different languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. <sup>11</sup>But if I do not know the language being spoken, the man who uses it will be a foreigner to me and I will be a foreigner to him. <sup>12</sup>Since you are eager to have the gifts of the Spirit, above everything else you must try to make greater use of those which help build up the church.

Now, brothers, if I come <sup>6</sup> to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? Even <sup>7</sup> in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what time is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? A- <sup>8</sup> gain, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking in- <sup>10</sup> to the air. Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not <sup>11</sup> grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. So it is with you. Since you <sup>12</sup> are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

**6. So when I come to you.** The gift of strange tongues, has no value when used in the public meetings, *unless*: (1) it brings a revelation from God; (2) it brings some knowledge; (3) it brings some inspired message; (4) it brings some teaching. But this could not be done unless they were made to understand what was being said.

**7. Even such lifeless.** Such things as the flute or harp must sound the notes distinctly to communicate the tune being played. What Paul says here may be directed mostly toward "ecstatic speech" which is gibberish.

**8. The bugle.** Armies in all ages have been directed by the sound of a bugle. But the loudest blast means nothing, if it does not *communicate* something which the hearers can understand!

**9. In the same way.** The most important message from God will mean nothing if it is spoken in a strange tongue which no one can understand, not even the one who speaks it. This also applies to "old fashioned church language" when it is spoken to those who cannot understand it.

**10. Many different languages.** The Bible has been translated into more than 1,500 different languages!!! **Yet none of them is without meaning.** Each of them is used for the purpose of **COMMUNICATING** with others!

**11. But if I do not know the language.** Anyone who has tried to communicate across the *language barrier* will understand what Paul is saying.

**12. Since you are eager.** It was proper for them to be eager for the gifts from the Spirit (*verse 1*). **Which help build up the church.** This is the key to the use of spiritual gifts. The Corinthians were more interested in *showing off*; and so were misusing the gifts from the Holy Spirit. See note on *1 Cor. 12:1*.

<sup>13</sup>The man who speaks in strange tongues, then, must pray for the gift to explain what he says. <sup>14</sup>For if I pray in this way, my spirit prays indeed, but my mind has no part in it. <sup>15</sup>What should I do, then? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray also with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will sing also with my mind. <sup>16</sup>When you give thanks to God in spirit only, how can an ordinary man taking part in the meeting say "Amen" to your prayer of thanksgiving? He has no way of knowing what you are saying. <sup>17</sup>Even if your prayer of thanks to God is quite good, the other man is not helped at all.

<sup>18</sup>I thank God that I speak in strange tongues much more than any of you. <sup>19</sup>But in church worship I would rather speak five words that can be understood, in order to teach others, than speak thousands of words in strange tongues.

For this reason the man <sup>13</sup> who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says. For if I <sup>14</sup> pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? <sup>15</sup> I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. If you are <sup>16</sup> praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? You <sup>17</sup> may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.

I thank God that I speak <sup>18</sup> in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I <sup>19</sup> would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

13. **For the gift to explain.** This implies more than one gift was possible. *Lipscomb* says: "Let him pray that he may have the gift of interpreting what he says in the tongue, else he will not profit those who hear." *MacKnight* ties it in with *verse 14*. "For which cause, let him who by inspiration prayeth in the church in a foreign language, pray in such a manner, and at such a time, as some one who is inspired may interpret his prayer to the edification of the church."

14. **For if I pray in this way.** Paul shows that for worship to be helpful, and for a sane and sound church life, the *mind* must work together with the energies of the (human) *spirit*. In a sense, these next few verses counterbalance what he said in *1 Cor. 1:18 to 2:5*. Paul is completely opposed to a blind fanaticism or irrational mysticism. It is tragic that some think of faith as: "something you believe, even though you know it isn't so." Paul is saying: "If the Holy Spirit working on my spirit makes it possible for me to pray in a strange tongue, my spirit does pray, but my mind has no part in it (because it does not understand what is being said)."

15. **What should I do, then?** Both his spirit and his mind will join together by using a known language. *Lipscomb* says: "The thought evidently is: 'I will sing as the Spirit directs or inspires, and I will sing in a language that those who hear can understand.' This expression is often quoted in connection with song service in a sense in which it was not used."

16. **How can an ordinary man?** This shows: (1) it was *standard practice* for the people in a public meeting of the church to say "Amen!"; (2) there were ordinary members who did not have the gifts from the Spirit.

17. **The other man is not helped at all.** By Paul's "rule of thumb," the beautiful abstract must take second place to the practical.

18. **I speak in strange tongues.** Even at Corinth where this gift of tongues was widespread, Paul could still *outdo* them! What he said about tongues was not out of jealousy!

19. **But in church worship.** [The church is the people. Church worship is the public meeting.] **Five words.** This is Paul's scale of values. Five words that teach others are more valuable than thousands of words in strange tongues!!!

<sup>20</sup>Do not be like children in your thinking, brothers; be children so far as evil is concerned, but be mature in your thinking. <sup>21</sup>In the Scriptures it is written,

“By means of men of strange languages  
I will speak to this people, says the  
Lord.

I will speak through lips of foreigners,  
but even then they will not listen to  
me.”

<sup>22</sup>So then, the gift of speaking in strange tongues is proof for unbelievers, not for believers, while the gift of speaking God’s message is proof for believers, not for unbelievers.

<sup>23</sup>If, then, the whole church meets together and everyone starts speaking in strange tongues—if some ordinary people or unbelievers come in, won’t they say that you are all crazy?

<sup>24</sup>But if all speak God’s message, when some unbeliever or ordinary person comes in he will be convinced of his sin by what he hears. He will

Brothers, stop thinking <sup>20</sup>like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. In the <sup>21</sup>Law it is written:

“Through men of strange  
tongues  
and through the lips of  
foreigners

I will speak to this people,  
but even then they will  
not listen to me,”

says the Lord.

Tongues, then, are a sign, <sup>22</sup>not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. So if the whole <sup>23</sup>church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if an unbeliever <sup>24</sup>or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be

**20. Do not be like children.** The “competitive spirit” and the desire to “show off” are *childlike*. So far as evil is concerned. Little children are “innocent” in many ways. Compare *Matt. 18:1-5*. But be mature. Compare *1 Cor. 2:6; 8:9-11*.

**21. In the Scriptures.** Paul paraphrases *Isa. 28:11-12* to make a strong statement about the inferiority of strange tongues (glossolalia). Compare *1 Cor. 1:19; 2:9; 3:19*. The context of this quotation is “drunken Israelites mocking God’s message as spoken by the prophet, as though it were only suitable for little children. In anger, God says he will give his lessons to them through the lips of foreign conquerors.” The strange tongues in this quotation would be *punishment*. The strange tongues may serve a similar sad purpose in the church. In other words, strange tongues were not to be understood as evidence of God’s special favor.

**22. Is proof for unbelievers.** This is the real point of the quotation in *verse 21*. Those who will not be taught by God through understandable language, will become fixed in their unbelief and even justified, by the speaking in strange tongues. [*Lipscomb*, et. al., takes this to be a proof to unbelievers in the sense of *Acts 2:5-13*. But Paul wants to restrain, rather than stimulate, the use of strange tongues at Corinth.]

**23. Won’t they say that you are all crazy?** “If strange tongues are the supreme gift from the Spirit, then to have the whole church speaking in these at the same time ought to be the very peak of spiritual power. But in fact, the church then would be like a group of crazy people!”

**24. But if all speak God’s message.** This gift: (1) helps the church (*verses 3-5*); (2) uses the mind (*verses 14-19*); (3) can be safely done by the entire church; (4) will convince sinners. That “all” should speak God’s message is a part of the Messianic ideal (compare *Rev. 1:6*).

be judged by all he hears, <sup>25</sup>his secret thoughts will be brought into the open, and he will bow down and worship God, confessing, "Truly God is here with you!"

judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

### Order in the Church

<sup>26</sup>What do I mean, my brothers? When you meet for worship, one man has a hymn, another a teaching, another a revelation from God, another a message in strange tongues, and still another the explanation of what is said. Everything must be of help to the church. <sup>27</sup>If someone is going to speak in strange tongues, two or three at the most should speak, one after the other, and someone else must explain what is being said. <sup>28</sup>But if no one is there who can explain, then the one who speaks in strange tongues must be quiet in the meeting, and speak only to himself and to God. <sup>29</sup>Two or three who are given God's message should speak, while the others judge what they say. <sup>30</sup>But if someone sitting in the meeting receives a message from God, the

### Orderly Worship

What then shall we say, <sup>26</sup>brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. If anyone speaks in a <sup>27</sup>tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.

Two or three prophets <sup>29</sup>should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation <sup>30</sup>comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker

25. **And worship God.** When he hears God's Truth, and measures his life by it, his secret thought will be brought out into the open (to himself). As he sees "Christ on the cross," he will bow down and worship God!

26. **What do I mean?** Paul looks at the *use* of gifts from the Spirit, as this relates to the church meetings. **When you meet for worship.** Compare *1 Cor. 11:18-20*. Each one tried to *get ahead* of the other. **One man has a hymn.** This implies they were all trying to speak at once! **Must be of help.** This is the key! Help, not compete!

27. **Two or three at the most.** This can mean: (1) not more than two or three who are given God's message by the Spirit, should speak at any one meeting (*verse 29*). Most take this view. (2) Those who speak in strange tongues should speak two or three sentences at the most, and then someone else explain what they said. MacKnight takes this view. (3) That two or three *sing* together as a choir. T. C. Edwards takes this view.

28. **But if no one is there who can explain.** In such a case, those who speak in strange tongues are to keep quiet. This, of course, applies to their speaking in tongues, not to the other parts of the worship.

29. **While the others judge.** Those who had the ability to "tell the difference" (*1 Cor. 12:10 note*) would be best able to do this, but *others* could include every prophet there except the ones speaking. *F. I. Stanley* brings up two important things: (1) "Paul does not discriminate between the prophets. He knew that there were both men and women prophets in the church, and that God had said, 'Sons and daughters shall prophesy.'" [See note on *Acts 2:17*.] (2) "Those prophets were to the church then as our Bible is to us today. A false prophet with a false message then could have done much harm to the church. Therefore, when prophecy was given in the church, it was screened by other prophets."

30. **But if someone.** The question is: Who is to decide this??? The answer must be: The other prophets who judge (*verse 29*). They are to preserve order in the meeting.

one who is speaking should stop. <sup>31</sup>All of you may speak God's message, one by one, so that all will learn and be encouraged. <sup>32</sup>The gift of speaking God's message should be under the speaker's control, <sup>33</sup>because God has not called us to be disorderly, but peaceful.

As in all the churches of God's people, <sup>34</sup>the women should keep quiet in the church meetings. They are not allowed to speak; as the Jewish Law says, they must not be in charge. <sup>35</sup>If they want to find out about something, they should ask their husbands at home. It is a disgraceful thing for a woman to speak in a church meeting.

should stop. For you can all <sup>31</sup> prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits <sup>32</sup> of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For <sup>33</sup> God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

As in all the congregations of the saints, women <sup>34</sup> should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire <sup>35</sup> about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to

31. **All of you.** Those who speak God's message (verse 29). **One by one.** Only one speaking at a time. [All the prophets would have their turn, but only two or three at any one meeting. The "best speakers" would not be allowed to suppress the others.]

32. **Under the speaker's control.** Verse 31 tells why the speakers must submit to regulation. "So that all will learn and be encouraged." This verse tells how that is possible. One proof of the Holy Spirit's gift, is the ability to control it. The *unruly prophet* is not genuine. This means, then, that the *speakers* can be directed by those who *judge*.

33. **Because God.** *Disorder* is contrary to God. Rather than being *unruly*, one who speaks God's message must be peaceful.

34. **The women should keep quiet.** Which women??? Paul is dealing with the gift of speaking God's message. Then *the women* of this verse must be *prophetesses*. F. I. Stanley says: "He is speaking of what prophets are doing, and not of marriage! He has no thought about men and their wives, but about men and women who are to prophesy (Joel 2:28-30; Acts 2:17)." SIGATOO = *quiet*. This same word appears in verse 28, and is translated *should stop* in verse 30. It means not so much as a sigh or a grunt. We can see in verse 28 this silence applied to the use of a spiritual gift. Here, then, it must also be a specific silence on a specific thing. If it were not, women would not be allowed to sing a note or to speak a word of any kind in a church meeting! The next verse tells us what this specific silence is about.

35. **If they want to find out about something.** "We see two or three who speak God's message, and others who judge what is said (verse 29). We see one of the "judges" rebuke one who "speaks," but we do not know why. It would waste valuable time for the judges to stop and explain. Those who have the gift "to tell the difference" (1 Cor. 12:10 note) have the authority to do this, and we are not to worry about it." (1) The women who belong to this context have the gift of prophecy (to speak God's message by inspiration). (2) They do not have the authority to judge those who speak. (3) If they want to find out something about what the "judges" have done, they can ask at home. Women are to learn and be encouraged in the church meeting (verse 31), which proves that this verse speaks of something specific. **It is a disgraceful thing.** Notice Paul's choice of words. What he is saying, then, is: "It is disgraceful for a prophetess to *judge* a speaking prophet in the church meeting, or to interrupt the church meeting by asking questions." F. I. Stanley writes: "It now becomes apparent that this scripture does not contradict such verses as 1 Cor. 14:3-4; 11:4-5; Acts 21:9; Phil. 4:2-3; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:14-16, and a host of other scriptures, but rather complements them, and gives a woman her place in the church, by the side of man, and in subordination to him." [This whole subject is carefully examined in C. R. Nichol's book, *God's Woman*.]

<sup>36</sup>Or could it be that the word of God came from you? Or are you the only ones to whom it came? <sup>37</sup>If anyone supposes he is God's messenger or has a spiritual gift, he must realize that what I am writing you is the Lord's command. <sup>38</sup>But if he does not pay attention to this, pay no attention to him.

<sup>39</sup>So then, my brothers, set your heart on speaking God's message, but do not forbid the speaking in strange tongues. <sup>40</sup>Everything must be done in a proper and orderly way.

### The Resurrection of Christ

**15** And now I want to remind you, brothers, of the Good News which I preached to you, which you received, and on which your faith

36 speak in the church. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?

37 If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he 38 ignores this, he himself will be ignored.

39 Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything 40 should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

### The Resurrection of Christ

**15** Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your

36. **Or could it be?** The Corinthians acted without thinking of anyone but themselves, as though they were the only church in the world, and that they ought to set the example for everyone else. *MacKnight* thinks it means: "What? Went the word of God forth into the world from you women? Did Christ employ any of your sex as apostles? Or did the word only come to you by the ministry of men? How then can you pretend to teach men?" But we must also consider Miriam, the first prophetess (*Exod. 15:20*), Deborah, a prophetess who judged Israel (*Judges 4:4*), Huldah, the prophetess, who taught men (*2 Chron. 34:22-23*), Phillip's daughters (*Acts 21:9*), et. al.

37. **He must realize.** Paul was an inspired apostle. Whoever claims to have the gifts from the Spirit, and does not pay attention to the New Testament commands, proves himself to be a phony!

38. **But if he does not pay attention.** The one who proves himself a phony is to be ignored! Notice what Christ said in *Matt. 7:22-23*.

39. **So then, my brothers.** "Speaking God's message is still the most important of the gifts, but strange tongues have their place also."

40. **In a proper and orderly way.** "These who have spiritual gifts must not fight and quarrel and try to outdo each other; and the women prophets must not judge the speakers or interrupt the worship with questions."

**The Resurrection.** The Greeks viewed the *body* as the "prison of the soul," and expected their happiness to come by being freed from the body forever by death. The false teacher, to please the Greeks, denied the raising from death of the body; taught that the only resurrection Christ promised was a spiritual resurrection from the death of sin; and taught that this resurrection was already past (*2 Tim. 2:18*). It does make a difference whether we think the *body* is a "prison of the soul," or a "temple of the Holy Spirit" (*1 Cor. 6:19*). Paul taught that man himself is a *trinity* (*1 Thess. 5:23*), and showed the raising from death of the *body* is one of the great Christian doctrines (*Acts 17:18, 31-32*). In this chapter he examines the raising of Christ from death, and how this relates to the raising of the dead.

1. **And now I want to remind you.** "Since some of you destroy the Good News by saying the dead are not raised to life, I repeat to you some things which I told you when I was at Corinth."

stands firm. <sup>2</sup>That is the gospel, the message that I preached to you. You are saved by the gospel if you hold firmly to it—unless it was for nothing that you believed.

<sup>3</sup>I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance; that Christ died for sins, as written in the Scriptures; <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, and was raised to life on the third day, as written in the Scriptures; <sup>5</sup>that he appeared to Peter, and then to all twelve apostles. <sup>6</sup>Then he appeared to more than five hundred of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. <sup>7</sup>Then he appeared to James, and then to all the apostles.

<sup>8</sup>Last of all he appeared also to me—even though I am like one who was born in a most

stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

2. **You are saved by the gospel.** Compare *2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:22*. **Unless it was for nothing.** "Unless you were only acting on impulse and didn't really understand what it was all about." [For the nature of *faith*, see note on *James 2:19*.]

3. **I passed on to you what I received.** Compare *1 Cor. 11:23; Gal. 1:12*. This is the Lord's message and not just something that Paul "made up." **Of the greatest importance.** Christianity looks back to an ACR IN HISTORY! The whole Christian system stands or falls on this point: "CHRIST ON THE CROSS!" Compare *verse 14*; and note on *1 Cor. 1:23*. **That Christ died for our sins.** *Isaiah 53:5-6* predicted this. See notes on *Rom. 8:1-4*. It is God's act in Christ, EXTRINSIC to ourself, which is the source of our salvation.

<sup>4</sup>**That he was buried.** As one who was known to be actually dead. See *John 19:33-35*. **And was raised to life on the third day.** Compare *verse 14*. This is very important, because if Jesus did not raise from death, there is no message of salvation!!! The prophets predicted this raising from death (*Psalms 16:10; Acts 2:31*). [*Third day*: see note on *Matt. 12:40*.]

5. **That he appeared to Peter.** "To prove to you the truth of Jesus raising from death, I tell you that he appeared to Peter in bodily form." [Jesus first appeared to a woman, Mary Magdalene. A complete list of appearances is in the notes on *Matt. 28:9*.]

6. **To more than five hundred.** None of the Gospels mention this, but MacKnight thinks *Matt. 28:10* hints at it. It probably took place in Galilee (Johnson thinks so), but it could have been while they were all still at Jerusalem. **Most of whom were still alive.** "They are eyewitnesses of all that happened, and the fact that most of them are still living makes it easy to check what I say." Paul had no doubt seen and talked with some of these *five hundred*.

<sup>7</sup>**Then he appeared to James.** The Gospels do not mention this. This James is the Lord's human brother (see notes on *Acts 15:13; 21:18*). **Then to all the apostles.** *Acts 1:6-9*.

8. **Last of all.** Paul did not see Jesus until the incident in *Acts 9:4*. **Born in a most unusual way.** EKTROMA is a sudden, violent birth, not like the usual order of things. Paul uses it symbolically, because his *experience* was so strange!

unusual way. <sup>9</sup>For I am the least of all the apostles—I do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted God's church. <sup>10</sup>But by God's grace I am what I am, and the grace that he gave me was not without effect. On the contrary, I have worked harder than all the other apostles, although it was not really my own doing, but God's grace working with me. <sup>11</sup>So then, whether it came from me or from them, this is what we all preach, this is what you believe.

### Our Resurrection

<sup>12</sup>Now, since our message is that Christ has been raised from death, how can some of you say that the dead will not be raised to life? <sup>13</sup>If that is true, it means that Christ was not raised; <sup>14</sup>and if Christ has not been raised from death, then we have nothing to preach and you have nothing to believe. <sup>15</sup>More than that, we are shown to be lying against God, because we said of him that he raised Christ from death—but he did not raise him, if it is true that the dead are

9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve 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 to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

### The Resurrection of the Dead

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If 13 there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And 14 if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than 15 that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the

9. **For I am the least.** That is, by human standards, because he persecuted the church. *Schmiedel* thinks that *TO EXTROMA* was one of the insulting names pinned on Paul by the *circumcision party*; and that he takes this as his title and gives it a new meaning. Paul probably repeats their charge in a sense of *irony*. But it is also true that he never forgot that he had once persecuted Christ's church (even though he knew he had been forgiven). Compare *Acts 26:9-11*; *Gal. 1:13*; *1 Tim. 1:13-16*.

10. **But by God's grace.** The *circumcision party* may not consider Paul an apostle, but he is - by God's grace!!! "Grace" is used in three different senses in this verse: (1) the *grace* that saved him (*Eph. 2:8*); (2) the *grace* that appointed him an apostle; (3) the *grace* that made it possible to outwork all the other apostles.

11. **Whether it came from me or from them.** "It makes no difference whether it is Peter, the Twelve, James (see note on *Gal. 2:12*), or me, our gospels the same! We all preach that Jesus raised from death!!! This is what you believed when we led you to Christ."

12. **Now, since our message.** "Since all the apostles including me preach that Christ has been raised from death and that his resurrection is a proof of yours, how can some of you say that the dead will not be raised to life?"

13. **If that is true.** "If you say none of the dead will be raised to life, you are also saying that Christ was not raised from death!" Compare note on *Acts 4:2*.

14. **And if Christ.** "If Christ was not raised from death, then all of us (*verse 11*) are telling a lie. And if we are telling a lie, then there is no Good News."

15. **Lying against God.** "We said that God raised Christ from death! If Christ did not raise from the dead, then we become guilty of lying against God himself!!!"



not raised to life. <sup>16</sup>For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. <sup>17</sup>And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is a delusion and you are still lost in your sins. <sup>18</sup>It would also mean that the believers in Christ who have died are lost. <sup>19</sup>If our hope in Christ is good for this life only, and no more, then we deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world.

<sup>20</sup>But the truth is that Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised. <sup>21</sup>For just as death came by means of a man, in the same way the rising from death comes by means of a man. <sup>22</sup>For just as all men die because of their union to Adam, in the same way all will be raised to life

dead are not raised. For if 16  
the dead are not raised, then  
Christ has not been raised  
either. And if Christ has not 17  
been raised, your faith is fu-  
tile; you are still in your sins.  
Then those also who have 18  
fallen asleep in Christ are  
lost. If only for this life we 19  
have hope in Christ, we are  
to be pitied more than all  
men.

But Christ has indeed 20  
been raised from the dead,  
the firstfruits of those who  
have fallen asleep. For since 21  
death came through a man,  
the resurrection of the dead  
comes also through a man.  
For as in Adam all die, so in 22  
Christ all will be made alive.

16. **For if the dead are not raised.** Paul restates what he said in *verse 13*. Note: (1) if the *fact* is untrue, the witness is untrue also (*verses 14-15*); (2) if the *fact* is untrue, the promises are untrue also (*verses 17-18*).

17. **Then your faith is a delusion.** Faith is based on facts! [See note on *James 2:19*.] "If Christ has not been raised (and his body still lies on the Judean hill), then he is not the Savior! This would mean that he is only another dead man who could not even save himself. You are still lost in your sins, because he cannot forgive them - IF HE HAS NOT RAISED TO LIFE!"

18. **It would also mean.** "The believers in Christ who have died, who thought the sting of death was removed and died happy in that belief, were cruelly deceived - if Christ has not raised to life!"

19. **If our hope in Christ.** This means: (1) "If Christ has not been raised, and death truly ends it all, then we Christians who have given up everything hoping to gain eternal life, deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world." (2) "If we apostles hoped to gain something in this life by falsely preaching that Christ raised from death (it would be false if the dead do not raise), then we who have framed and preached this falsehood while knowing it to be false, deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world (because of the agony we brought on ourselves by this, *1 Cor. 4:9-13*)."

20. **But the truth is.** In contrast to all the bad things that would come if Christ were still in the grave, he now shows us the TRUTH! **Christ has been raised from death.** "Your faith is not a delusion! Your sins are forgiven!" **As the guarantee.** The "first-fruit" of the harvest was both an example and a pledge of the future harvest. Christ's resurrection is both an example and a pledge that the dead will raise! The true value of *goodness* is seen in its future reward!!!

21. **For just as death came.** "The raising of the dead through Christ is a reasonable thing. If death came through a man, it is only right that the raising from death should come through a man." What we unconditionally lost through Adam, we unconditionally get back through Christ. See *verse 22*.

22. **For just as all men.** The entire human race came under the sentence of (physical) death because of their union to Adam, their ancestor. In the same way the entire human race will be raised from (physical) death and brought to Judgment because of their union to Christ (the second Adam). This does not say that all will be finally saved, but that all the dead, whether bad or good, will be raised to life again. Compare *John 5:26-29*; *Rev. 1:7*. *Rom. 5:18* is a good explanation of this.

because of their union to Christ. <sup>23</sup>But each one in his proper order: Christ, the first of all; then those who belong to Christ, at the time of his coming. <sup>24</sup>Then the end will come; Christ will overcome all spiritual rulers, authorities, and powers, and hand over the Kingdom to God the Father. <sup>25</sup>For Christ must rule until God defeats all enemies and puts them under his feet. <sup>26</sup>The last enemy to be defeated will be death. <sup>27</sup>For the scripture says, "God put *all* things under his feet." It is clear, of course, that the words "all things" do not include God himself, who puts all things under Christ. <sup>28</sup>But when all things have been placed under Christ's rule, then he himself, the Son, will place himself under God, who placed all under him; and God will rule completely over all.

But each in his own turn: <sup>23</sup> Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end <sup>24</sup> will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he <sup>25</sup> must reign until God has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be <sup>26</sup> destroyed is death. For God: <sup>27</sup> "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When <sup>28</sup> he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

23. **But each one in his proper order.** This implies the good and the bad will be raised separately, but at the same time. Compare *Rev. 14:13-20* and notes. The Parable of the Weeds (*Matt. 13:24-30*) also applies to this.

24. **Then the end will come.** The world's history and time itself will terminate as Christ Comes, the dead rise, and Judgment takes place. *Christ will overcome.* He has ALREADY won the victory (see note on *Rev. 20:1-3*), yet he does not completely destroy his enemies until the right time. Compare *verse 26*. **And hand over the Kingdom.** Jesus is now crowned as King (*Heb. 2:9*) in the Kingdom which is called: "all authority in heaven and on earth" (*Matt. 28:18*). Salvation puts us in his Kingdom (*Col. 1:13*). But Christ's mission of "putting men right with God" will terminate at the Coming. With his mission completed, he will hand over the Kingdom to God the Father. Compare *verse 28*.

25. **For Christ must rule.** He is not fighting a battle to seize a Kingdom, since he has already won the victory (see *Dan. 2:44; Acts 2:16-17*; and read the Introduction to Acts). **Until God defeats.** *Psalms 110:1; Heb. 1:13*. This is God's promise to defeat these enemies, in order to destroy them!

26. **The last enemy.** Death will be destroyed by the RAISING FROM DEATH! Christ is the *guarantee*; the Resurrection will be the *fact!* Compare notes on *Rev. 20:12-15; Rom. 5:18*.

27. **For the scripture says.** "What I have said about the duration of Christ's Kingdom and his handing it over to the Father, agrees with the words of *Psalms 8:6* as explained in *Heb. 2:8-9*." **Do not include God himself.** The Greeks had a myth about Jupiter dethroning his father Saturn and exiling him to the Fortunate Island. By proving from the words of the Psalm that the Father did not place himself under the authority of the Son, the apostle shows that not only is the supreme rule of the Father declared in the Psalm, but when the Son's rule is no longer needed, the Father will receive back the Kingdom and rule it forever in person.

28. **But when all things.** "When there is no longer any need for a prophet to teach, a priest to make a sin-offering, or a king to rule under God." In other words, when Christ's mission is complete. Compare note on *Rev. 6:11*. **Then he himself, the Son.** Compare *verse 24*. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The end" does not mean the termination of *Christ's sovereignty*, which in its largest sense began before the world (*John 1:1-3; 17:5*) and is its goal (*Col. 1:16*); but the termination of *the reign of sin and death* (*Rom. 5:21; compare John 6:37-40*)."

<sup>29</sup>Now, what of those people who are baptized for the dead? What do they hope to accomplish? If it is true, as they claim, that the dead are not raised to life, why are they being baptized for the dead? <sup>30</sup>And as for us—why would we run the risk of danger every hour? <sup>31</sup>Brothers, I face death every day! The pride I have in you in our life in Christ Jesus our Lord makes me declare this. <sup>32</sup>If, as it were, I have fought “wild beasts” here in Ephesus, simply from human motives, what have I gained? But if the dead are not raised to life, then, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die,” as the saying goes.

<sup>33</sup>Do not be fooled. “Bad companions ruin good character.” <sup>34</sup>Come back to your right senses and stop your sinful ways. I say this to your shame: some of you do not know God.

### The Resurrection Body

<sup>35</sup>Someone will ask, “How can the dead be raised to life? What kind of body will they

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 rection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? And as 30  
 for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? I die 31  
 every day—I mean that, brothers—just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. If I fought 32  
 wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

Do not be misled: “Bad 33  
 company corrupts good character.” Come back to 34  
 your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.

### The Resurrection Body

But someone may ask, 35  
 “How are the dead raised?  
 With what kind of body will

29. **Who are baptized for the dead?** If we knew the exact wording of the Corinthians' question, it would be easy to know exactly what Paul means. But we do know this is part of his logic in proving the dead will be raised. *MacKnight* translates this: “who are baptized for THE RESURRECTION of the dead.” Then, we take this as Paul continuing his reasoning of verses 16-19. (1) All the Corinthians were baptized (*Acts 18:8*). (2) They were baptized into union with Christ and shared his death (*Rom. 6:3-5*). (3) Their baptism was in hope of being raised from death through Christ's resurrection (*1 Pet. 3:21*). *Shepherd* sees *2 Cor. 4:11* as an added element, and says: “What is to become of those who on being baptized do so knowing that it may prove their death warrant, if the dead rise not?” Compare *verse 30*.

30. **Why would we run the risk?** If there were no Resurrection??? Compare *2 Cor. 11:23-28*.

31. **I face death every day!** This is a vivid picture of his constant danger!

32. **I have fought “wild beasts.”** Most take these words as figurative of the opposition he faced from unbelievers. But *MacKnight* and most of the ancient scholars think this actually happened just as Paul says, and that *2 Cor. 1:8* and the customs of the time imply that Paul actually faced wild beasts in the arena. **But if the dead are not raised.** Paul points to what “everybody says.” The words Paul quotes speak the *moral recklessness* of those who believe death ends it all!

33. **Do not be fooled.** “Do not let the false logic of the wicked fool you, especially about the raising from death. Your good character can be ruined by the *unbelief* that is hidden in what they say.”

34. **Come back to your right senses.** “Just because some say the dead will not rise does not give you the right to sin!” **Some of you do not know God.** The fact that some were saying the dead will not rise from death and that there is no future life - proved they did not really know God and his power! This is a *shame*, especially when these did claim to know God.

35. **Someone will ask.** These two questions have been asked by people in all ages of time. **How can?** “The body goes back to dust, or is burnt up, and the elements of it go to form the bodies of other people. How is it possible?” **What kind?** “What kind of body would they have if they could come out of the grave?”

have?" <sup>36</sup>You fool! When you plant a seed in the ground it does not sprout to life unless it dies.

<sup>37</sup>And what you plant in the ground is a bare seed, perhaps a grain of wheat, or of some other kind, not the full-bodied plant that will grow up. <sup>38</sup>God provides that seed with the body he wishes; he gives each seed its own proper body.

<sup>39</sup>And the flesh of living beings is not all the same kind of flesh; men have one kind of flesh, animals another, birds another, and fish another.

<sup>40</sup>And there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies; there is a beauty that belongs to heavenly bodies, and another kind of beauty that belongs to earthly bodies. <sup>41</sup>The sun has its own beauty, the moon another beauty, and the stars a different beauty; and even among stars there are different kinds of beauty.

<sup>42</sup>This is how it will be when the dead are raised to life. When the body is buried it is mortal; when raised, it will be immortal. <sup>43</sup>When buried, it is ugly and weak; when raised, it will

they come?" How foolish! <sup>36</sup>What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When <sup>37</sup>you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But <sup>38</sup>God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the <sup>39</sup>same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heav- <sup>40</sup>enly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun <sup>41</sup>has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

So it will be with the res- <sup>42</sup>urrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable; it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, <sup>43</sup>it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in

36. **You fool!** "Nature itself teaches you this lesson." **Unless it dies.** The body of the seed is destroyed, but out of it comes the new plant. So long as the body of the seed is protected, it cannot grow.

37. **Not the full-bodied plant.** But the full-bodied plant is contained in the seed (even though it is dormant), and under the proper conditions, it grows up out of the seed. The point is that the plant is not the very seed that was planted, so our new body will not be the same body that was buried, *but there is a connection between the two!*

38. **God provides that seed.** Nature shows the greatness of God! Compare *1 John 3:1-3*.

39. **And the flesh.** "The flesh itself of man, animals, birds, and fish is another example of God's power. God has structured each to fit into the *ecosystem*. Will he not also structure the bodies of those raised from death?"

40. **And there are.** Each of these is also structured to fill its *role* in the Creation.

41. **The sun.** Paul shows us the variety in the "heavenly bodies." All of this is proof of a future body so different from our present body that we cannot begin to imagine what it will be like!

42. **This is how it will be.** "The resurrection of the dead is as *possible* as all these examples which I have just shown you." **It is mortal.** "When the body is buried, it can decay and be destroyed." **It will be immortal.** "The new body will not decay, nor will it ever be destroyed (but see *Matt. 10:28* and note)."

43. **Ugly and weak.** Because of mutilation, disease, old age, and death. **Beautiful and strong.** Compare *Luke 20:36; Phil. 3:20-21*.

be beautiful and strong. <sup>44</sup>When buried, it is a physical body; when raised, it will be a spiritual body. There is, of course, a physical body, so there has to be a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup>For the scripture says, "The first man, Adam, was created a living being"; but the last Adam is the life-giving Spirit. <sup>46</sup>It is not the spiritual that comes first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup>The first Adam was made of the dust of the earth; the second Adam came from heaven. <sup>48</sup>Those who belong to the earth are like the one who was made of earth; those who are of heaven are like the one who came from heaven. <sup>49</sup>Just as we wear the likeness of the man made of earth, so we will wear the likeness of the Man from heaven.

<sup>50</sup>What I mean, brothers, is this: what is made of flesh and blood cannot share in God's Kingdom, and what is mortal cannot possess immortality.

<sup>51</sup>Listen to this secret: we shall not all die, but

power; it is sown a natural 44 body, it is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so we shall bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

I declare to you, brothers, 50 that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we

44. **When buried** it is flesh and blood, under the curse (*Gen. 3:16-19*). **When raised** it will be a spiritual body, structured to fit into the *eternal world* (*1 John 3:1-3*).

45. **For the scripture says.** Paul paraphrases *Gen. 2:7* Septuagint, which says that Adam was created a *living being*. [*ΨΥΧΗ* means both soul and life, according to the context. *ΨΥΧΗΝ ΖΩΣΑΝ* here means *living being*.] This is life in the *animal or natural* sense. **Is the life-giving Spirit.** The *natural* body depended upon the presence of the soul for its life. Our spiritual bodies will not be such fragile things. Paul implies a *fusing* of our triune nature in *1 Thess. 5:23*. But there is no way we can know just what this will be.

46. **That comes first.** First Adam, then Christ. First the physical, then the spiritual.

47. **Made of dust.** *Gen. 2:7* **Came from heaven.** Compare *2 Cor. 5:2-3* and notes.

48. **Those who belong to the earth.** Our natural bodies are like Adam's body. **Those who are of heaven.** Our spiritual bodies will be like Christ's resurrection body. Compare *Phil. 3:20-21*.

49. **The likeness.** "We Christians wear the likeness of Adam in our physical bodies as we live on earth for a short time. We will wear the likeness of Christ in our spiritual bodies as we live forever in eternity!"

50. **What I mean.** "Nature prohibits eternal life in this earthly body. Our own resurrection or change must come before we can possibly share in God's Kingdom of Eternity!"

51. **Listen to this secret.** This is a new truth which they did not have! He challenges the false teacher and the others with this revelation from God! **We shall not all die.** When Christ Comes, many (perhaps millions) will not die (as we understand death)! **All be changed.** *1 Thess. 4:17*.

in an instant we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup>as quickly as the blinking of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds. For when it sounds, the dead will be raised immortal beings, and we shall all be changed. <sup>53</sup>For what is mortal must clothe itself with what is immortal; what will die must clothe itself with what cannot die. <sup>54</sup>So when what is mortal has been clothed with what is immortal, and when what will die has been clothed with what cannot die, then the scripture will come true: "Death is destroyed; victory is complete!"

<sup>55</sup>"Where, Death, is your victory?

Where, Death, is your power to hurt?"

<sup>56</sup>Death gets its power to hurt from sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. <sup>57</sup>But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

<sup>58</sup>So then, my dear brothers, stand firm and steady. Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever without value.

shall all be changed—in a 52 flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For the perishable 53 must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When 54 the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your 55 victory?"

Where, O death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, 56 and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! 57 He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my dear 58 brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

52. As the blinking of an eye. The change will be instantaneous! Notice this clearly shows the time factor in 1 Thess. 4:16-17. When the last trumpet sounds. Compare Heb. 12:18-21.

53. For what is mortal. To share the Kingdom of God, our mortal bodies must become immortal, no longer capable of dying. Compare 2 Cor. 5:1-5.

54. Then the scripture will come true. The Resurrection will cancel the curse of death placed on mankind in Gen. 3:16-19. See verse 26.

55. Where, Death? Paul adapts the language of Hosea 13:14 as a song of victory! "Death, who lead the human family captive, where is your victory? All the dead have been rescued from you! With your power to hurt you killed God's people. Where now is your power to hurt, since they cannot die anymore?"

56. Death gets its power to hurt. Compare Rom. 5:17, 21; 6:23. Sin gets its power from the Law. In these seven words Paul condenses his teaching in Rom. 4:15; 5:20; 6:14; ch 7; Gal. 2:16; ch 3; 4:21-5:4. "The Law of God, imposing on sinful man impossible yet necessary tasks, promising salvation upon terms he can never fulfill and threatening death upon non-fulfillment, in effect exasperates his sin and involves him in hopeless guilt." [But see Rom. 8:1-4 and notes.]

57. But thanks be to God. God gives us a way to escape from sin and death! The Resurrection comes through Christ on the cross!

58. Stand firm and steady. "Do this because the dead will be raised to life and God's people will be happy beyond any human imagination in that Eternal Kingdom!!!" Keep busy. Compare verse 14. Christ did raise from death!!! Therefore their work for the Lord is not empty and useless.

people. I beg you, my brothers, <sup>16</sup>to follow the leadership of such people as these, and of anyone else who works and serves with them.

<sup>17</sup>I am happy over the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus; they have made up for your absence, <sup>18</sup>and have cheered me up, just as they cheered you up. Such men as these deserve notice.

<sup>19</sup>The churches in the province of Asia send you their greetings; Aquila and Priscilla and the church that meets in their house send warm Christian greetings. <sup>20</sup>All the brothers here send greetings.

Greet one another with a brotherly kiss.

<sup>21</sup>With my own hand I write this: *Greetings from Paul.*

<sup>22</sup>Whoever does not love the Lord—a curse on him!

*Maranatha*—Our Lord, come!

<sup>23</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

<sup>24</sup>My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.

to submit to such as these <sup>16</sup>  
and to everyone who joins in  
the work and labors at it. I <sup>17</sup>  
was glad when Stephanas,  
Fortunatus and Achaicus  
arrived, because they have  
supplied what was lacking  
from you. For they refreshed <sup>18</sup>  
my spirit and yours also.  
Such men deserve recogni-  
tion.

#### Final Greetings

The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. All the brothers here <sup>20</sup>  
send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

I, Paul, write this greeting <sup>21</sup>  
in my own hand.

If anyone does not love <sup>22</sup>  
the Lord—a curse be on him. Come, O Lord!

The grace of the Lord <sup>23</sup>  
Jesus be with you.

My love to all of you in <sup>24</sup>  
Christ Jesus.

16. **To follow the leadership.** "A congregation is as strong as its most spiritual members." The spiritually mature are to give leadership to the spiritual immature. Compare *Eph. 4:11-15*.

17. **I am happy.** Some think this Stephanas is the son of the one in *verse 15*. These three must have brought Paul the letter mentioned in *1 Cor. 7:1*.

18. **And have cheered me up.** By bringing news of the Corinthians. **Deserve notice.** This repeats the advice of *verse 16*. See also *1 Thess. 5:12-13*.

19. **The churches.** Paul is in constant contact with the churches through his *evangelists* such as Timothy. He *passes on* their greetings in his letter. **Aquila and Priscilla.** They were former members of the church at Corinth (*Acts 18:2, 18*), who were now with Paul. **And the church.** See notes on *Rom. 16:5, 23*.

20. **All the brothers.** The Christians at Ephesus. *MacKnight* thinks *brother* was used to *identify* a preacher (*1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; 2:13*) and that Paul is sending greetings from the preaching brothers at Ephesus. **With a brotherly kiss.** See note on *Rom. 16:16*.

21. **With my own hand I write this.** Paul signed his letters to show they were genuine. One of his associates did the actual writing (*Rom. 16:22*). *2 Thess. 2:2* implies that some counterfeit letters were being circulated in his name.

22. **Whoever does not love the Lord.** *MacKnight* writes: "If any one professing the gospel, *love not the Lord Jesus Christ*, I with my own hand write this greatest curse against him." *Maranatha*. This is in Aramaic, and means: *Our Lord, come!* First century Christians ended their prayers with these words. The gospel says Jesus will Come Again! Compare *Phil. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:14-16; James 5:7-9; Rev. 1:7; 3:11; 22:20*.

23-24. **The grace.** His final greeting. Compare *2 Cor. 13:13*. He assures them of his love for them (since he has scolded them strongly).