

He did not tell them to give a tithe but said, "Each one of you should set aside some money in keeping with his income" and be ready to add it to the collection when you meet to worship (16:2).

The Law demanded a tithe or many tithes from the people of Israel in Old Testament times (Mal 3:10). Now God asks us to give as He has blessed us. Everything we have belongs to the Lord, so use the money you need, and honour Christ with the rest. Christ taught that a 'full' offering comes from a full heart. And that "The Lord loves a cheerful giver..." (2 Cor 9:7).

"After I go through Macedonia..." (16:4). To reach Corinth from Ephesus, Paul had to go through Macedonia (16:5). He wanted them to know he would not come right away, but when he did come to Corinth he would 'stay for some time' of the Lord permits (16:7).

"I will stay at Ephesus until Pentecost..." he said (16:8). Many in that city opposed the gospel, but God was at work there.



TALK ABOUT

1. Why would Paul go up to Jerusalem?
2. What did the brothers take with them to Jerusalem?
3. Did the coming of Christ put an end to the tithe given under the Law (Matt 23:23-24)?
4. How should a person give to God's work (2 Cor 9:7)?
5. What did Paul mean by "do everything in love" (16:14)?

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24th November 2000

Books of the Bible

First Book of CORINTHIANS

**written in Easy English
by
Fred Morris**

TO THE READER:

Read your Bible first, a few verses at a time. Then read this study. Verses are from the New International Version of the Bible. Verses taken from other versions of the Bible are shown as:

KJV – King James Version, **NASB** – New American Standard Bible, **TLB** – The Living Bible, **NLT** – New Living Translation. Verses quoted are shown as 7:6, chapter 7 and verse 6.

Corinth was a great city in ancient Greece. Ships came to Corinth from all parts of the world. It was a very wicked city, full of idols, pagan temples and prostitutes.

The people of Corinth had lived all their lives without God. When Paul preached the gospel of Jesus Christ in their city, some believed. When they believed, God's Spirit changed them. He showed them the truth. Their old ways were wrong! (Eph 4:17–27).

The Jewish rulers did not like these Christians because:

- They talked about Jesus Christ, not Abraham or Moses.
- They stopped keeping the laws given to Moses.
- They told others about their faith in Jesus Christ and the resurrection.

PAUL WAS PREACHING AT EPHESUS

Paul was preaching in Ephesus, another city in Asia Minor, now Turkey. Some of the Corinthian Christians wrote letters to Paul (1:11; 7:1; 8:1; 12:1). They told him about some of their members who were still living in sin. Some members had divided into groups. Some said they were following Paul's teaching. Some said they were following Apollos or Peter. There was trouble in their meetings because of this.

Paul wrote letters to the 'church at Corinth' to answer their questions. His letters have been preserved for us to read and study today.

God's Spirit spoke through Paul. Paul's words were God's words to the Christians in Corinth. Christians today believe that "all Scripture (the Bible) is God-breathed." We learn and profit from what it says (2 Tim 3:16).



TALK ABOUT

- Why did Paul write this letter to the Christians in Corinth?
- Why did Paul want to preach the gospel in their city?
- Christians had no church buildings to meet in, so they met in houses and public halls (Acts 2:42–47).

PAUL SENT GREETINGS



1 Corinthians 1:1–3

Paul put his name at the top of his letter: "Paul, called to be an apostle ... and our brother Sosthenes." He was a ruler in the synagogue at Corinth, but he believed in Messiah Christ (Acts 18:17). All Christians are 'brothers and sisters' in Christ, so Paul called him "our brother" (1:1).

Jesus Christ, the second man, was from Heaven. "So shall we bear the likeness of the man from Heaven. Christians are being made like Jesus Christ now. In the resurrection their bodies will like His "glorious body."

Will you be ready when the time comes for Jesus to take you to Heaven? Time will yield to eternity and you will live in God's Kingdom forever. To pass into the Father's presence with the likeness of the Son 'stamped' on our spirits will be the greatest victory ever!

THE VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION



1 Corinthians 15:50-58

This is Paul's final argument about the resurrection of the body. At Christ's Second Coming, "We will not all sleep (in death), but we will all be changed. In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye." The trumpet will sound, the dead (bodies) will be raised and we will be changed. Mortal bodies will be changed to immortal bodies. This means those living at the time will be changed. They, too, will get new bodies. Then the saying will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting" (15:50-53)?

Death would be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:14). Paul could not hold back his praise to God: "Thanks be to God!" he shouted. "He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (15:57).

Christ won the victory over death and Christians will win this victory too! God gives us this victory because of the blood of Jesus Christ. That is why Paul could say, 'stand firm in the Lord Jesus Christ' (15:58). This was Paul's last word to his Christian brothers. It is set out in three parts: **a)** Stand firm in your beliefs (faith). **b)** Let nothing move you off the foundation (Christ). **c)** Give yourselves fully to the Lord's work.



TALK ABOUT

- Why did Paul work so hard?
- Was it Paul or the grace of God working through Paul?
- How can we do most good to those around us?
- Does death have any 'sting' for believers (15:55)?

MONEY COLLECTED FOR POOR



1 Corinthians 16:1-24 (Romans 15:26-27)

The Christians were collecting money for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul wanted them to finish collecting the money before he came. He told them, "On the first day of the week each one of you should set aside a sum..." This was not a command. Christians give because they love God.

The first day of the week was Christ's resurrection day. His followers kept this day holy. They worshipped on Sunday (John 20:19; Acts 20:7).

Paul did not want to take the money. They must choose men to take it. He would give them 'letters' to introduce them to men in Jerusalem (16:3).

HOW TO GIVE...

- Regularly - make it a habit
- Each one of you
- Have a plan and set money aside
- As you receive, so give
- Do it with joy (2 Cor 8:2)

WHAT KIND OF BODIES?



1 Corinthians 15:35-44

Christians in Corinth asked, "How are the dead raised?" What kind of body will they have (15:35)?

The apostles saw Jesus alive after He rose from the grave: **a)** His body was not limited by time and space (Luke 24:36). **b)** They could recognize His new spiritual body. They knew it was Jesus! (Luke 24:31). **c)** They saw Him go back to Heaven (Acts 1:9).

Paul used a seed to teach about this new body. He said, 'When you plant a seed in the ground, you do not get a seed but a new plant. The seed dies, but a new life springs up from the seed' (15:36-38). A wonderful change takes place in the seed's 'body.'

We are all like seeds. Our bodies will die and be buried. In the resurrection, God will raise our bodies in glorious new life. Our new bodies will be spiritual bodies. Paul compared the body we have now with the new one we will have in the resurrection: **a)** A perishing body will be raised an ever-living one. **b)** A body with no honour (now) will be "raised in glory." **c)** The natural physical body "is raised a spiritual body" (15:42-44). **d)** The old body made from "dust of the earth" will be changed into a heavenly body.



TALK ABOUT

1. When will all Christ's enemies be destroyed?
2. What did Paul mean when he spoke about "death to self"?
3. Some say Christ will ride out to make war against the nations, but what would be His purpose if the nations have been judged already (2 Peter 3:10-13)?

JESUS, THE GIVER OF LIFE



1 Corinthians 15:45-49

"The first man Adam became a living being, the last Adam (Jesus) a life-giving spirit" (15:45).

Here we have God's order, sowing must come before harvest. God began with the natural man (Adam). Then He moved to the spiritual man, Jesus Christ. We had an old life and body 'in Adam.' Now we have a new life 'in Christ' and we will soon have a new body also. Our earthly body 'in Adam' will be forever changed into a body like Christ's glorious body (Phil 3:21).

"The spiritual did not come first, but the natural and after that the spiritual" (15:46). This is a great truth. Under the Old Covenant everything was physical and temporal. Under the New Covenant everything becomes spiritual and eternal.

THE FIRST MAN ADAM

In every way, we are like the first man Adam. We have all his weaknesses and sins. But just as "we have borne the likeness of the earthly man" so we will bear the likeness of Jesus (15:49; 2 Cor 3:18).

Paul said God 'called' him. On the way to Damascus, he heard God's voice. That day Paul had a vision of Jesus that changed his life forever (Acts 9:5).



Paul preached in Corinth

When Paul preached at Corinth, the Jews would not listen. They treated him roughly and did not believe the gospel. At last Paul said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads. From now on I will go to the Gentiles" (Acts 18:1-6). Gentiles were all those people who were not Jews. They also needed the gospel.

THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CORINTH

Paul wrote to "the church of God in Corinth..." God had called these Christians and they had answered 'Yes!' to His call. He saved them from their sins and brought them into His

family. God loves all men and wants them to be saved from their sins. He calls us. He puts a longing in our hearts for something more. Only He can fill that longing in our hearts. We must let Him fill that space or we will never know real joy.

The 'Church' is made up of people God has brought into His family. They come from every people group and place. All "call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ – their Lord and ours!" (1:2).

Paul wrote "To those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy..." When God calls us and we answer, He changes us. His Spirit comes to live with us to make us holy. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us to make us fit to serve a holy God. Sanctified means 'set apart' for God to use.

TALK ABOUT

1. Who was Sosthenes?
2. How does God 'call' a person (The word 'call' used here means to hear and obey)?
3. What changed Paul's life forever (Acts 9:5)?
4. What is the 'Church of God' (1:2)?
5. Why did these people call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ'?
6. What does 'sanctified' mean?

GRACE AND PEACE

"Grace and peace to you..." (1:3). Grace is God's love and kindness freely given to us. When we receive God's love, He gives us peace in our hearts (John 14:27). When we sin, we lose our peace. Then we must repent and ask God to forgive us. He will forgive our sins and we will have peace again.

God invites us to fellowship with Him. He is holy and to fellowship with Him His people must be holy (1 Peter 1:15). This does not mean that Christians have no sin. It means that God forgives them when they repent because Jesus died for them.



Without blame

When we confess our sin, the blood of Jesus makes us clean. We are without blame before God (1:8). We can be 'blameless' only because God gives us His Holy Spirit to live in us. The Holy Spirit brings Christ's righteous life to us. God's Spirit shows us our sins, so that we can be free from them.

PAUL THANKED GOD



1 Corinthians 1:4-9

Paul thanked God for these believers. He had heard bad reports from Corinth. He remembered what they were before they received Christ. Now

they were 'in Christ.' When he thought of their faith and their holy lives, his heart filled with praise to God. In Christ they were blessed and had hope. He thanked God for saving them and bringing them into His family. God did this work in their hearts. God's grace drew them and they had followed.

"For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim 1:7) KJV

Paul used the words 'in Christ' to mean a person who has been joined to Jesus Christ (1:4). Those who are not 'in Christ' cannot live holy lives. They may change their ways. They may say all the right words, but they will not have God's Spirit at work in their lives. And "He who has not the Spirit of God, is none of His," Paul said (Rom 8:9).

"You have been made rich in every way..." (1:5). If these Christians did not live as 'new creations,' it was their own fault. They knew Jesus Christ. He was their Saviour and Lord and they could tell others about Him.

Paul 'lived the gospel and preached it. This was Paul's testimony. His words were made sure in the Christians because they believed (1:6). Now it was their testimony and they were 'enriched' by it..



TALK ABOUT

1. All Christians are 'in Christ' __ True __ False?
2. Christ is the Head of the body, His Church __ True __ False?
3. How must each member behave?
4. What must we do to have peace in our hearts?
5. How were the Christians in Corinth "rich in every way?" Do you feel rich?

GOD GAVE THEM RICH GIFTS

The Corinthian Christians did not lack any 'spiritual gift' (1:7). Here Paul speaks of the 'gifts' given by God's Spirit (12:7-11). God's gifts are given to help the whole Christian Church grow strong. Every Christian has some gift. We must use our gifts wisely. If we don't we can easily hurt the ones we try to help. God's Spirit must control the gifts He has given us. When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, we have a good testimony.

Paul did not lack special gifts, but he put 'knowing Christ' first. No spiritual gift is greater than to know Christ and be filled with His Spirit (13:13).

The greatest gift of all is Jesus Christ! (2 Cor 9:15).



God makes us rich...

- a) Salvation, "the gift that comes by grace" (Rom 5:15).
- b) Gifts given to each one by God (Rom 11:29; 1 Peter 4:10).
- c) Special gifts of His Spirit (1 Cor 12:1-11)...." they had many gifts but also many sins!

JESUS CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN

"As you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed..." (1:7). They expected Christ to come again at any moment. When Jesus went back to Heaven, He promised to come again (Acts 1:11; John 17:24).

Jesus told His disciples, "Keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come" (Matt 24:42).

When we confess our sin, the blood of Jesus makes us clean. Then we are

DEATH AND THE CHRISTIAN



1 Corinthians 15:25-34

'All Christ's enemies' includes death (15:25). Death came when Adam sinned. All die because 'the wages of sin is death' (15:21; Rom 6:23). Death is the last great enemy, but Jesus won the victory over death. Death will be "cast into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:14).

Death will not have power over Christians. Their bodies will rise to meet Christ in the air (1 Thess 4:17). They will live in new bodies that will never die. "All will be made alive." Paul spoke about all believers (15:22). Believers are 'In Christ' so all will rise to new life at the resurrection (15:23).

EACH WILL RISE IN HIS OWN TURN

Christ has gone to Heaven first. He is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (15:20). All those who are in Christ will also rise. Then the redeemed of all ages will surround the throne and cry out, "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb" (Rev 7:10).

By faith, believers are joined with Christ forever. Just as He rose from the grave, so those alive in Him will rise. "Each in his own turn" is a military term. They will rise like a company of soldiers marching in proper order. "Then the end will come...(15:24).

God gave the Son "all authority in Heaven and on earth" (Matt 28:18). When Christ has conquered all His enemies - sin, death and Satan - He will hand over His power and authority to God the Father (15:28).



TALK ABOUT

1. How did God's grace work in Paul's life (15:10)?
2. If we have hope in this life only and have nothing beyond, is that true hope (15:19)?
3. Tell three things about death?
4. What hope do you have for life after death?

"If there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead" (15:29)? We don't know what this means. It is possible that some believers were being baptized for believers who had died before they received baptism.

Then why do we risk death every hour if there is no resurrection (15:30)? Why would Paul suffer to bring them the gospel, if life ended in the grave? His suffering would be of no value (2 Cor 11:23-29).

Paul said, "I die every day" (15:31). This is what Jesus meant when He said, "take up your cross and follow Me." Death to self worked in Paul's life. He chose to deny himself to share the gospel with them (Mark 8:34).

Paul took words from a Greek play: "Bad company corrupts good character." He means be careful of those who say 'there is no resurrection' or you will be turned away from the truth (15:12,33).

And who were the women to submit to? To their husbands or the leaders who were responsible for keeping order in the worship service?

There were times when women were allowed to speak. Paul had already discussed the role of women praying and prophesying in the church (11:5). Here Paul was giving instructions on how to keep order.

Women are gifted by the Holy Spirit the same as men.

Gifted women should be recognized by the elders. Both men and women must wait on the Lord for the right time and place to use their gifts.

TALK ABOUT

1. In Paul's day, most women did not go to school. Could this be the reason for him saying, "Women should ask their own husbands at home" (14:35)?
2. Does the Holy Spirit give men and women the same gifts?
3. What does verse 40 tell us about the meetings in Corinth?

THE RESURRECTION



1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Paul preached the resurrection of Jesus. This was part of the gospel. It had made his enemies angry and they had put him in prison (Acts 24:21).

If you don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, "You have believed in vain," Paul told them (15:2). "By this gospel you are saved," Paul said, "if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you" (15:2; Heb 3:6).

Paul named the times when Jesus showed Himself to believers after He rose from the dead: **a)** Peter saw Him (Luke 24:34). **b)** The women saw Him (Matt 28:9). **c)** The Twelve saw Him (Luke 24:36-43). **d)** More than five hundred saw Him (Matt 28:10). **e)** James, the brother of Jesus, saw his own brother. **f)** "Last of all, He appeared to me," Paul said (Acts 9).

One great truth is the resurrection of Christ's human body. Without that truth we have no hope (15:19).

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD



1 Corinthians 15:12-24

Some in Corinth said there would be no resurrection. Paul said, "If there is no resurrection...even Christ has not been raised" (15:13). "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (15:20). If there is no resurrection: **a)** Christ is left in a martyr's grave. **b)** Our preaching is vain (empty) (15:14). **c)** You are still in your sins. **d)** It makes our "hope of glory" a false promise and us false witnesses (15:15). **e)** Those who have 'fallen asleep' in Christ are also lost (15:17).



His rewards come with Him

- a) Peace in our hearts.
- b) The rest of faith in His perfect plan.
- c) The fellowship of the saints as they support us.
- d) The joy of serving Christ satisfies our hearts. These blessings come to you as you give Him first place in your life (Matthew 6:33).

without blame before God (1:8). We can be 'blameless' only because God gives us His Holy Spirit to live in us. The Holy Spirit brings Christ's righteous life to us. God's Spirit shows us our sins, so that we can be free from them.

GOD WILL KEEP YOU STRONG

When times are hard, we can count on God's strength. "He will keep you strong to the end," Paul said, "so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:8). God promised to protect them from the persecutions that came on them, right to the end of life (1 Peter 1:4).

Paul set their eyes on Christ's return (Matt 16:27). He called that day "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is the day of Christ's final victory over all His enemies. And it will be a victory day for all who 'eagerly wait' for His coming. They are the ones "who in every place call on His name" (1:2).

"Jesus Christ our Lord is faithful" (1:9; 1 Thess 5:23-24). We are one in Him and one with a mighty God. He will keep us strong as we trust Him.



TALK ABOUT

1. How do you know Jesus will come again? What did the angel say (Acts 1:11)?
2. What would keep their faith strong (1:9)?
3. Do you have this faith in Christ?
4. How can we be 'blameless' before God (1:8)?

PAUL WROTE TO 'THE SAINTS'



1 Corinthians 1:10-17

"I appeal to you, brothers..." Paul wrote to the women, too. He wrote to all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Christ was speaking to these Christians through Paul.

Great men of God had preached in Corinth – Paul, Apollos, Peter. Some said they followed one man, some another. Paul told them to forget these men and unite in Christ and be 'one body' (1:10). He asked them, "Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul" (1:13)? His questions showed them how foolish they were to follow a man. It was God who called them and saved them. It was God who blessed them. God alone could: **a)** Plant the seed of faith in a person's heart (Rom 10:10). **b)** Save them by the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:15). **c)** Baptize them into His family (12:13).

Like many Christians today, they were trusting in men. They were putting value on a preacher who baptized them



Ask in Christ's name

Call on His name in prayer. Praise His name in worship. Call on His name for strength and grace.

"He will see that they get justice, and quickly." (Luke 18:8)



Jesus Christ alone can ...

- plant the seed of faith in a man's heart (Rom 10:10)
- offer salvation from sin through the gospel
- water the faith that springs up in hearts
- baptize believers into His family (12:13)
- grow Christians to maturity
- take them to Heaven when they die

in water. They had taken their eyes off Jesus Christ and put them on a man.

Paul said, "I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you..." (1:14). It did not matter which leader put these believers under the water. They were baptized in the name of "the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (12:13; Matt 28:19).

WATER BAPTISM

Baptism means, 'I am one with Jesus Christ' (Rom 6:3-4). **a)** I am joined with Him in His death. I die to my old nature, to my old lusts and ambitions. **b)** I am joined to Him in His resurrection. **c)** Every part of me rises to a new life of victory in Jesus. **d)** I am telling the world, 'He is Lord of my life and from this day on I will live for Him only.' That is the baptism Jesus taught and the baptism Paul taught. There is no other believer's baptism.

Water baptism is a sign, but also a command to be obeyed. It is a testimony to the world and the devil. In Paul's day, men believed and were baptized soon afterwards in a lake or river. All their neighbours could watch and all their neighbours could hear their testimony. All those listening knew if what they said was true.



TALK ABOUT

1. What was dividing the Christians in Corinth?
2. How could they unite?
3. What did Paul say about his calling? What did he put first in his ministry (1:17)?
4. What is the meaning of water baptism?
5. Were these Christians baptized into their leader – a Peter, or an Apollos – or into the person of Christ?

THE WISDOM OF GOD



1 Corinthians 1:18-21

Man's wisdom was important to the people in Corinth. Paul said man's wisdom does not know God and man, by his own wisdom, cannot find God. Man's wisdom leads him away from God, so God will destroy it (Is 29:14).

The Pharisees and chief priests thought they were wise. They hated Jesus. They rejected Him and killed Him.

Paul had learned all the wisdom of the Pharisees. He had a great mind. He could use many big words. Before Paul was saved, he hated Christians and tried to kill them. Now he used only Jesus' words to lead them to God. The words of the gospel were full of life and power (Rom 1:16).

Eve wanted to be as wise as God. Satan knew this! He told Eve she would 'gain wisdom' if she ate the fruit God told them not to eat.

Adam and Eve did not obey God. "When she (Eve) saw that the fruit was good...for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it" (Gen 3:6).

At once, Adam and Eve were cut off from their

Without the Spirit of God

the man without the Spirit of God does not accept:

- the truth of God's word
- the conviction of the Holy Spirit
- the warnings of Scripture
- wisdom that comes from God

The Gospel has power to:

- a) Break man's stubborn will.
- b) Make man's wisdom foolish.
- c) Turn the world upside down.

sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind" (14:15). Paul wanted to sing and pray with his mind as well as his spirit.

Paul added, "I thank God that I "speak in tongues" privately more than any of the rest of you. But in public worship I would rather speak five words that people can understand...than ten thousand words...in an unknown language" (14:18-19 TLB).

"Tongues then, are for a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers" (14:22). Jews in Isaiah's time refused to listen to God's prophet, so God send foreigners (the Assyrians), with strange tongues, to attack them (Is 28:11-12).



TALK ABOUT

1. What would it be like to enter a meeting where all prophesied?
2. What does Paul say will happen if an unbeliever stumbles into such a meeting of believers (14:24-25)?

ORDER IN WORSHIP MEETINGS



1 Corinthians 14:26-32

Paul 'opens the door' and lets us look in at the meetings in Corinth. There is no pastor, no organ, no choir, no order of service, just a handful of believers sitting in a room.

He encouraged them to use the gifts God had given them: When you meet together some will sing, another will teach...or speak in an unknown tongue, or interpret the unknown language. Everything that is done must be useful to all, "to build them up in the Lord" (14:26).

Paul said that no more than three persons should speak in tongues. And they should speak in turn, not all at once. If there was no one present who could interpret, then the person with the tongues gift should keep quiet, unless he could interpret the words himself (14:26-29). Each speaker should take his turn. "Others should weigh carefully what was said" by the speaker. "If someone else receives a message... from the Lord, the one who is speaking should stop" (14:30).

WOMEN MUST BE SILENT



1 Corinthians 14:33-40

In the Corinthian culture, men and women sat on opposite sides of the meeting room. We don't know what happened in Corinth and we don't know why Paul said, "women should remain silent" (14:34). This was Paul's third word to women 'to be silent,' which seems to tell us that the meetings at Corinth were very noisy. Was he speaking of the cries of grief or mourning made by pagan women?

Women were not to call out questions, or shout to their husbands, or stop the speaker. They were not to discuss or argue about the message during the meeting, but "ask their own husbands at home..." (14:35). Was this only for wives?



CONCLUSION

1. Paul's authority is Christ. It is "the Lord's command" (14:37).
2. Those who do not live by God's
3. word should not speak in the meetings (14:38).
4. "Be eager to prophesy" (14:39).
5. Don't forbid speaking in tongues
6. Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way (14:40).

word (Rom 12:6). The gift of prophecy is greatly needed in the Church everywhere to help new believers grow.



TALK ABOUT

1. Does 'to prophesy' mean to teach, to comfort or to encourage other Christians?
2. The one who prophesies, speaking the message of Christ, helps others grow in the Lord ___ or True ___ False (14:3)?
3. If we prophesy under the control of the Holy Spirit, it will bring glory to God ___ True or ___ False?

Women's mouths shut

Because of the verse 34, the Christian Church has shut women's mouths. God did not mean us to do this. Paul received the ministry of women. Philip, the evangelist, had four daughters who prophesied and Paul did not tell them to stop (Acts 21:9). He said women were to 'pray and prophesy' in the meetings (11:5).

ANYONE WHO SPEAKS IN A TONGUE

"Anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. No one understands him. He speaks in a 'language' given to him by the Holy Spirit (14:2).

Men have puzzled over the use of this gift of speaking in a strange language. The gift caused much confusion in Corinth, and no gift has caused more division in the Christian Church. So Paul told them, "I would rather have you prophesy" or teach (14:5).

When a man preached in the tongue (language) of the people, all present could understand. He 'edified the church,' which means all are helped. If the speaker used a strange language, one the people did not understand, he had to have someone else who knew what he was saying to explain. The interpreter would change 'unknown words' into words the people understood.

"If I myself should come speaking to you in some language you don't understand, how would that help you?" Paul asked (14:6 TLB). Paul did not say, 'Don't speak in tongues.' He wished everyone in Corinth 'spoke in tongues.' But those who used this gift used it in the wrong way. They were puffed up. They were using their gift to honour themselves.

THE MOST IMPORTANT GIFT?

The believers at Corinth got 'carried away' with the mystery of it all. Paul said the tongues-gift had a place in personal worship, but Spirit-filled preaching was needed to build up the body. He used object lessons to show this: **a)** His own experience as a teacher (14:6). **b)** The clear notes played on an instrument (14:7-8). **c)** The different kinds of music (14:7). **d)** The sounds of human language (14:10-11). Each instrument of music plays a different part. The flute in worship; the trumpet in battle. A clear bugle note can summon an army to action, but it is not good to play the same note over and over again - or say the same words.

For this reason if a person speaks in a tongue he should pray that he may also interpret what he says (14:13).

With the mind we know truth. We respond to God's word first in our minds. When we understand God's truth, it moves our minds and our bodies to action.

"So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will

Creator-God. All mankind became sinners. God has let man go his own way so that no one, by his own wisdom, can find God (Rom 1:21; 3:11-12).

Paul said, "So what about these wise men...? God has made them all look foolish and shown their wisdom to be useless nonsense" (1:20 TLB).

THE JEWS LOOKED FOR A MESSIAH



1 Corinthians 1:22-25

The Jews looked for a conquering Messiah. One who would deliver their nation from the Romans. Paul's preaching of the cross was a 'stumbling block' to them. They were offended by it. How could Jesus be the Messiah and let the Romans kill Him on a cross?

The Greeks wanted to be men of great wisdom and strength. Jesus' words were too gentle, too humble! Jesus said He was God, but He could not save Himself. How could His words be true? How could He be God?



TALK ABOUT

1. What makes men truly wise?
2. Why did the leaders kill Jesus?
3. Why was Christ's death a 'stumbling block' to the Jews?
4. The man without the Spirit of God is lost ___ True ___ False (Rom 8:9)?

GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN



1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Paul said to the Christians, "Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many had influence; not many were of noble birth" (1:26).

He asked them to think of what they were when God called them (1:26). When they heard God's call, they obeyed.

To be called means to know God and walk in His ways. The gospel calls all men to be saved. The gospel is:

- the power of God to SAVE men from sin (Rom 1:16).
- the wisdom of God to SATISFY all our needs (1:24).
- the STRENGTH of God to hold us fast to the end (Phil 3:13-14).

We are saved by the foolishness of preaching, "so that no one may boast..." (1:28-29).

God is sovereign. He does as He wishes. He chose the foolish things and the weak things, the lowly things and despised things of the world - the nothings and the nobodies - to shame the wise and strong (1:27).

These Christians were aliens, slaves, misfits. Only a few were 'free men' (Acts



Foolish things ...

- a) Jesus, the Son of God, dying on a cross.
- b) Jesus "despised and rejected by men..." (Is 53:3).
- c) Unlearned men preaching the gospel. The world heard their preaching and called it "foolishness" (2:14).
- d) Ordinary people (nothings) being saved.
- e) Paul, himself, looked foolish. He was a well-educated Pharisee who went around killing Christians. Then God called him. Now he preached the gospel of Christ. Christ.

22:28). Praise God He saves rich as well as poor. The gospel is for all people, for men and women of all classes.

The Jews thought Jesus was a nobody. They thought the same about the saints at Corinth....a lot of nobodies, simple folk who would believe anything. That is why the Jews despised the Christians, just as they had despised Jesus.



TALK ABOUT

1. What do you trust in? Do you trust God's power to save you or are you trusting in doing good?
2. What were the foolish things of the world (1:27)?
3. Let him who boasts boast in the (1:31)?
4. Why did Jews think Jesus was 'a nobody'?
5. What did it mean to be a 'free man'?

PAUL'S WISDOM CAME FROM GOD



1 Corinthians 2:1-14

The deep things of God were shown to Paul by God's Spirit (2:13). He was not pretending to be bold or strong. Remember, Paul was a very learned man. He studied God's Law in the school of Ga-ma'-li-el (Acts 22:3). But Paul chose to speak only of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross (2:2).

Paul said, "We do speak wisdom among those who are mature..." (2:6). These truths were hidden from the little ones and shown to the mature – to those who were grown in their faith. They were 'the mature!' Paul could share 'the wisdom of God' with them freely.

The church at Corinth was like a nursery full of small children. They quarreled and shouted and cried. They did as they wished, because they were controlled by their own desires (3:2; Heb 6:1). They had not grown up! Those who have grown up in their faith could understand "God's wise plan" (2:7).

The "rulers of this world" (chief priests and Pharisees) could not know God's plan. "If they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (2:8 NASB). They were ignorant rulers!

THE PROPHET'S WORDS

The prophet wrote, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard....all that God has prepared for those that love Him" (2:7; Isa 64:4). This is part of the secret of the Christian Church. It was: **a)** Planned by God before the world began. **b)** To bring all men of faith together in one body – His Church. **c)** To bless all men now in this age. **d)** To show forth God's glory.



This is what the Lord said.....

This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows Me." - Jeremiah 9:23-24

possess to feed the poor; to deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing (13:3 NASB).

Love is an action word: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son..." (John 3:16). We love Him and give ourselves... (Rom 12:1).

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus ... There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:26-28).

GOD'S LOVE NEVER FAILS

Love was and is the very center of Christ's character. "God showed His great love to us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners" (Rom 5:8 TLB). As the Holy Spirit breathes Christ's life into us, we love others. Without Him our hearts are empty and cold.

Someone said, "If you put 'Jesus' in place of 'love' in these verses, you will have a perfect picture of Christ as He lived here on earth.

Because God is eternal, His love is eternal and will go on forever. All the other gifts will end, but not love (1 John 4:1). **a)** "prophecies will cease. **b)** "tongues will be stilled. **c)** "knowledge will pass away ..." (13:8). Only love will remain.

Paul said, "For we know in part and we prophesy in part ..." Our feeble minds know so little of God. It is like looking at God in a poor mirror. "Now all I know is hazy and blurred ... but in Heaven I will see everything clearly ..."

In Paul's day, mirrors were made of metal. The metal was hammered flat and polished. It did not give a good reflection. Paul said we see only a dim picture of Christ's perfect character. In Heaven, we will see God "face to face." In Heaven, we will "know fully" and see fully - "as clearly as God sees into my heart right now" (13:12 TLB).

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" (13:13). From this wonderful love of God comes our love, our faith and our hope, that one day we will dwell in His love forever.

The love of God
We can break chapter 13 into three themes:
1. The results of not having love (1-3).
2. The true nature of love (4-7).
3. Love compared to the Holy Spirit's gifts (8-12).

GIFTS OF PROPHECY AND STRANGE TONGUES



1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Now Paul tells how the gifts are to be used. His first advice was: "Follow the way of love..." He said, "the greatest gift is love" (12:31).

"Eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy" (14:1). Paul put the gift of prophecy first. The Corinthians had put the 'gift of tongues' first. 'Prophecy' is speaking God's

How to worship
Paul told the Christians in Corinth how to meet and worship together: **a)** They must speak one at a time. **b)** Others should listen carefully to what is said. **c)** Everyone must be instructed and encouraged. **d)** The gifts of the Spirit must be controlled by those who have received them, so that all is done in order and with peace (14:40). God wanted order in their meetings. Paul said he found this order in all the other churches (14:33).

kinds of tongues (12:10) and **8.** those who interpreted what they said (12:30).

Apostles, prophets and teachers were given a place of honour or leadership in the early churches. The first three are also given this honour or rank in Ephesians 4:11 and Romans 12:6-8.

Paul then asked seven questions. His questions show how different each role (gift) was in the Church. Some had one gift; some had another. All the gifts were needed and all gifts had to work together to honour Christ.

“But eagerly desire the greater gifts, he said. “And now I will show you the most excellent way” (12:31). He set a goal before them. They are to desire the “greater gifts.” We suppose these are the gifts he listed first.

NOTHING WITHOUT LOVE



1 Corinthians 13:1-13

There is a danger that we seek the grace-gifts for our own benefit. In all our service for Christ, the driving force must be love... love... love. “Love is the most excellent way,” Paul said.

Love must come before everything else, and love must control all the gifts. Every meeting, every service for God must be done in love. Love for Christ, then love for others.

In chapter 12 Paul named the gifts. In 14 he told how the gifts must be used in public. In chapter 13 he wrote of God’s love, the greatest gift of all.



TALK ABOUT:

1. Our language has no word for God’s love - the love that Christ had for His Church. The New Testament writers took a little known Greek word, ‘Agape,’ and used it. No one else used ‘agape.’ Agape love is not known to people without Christ. It means a selfless concern for others. How are you using your grace gifts? Do you know what they are?

God’s love	The Spirit’s fruit
is patient	patience
is kind	kindness
does not envy	
does not boast	
is not proud	
is not rude	gentleness
is not self-seeking	
is not easily angered	self-control
keeps no record of wrongs	
does not delight in evil	
rejoices in the truth	
always protects, trusts	faithfulness
hopes and perseveres	goodness
never fails	
God is	joy
God is	peace
God is	love

THE (AGAPE) LOVE OF GOD

“If I speak in the tongues (languages) of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong...” (13:1 NASB). Nothing can take the place of love. All we do, or say, becomes empty noise without love. Even if I have “faith to move mountains” but use it without love for others, “I am nothing.” If I have faith to give all I

“The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God” (2:10). The Holy Spirit is God. He works in men’s hearts. He reveals the mystery of how Christ lives in the believer, Jew and Gentile alike.

The mystery is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27). Christ comes to live in every believer by His Spirit.

WE MUST WAIT UPON GOD



1 Corinthians 2:15-16

God’s servant thinks differently and acts differently to non- Christians. He is under God’s authority and he takes his orders from above (Titus 2:11-13). The natural man does not understand him. His motives are not open to the world’s eyes (2:15).

THE MIND OF CHRIST

“Who has known the mind of the Lord? But we have the mind of Christ” (2:16; Is 40:13). Christians can know the ‘mind’ of God in a matter, for He will reveal it to them (Is 55:8). They can know God’s will (Eph 6:6).

Believers can reason and know what is right. They can feel and love as Christ loved. This is possible because the Holy Spirit works in them. He does a new work in their hearts. That is God’s promise (Luke 11:13; Phil 2:13).



TALK ABOUT

1. Why are Christians different?
2. How can we have more of Jesus in our hearts (Luke 11:13)?
3. Where did Paul learn the ‘wisdom of God’ (2:4)?
4. Can we know the truth (John 8:32)?
5. “The spiritual man makes judgments about all things...” (2:15).
6. Do you ask God to help you make wise choices (Jas 1:5)?

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT



1 Corinthians 3:1-7 (Eph 4:11-16, 22-32)

Paul said, ‘When I was with you I talked to you like I would to babies...and I still have to feed you on the milk of God’s word’... (3:1-2).

These Christians should have been



The Holy Spirit

- a) searches the deep things of God (2:10)
- b) knows a man’s thoughts (Prov 20:27)
- c) shows us what God has freely given to us when we believe (2:12)
- d) brings these ‘treasures’ into our lives (2 Pet 1:3)
- e) ministers Christ’s life to us



Study how these early believers worshipped. They were:

- a) Devoted to the apostles’ teaching.
- b) Kept close in fellowship.
- c) Shared the Lord’s table.
- d) Prayed together.
- e) Filled with a holy fear (Acts 2:42-47).

As we follow their example and wait on the Lord, we will know His mind in everything we do (2:16).

Christian	Not a Christian
Spiritual	worldly
spiritual man	natural man
of the spirit	of the flesh
new man	old man
In Christ	not in Christ

growing up in their faith, but they were weak in faith and behaved badly. They wanted their own way, as children do. They did not act like grown Christians. Paul called them 'worldly' or like those who were not Christians.

Paul tried to give these believers the solid 'food' of God's word to help them grow. He wanted to teach them deeper truths, but he could not. They were not ready to receive this deeper teaching (Heb 6:1-3).

LOOK AT US!

Paul said, 'Look at Apollos and look at me. We are just God's servants. We brought you the gospel, but that is all we could do. Why quarrel over us? We are only men. We are not that important.'

God had given these two men very different gifts and very different tasks. "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it...God made it grow" (3:6). "We are God's fellow workers..." Paul told them.

Paul did not say, 'We are doing God's work.' Many people will tell you that. If there was not a man on the earth, God would do His work. He could well do His work Himself. He does not need man to help Him, but God wants us to 'work together with Him (Acts 17:25). He trusts us to do His works. Jesus said to His disciples, "Anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing..." (John 14:12).

God used Paul to plant the seed of the gospel (Mark 4:3-20). He used Apollos to 'water the seed' in their hearts, but the Holy spirit made it grow. God wants to grow you into a mature Christian. He wants to do His work in you (Phil 2:13; Ps 121:3).



TALK ABOUT

1. What went wrong with the Corinthian church?
2. Why did Paul say the Christians were acting like babies?
3. What is 'solid food' for a Christian?
4. When we are saved, the Holy Spirit: **a)** Baptizes us into Christ's body (12:13). **b)** Marks us as God's people (Eph 1:13). **c)** Brings us the power of Christ's life (John 4:14). **d)** Teaches us the things of Christ (John 16:14).

EVERY MAN'S WORK TESTED



1 Corinthians 3:8-15

The man who 'plants' and the man who 'waters' the seed work together. "And each will be rewarded according to his own labour..." (3:8). God blesses His servants now and He will reward them later. God will say to each one, "Well done, you have been a faithful servant" (4:5; Matt 25:21).

Paul told them, "You are God's...building" (3:9). God wants His Church to be well built. Paul thought of the

Many Christians are like a small dog running down the street with a tin can tied to its tail. If the dog stopped, the noise would stop. If they would stop being so busy, they would hear God's voice. If they waited on God for their ministry, He would give them more of His mind and Spirit. He wants to fill our minds with His thoughts, and our lives with His power (Eph 3:20).

"You are jealous...you quarrel...you divide into groups...doesn't that prove you are still babies wanting your own way?...you are acting like people who don't belong to the Lord at all" (1 Cor 3:3 The Living Bible).

GOD'S SPIRIT BAPTIZES US

When we believe in Christ, God's Spirit baptizes us into His Kingdom. The Spirit of God marks each one by coming to live in them (Rom 8:9; Eph 1:13). This word 'baptize' means this action takes place only once.

After you are baptized into the body of Christ, you can be filled with God's Spirit or you can be half empty. "Be filled with the Spirit," Paul wrote. This means 'be being filled.' We are to be filled over and over again. We can ask God to fill us every day (Luke 11:13).

God has made our bodies so that the foot does the work of a foot and the hands do the work of hands (12:18). Each person must accept the gifts and work that God has given them (Rom 12:4).

"We each need the other..." (Rom 12:5 TLB). The weak members need the stronger members. Those who speak out need those who listen. The body (church) needs balance and harmony. No part can say to another, "I don't need you." The body is made weak if a member becomes sick and does not do his work.

There is no room to be jealous of another's gifts. Rather we should give special honour to the poor and less educated amongst us. The body needs them, too! (12:23). There should be no caste, class or status among us. If one suffers, all should suffer. If one rejoices, all should rejoice (12:26).



TALK ABOUT

1. What do we mean by "the body of Christ?"
2. How do people get into this 'body' (12:13; John 3:8)?
3. How many times can you be 'filled with the Spirit'?
4. What does the Holy Spirit give us to enable us to do God's work?
5. The same gifts of the Spirit are given to every Christian ___ True ___ False?
6. The Spirit gives gifts for the purpose of.....?

APOSTLES AND TEACHERS



1 Corinthians 12:27-31

God has appointed key men: **1.** First of all apostles, or "sent ones." After Christ died, the word 'apostle' took on a wider meaning (Gal 1:19). **2.** Prophets - one who explains God's word (Eph 3:5). **3.** Teachers were like pastors (Eph 4:11). **4.** Workers of miracles - "gifts of healing" (12:9). Healing gifts were widely used in planting the early Church and still are today (Acts 9:11; Matt 9:20-25). Jesus gave His disciples His authority to heal sicknesses (Luke 9:1). **5.** Those able to help others. Paul said, "By this kind of hard work we must help the weak" (Acts 20:35). Paul was thinking of widows, orphans and others who needed special help. **6.** Those with gifts of administering. Paul appointed elders who directed the work of the churches (1 Timothy 5:17). They guided in business matters. **7.** Those who spoke in different



Leaders must be trained

The Holy Spirit gives gifts and directs their use. Men must be trained by the Spirit of God to:

- a) To lead others in worship.
- b) To pray in public.
- c) To learn the Scriptures and teach them to others (2 Tim 2:15).
- d) To know the mind of the Holy Spirit in making decisions.
- e) To recognize their own gifts and use them for the blessing of all.

little use talking about gifts of the Spirit, if they did not live for the Lord every day. Peter said, 'If you don't live a holy life, where is your faith (1 Peter 1:15-16)?

DIFFERENT GIFTS, ONE SPIRIT

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit..." (12:4,11). The Greek word means 'portions.' The Spirit gives a portion out of His store house. His gift makes the person rich and blesses the whole Christian Church. The Spirit's gifts are for service to Christ and to build others up in their faith.

The Holy Spirit wants us to have all of Christ's character. He wants us to have the 'fruit' of His work in us - love, joy, peace (Gal 5:23).

No gift was ever given to draw attention to the person with the gift. The Spirit's gifts exalt Christ. When Christ is lifted up, men are drawn to Him. (John 12:32) When men repent or worship, Christ is glorified.

FOR THE GOOD OF ALL



1 Corinthians 12:7-11

"The manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (12:7). All these gifts are given to believers as the Spirit of God determines. Some people have listed them as: **1.** Speaking gifts - preachers, teachers, evangelists. **2.** Serving gifts - hospitality, visiting sick, administration, helps. **3.** Sign gifts - healing, miracle powers, testing the spirits, words of knowledge, speaking in tongues. "But one and the same Spirit works all...distributing to each one...just as He wills" (12:11 NASB).



TALK ABOUT

1. What are grace-gifts (12:8-11)? Can you name some of them?
2. How should grace-gifts be used in the Church?
3. How can grace-gifts be used in the wrong way?
4. When we use our gifts, who should get the glory?
5. Can we 'curse God' by the way we live (Phil 3:19)?
6. What did Paul say about the way he lived before he met Christ (1 Tim 1:13)?

ONE BODY, MANY PARTS



1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Paul saw great needs in the church at Corinth: The need to respect and care for each other. The need to use their gifts with a humble spirit. The gifts of the Spirit must always be used in love and in unity within the body.

Paul used the human body as an example of this: The body is a unit - it is a whole. Though it has many different parts - hands, eyes, feet, ears - they are one body. So it is with Christ's body (12:12).

"We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body" (12:13; John 1:33). Jews and Greeks, slave and free men, men and women became members of the living, growing Christian Church (Gal 3:26-29).

gospel 'seed' as very valuable - like gold and silver. He thought teaching from God's word was very precious.

Poor work and wrong teaching were like a grass hut in the jungle. The grass hut did not take much work to build and it is soon eaten by insects. And it did not take much to make it burn. "Wood and straw" means teaching or work: **a)** That does not put Christ first. **b)** Done without the Holy Spirit's power. **c)** Done for man's own glory.

If God's work is not done in God's way, it will not have God's blessing. The believers will soon stop following Jesus and their witness will die out. The Christian worker will be saved, "but only as one escaping through the flames" (3:15). The picture here is of a workman running from a burning hut. He is safe, but all his work is lost.

Paul remembered what God did for him, and he gave thanks. God freely forgave him (Acts 9). Now God freely used him. Paul laid the foundation in Corinth, "which is Jesus Christ." Now others were building on that foundation.

Paul preached, "by the grace God has given me..." (3:10). God's grace filled Paul's and drove him on. Everything Paul did was: **a)** By the grace of God. **b)** To and for the Lord, the Master builder. **c)** Built on the sure foundation of Jesus Christ (3:11). There can be no other foundation, Paul said and their faith must stand on Christ alone.



TALK ABOUT

1. Who 'planted' the gospel seed in Corinth? Who 'watered' it?
2. How do Christians do God's work (Phil 2:13)?
3. How is wrong teaching like bad work?
4. What will happen to those do not teach the truth of God's word?
- 5.

WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD



1 Corinthians 3:16-23

Do you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you (3:16)? Each believer is built together into God's house. Each person is like a stone or brick in a building (1 Peter 2:5).

"If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred" (3:17). Paul refers to those who divide or tear down God's people. He may fear false prophets would destroy the church in Corinth.

Satan never destroys congregations from without. He uses false teachers to destroy them from within! Paul may fear that wrong teaching would turn believers away from the truth. This would also make the local church weak. It may appear to be 'destroyed,' but God knows those who belong to Him (2 Tim 2:19). The true Church will go on forever. God will protect His Church (Matt 16:18).



God will test all work

"It will be shown for what it is, because The Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work." 1 Cor 3:12

Paul wrote to Timothy: "Present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed...who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

THE WORLD'S WISDOM

Paul turned again to the matter of this world's wisdom. God will bring the wisdom of this world to nothing. We should not boast about men. Many start out well, but end poorly. The wise often trip on their own foolishness and fall.

No one else 'owned' these believers. "You are of Christ, and Christ is of God. You are God's possession," Paul told them (3:22-23). Christ has all authority "in Heaven and on earth" and He gave His authority to believers (Matt 28:18).

Everything we have comes from Christ, "So don't be proud of following the wise men of this world. For God has already given you everything you need" (3:21 (TLB). They had Paul, Apollos and Peter, but they were taking sides. They liked one better than the other and followed that person.

Life, death, present, and future is ours because we are in Christ and Christ is in us (3:22b). Christ paid the price for us and in Him we have everything we need (John 15:4-6; 2 Peter 1:3-4).



TALK ABOUT

1. How can you know who is true servant of Christ?
2. Why would God want us as His children?
3. How could Paul prove he was Christ's apostle (15:7-10)?
4. Ask God about the work you do: "Is this a work of God, or do I do this because I get praise from men, or because I get paid to do it"?
5. What does God think of those who divide His Church (3:17)?



God will judge

"Each of us will give account of himself to God." (Rom 14:12)

"Stop fooling yourselves. If you think you are wise by this world's standards, you will have to become a fool so that you can become wise by God's standards. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God.— (1 Cor 3:18-19 NLT)

A SERVANT MUST BE FAITHFUL



1 Corinthians 4:1-4

All the apostles were servants of God. Every believer is a servant of God. We are His messengers and we go out with His message of love. "Those who have been given a 'trust' must prove faithful" (4:2). Faithful does not mean successful, but honest and worthy of that trust. God's servants must put off the old ways and live upright, moral lives (Eph 4:20-32). They must not be partial or have favourites, but judge each one fairly (Jas 2:4).

Paul, the other apostles and all servants of God serve the same Master. They obeyed God only. Paul was not seeking position or power among the believers. He did not want a good report from Corinth.

MY CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR

"I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court..." Paul told them. "It is the Lord who judges me" (4:4). "My conscience is clear..." (4:4). Paul did not

Our rewards

- a) The crown of life (Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10)
- b) The crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4)
- c) The crown of righteousness (2 Tim 4:7)
- d) The crown of rejoicing (1 Thes 2:13,19)

had already been judged in Corinth. They had not examined themselves and confessed their sins.



TALK ABOUT

1. Before we eat the Lord's Supper (Communion), we must let the Holy Spirit show us what is wrong in our lives. How does He do this?
2. How do we put wrong things right?
3. God's.....is to make us more like sons (Heb 12:5-11).
4. What does Proverbs 10:1 say?
5. Is God your Father?



The Holy Spirit's work

- a) Prepare God's servants for their work.
- b) Give them the grace-gifts to do the work.
- c) Make them bold to speak His word.
- d) Control the grace-gifts to do what God wants done.
- e) Use these gifts to point to and glorify Christ.

GIFTS IN THE CHURCH



1 Corinthians 12:1-11

"Now about spiritual gifts..." (12:1). "Now about..." tells us that Paul is answering another question the Corinthians asked in their letter to him.

The Corinthians thought they owned their gifts and could use them as they wished. They thought their gifts made them better than others. Paul reminded them, "when you were pagans" you were "led astray"... (12:2). Then Satan ruled over you. Now you are controlled by God's gentle Spirit. The word 'gift' comes from the same word as 'grace.' Paul said these are grace-gifts.

A 'gift of the Spirit' is a special ability that comes from the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts are given only to believers. They allow the gifted person to do things beyond their natural abilities.

Every gift is to help Christ's body (the Church), so it is right to ask: **a)** Is the gift true to Christ's teaching? **b)** Is the one using the gift loyal to his Lord and upright in his living? **c)** Is the gift being used to honour Christ and build up His Church?

Paul gave this test: "No one speaking by the power of the Spirit of God can curse Jesus, and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' and really mean it, unless the Holy Spirit is helping him" (12:2-3 The Living Bible).

To say "Jesus is cursed" was blasphemy. Paul was a blasphemer before he met Christ on the road to Damascus (1 Timothy 1:13).

These believers were under the power of God's Spirit. Now, under Rome,

Christians were ordered to say, 'Caesar is Lord.' Those who refused said "Jesus is Lord" instead. They did this even when it cost them their lives. True believers lived by the words "Jesus is Lord" and they died with the same words on their lips (12:13). Only by the Spirit can we cry "Abba, Father" (Rom 8:15). And only by the Spirit's power can we say in truth, "Jesus is Lord." Men who know Christ worship Him as their Lord and King. He controls their acts and their words (1 John 4:2-3). It was of



The Holy Spirit is Lord

- a) Distributing to each "as He wills."
- b) Empowering His gifts at any time.
- c) Lifting up Christ's person and name.
- d) Speaking only the words of God.
- e) Assuring that the body is built up.
- f) Bringing harmony and peace

They had no respect for Christ's death, which was the whole reason for having the Lord's Supper. Because they did not honour Christ, they brought judgment upon themselves. Their sin was against the person of Christ (Psalm 51:4).

They were weak and sick in their spirits and maybe in their bodies, too. "And a number of you have fallen asleep" - they had died (11:30). They must see that Christ's body was broken and His blood shed for them. Eat and drink at the Lord's table to honour the Lord's death, not for any other reason.

Christ's supper was a covenant meal. Their eyes and hearts must be set upon Him.

TO REMEMBER CHRIST



1 Corinthians 11:23-27 (Luke 22:19-20)

"I am passing on to you what I received from the Lord," Paul said (11:23). The Holy Spirit made this truth clear to Paul. He learned about the Lord's Supper from the apostles. The apostles received this feast "from the Lord." They passed it on to Paul. Paul passed it on to the church at Corinth, but they had forgotten his instructions.

Paul repeated what he had said before (11:23-26). **1.** "The Lord Jesus..." Christ was there. **2.** It was "the night He was betrayed" by Judas Iscariot. **3.** Jesus "took bread"...the common loaf from the table. He used the bread as a symbol. It was not His real body because He stood there before them. The bread represented His body which was broken on the cross the next day.

"When He had given thanks, He broke the bread and said, 'This is My body, which is (broken) for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.'" Jesus meant 'keep on doing this until I come again.'

In the same way Jesus took the cup from the table. It was the common cup they had used during the meal. "The cup is the New Covenant in My blood..." He told them (Luke 22:20).

Again, the wine was a symbol of Jesus' blood. He was still with them. His blood had not yet been shed, but without the blood there could be no New Covenant (Jer 31:31-33; Hebrews 9 and 10).

Paul said, "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord" (11:27). Be warned! Don't eat at the Lord's table "in an unworthy manner." If you do you will be guilty and you will suffer under the judgment of God.

We must confess our sin and be made clean before we eat (1 John 1:9). Paul said we must 'put off' all that offends Christ and keep His body healthy (Eph 4:22-30).

WE ARE NOT WORTHY

God makes us worthy to come to His table. He does this when we confess our sin and put wrong things right.

"Let us draw near to God: **a)** With a sincere heart (1 Pet 2:1-3). **b)** In full assurance of faith (Heb 10:22). **c)** With heart (conscience) and body sprinkled...(Heb 9:13-14). **d)** Holding to the hope we profess (Heb 3:6). **e)** Considering how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds...(Hebrews 10:22-24).

Those who don't examine themselves, do not understand what they are doing. They eat and drink judgment on themselves rather than blessing. That is why many

know of anything the Christian in Corinth could hold against him or anything that was not pleasing to God. He had a clear conscience.

WE WILL GIVE ACCOUNT



1 Corinthians 4:5-6

Paul used a court scene and the words of a trial. He was their prisoner. The men of Corinth could question him, but God would be the final judge. Paul said, "At the appointed time...He (God) will expose the motives of men's hearts" and bring into the light what is hidden there (4:5; Heb 4:13).

Don't try to play God. Wait until God calls for an accounting (3:13). Wait for Him to turn on the light (2 Peter 3:11-12).

"Judge nothing..." does not mean that we are not to judge evil. We judge evil when we separate from it. We stand against the darkness. We expose it and take authority over it in the name of Jesus (Eph 5:11).

"At that time..." When Christ comes again, "each will receive his praise from God." When Christ comes, His reward will come with Him (2 Tim 4:14).

Paul warned them: "Do not go beyond what is written" (4:6) When we go beyond what is written in the Bible, we have the foolish ideas of men (3:19).

Let the Scripture do its work in your hearts (Heb 4:12-13). "Then you will not take pride in one man over against another," Paul said (4:6). Their pride brought division and quarrels in the church at Corinth. We must not take pride in our church or in our church leaders.



TALK ABOUT

1. Are all Christians 'servants of the living God'?
2. How can a Christian be 'in the world,' but not part of it?
3. When will Christians receive their reward (4:5)?

ALL COMES FROM GOD



1 Corinthians 4:7-13

These Christians thought they were wise and strong. Paul asked them, "If all you have is from God, why act as though you are so great" (4:7 TLB). Paul told them God gave them all the special gifts they had. "Already you have all you want!" he said. "Already you have become rich! You have become kings..." (4:8). He pointed to their pride. He spoke of how they thought about themselves. Who would dare boast of the Spirit's riches? Would they reign like 'kings,' without God's other servants sharing with them? They were acting as if they were better than the apostles!

Paul said he would like to be full of Christ's power...reigning like a king. And if he was, he would not boast of it.

Every servant has different work to do, and a different path to tread, but all have the same Master. Jesus came as a servant, and He sends us out as servants. We are stewards in God's house. We take care of His business. We give from His supply (Luke 12:42-43; 16:1-2).

LIKE PRISONERS ON PARADE

The saints in Corinth did not stand behind Paul. He told them, "You are so wise in Christ..." So sensible, but all talk! (4:20). They lived at ease, while Paul fought alone against the enemy, Satan.

These Christians in Corinth seemed to be enjoying their own 'heaven' and not sharing it with him! All this time Paul had been: **a)** Set forth like an exhibit. **b)** Made a spectacle...to angels and to men. **c)** Made a fool for Christ's sake. **d)** Made to go hungry and thirsty. **e)** Worked with his hands making tents. **f)** Without a home and beaten often. **g)** Treated like the scum of the earth (4:9-13).

In Paul's day, Roman Generals led their troops through the city in victory parades. Prisoners of war, who were to be killed, were dragged along in chains at the end of the parade. Prisoners were often made to carry their own cross on which they died a few hours later!

Paul said, "It seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession..." (4:9). Paul felt like a prisoner condemned to die. Life had been hard for him. Many times he had faced death. He was not complaining. Other apostles had been persecuted and killed for Christ's sake (Heb 11:32-38).

PAUL WROTE TO HELP THEM



1 Corinthians 4:14-21

Paul wrote to unhappy people. He said, "I am not writing this to shame you..." (4:14). He wanted them to unite...to be one in Christ. Many leaders had cared for them, but he was like their father. They were his 'children' in the faith. He had seen them come to Christ and he had fed them with God's word. He had prayed for them. He wanted only God's best for them. He wanted them to 'grow up' and become strong Christians. "For this reason I am sending you Timothy, my son...who is faithful in the Lord" he said (4:17).

Many would teach them, but who would dare to correct them when they did wrong? Only a father would do this!

Paul would like to go to them himself. He could not go then, so he sent Timothy. Timothy was Paul's spiritual son (4:17). He would 'remind them of Paul's way of life.' Paul's way of life agreed with his teaching. What he preached in the churches, he lived on the street. And as soon as the Lord opened the way, he would go to Corinth himself (4:19). It did not matter what the proud Corinthians said about him. "For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power," he wrote (4:20).

Many talk about God's Kingdom, but do not have His power in their lives. Their talk is useless!



TALK ABOUT

1. Why do God's servants suffer persecution?
2. When we are badly treated, should we fight back? (4:13)
3. What enemy was Paul fighting (2 Cor 10:5)?
4. Who was made a 'spectacle' for your sin and mine?
5. We judge sin when we separate ourselves from it ___ True ___ False?



Christ's Enemies

"For a little while Your people possessed Your holy place, but now our enemies have trampled down Your sanctuary." - (Is 63:18)

THE HUSBAND-WIFE TEAM



1 Corinthians 11:14-16

Paul turns now to the matter of hair length.

The Corinthian Christians must have been arguing about this. A woman's hair is like a 'covering' given to her by God.. In Paul's time, men wore their hair shorter than the women. 'Whatever you do,' Paul said, 'don't divide the church by arguing over hair length.' The Holy Spirit will show each person God's will for them. He will show us where our selfish desires are not of God. Even Jesus had no will of His own (John 5:30; 6:38). He did the will of the Father (John 15:10).

Every marriage built on Christ can be glorious in its intimacy and bring glory to its Creator-God. As our spirits yield to God's Spirit, we grow in two ways. **1.** We grow up in Christ (toward maturity). **2.** We grow together in a 'one flesh' unity. This unity shows the 'image and glory of God' in our lives.

A couple's union in marriage shows: **a)** The unity of the Trinity, God in three persons (Matt 28:19). **b)** The love and harmony of Heaven (John 17:5). **c)** The order God set down in creation (Gen 1:28).

Christian marriage is a wonderful picture of Christ and His Church.

This is why Christian marriages are attacked by the world. Satan and all his hosts are against the Christian family. Satan wants to destroy the family and put sinful (homosexual) life styles in its place.



TALK ABOUT

1. Should Christian husbands let their wives develop the talents God has given them?
2. Should Christian wives serve in the local church? How?
3. Paul said women prophesied and prayed in the meetings (11:5)? What was one of the outward signs of they obeyed Christ?
4. Why did the Corinthian church argue over hair length?

THE LORD'S SUPPER



1 Corinthians 11:17-22

Paul told the Christians, "your meetings do more harm than good" (11:17). He said they were not like a fellowship of believers, but acted like heathen. If you have to behave like this, you had better eat at home, he told them, "It is not the Lord's supper that you eat."

They did not eat as one body (11:21).

When they met together they divided into groups - the rich and the poor, the important people and the not so important ones. The wealthy ones ate what they brought and gave nothing to the poor. They did not think to share or care for others. Everyone grabbed what he wanted for himself.

THE LORD'S TABLE

- a worship feast to remember Christ's death
- a time to examine their own hearts
- identified them with Christ, as His body
- spoke of union – they were one body
- bound them together and made them stronger
- declared their faith in His second coming
- **"A man ought to examine himself before he eats..."**
- **Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves."** (2 Cor 13:5)
- **"Each one should test his own actions."** (Galatians 6:4)

THE UNVEILED WOMAN



1 Corinthians 11:11-12

There was a bigger problem in Corinth. Women with no morals threw off their veils. They showed themselves off and even cut their hair. They did not regard the custom of their day. The ones who did this dishonoured their sisters and, if married, their husbands and society. They were rebels in their spirits. The unveiled woman could be a temple prophetess or a prostitute who shaved her head. If they came into the church meetings it caused disorder and division.

Even today, in pagan cultures, to break custom brings punishment, sometimes death. These Christian women had been freed from pagan customs, but not from God's law. God's moral law is stronger than all custom and culture. Did they understand this? Do we?

The Holy Spirit uses God's word to teach us how to live. James wrote, "Submit yourselves to God" (Jas 4:7). We submit to God and honour Christ when we honour those over us: **a)** In our homes (Eph 5:21). **b)** In our local assembly (Heb 13:7). **c)** In our places of work (Eph 6:5-7). **d)** In our government (Rom 13:1).

Paul was not against women sharing in worship. They did this in Corinth (11:5). But some went to meetings and prayed, even prophesied (taught) without a covering on their heads. He said they should not do this. Paul said, an unveiled woman would shock even the angels (11:10). Such a person would dishonour God and bring shame to the congregation and their husbands.

Paul taught that women who threw off their veils were not "in the Lord" (11:11). Their contempt for God's order was not Christ-like or of the Spirit.



TALK ABOUT

1. Is God's 'image' less in the woman than in the man (Gen 1:28)?
2. Are Christian women free to do as they wish?
3. What is woman's role in marriage?
4. What is the husband's role in the marriage?

RESPECT OF HUSBAND FOR WIFE

Respect is the most powerful force in any marriage. If there is no respect between parents, a marriage quickly falls apart. Children learn to respect parents when they see fathers and mothers respect each other.

"In the Lord" means that husband and wife depend on each other (11:11). They need each other. One could not be complete without the other. They were created to be 'one flesh.'

God created only one man. Since Adam, every man who ever lived was born of a woman (11:12). Men should not put women down. A man should remember that a woman gave him birth.

The order established by God goes much further than man's immediate needs. Harmony in a marriage comes as each person takes his or her place in God's order. They must work together as a team.

CHRISTIANS LIVING IN SIN



1 Corinthians 5:1-8

Paul went to the cause of their problem: "It is...reported that there is sexual immorality among you..." They had begun to take pride in their sin.

"A man has his father's wife," and this man was not ashamed. He was living in sin but pretending to be a Christian, even boasting in their emetings about his sin. And no one seemed to be ashamed!

This is such an evil thing "even the heathen don't do." Paul told them. "You have become arrogant and have not mourned..." (5:2 NASB).

You boast about being holy! How could you? You should have put this man out of your fellowship. I may be absent in body, but I am with you in spirit (NASB). I have already passed judgment, and you must too (5:3).

Paul told them what to do: He said, 'When you are assembled, you must call a meeting and tell this man he cannot be part of your fellowship.' "Hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved..." (5:5; 2 Cor 6:14-16).

Because this man was living in sin, he must leave their meeting. This would be like handing him over to Satan. If he repented of his sin, they would ask him to come back (Jas 5:20). They must love this man and pray for him, that "his spirit be saved on the day of the Lord" (5:5). God is full of mercy and grace. We do not give up on anyone, but pray for those who fall into sin.



Saints will judge the world

- a) We reign with Christ in life (Rom 5:17).
- b) We overcome evil with good (Rom 12:21).
- c) Saints will judge the world (Matt 19:28).
- d) We will reign with Christ forever (2 Tim 2:12).

AUTHORITY TO BUILD UP AND NOT TEAR DOWN

God gives His servants authority to build up His Church, not to tear it down. Christians have the authority of Christ's name. They go out in Christ's name and use this authority against Satan and sin (1 Tim 1:20). We do warfare against Satan in Christ's name. Victory comes as we expose sin and separate ourselves from it.

"Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?"

SIN IS LIKE YEAST

When the bread dough is ready, the yeast is added. It soon works its way through the whole loaf. Paul said, "Get rid of the old yeast (sins in your life)..." (5:7).

At Passover, every Jewish family cleaned house. Every bit of yeast had to go. Then the Passover bread was baked without yeast (Ex 12:15). Passover pointed to Christ dying on the cross. He was "the lamb of God" and their sacrifice for sin. His blood paid the price to redeem us. Sin in their assembly would take away the purity and the true meaning of the Passover feast. Holy living honours God. It speaks to others of His purity and power.

Paul reminded them that "Christ, our Passover lamb is already slain and the house is not yet clean..." (Deut 16:4-6) Because they accepted Christ's death as their

'sacrifice,' no sin must be left among them. "Let us keep the Festival, not with the yeast...of malice and wickedness" (5:8).

When they met at the Lord's Table, it must be "in sincerity and truth." They must not boast of which party they belonged to but rather unite in Christ and worship Him together (Eph 2:14-22).



TALK ABOUT

1. What does Passover mean to a Christian?
2. Why do we eat the bread and the wine at 'the Lord's supper'?
3. Can sinners come to the Lord's Table? How (2 Cor 6:14-18)?
4. What happens when Christians 'eat and drink' carelessly (11:27-31)?
5. How would Paul correct these believers?

DON'T MIX WITH IMMORAL PEOPLE



1 Corinthians 5:9-13

David wrote, "Holiness adorns your house...O Lord" (Psalm 93:5). The word "adorn" means to put in order or to trim or finish and make beautiful.

To keep their fellowship pure and holy, they could not have people who sinned openly in their meetings (5:11). If such people joined their fellowship, it would spoil their witness. Those outside the Church would not see any difference between them and their heathen neighbours.

We are not to judge those outside the Church, but pray for them. "God will judge those outside," but we must judge ourselves, that is the members in our fellowship (5:12-13). We must discipline those in our own fellowships.

The Bible says sex outside of marriage is sin. Paul lists these same sins again later (6:9-10). All sin keeps men out of Heaven. If men call themselves Christians, but live in sin, separate from them, Paul said.



TALK ABOUT

1. We judge sin when we separate ourselves from it ___ True ___ False?
2. Is sex outside of marriage a sin (Heb 13:4)?
3. Who will be the judge of all those who are not Christ's (John 3:36)?
4. How can we keep our lives pure and holy?

THEY TOOK THEIR OWN 'BROTHERS' TO COURT



1 Corinthians 6:1-11

"If any of you has a dispute with another..." (6:1). Paul was not talking about criminal cases, which would be handled by the Roman government. He seems to be speaking of disputes over property. In Paul's day the Roman authorities let the Jews



GOD'S GRACE...

"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities ... as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." (Psalm 103:10-12)



JUSTIFIED...

Justified means God sees us 'just as if we had never sinned.' Even when we sin, God sees us as 'justified' because He sees us 'in Christ' (Ps 103:12).

Under Christ, the husband is responsible as head of his family. Let all husbands love their wives as Christ loved the Church (Eph 5:25). Wives will find their husband's headship in the home and in worship satisfying. The wife's place, under her husband, will be natural and right. Many men do not take their responsibility of being head of the home and wives have had to take the lead. This makes our churches weak. When men don't act like 'heads' their children don't follow and parents wonder why.

"Every man who prays...with his head covered dishonours his head" (11:4). When men gather for worship, Christ is their authority. They honour Christ, their Head. They respect and acknowledge Him as present in their meetings by not covering their heads. No one knows what Paul meant by 'covering' - a veil, long hair, or something else. He wrote, "if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him (11:14).



TALK ABOUT

1. Christian marriage is a legal contract between a man and a woman, for as long as they live.
2. Each must do his or her part to keep their marriage strong.
3. How should men love their wives (Eph 5:25)?

THE VEILED WOMAN



1 Corinthians 11:5-10

In Paul's day, those under authority wore a 'covering' on their heads. Slaves wore a hat and wives covered their heads when they went out of their homes.

Christian women wore veils and long hair. They covered themselves. Western culture has no equal to the veil. A hat is not the same as a veil.

In the meetings at Corinth, a veil and long hair marked a woman who took her place (or rank) willingly. She honoured and respected her husband and she honoured Christ (11:14-15).

By 'covering' her head, the woman protected her own honour=glory=person. She did this before the whole fellowship of believers and her community. She showed that she truly bowed to the authority and headship of Christ. She also showed respect for church leaders and, if she was married, the headship of her husband.

The woman who covered her head said to those around her: **1.** I honour myself and all women. God created me a woman and I am free to be myself. **2.** I honour my husband. He is the 'head' in my marriage. God gave him that place and I accept him in it. Because he is head of my family, he is responsible before God. **3.** I honour Jesus Christ. He is the Head of His Church. I am a member of His body and His servant. **4.** I honour the elders of my local assembly. They set the standards of conduct in the church. They lead the way in discipline and self-control. I accept their leadership.

The covering on a woman's head was "because of the angels," Paul said (11:10). Angels submit fully to God (Psalm 103:20). They are humble before their Creator and cover themselves in His presence (Is 6:2).

Angels are also created beings and they watch what we are doing.

dominion over the works of His hands. This came with a great responsibility. They both had to answer to God.

GOD'S ORDER IN CREATION

At creation God placed His order on mankind: "Male and female created He them" (Gen 1:27). Sin spoiled everything. Sin cut them off from God and it put a 'wall' between husband and wife, between male and female. Before Adam sinned, he didn't have to work at being one with Eve. He accepted Eve as his equal. She was everything he needed to fill what was missing in his own manhood and make it complete.

GOD'S MARRIAGE LAW

At this point, God gave them His marriage law (Gen 2:24). In marriage, the man would leave home and step out in faith. He would take a wife with one objective - to become "one flesh" with her and begin a family. He was to cleave to his wife and she was to cleave to her husband.

"One flesh" means one new unit in society. Two minds blending in work and worship. How is this achieved? By hard work, and more hard work. By trust and more trust. By prayer and by putting Christ first in our lives. Because marriage is God's plan for male and female, He will honour every effort we put into our Christian marriages. Man must leave everything, as Christ did, and cleave to his wife. Marriage shows Christ's love for His bride, 'giving Himself up' for her in every possible way (Eph 5:25).

GOD'S AUTHORITY IS HIGHEST

In this chapter Paul explained God's order in marriage: "The head of Christ is God" (11:3). The head of every woman is man and the head of every Christian man is Christ. A man gets his authority (all that he has) from his submission to Christ (11:11). As head of the physical creation, man is under Christ, as Christ was under God (15:27-28).

Paul said the order in marriage was to be kept in worship. God planned this order in Heaven and commanded it among men. The roles of man and woman were set by their Creator. They were both created "a little lower than the angels." They both had personal dignity (Psalm 8:4-9).

And the Lord said, "It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a companion for him, a helper suited to his needs." (Gen 2:18 TLB)

FREEDOM IN MARRIAGE... Marriage was not meant to keep a person from being what God meant them to be. Marriage was meant to mature each person by giving them a loving, caring place where they can grow and develop their God-given talents. Each person's special abilities must be developed.

As each person's gifts and talents are joined in the whole, the new unit (family) grows in strength, creativity and service. Responsibility for growing together and toward God must be shared. God holds the husband finally responsible: **a)** For the spiritual life of the family. **b)** For guarding wife and home from evil and danger (Matt 2:13-15). **c)** For educating and leading the children (1 Sam 3:13). **d)** For supplying the physical and material needs of each member (1 Timothy 5:8). **e)** For any inheritance passed on to the wife or children.

(Christian Jews, too) judge property cases according to their own Jewish laws.

Jesus told His followers how to settle these matters. He said, 'When a brother does you harm, go to him and be reconciled (Matt 18:15-18). If he refuses you, leave the matter in God's hands.'

"Do not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath..." (Rom 12:19).

"If you have disputes... appoint judges..." (6:4). They were to 'try' these cases themselves. They did not need to go to a pagan court (6:6).

Their law suits showed that their hearts were full of greed. They were "completely defeated" by Satan. Paul said it was better to be "wronged and cheated" than to let Satan overcome you.

"You cheat and do wrong, and (you do)...this to your brothers" (6:8). They were giving in to their selfish desires and not forgiving one another. This gave Satan a foothold in their lives (Eph 4:27). Once you let him get a foothold, he takes over and spoils everything God is doing in your life.

SINNERS WILL BE SHUT OUT OF GOD'S KINGDOM

"Don't you know that the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God" (6:9)? Paul listed ten sins that were common in Corinth. All these sins begin in a man's heart and make him unclean (Mark 7:21-22). Nothing unclean can enter Heaven (Rev 21:7-8).

"Some of you" were like this, he told them, but don't be deceived." Paul is saying, 'Don't deceive yourselves. Don't think you can live in sin and then go to Heaven when you die. Turn away from your sin and seek God now. Ask Him to forgive you, because "you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ..." (6:11). They were saved. God's Spirit began a work in them. He 'set them apart' for God. But they did not stay that way. They were living in sin!



TALK ABOUT

1. Should we choose to suffer loss of property rather than lose our witness?
2. How should a Christian handle a dispute with another Christian?
3. Explain the word 'justified'?
4. Who said 'men reap what they sow' (Gal 6:7)?
5. What were the ten sins Paul listed here (6:9-10)?

Many prostitutes in Corinth served the Greek goddess Aphrodite, dedicated to love and sex. Having sex with these prostitutes was a part of pagan worship, but against God's law (Gen 2:24).

I WILL NOT BE A SLAVE TO ANYTHING



1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (Romans 14:1-8)

The Christians were making excuses. The false teachers said they could use their bodies as they wished and they were not sure.



GOD'S LAW

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." (Gen 2:24)

Even if “all things are lawful for me,” Paul wrote, “not all things are profitable” (6:12 NASB). Even if everything Paul did was permitted, he would not do anything that would hurt others.

Christians must put God first, even in eating. Perhaps they had asked Paul about eating food that had first been offered to idols. More likely they argued among themselves that eating food had nothing to do with their spiritual lives. And who they had sex with did not really matter.

‘Not so!’ said Paul. ‘Don’t you know that your bodies are members of Christ Himself’ (6:15)? “The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord.” Feed your body, wash your body, but keep your body from all sex sin. They were a part of Christ’s body on earth. They were joined to Him. God’s power had worked this union in them. They must never be united with a prostitute.

Jesus had a human body, just like ours. God raised Christ’s body to resurrection life. “By His power God raised the Lord (Jesus) from the dead, and He will raise us also” (6:14). Paul had this same blessed hope of resurrection (15:42-44)

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

The Spirit of God and Satan cannot live in the same ‘house.’ God’s word is clear: “Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you...” (6:19). “You are not your own; you were bought with a price...” (6:20). God paid for your life on the cross. Jesus paid the full price. You belong to Him and your body must be under the control of His Spirit (Gal 5:23).

When you were joined with Christ, He set your feet on a new path. Now you must give every part of your life to Him. “Do all to the glory of God...and honour God with your body,” Paul said (6:20).



TALK ABOUT

1. Can we honour God in everything we do?
2. Who must be in control of our spirits and our bodies (6:19)?
3. Why were these Christians boasting that they could live any way they pleased (6:12)?
4. Can Christians walk God’s path and Satan’s path at the same time?
5. Why does God want us to care for our bodies? Are they important to God?

HONOUR IN CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE



1 Corinthians 7:1-5 (Ephesians 5:22-33)

“In times like these I think it is best for a person to remain unmarried” (7:26 TLB). This was how Paul felt. Other men on Paul’s team had wives, but he would rather be without a wife.

Times were hard. Many had lost their jobs because they were Christians. Some were put out of their homes. Others were put in prison and many were killed. Because of the hard times Paul thought it would be easier for a man not to take a wife. “But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband” (7:2). Unfaithful husbands in the church at Corinth had turned some against marriage. They may have been saying ‘men and women should not marry.’

Spirit) allows me, but I am not free to do what hurts my brother in Christ. And everything I do must bring glory to God’ (10:31).

a) Eat anything sold in the markets, “All belongs to God” (Ps 24:1). **b)** Eat whatever is put before you. If another says, “this has been offered in sacrifice,” do not eat it...for his sake. **c)** Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God (10:31) **d)** Do not cause anyone to stumble. **e)** Follow my example. **f)** Christ is the great example for all of us.

“I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many, so that they may be saved,” Paul said (10:33).



TALK ABOUT

1. How can your life bring glory to or honour God?
2. Why are so many Christians defeated by sin?
3. Did Paul’s ‘freedom’ make him more careful not to hurt others?
4. How does our careless living hurt other Christians?
5. Paul said, ‘Do not eat meat offered to idols’ ___ True ___ False (10:28)?
6. What is the power behind every idol (10:20)?

HUSBANDS AND WIVES



1 Corinthians 11:3-4

Ever since Paul write these words, Christians have struggled to understand what he meant. He wrote about relationships and the way we treat others. The way a Christian treats the opposite sex speaks louder than his words. In a Christian marriage, Christ is Head. Under Christ, husband and wife join in holy union. Unity in Christ is what people should see when a husband and wife worship together. God created marriage and every Christian marriage should bring glory to His name.

Christ is the ‘Head,’ also thought of as the ‘source’ of life and nourishment for the body (11:3). Under Christ’s authority, men and women are equal before God. In Christian marriage the man is ‘head,’ under Christ. From eternity God knew Adam needed a helper (Gen 2:18). He gave us a beautiful record of how he made Eve from the ‘source,’ Adam.

When Adam saw his partner he cried out, “she is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone” (Gen 2:23). Adam saw God’s ‘image’ in Eve. He saw the glory God had put upon her. She was of his kind (a she-man), to share with him in every way. She was created in God’s image and for man’s glory and Adam sang a song of praise to Eve (11:7; Gen 2:23).

Some say Eve was made in the image of Adam. This is not true. ‘In God’s image’ means that God created men and women rational and morally responsible beings. How could men be rational and moral beings and women not so?

The man and woman stood equal before God (Gal 3:28). They both had fellowship with Him. He gave them both authority or



Women have Christ’s Example

- He veiled His glory and came to earth (John 17:5)
- He took the form of a servant (Phil 2:7)
- He obeyed the will of the Father (Heb 10:7)
- He gave Himself up for the Church (Eph 5:25)

“A wife of noble character is her husband’s crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.” (Proverbs 12:4)

Corinth because they were abusing the Lord's Table and not eating together.

God wants us to be united. He wants all members (parts of the Body) to work in harmony as a healthy human body does (Ephesians 4:16).

SACRIFICES MADE TO SATAN



1 Corinthians 10:19-22

"Do I mean that an idol is anything," Paul asked. "No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God..." (10:19-20; Deut 32:17). Paul said demons were the real power behind all pagan rites. Satan works through idols and we should not handle any idol or fetish, or take it into our home. Any time a Christian has to go near a heathen temple, he should claim the blood of Jesus over his person and those with him.

"Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy" (10:22)? God said, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex 20:3-5).

A person who worships at heathen temples must not sit at the Lord's Table. This will make "the Lord Christ" jealous. "Are we stronger than He?" It is foolish to make God angry when He is stronger than we are (10:22).

The Lord Jesus will not share His memorial feast with demons. The two cannot go together (2 Cor 6:17-18).



TALK ABOUT

1. What did Paul say about being 'one in Christ' (Gal 3:26-28)?
2. What does being 'one in Christ' mean to you?
3. As a child of God you have many blessings. Can you name some?

WE SHOULD NOT SEEK OUR OWN GOOD



1 Corinthians 10:23 - 11:2

"Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others" (10:24). This truth guided Paul's life. His conscience was clear. He did everything not to offend another brother.

Paul said, 'I am free to do what my conscience (under the control of the Holy



IN GOD'S IMAGE

"Who am I that You should love me
Meet my every need from birth?
Why invest Yourself so fully
In a creature made of earth?
In Your loving heart You planned me,
Fashioned me with greatest care;
Through my soul You breathed Your Spirit,
Planted Your own image there."

— Peter Ellis



The Problem in Corinth?

What was the problem Paul wrote about?

There are many different views:

1. Women believers had a new-found freedom in Christ and came to the meetings with a 'cover' on their heads.
2. To worship without a covering was against Jewish or Gentile custom and doing this might give Christians a bad name.
3. Worshipping with a 'covering' customary in the Gentile churches and offended the Jewish Christians.
4. Women with their hair down in the meetings offended the men.
5. Under Roman law, freed slaves wore hats. Men who wore a covering showed they were free from Christ's Lordship.

Marriage has always been God's plan for a man and a woman (Gen 2:24) Marriage satisfies our many needs. God planned marriage to one partner to keep us from falling into sex sins. Each partner has a duty to the other and each is responsible before God (7:3). Duty here means sexual intercourse. Without it a marriage is not complete.

Faith joins us to Christ, and trust holds two believers in marriage. When a husband and wife put their marriage into God's hands, the Holy Spirit works to bind them together. The Holy Spirit will increase this trust.

The wife is not her husband's property. Husband, wife and children are joined in a precious bond. Blessing comes to our homes when husbands and wives respect each other.

The wife's body does not belong to her alone. Nor does the husband's body belong to him alone (7:4). So "stop depriving one another..." Each must care about the other's needs, "so that Satan will not tempt you" (7:5).

Nothing should shut out our time spent with God, and nothing is more important than prayer. If a partner is led to fast and pray in private, do this "for a time," Paul said. "Then come together again" (7:5).



TALK ABOUT

1. Is marriage a special gift from God?
2. What about those Christians who cannot find a Christian to marry?
3. Should husbands and wives pray alone or together?
4. How can you build trust between you and your partner?

THE GIFT OF MARRIAGE



1 Corinthians 7 6-14

Christians should seek God's will in all things. They must know His will for them before they marry. The question is whether to marry or stay single? God does not give the gift of marriage to everyone, so Paul makes no command about it (7:6; Matt 19:11-12).

Paul was not married. If he had been married, he was not married at this time. He said to remain single was equal to the gift of self control (7:37).

In a later verse, Paul made this gift of marriage equal to self control (7:37). He wrote to: **1.** "The unmarried and widows..." **2.** "The married." **3.** "To the rest..."

Jesus pointed to God's marriage law (Gen 2:24; Mark 10:6-9) He said,

"What God has joined, let no man separate! Marriage is for as long as both husband and wife shall live!

Paul wrote, "the unbelieving (partner) has been sanctified through the believing (partner)..." (7:14). Unsaved spouses are set apart to their marriages. Unsaved spouses who remain faithful to their partners are kept from the sin around them. Then their children are also thought of as 'holy' (7:14).

God's Spirit calls to our spirits and our spirits answer. As we respond to Him, we come under His Spirit's control.

The Holy Spirit "washes, sanctifies, and justifies us in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." (6:11)

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

God hates divorce! In the Bible, there are only two conditions that allow for remarriage. **1.** When a spouse commits adultery (Matt 5:32). **2.** When a divorced spouse dies (7:1-11, 39). Otherwise a divorced person should not marry again.

THE UNBELIEVING PARTNER



1 Corinthians 7:15-24

If the unbelieving husband or wife leaves, let him or her do so. "God has called us to live in peace" (7:15). The believer must have a quiet and gentle spirit. He or she must seek God's will. This may take a lot of time and waiting on God. No one but God can tell a wife what to do or tell a husband what to do.

"If the unbeliever leaves..." (goes away) the other partner is not bound.

Some believe this means the remaining partner is free to marry again (7:15). Others think Paul did not mean they were free to remarry.

Many Christians lead their unsaved partners to Christ. This should be our prayer. "How do you know, wife," Paul asked "whether you will save your husband..." (7:16)?

STAY IN YOUR PLACE

"Each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him..." (7:17,20). If you are married to an unbelieving partner or working for a master who does not know God, stay where you are and be content.

Paul spoke to those who were slaves. 'God put you in that place,' he said. He knows all about you and loves you, so be content. "Was a man already circumcised when he was called?" He should not worry. The rite of circumcision counts for nothing, Paul said (Gal 2:16).

"You were bought at a price (by God)...do not become slaves of men" (7:23). Do not let false teachers or their evil ways control you. Paul thought of a slave market where men were bought and sold. Jesus Christ paid the price of His own life-blood for these Christians.

"Each man, as responsible to God..." (7:24). No man or woman can make excuses. No man can say, 'Because I was a slave when God called me, I am excused for the way I live.'



TALK ABOUT

1. What was the 'price' God paid to save us (John 3:16)?
2. Does God accept excuses for our sins (Rom 1:20)?
3. What excuses have you made to God?
4. What dangers do Christians face today?
5. Does God want you to be content where you are?
6. Can God change those things that trouble you?

THOSE WHO MARRIED FACED MANY TRIALS



1 Corinthians 7:25-40

The unmarried and those engaged to be married (virgins) asked, 'What should we do?'

In New Testament times, the Roman Empire persecuted Christians. There was much suffering, so Paul said it would be better for most not to marry (7:26; Acts 8:1). "We Christians are facing great dangers...In times like these I think it is best for a person to remain unmarried" (7:28 TLB).

- a) Know how temptation comes to us and avoid it.
- b) Confess it and ask the Lord to take it away.
- c) When you are tempted, claim His promises.
- d) Speak Christ's victory against Satan and his lies.



TALK ABOUT

1. How do we begin our life of faith? Do all begin the same way?
2. How do you face temptation? Where can you get help when you are tempted?
3. James wrote, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you ___ True ___ False (James 4:7)?
4. Does God help us when we are tempted? How (10:13)?
5. What are the best ways to keep away from temptation?

THE PASSOVER FEAST



1 Corinthians 10:14-18

In Corinth there were pagan temples everywhere. Paul told them to keep away from these temples. "Don't share in or have fellowship with demons," he said. "Flee from idolatry." Don't go to places where you will be tempted to do wrong things. Paul asked, "Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ?" They took the cup of thanksgiving at the Lord's Table. It was a sign of fellowship. They were one "in Christ."

"Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ" (10:16 NASB)? Christ gave His body and blood so that we could be saved. When we drink from the cup and eat the bread at the Lord's Table (Communion), we share in giving thanks to God for His forgiveness and salvation (Heb 10:5,8,12).

"We all eat from the same loaf, showing that we are all parts of the one body..." (10:17 TLB).

DON'T CRITICIZE...

"Each of us will give an account of himself to God. So don't criticize each other any more. Try to live in such a way that you will never make your brother stumble by letting him see you doing something he thinks is wrong" (Rom 13:12-13 TLB).

THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

"Consider the people of Israel" - all of them. "Do not those who eat the sacrifices, participate (share) in the altar" (10:18)? When people brought a lamb to sacrifice, it was offered on the altar as a burnt offering (Lev 1:1-5). They participated (or joined) in the death of the sacrifice. They made this joining final when they ate part of the sacrifice (Lev 7:15; 8:3; 1 Sam 1:4).

Jesus Christ is the Christians 'altar and sacrifice.' Jews, Greeks, rich, poor, learned and unschooled, all ate together at The Lord's Table because Christians are 'one body' world wide. God does not respect our persons. He does not have favourites, "but accepts men from every nation who fear Him" (Acts 10:34).

God had to show the Jews of Paul's day that Gentiles were as welcome in His Church as they were. The body of Christ on earth is greater than race, colour or creed (Gal 3:27-28). All God's children belong to His Body. That is what the 'one loaf' means (10:17).

When we share the Lord's Table with other Christians, we show to the world and the devil this one-body union. It is our testimony. Paul was upset with the Christians at

Paul said that their forefathers were one with their leader Moses. What happened to Moses happened to all the people of Israel.

The Christians at Corinth had the same faith as their 'father' Abraham (Rom 4:11,16; Gal 3:7,29). **1.** The Israelites were all "under the cloud." The cloud was a symbol of God's presence with them. The cloud protected them and showed them the way to go (Ex 14:19,24). **2.** All Israel passed through the Red Sea. God made a path for them through the sea until all passed over to dry land (10:1). **3.** They "were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (10:2). **4.** "All ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink" (10:3). They ate manna in the desert. Moses ate it, too (John 4:13-14; 6:33-58). **5.** God gave them 'drink' from the Rock. That Rock was Christ who went with them in the pillar of cloud (10:4). God's blessings in the protection of the cloud, the manna for food and the water all came from Christ.

EXAMPLES TO US



1 Corinthians 10:11-13

In the desert, life was hard for the people of Israel and they grumbled. They grumbled against God and against Moses. Their evil hearts turned away from God and turned back to Egypt (Heb 3:7-19). That generation did not go into the promised land because they were not thankful to God (Num 14:34-35; Ex 12:23).

"These things happened to them (Israel) as examples and were written ...as warnings for us..." who live in these last days (10:11). Because of this, Paul said, we must be sober and take notice of God's warnings (2 Peter 3:11-12). The message is clear. Trust God and study His word. Don't grumble and quarrel or you won't win the race (Heb 3:12).

Israel lost the race of faith by being selfish. They thought only of themselves and they complained when they did not get what they wanted. They did not fully trust God.

DO NOT BOAST

The Jews boasted that they were 'God's chosen people.' They thought they were special and would not be punished for their sins. "If you (Christians) think you are standing firm," Paul said, "be careful that you don't fall" (10:12). Do not boast. Even mature Christians are tempted and fall into sin.

Paul told them, 'You will be tempted to go to heathen temples on feast days and to have sex. Sex orgies and idol worship went together in Corinth. But remember, "no temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it" (10:13 NASB).

- Temptation is "common to man" means that all men are tempted.
- God does not tempt us (Jas 1:13). God may test us to prove our faith, but Satan tempts us to make us sin (Deut 8:2).
- God promised to make a way for you to escape the temptation (10:13).
- And He will give grace to endure the temptation while we are in it.

We can overcome temptation when we:

Members of Christ's Body

- joined to Christ (John 15:5)
- joined to each other (Eph 3:6)
- needing each other (Rom 12:5)
- working in harmony (Eph 4:16)

Paul believed time was short and Jesus would come again soon. "For this world in its present form is passing away" (7:31).

The verses 36-38 are not clear, partly because we don't know what Christians faced 2,000 years ago. Even so, Paul believed whether you are engaged to be married or not, you must know the Lord's will for your life. He told men to 'examine themselves' to see if they had the gift of self-control. If so, it was probably better for them not to marry.

FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS



(1 Corinthians 8:1-13)

The Christians had been arguing about food offered to idols, so Paul said, "Now about food sacrificed to idols..." All Corinth worshipped idols. They brought their food and money to the temples and offered them to idols. The meat offered to idols was later sold in the markets or eaten at the temple feasts.

The question was, 'Is it wrong to eat such meats?'

Paul's answer was, "We know that an idol is nothing...and that there is no God but one...God the Father from whom all things came..." (8:4-6). **a)** Knowing right from wrong comes from God (Prov 9:10). **b)** All things come from Him (Jas 1:17). **c)** We must put Him first in our lives (Col 1:18).

Eating food offered to idols was not wrong, but could turn others away. Not every believer in Corinth was sure that an idol was 'nothing.' When they ate meat offered to idols they felt guilty. Or, when they saw others eat it they were not sure if it was right or wrong. And "since their conscience is weak, it is defiled," Paul said (8:7).

Paul told them, 'Even if all things are permissible, they may not help others, so be careful what you do for their sakes' (6:12; 10:23).

Paul said, "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" (8:13).

Some feared to eat meat offered to idols. Others felt they knew what was right and did not worry. Thinking that we know everything puffs us up, but loving others builds us up.

Beware of the man who thinks he knows everything. Some openly at food offered to idols to show their great faith. They were wrong in doing this because faith has nothing to do with what you eat. Love for Christ puts limits on our freedom. We must live to honour Christ (8:6,12; Rom 11:36).



TALK ABOUT

- Was eating meat offered to idols hurting the church in Corinth?
- Does God want His children to care about hurting weaker Christians?
- Should Christians go to heathen feasts and funerals?

WORK FOR PAY:

- The soldier is paid by the government.
- The farmer eats the fruit that he grows.
- The shepherd drinks the milk of his own goats.
- The ox that treads out the grain eats the hay.
- The Levites who served at the altar shared in what was offered (1 Corinthians 9:13)

4. What were the great dangers these Christians faced (7:26)?
5. Did Paul think it better for Christians in Corinth to be single or married? Why (7:28)?

THE RIGHTS OF AN APOSTLE



1 Corinthians 9:1-15

Some in Corinth said Paul was not an apostle, so he told about his work for the Lord and asked: "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord (Acts 9:3-6)?"

They were the result of his work, the proof of his apostleship. Paul was 'free' but he would not let his freedom hurt another brother (9:1)? 'Free' means several things. In Paul's day some were born free. Some had to buy their freedom. Others were born slaves. Paul thought of himself as a man who was 'free in Christ' (Rom 8:2; Gal 5:1).

In Corinth Paul felt free to claim his rights. His rights were the same as theirs: **a)** To enjoy food and drink. **b)** To take a believing wife. **c)** To receive pay from them for his work.

Paul warned, "Take care lest this liberty of yours...becomes a stumbling block to the weak" (8:9 NASB). His life was an example. He did not write these things to get money from the Corinthian church. He 'boasted' that he took nothing from them for his work.

Paul did not demand his rights. He could boast that he was earning his own living. "I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of this boast..." he said (9:15).

WOE TO ME...



1 Corinthians 9:16-22

Those who travelled with Paul gave up their rights, also. They did everything they could to spread the gospel. Paul and Barnabas did not ask to be paid. 'To offer the gospel freely is my reward,' Paul said.

To offer the gospel freely Paul made himself 'a slave' to everyone (9:19). He worked with his hands and he taught without pay. He made tents.

Paul gave everything he had back to God. "My God will meet all your needs..." he said (Phil 4:19). We cannot claim this promise if we have not given all to God. It is a promise made to God's servants who trust fully in His care and supply.

God's love in Paul's heart drove him on. He said, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (9:16). "For Christ's love compels us..." (2 Cor 5:14). He preached to: **a)** Jews under the Law of Moses (9:20). **b)** Christians under the law of Christ (9:21; Jas 2:8). **c)** Heathen who knew no law at all.

In Corinth men shouted about their rights. They wanted to do as they pleased, without thinking how they might hurt others (9:22).



Long Distance Runners

- a) All serious runners go into training (9:27).
- b) They run their own course - in their own lane.
- c) They run with their eye on the goal (Christ).
- d) All who run to the finish line get a 'crown' (9:25).

WE RUN TO WIN THE PRIZE



1 Corinthians 9:23-27

Paul said the Christian life is like a race. "Do you know that in a race all...run, but only one gets the prize. So run your race to win," he wrote (9:24 TLB). Keep your eye fixed on Jesus not on anyone else. Run a steady race. Make every stride count. Run with a purpose, to win the prize (Heb 12:1-2).

Watch the runner! See the purpose in his stride. See the power in his legs. Christians run the race of life. They run to win the prize, eternal life.

As we put ourselves into God's hands, He trusts us with His power. As we 'present' ourselves, He uses us (Rom 12:1-2).

I MAKE MY BODY MY SLAVE

"I beat my body and make it my slave..." Paul said (9:27). This means 'I train my body to win the race. "Otherwise, I fear that after enlisting others for the race, I myself might be declared unfit and ordered to stand aside" (9:27 TLB). Paul had one goal: To preach Christ and Him crucified for our sins. He knew there was nothing good in his old sinful nature (Rom 7:18). He could not trust it to carry him to the finish line (Phil 3:3). He only gloried in Jesus and in the power of God's Spirit.

To win the race Paul: **a)** Did not seek his own rights. **b)** Kept his body (his greater enemy) under control. **c)** Kept his eye on the prize. He did not want to lose the prize - his heavenly 'crown.' He was confident of reaching the finish line, but that was not enough. He wanted to win first prize.



TALK ABOUT

1. What have you given up for Christ?
2. What was Paul's fear (9:27)?
3. What kept Paul preaching the gospel (2 Cor 5:14)?
4. What did Paul hope to get at the end in the race?
5. What might make him unfit to win the prize?

ISRAEL'S HISTORY



1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Many of the Christians in Corinth were Jews. Paul reminded them that their forefathers were slaves in Egypt. God sent Moses to tell Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to let His people go. God did mighty signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all Egypt and Pharaoh let the Hebrews go (Ex 6-14).



Paul listed Israel's sins

- they worshipped idols (Ex 32:6).
- they sinned with other men's wives (Num 25:1).
- they rebelled against the Lord (Heb 3:15).
- they grumbled against Moses and God (Num 16:41).



Come to God

"Come near to God and He will come near to you. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you..." (James 4:7-8)