

1 CORINTHIANS

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

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PREFACE TO THE READER

One of the most important elements of a healthy Christian life is regular study of God's word. The Psalmist writes in Psalm 19:7-8 that *"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."* I yearn for Christians to reap the rich benefits of scripture study, and to grow in the knowledge and love of God's word through directly engaging with the biblical text. This is why I have chosen to publish bible study questions instead of commentaries. There are many valuable commentaries to help aid your study of scripture, and I recommend using them. For guidance on commentaries visit www.bestcommentaries.com.

However, the focus of this book is to engage you, the reader, and to challenge you to answer relevant questions based on the scripture.

I have in mind three types of users for this book: First, group bible studies. Most of these questions were written for my weekly men's bible study. I recommend that the leader use this resource to prepare beforehand, reading all the questions and picking only five to seven for discussion. Twenty questions would certainly be a lot of material to discuss! For the bible study, each participant could have a copy to follow along. Second, sermon preparation. Asking questions of the text can be very helpful for understanding the flow and point of a passage of scripture. Third, personal bible study. Again, you can gain valuable insights by asking questions of the text.

My hope for these bible study questions is that they would encourage and facilitate Christians' gathering together to study God's word. One day, as Habakkuk 2:14 says, *"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."* Critical to this prophecy in Habakkuk is our *knowing* about the Glory of God, and this is best achieved through the study of the bible. So let's do our part!

I challenge you, reader, to ask some friends, colleagues, classmates, or fellow church members to join you for a bible study. Ask God to open your eyes to understand the scripture (Psalm 119:18), and step out in faith to spread the knowledge of the Glory of God. May this book enrich your study of God's living and active word (Hebrews 4:12), and may the Lord Jesus Christ bless your bible studies!

SUMMARY OF 1 CORINTHIANS

In Acts chapter 18, Luke records the Apostle Paul's visit to the Greek port city of Corinth. After being rejected from the Jewish synagogue, Paul spent eighteen months teaching the gentiles about Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins. Though there was much opposition, Paul, along with his ministry partners Priscilla, Aquila, Silas, and Timothy, planted a church with the gentile converts who had trusted in Christ.

Yet sometime after Paul left Corinth, the church fell into serious dysfunction. There were factions and divisions in the church (1:10-12), lawsuits between believers (6:1-8), sexual immorality (5:1 & 6:18-20), marital problems (chapter 7), flaunting of freedom (8:1-13), syncretistic idolatry (10:14-22), gender role confusion (7:2-16), perversion of the Lord's supper (11:17-34), abuse of spiritual gifts (chapters 12 & 14), and false teachers who denied the resurrection (15:12). For Paul, the remedy to all this dysfunction is the preaching of the cross, the pure gospel: Christ delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

The cross of Christ dissolves divisions and factions, because no human leader was crucified to purchase the church. Christ alone is the head of the church. The cross of Christ brings peace to disputes about property because Christ willingly suffered wrong for us, why should we be unwilling to suffer loss to uphold the honor of Christ's Church? The cross of Christ answers the question of sexual immorality, for believers are now united with the crucified and resurrected Lord. Our union with Christ and his body makes illicit sexual union abhorrent to us, for he owns our bodies. The exclusive gospel of Christ heals us from our sinful idolatry, for we cannot serve Christ and demons. The gospel transforms how we think about the community of the church. The church is not like other human organizations, but rather every member should seek to serve the other members with humility, for we are members of one body.

Most importantly, in chapter 15 Paul shows that the true gospel of Christ, including his death, burial, and victorious resurrection is indispensable to our hope as Christians. Christ's resurrection from the dead is the guarantee of his sufficient atonement and thus the full forgiveness of our sins. Christ's resurrection from the dead gives us a sure hope of our own resurrection, for he will raise us to be like him on the last day.

Therefore, knowing that this mortal body will be swallowed up in life, that we are united with Christ even now, and that a glorious resurrection awaits us, we must labor hard for the Lord now, because our work will not be in vain. We must keep a close watch on our spiritual walk, lest we be disqualified from the prize (9:26-27).

The gospel is sufficient to transform a dysfunctional church.

GREETING, THANKSGIVING, AND APPEAL FOR UNITY
1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-17

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does Paul's gracious greeting and thanksgiving at the beginning of this letter (which contains many rebukes) teach us about the need to be gentle and full of grace, even when rebuking people?
2. What do you learn in this passage about the faithfulness of God and the perseverance of the saints?
3. What does this chapter teach us about the importance of unity in a local church?
4. How does Paul limit the importance of water baptism here?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL'S THANKFULNESS FOR THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH (vv. 1-9)

1. How does Paul use the word "called" to refer both to himself and to the Corinthian church? (1-2)
2. What does the word "sanctified" mean when it refers to Christians? Knowing some of the struggles of this Corinthian church, does it surprise you that Paul would call them sanctified? What does this teach you about the nature of Christ's work of redemption? How could it have been humbling to hear this? (2)
3. What vision does Paul have of the universal church in verse 2? Why do you think Paul mentions their place together with the universal church in this greeting? (2)
4. John Piper has noted that in every one of Paul's epistles, he begins with the phrase "Grace to you," and he ends with "Grace be with you." He says this implies Paul looks on his letter itself as a means of grace to those who read, and that he desires them to walk out of the epistle with grace on them for the challenges they will face now that they're done reading it. How are Paul's letters pipelines of grace for Christians even now? (3)
5. What does Paul thank God for in verse 4-9? Why is it so vital for church leaders to express thankfulness to God for the churches they lead, especially if their church has problems? (4-9)
6. Paul is thankful for the amazing way the Corinthian church had been gifted with every spiritual gift. Yet the church has so many shortcomings: problems with divisions, sin, false doctrine, immorality, and other issues. What does this teach you about spiritual gifts? (5, 7)

7. What does Paul promise to the Corinthians, and indeed to all Christians, about our eternal security? How does the faithfulness of God, not our own faithfulness, guarantee our final salvation? (8-9)

PAUL'S APPEAL FOR UNITY IN CHRIST (VV. 10-17)

8. Paul makes a passionate appeal to the Corinthians in these verses. What is it? (10)
9. Compare verse 10 with Philippians 2:2. What do you see in these two passages? How do Christians come to “one mind” if they’ve been earnestly disagreeing? Is it ok to “agree to disagree”? (10)
10. Paul talks about the factions in the Corinthian church. What are factions? Why are they so damaging to a local church? How do you see them in modern churches? (11-12)
11. How does Paul use the unity of Christ and his Body as a strong argument against factions, against following specific leaders against other leaders? (13)
12. What point does Paul make about his own role in their baptism? Why does Paul seem to make very little about whether he baptized them or not? (14-16)
13. Paul is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit here, yet he says he doesn’t remember whether or not he baptized anyone else. What does this teach you about the inspiration of a writer of scripture? (16)
14. Some people (Roman Catholics, Church of Christ) teach “baptismal regeneration”: the doctrine that unless you are water baptized, you cannot be saved. How does verse 17 help to refute that teaching? (17)
15. Why would Paul say that using “words of eloquent wisdom” would empty the cross of its power? What does he mean? (17)

III. SUMMARY

The Apostle Paul greets his beloved Corinthian church, expressing his gratitude for the grace of God that has been poured out on them, as well as the variety of spiritual gifts that are manifested in their congregation. However, Paul quickly begins to address the host of problems in the church, beginning with their unhealthy factionalism.

CHRIST THE WISDOM AND POWER OF GOD
1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-31

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why does the world see the message of the cross (Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins and raised from the dead) as foolishness and weakness?
2. How is the message of the Cross it actually wisdom and power from God? How has God demonstrated the power of the gospel for the past 2,000 years?
3. How does the make-up of the Corinthian church (not many of them were wise or powerful or influential) show the wisdom of God? Why did God do that?
4. What does this passage teach you about boasting? Why does God hate human boasting so much?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE CROSS: FOOLISH AND WEAK TO THE WORLD, WISE AND POWERFUL TO GOD (VV. 18-25)

1. In this section, Paul is taking on the Greek love for human wisdom, commonly called “philosophy.” How would you define “philosophy”? Why is it a threat to the gospel? (18-25)
2. Paul had just left Athens when he came to Corinth. What was his experience in Athens, especially on Mars Hill? See Acts 17:16-34. How would that have left a very bad taste in Paul’s mouth? How is 1 Corinthians 1 a sample of his argument against human philosophy?
3. In what way is the “word of the cross” foolishness/folly to the perishing? How is the cross the “power of God” to those who are being saved? (18)
4. Paul speaks of “us who are being saved” as though salvation is a process that is presently going on. Yet Ephesians 2:8 says we have been saved by grace (past) and Romans 5:9 says we will be saved from God’s wrath (future). How do you understand the past/present/future aspects of our salvation? (18)
5. What does verse 19 tell us about God’s plans for human wisdom? How will God destroy human wisdom? (19)
6. In what way has God made human wisdom foolish? How has the final disposition of famous Greek scholars shown this? (20)
7. Why is it very wise for God to make it impossible for human beings to know him or to save themselves by their own wisdom or cleverness? How does this humble us and make us totally dependent on his revelation of Christ? (21)
8. How do both the Jews and the Greeks naturally oppose the message of Christ crucified, but in different ways? (22-23)

9. How is Christ crucified a stumbling block to the Jews? How is he foolishness to Greeks? (23)
10. What does Paul mean when he says “the foolishness of God is wiser than men” and “the weakness of God is stronger than men”? (25)

THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH: LOWLY IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD, HOLY IN CHRIST (VV. 25-31)

11. Paul next turns to the Corinthian church itself, to its make-up, those who are actually part of the church. What point does he make about them? How do we see this happening in the spread of the gospel around the world? (26)
12. Why do the wise, influential, noble born people of the world tend to scoff at Christianity?
13. How does the detailed election of who made up the Corinthian church show the sovereign power of God over human salvation? What do you learn from the three times Paul says, “God chose...”? To this end, what is the significance of the statement “And because of him [God] you are in Christ Jesus”? (27-30)
14. Why did God do this? What is his reason for generally choosing the people no one loves to become Christians? How does it shame the powerful, wise, rich people of the world? (27-29)
15. How has Christ become for us wisdom from God? How is he also our righteousness, holiness/sanctification, and redemption? (30)
16. What does it mean, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord”? See also Jeremiah 9:24. Why does God hate human pride so much? (31)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul exalts God’s gospel and God’s wisdom, for the message of the cross seems to be foolishness to those who reject the gospel, but is the power of God for salvation to those who are being saved. God destroys the so-called wisdom of the so-called wise, but has revealed his salvation through the gospel proclamation. Saving knowledge of God cannot come through human wisdom, but only through the word of the cross. To eliminate human boasting, God has sovereignly chosen many of his people from lowly backgrounds, as evidenced by the Corinthian church.

THE GOSPEL: A DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT'S WISDOM AND POWER

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-16

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach us about how the Spirit uses weak people to spread the gospel?
2. How is the message of the Cross a demonstration of both the power and wisdom of the Spirit?
3. What does this section teach us about the work of the Spirit on human hearts?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

WEAKNESS, FEAR, AND TREMBLING REVEAL THE SPIRIT'S POWER (VV. 1-5)

1. How does this section relate to the previous one? Why does Paul seem so eager to reject human eloquence and wisdom when it comes to preaching Christ? (1)
2. How do you understand Paul's statement in verse 2? Obviously, Paul knew and taught far more than that in his teaching ministry. See Acts 20:20, 27. (2)
3. What insights do you gain from Paul's assertion, that he preached in "weakness and in fear and much trembling"? How does this challenge your methods? (3)
4. Talk about how Paul's weakness and fear is an encouragement to you in personal evangelism. Give personal examples of how evangelism brought you fear. How is the Spirit's power displayed in such people as us? (3)
5. What does Paul say about his message? How was Paul's weakness actually a display of the Spirit's power? (4)
6. How are we tempted to rely on personality, persuasive speech, communication techniques, or "polish" rather than on the message and the Spirit? (4)
7. What is Paul's greatest concern in all this, according to verse 5? Why is he so concerned about this? (5)

WORDS GIVEN BY THE SPIRIT REVEAL THE SPIRIT'S WISDOM (VV. 6-16)

8. What does Paul emphasize and celebrate in verses 6-7? How is the gospel, in reality, the wisest message that has ever been proclaimed? (6-7)
9. What does Paul mean by saying he speaks a message of wisdom "among the mature"? What does that mean? Who is he referring to? (6)
10. What does Paul say about the "rulers of this age"? See also 1 John 2:17, 1 Cor. 7:31. Why do these worldly rulers reject the gospel's wisdom? (6)
11. How did God conceal the wisdom of the gospel for centuries? How is it "for our glory" that this gospel was decreed? How does that encourage you? (7)
12. What does Paul say about the "rulers of this age" in reference to Jesus' death? How do the rulers of *our* age also show the same ignorance of God's wisdom and power by how they respond to Jesus? (8)

13. Verse 9 is one of the more well-known verses in this section of 1 Corinthians. People usually quote it to say that we cannot really predict what heaven will be like. Is that what Paul is saying here? How does verse 10 refute the idea that we have no idea what heaven will be like? (9-10)
14. How would it have been impossible for human wisdom or imagination to have concocted the gospel of a dying and rising Messiah who saves people simply by faith? How does verse 10 fit into Paul's argument in this section? (10)
15. What do verses 10-11 teach us about the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the mind of God the Father? How would meditating on these verses greatly expand your esteem for the Spirit? (10-11)
16. What is the significance of the statement, "No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God"? How does it line up with Isaiah 55:8-9? (11)
17. What is the "spirit of the world"? See Ephesians 2:2. How is the Holy Spirit radically different? (12)
18. What does verse 12 teach us about the ministry of the Spirit within our minds and hearts? What is the Spirit teaching us according to that verse? (12)
19. What does verse 13 teach us about the supernatural origin and character of the gospel message? How does the Spirit teach us the right words? How does this relate to the use of the Holy Scriptures, which are inspired by the Spirit? (12-13)
20. Verse 14 gives a powerful assessment about unconverted people. What does Paul say about them? What are they incapable of doing? See also Romans 8:7-8. How does this support Paul's assertion in 1 Cor. 1:30 that it is *because of God* that you are in Christ Jesus? How does it also support Jesus' statement in John 6:44, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him"? (14)
21. Why do you think the things of God seem so foolish to unconverted people? It seems by crafting the message of the cross (A dead Jewish man two thousand years ago is your only hope of salvation), God specifically was making Christ seem outwardly foolish. Why would he do this? (14)
22. What is "spiritual discernment"? How is it that Christians can see in Christ what the lost cannot? (14)
23. What does verse 15 mean? How do you understand it? It seems like Paul is saying, "If the world cannot understand me, they will not understand you either." Why is that important to know? (15)
24. How does verse 16 relate to verse 15? What change has the Spirit worked within our minds? What does it mean to have the "mind of Christ"? (16)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul describes the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in bringing us from spiritual darkness to a right understanding of God's grace in Christ.

BUILDING THE CHURCH IN LIGHT OF JUDGMENT DAY TESTING

1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-23

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How do factions and divisions in the church show spiritual immaturity on the part of its members? How do they ruin the church's witness in the world?
2. What is the significance of Paul's statement, in verse 6? Why is it vital for us to be humble about our service in building Christ's church?
3. What does this section teach us about Judgment Day and the testing of our works? How should we live in light of this truth?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

DIVISION IN THE CHURCH EXPOSES SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY (VV. 1-4)

1. Why is Paul so critical of the Corinthians church here? What does he mean when he says he could not speak to them as "spiritual people" but rather only as people of the flesh (worldly)? How does it relate to Hebrews 5:11-14? (1)
2. Based on this section, some have wrongly taught the idea of the "carnal Christian": someone who is a Christian but lives a worldly, sinful lifestyle. Is that what Paul is talking about? What else could be the issue here? (1-2)
3. How does jealousy and quarrelling show great sin? See Galatians 5:19-21. (3)
4. What is so wrong about some people saying "I follow Paul" or "I follow Apollos"? How do we see this kind of mentality today? (4)

ONLY GOD CAN MAKE THE CHURCH GROW (VV. 5-9)

5. What does Paul mean by "What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants..."? Why is it vital for neither the servants of God nor those they serve to make too much of human ministry? Hebrews 13:17 also says it is right to honor those who lead well and teach the Word of God. How do we balance these out? (5)
6. What is the importance of the phrase, "as the Lord assigned to each"? What does this teach about God's wisdom in building the church? How does it relate to spiritual gifts? (5)
7. Jesus frequently used agricultural imagery in his parables. How does the image of planting a seed and watering show the limitations of human agency in building the church? How does it relate to the parable in Mark 4:26-29? How is it true that only God can make the seed grow? (7)
8. How is verse 8 a great encouragement to labor in the Lord? How does it give peace to us to realize that the Lord has limited the scope of our labors, and that he alone can make our works successful? (8)
9. What does Paul call the church in verse 9? How is the church like a field? How is it like a building? (9)

JUDGMENT DAY WILL REVEAL THE QUALITY OF OUR WORKS (VV. 10-15)

10. This section is one of the most important in the Bible on teaching about Judgment Day. What does it reveal to us about God's assessment of our lives?
11. Paul speaks of the work he did in planting the Corinthian church. What is the significance of him saying "I laid a foundation..."? What does that refer to? Based on verse 11, what is the "foundation" that Paul laid? (10-11)
12. How is Paul a "master builder"? What does this teach you about developing spiritual gifts? (10)
13. Paul warns all who follow him at Corinth to build skillfully and well. How does someone build the church using quality materials that will survive Judgment Day? Many today build/assemble a huge church by using worldly means of entertainment and preaching that tickles the ears. How does this paragraph warn them about what their work will look like on Judgment Day? (10-15)
14. How does the image of our works being tested with fire on Judgment Day cause us to be sober-minded in how we live? What is the significance of Paul's assertion that, if we build with wood/hay/straw, the Day will test it with fire and it will burn up and we will "suffer loss"? What is the nature of that loss? How can we avoid it? (13-15)
15. If we suffer loss on Judgment Day, what will we feel at that time? Why is it beneficial to fear that loss now, while there's time to do something about it? How does that fear seem to be on Paul's mind in Acts 24:16?
16. What is the nature of our reward for the gold/silver/precious stones that survive Judgment Day? See 1 Cor. 4:5. Why is it actually not sinful but essential to live daily lives for the rewards that Christ will give? (14)
17. What does Paul mean by "He himself will be saved, but only as through fire"? Comment on the various ways that Christians can live their lives. (15)

WE ARE GOD'S TEMPLE (VV. 16-23)

18. What does Paul mean when he says we are God's temple? How does the indwelling Spirit of God make it so? What warning does Paul give to the enemies of Christ (and thus Christ's church) in verse 17? (16-17)
19. How does verse 18 go back to the themes of chapter 1? What does Paul want them to do to become "fools" like him? (18)
20. How is boasting about men foolish? How were they doing that? What does Paul mean by "All things are yours"? (21-23)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul powerfully criticizes the Corinthians for their factions, and calls on them to grow up to maturity, realizing that human labor is only a means that God uses to build his church for his glory. Paul also calls on them to build the church using high quality materials: the word of God as it testifies to Christ. And Paul warns them to live every day in light of Judgment Day, when their works will be tested with fire.

COURAGEOUS STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL

1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-21

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this chapter teach us about being faithful stewards of the gospel in our generation?
2. How does this chapter humble us and cause us to evaluate our love for ease and comfort in this present evil generation?
3. What does this chapter teach us about living in light of Judgment Day?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

GOD'S JUDGMENT DAY ASSESSMENT IS ALL THAT MATTERS (VV. 1-5)

1. Why is Paul talking about how people should regard them? How does that fit into the problems the Corinthians were having with factions? See 1 Corinthians 1:12. (1)
2. How does Paul say people should regard them in verse 1? What principle of stewardship does Paul relate in verse 2? How should this affect the way we see our own lives? (1-2)
3. What are the “mysteries of God”? See 2:7. (1)
4. How does Paul express independence from human opinion? How should such an attitude affect the way we preach the gospel in our generation? (3)
5. What does Paul teach us about the limits of self-evaluation in verses 3-4? What is the significance of him saying, “For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted”? How do you line that up with Paul’s statement to Felix in Acts 24:16? How is it possible for someone to say “I have a clear conscience” when they are actually living in sin? (3-4)
6. What is the overall point Paul is making in verses 1-5? How does Judgment Day make everything plain? How can we best live in light of this insight? (5)

Note: George Whitefield, who preached the pure gospel to tens of thousands of people, wanted this put on his grave marker: “Here lies George Whitefield; what sort of man he was the Day will reveal.”

7. What does verse 5 teach us about rewards from God? What is the significance of the phrase “commendation from God”? Why is it actually imperative for us to live constantly for that? (5)

THE CORINTHIANS' PRIDE AND THE APOSTLES' HUMILITY (VV. 6-14)

8. What point does Paul make about himself and Apollos in verse 6? How would meditating on these things when it comes to Paul or Apollos help free them from being so focused on human achievements? (6)
9. What does Paul mean by “not to go beyond what is written”? Why is this important? (6)

10. What is Paul's point in verse 7? How should it humble us, to know that any difference there ever is between us and another person is because God made us different? Why is it foolish for anyone to be arrogant about their talents? (7)
11. I believe verses 8-13 are some of the most convicting in the Bible for comfortable, affluent Christians to read. Why would that be so? How is Paul actually being very scathing and to some degree sarcastic in these verses? How is that a warning or "admonishing" (verse 14) to them and to us? (8-13)
12. In what ways did the Corinthians want the "crown without the cross"? In what ways do we act and think the same way? How is that exposed in verse 8? (8)
13. What does verse 9 teach us about what it was like to be an apostle back then? How does it relate to 1 Corinthians 15:19? Why does God seem treat his choicest servants so poorly in this world? See Romans 8:28-39. (9)
14. What else does Paul say about the life of an apostle in verses 10-13? How does he contrast it with the life the Corinthians are leading? (10-13)
15. As you read these verses, how could they help you live a bolder, more self-sacrificial life for the glory of Christ? (8-13)
16. What is the "warning" Paul is giving them and us by this ironic (even sarcastic) parallelism between his life and theirs? (14)

PAUL'S FATHERLY DISCIPLINE (VV. 14-21)

17. As Paul gives them a rather harsh warning in verses 14, what does he reveal of his reason for doing it? (14)
18. How has Paul become their "father"? (15)
19. How is Paul acting like a spiritual father to them and to us? Why do godly "fathers" like Paul sometimes have to speak so sharply? What is the danger Paul is warning us from? (14-15)
20. What ultimately does Paul want from his spiritual "children" in verse 16? How can we also imitate Paul? (16)
21. What is Timothy's role here? (17)
22. What final warning does he give this headstrong, talented, prideful congregation in verses 18-21? How would Paul come with a "rod"? What "power" is he threatening to put on display when he comes? (18-21)
23. What is the significance of Paul's assertion that the Kingdom of God is not a matter of mere talk but of power? How are the mere talkers devoid of the power Paul has? (19-20)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul warns the prideful Corinthian congregation (and us) to stop desiring the world's comforts and praise and to imitate him in suffering for the gospel.

EXPELLING IMMORAL PEOPLE ESSENTIAL TO CHURCH PURITY

1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why is church discipline so vital to the health of a local church? Why do so few churches actually practice biblical church discipline?
2. What motives does Paul give throughout this passage for doing church discipline?
3. How could the pastors of a church that has forsaken church discipline lead their church back to faithfulness in this area?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What is the issue (the actual case) that Paul is addressing in this chapter? What does he want the church to do? What attitude does Paul have toward the Corinthian church in this matter?
2. What is the significance of the fact that the immorality he is addressing here doesn't even occur among the pagans, and the fact that this case seems widely known in the community, since it is "reported"? How is the faithful practice of church discipline essential to a church's reputation in the community? Why does it matter what the community thinks about the holiness of a church? (1)
3. Why do you think Paul rebukes them for arrogance in verse 2? In what ways do you think the Corinthian church was exhibiting arrogance? Perhaps it was related to this very case, or perhaps they were proud about other things—like their amazing spiritual gifts—and this immorality didn't bother them at all. (2)
4. Instead of pride, what attitude did Paul want the church to show in this case? Why is it appropriate for a church to be "filled with grief" when expelling a sinning church member? How is that open display of grief essential to the outcome of church discipline? (2)
5. What action does Paul clearly want them to take? Note that he says it twice, verse 2 and verse 13. Why is the expulsion of a sinning church member from the church membership sufficient punishment for a church to mete out? Why is the use of corporal punishments, imprisonment, torture, and death wrong for churches to use for dealing with theological/moral issues? (2)
6. What does Paul say about himself in 3? What is the significance of him saying "I am present in spirit..." and "I have already pronounced judgment..."? (3)
7. What other procedures does Paul give for the enactment of church discipline in 4-5? Why is it vital for the action to be taken by the whole church and not just the pastors? Why must the church act when everyone is assembled? (4-5)
8. Since in verses 2 and 13, Paul commands the church to expel the immoral person, what does he mean in verse 5 by "deliver this man to Satan"? In what sense is putting someone outside the covenant fellowship of a local church

“delivering over to Satan”? How is it related to Jesus’ statement in Matthew 18:17 “let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector”? (5)

9. What does Paul hope will happen to the man who is expelled? How would the flesh be destroyed, and how would the spirit be “saved on the day of the Lord”? In what way could church discipline actually result in the salvation of the sinner involved? Is such a wonderful outcome guaranteed? If the person never repents, how was the church discipline still worth doing anyway? (5)
10. Why does Paul return to their boasting in verse 6? What does the analogy of the yeast permeating the whole batch of dough teach us about another motive for church discipline? How does sin, if not dealt with biblically, tend to spread and ruin whole churches? (6)
11. Paul reaches in verse 7 for the Jewish Passover ritual of cleansing the household once a year of all yeast. What analogy does he make to the Corinthian church? How is this analogy relevant to the issue of the purity of the church and Christ’s sacrifice for it? (7-8)
12. What does this teach you about Paul’s view of local churches? Should they be mixtures of saved and unsaved people, or as pure as possible from all evil? How does this argue for a believers-only church? (7-8)
13. How does Paul contrast leaven (malice, evil) with unleavened bread (sincerity and truth)? What does this analogy teach us about the church? (8)
14. What further commands does Paul give about associating with evil people in verses 9-10? What specific immoral people does Paul mean? How does such a “ban” actually get lived out? What reasons do you think Paul would give for not even eating with wicked people who call themselves brothers? (9-11)
15. Why do you think Paul prohibits fellowshiping with people who claim to be Christians but live an immoral life, but does not prohibit spending time with immoral pagans? What are the key differences? (9-11)
16. What other sins does Paul extend this prohibition to in verse 11? (11)
17. What does the inside/outside language of verses 12-13 teach you about the local church? How does it prove the existence and validity of committed local church membership, including effectively a list of names of present members? (12-13)
18. What clear limitation does Paul make on church discipline in verses 12-13? Who do we “judge” and who do we not? (12-13)
19. What final, clear command does Paul give? (13)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul commands the Corinthian church to expel an immoral church member for the sake of the church’s reputation in the community, for the possible salvation of the sinner, and for the protection of the purity of the church.

LAWSUITS AND SEXUAL IMMORALITY AMONG BELIEVERS

1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-20

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this chapter teach us about the need for local churches to be holy for the sake of their witness in the world?
2. When it comes to lawsuits, and any other offense we might have with other Christians, what is the significance of Paul's principle, "Why not rather suffer wrong?" How does it relate to turning the other cheek?
3. How do verses 9-10 warn hypocrites in the church and unbelievers outside the church about Judgment Day? How does verse 11 give us confidence about the transforming power of the gospel from soul-killing sins like homosexuality?
4. How is sexual purity a primary issue in the church today?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

LAWSUITS AMONG BELIEVERS (VV. 1-11)

1. What is Paul most concerned about when it comes to lawsuits among believers? Why is it devastating to the witness of the church in the community if church members go to court with each other? How does it relate to John 13:35? (1)
2. What does Paul teach us verse 2? What does it mean that the saints will judge the world? What does it mean that we will judge angels? How does he use this to argue that the church is able to deal with disputes between members? (2-3)
3. What attitude does Paul have about these lawsuits that are being resolved before unbelievers? In what way does Paul feel the church should be ashamed? (4-6)
4. What does Paul mean by "Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?" Rather than what? Why is it better to take the loss when wronged by a fellow church member than to sue him in front of an unbelieving judge? (7)
5. How would the "Why not rather be wronged?" ethic get played out in every area of Christian relationships? How would it make disputes and conflicts between Christians a lot more infrequent and a lot less bitter? How does it relate to Paul's statement in Philippians 2:4? (7)
6. Paul goes on to show how far they are from this selfless, loving, others-centered ethic. How does he expose their shame in their dealings with each other? (8)
7. What do verses 9-10 teach us about Judgment Day? What does Paul mean by "inherit the Kingdom of God"? How does Satan try to deceive people about this, for Paul says, "Do not be deceived"? (9-10)
8. How does this warning fit into the issue of lawsuits that he was just discussing? How does it fit into the issue of sexual purity he is about to discuss? (9-10)
9. One of the hottest issues of our day is homosexuality, along with the assertion that homosexuality is genetic, and essential to that person's self-identity rather

than a moral choice they are making. How does verse 11 help undercut that argument? How does verse 11, “and such were some of you,” give hope to people struggling with same-sex attraction that Christ can heal them the way he heals people from other sin patterns? (11)

10. What does Paul say that Christ did to the Corinthian believers in verse 11? How do these words show us the extent of Christ’s saving power? What does the word “sanctified” mean in here? (11)

SEXUAL IMMORALITY (VV. 12-20)

11. What do you think the statement “all things are lawful for me” means in verse 12? Why does Paul counter it twice? How can Christian freedom be abused? Are “all things” really lawful for Christians? (12)
12. What is the danger in being “dominated” by something? See Romans 6:16. (12)
13. Why is it vital for us as affluent, 21st century American Christians, to be careful that amoral pleasures (like food, entertainment, hobbies, possessions, lifestyle choices) not become enslaving addictions? How do Proverbs on honey (24:13-14; 25:16; 27:7) give us a sense of the benefits and dangers of amoral pleasures?
14. What perspective does verse 13 give us on amoral pleasures (like eating)? (13)
15. What topic does Paul address next? How would you define sexual immorality? Why is this such a perpetual weakness for the human race? (13-20)
16. What does “the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” mean? (13)
17. Why does Paul mention Christ’s resurrection and ours in verse 14? What does it teach you about the importance to God of what we do with our bodies? (14)
18. What do verses 15 and 17 teach us about the physical ramifications of our spiritual union with Christ? (15, 17)
19. How does Paul’s use of the marriage words “the two will become one flesh” show the immense significance of even “casual” sexual intercourse? How does it show there is no such thing as “casual sex”? (16)
20. What command does Paul give about sexual immorality? How does one “flee”? What reason does Paul give in verse 18? (18)
21. What does Paul say about the body of every Christian in verse 19? (19)
22. What is the significance of the assertion, “You are not your own, for you were bought at a price”? How are we in some sense Christ’s slaves? What are the ethical implications for that? (19-20)
23. What final command does Paul give to sum up this section? (20)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul gives commands concerning holiness (lawsuits, sexual immorality) to the Corinthians, and reminds them that they are not their own, but belong to Jesus.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GODLY MARRIAGES

1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-16

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think marriage is such a spiritual battleground in which Satan concentrates so many of his attacks? Homosexuality, abortion, divorce, sexual immorality, transgenderism, gay marriage... all these are in some ways Satanic attacks on God's pattern of godly marriage.
2. In light of question 1, why is it important for Christians to have godly, upright marriages, beyond all reproach?
3. What insights does this chapter give on developing godly Christian marriages?
4. How could this chapter be encouraging to Christian singles?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR HEALTHY MARITAL RELATIONS (vv. 1-7)

1. In this chapter, Paul is addressing an issue they raised by the statement, "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." What does that mean? How could it relate to the false teachers who forbid marriage in 1 Timothy 4:3? (1)
2. In some ways Paul does agree in this chapter that it is good not to marry, but not in the way they intend by the statement. How does Paul uphold both marriage and singleness in 1 Corinthians 7? (1)
3. How are marriage and celibacy the only Christian answers to the problem of sexual immorality? What answer does the world usually give to the powerful sexual drive? (2)
4. Verses 3-4 are very egalitarian between the husband and wife when it comes to marital relations. What vital aspect of marriage does that teach? (3-4)
5. What "rights" does Paul have in mind in verses 3-4? What does Paul's command teach you about marital relations? How is helpful to see it as something a spouse (husband or wife) owes to their spouse? How is it insufficient to only see it as a duty? (3-4)
6. Verse 4 is quite amazing. What does Paul assert about marriage in this verse? What are the implications of this teaching, that a husband's body doesn't belong only to himself but also to his wife, and vice-versa? (4)
7. How does that proper "ownership" of the spouse's body reveal the evil of adultery? (4)
8. What command does Paul give in verse 5? How does this show that sex is essential to a healthy marriage? (5)
9. What valid reason does Paul give a married couple from abstaining from sex? Why does he command that it only be for a short time? (5)

10. How does Satan seek to drive unmarried people together sexually, and how does he seek to drive married people apart sexually? How does this prove that Satan does not believe that marriage is “only a piece of paper”? (5)
11. If a spouse is withholding sex from his/her spouse, why does that tend to expose that person to temptations toward immorality? (5)
12. What does Paul mean by verses 6-7? What does he mean when he says he wishes all men were as he was? (6-7)
13. What are the two gifts that Paul has in mind in verse 7? (7)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE UNMARRIED AND MIXED MARRIAGES (VV. 8-16)

14. What does Paul really want from single people in verse 8? What motive does he give for marriage in verse 9? How does this expose the modern-day practice of “living together” as sinful and destructive? (8-9)
15. What commands does he give married people in verses 10-11? How do you understand verse 11? Is he giving some partial permission to be separated? (10-11)
16. What do you think Paul means by “not I, but the Lord” (verse 10) and “I, not the Lord” (verse 12)? How does verse 25 give insight into this, where he says “I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy”? (10, 12, 25)
17. What marital situation is Paul addressing in verses 12-16? Since no Christian should ever marry a non-Christian, how might a mixed marriage come about? How do these verses give good instructions on what to do if you are married to an unbeliever? (12-16)
18. What does Paul mean by saying the unbeliever is “sanctified” through the believing spouse? What does he mean by the statement that the children are “holy” as opposed to being “unclean”? (14)
19. How does verse 15 address the case of abandonment by an unbelieving spouse? What does Paul mean when he says God has called us to live in peace in such a case? What is the significance of the sentence “In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved.”(15)
20. How does verse 16 set reasonable expectations for a believer winning an unbelieving spouse to Christ? As you read between the lines in verses 12-16, how does this give a glimpse into the pain and trial of a mixed marriage? (12-16)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul instructs the Corinthians of the importance of marriage as a guard against sexual immorality. Paul also address the difficulties of a Christian being married to an unbelieving spouse. The Christian must uphold the marriage vow in hopes that God will bring the spouse to repentance, but if the unbeliever ends the marriage, the abandon Christian is free from the marriage.

LIVING FOR THE SERVICE OF GOD
1 CORINTHIANS 7:17-40

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How could this chapter be encouraging to Christian singles?
2. According to Paul, what are the benefits of staying single, even if you are free to marry?
3. How does this chapter put marriage in proper eternal perspective?
4. How does verse 39 answer the question of whether or not a Christian can marry a non-Christian?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

REMAINING IN THE CALLING TO WHICH GOD HAS CALLED EACH ONE (VV. 17-24)

1. What is the general point Paul is making in verses 17-24? Why does Paul want people not to expend tremendous amounts of energy in improving their earthly circumstances? (17-24)
2. What in particular does Paul mean by becoming “uncircumcised” or becoming “circumcised”? How do these verses make circumcision basically of no account at all? (18-19)
3. What command does he repeat in verse 20, and again in verse 24? Why does he repeat it from verse 17? (17, 20, 24)
4. What contribution do verses 21-23 add to the slavery question in the New Testament. Why doesn’t Paul simply command all Christian masters to set their slaves free? How does Paul’s desire for freedom for the slaves take a back seat to his overall point in this section to not be too focused on or troubled by your earthly condition? (21-23)
5. How do verses 22-23 teach us to think of ourselves as both slaves of all and freedmen, ruled only by Christ? How is such a dual perspective (clearly taught by Martin Luther in his treatise “Two Kinds of Freedom”) helpful in the Christian life? (22-23)

***INSTRUCTIONS PUTTING MARRIAGE/SINGLENES IN ETERNAL
PERSPECTIVE (VV. 25-40)***

6. What general command does Paul give to virgins—people who have never been married—in this section? How does it fit into his repeated advice in verses 17, 20, 24? How does verse 26 basically repeat the same kind of advice he’s been giving over and over again? (25-28)
7. What do you think Paul meant by “the present distress” and “the time has grown very short”? How does this give insight and context to his overall ethic in this section? (26, 29)
8. Paul seems to think unmarried people going ahead and getting married is okay, but not necessarily the best route. Why?
9. What troubles does Paul desire to spare single people? How does Paul lay out the divided nature of married people’s earthly experience? How does getting married and raising a family divide both a husband and wife’s attentions—and needfully so? (28-35)
10. According to Paul, what is the greatest benefit to the single life for the Christian? (32, 34)
11. Why do you think so few Christian people choose a life of joyful singleness, despite Paul’s many persuasions here?
12. What situation does he address in verses 36-38? How does the tone of his advice fit in well with the whole chapter’s tone? (36-38)
13. What final case does he address in verses 39-40? Again, how does this fit in well with the whole chapter? (39-40)
14. What do the words in verse 39 “only in the Lord” mean? How does this answer the question of whether or not a Christian can marry a non-Christian? (39)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul gives commands concerning marriage and singleness, seeking especially to encourage people to focus on undivided devotion to the Lord in this brief life we live on earth.

FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS, AND THE LIMITS TO CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this chapter teach us about idols?
2. What do you think are some modern-day analogies to “eating food sacrificed to idols”?
3. How does this chapter put limits to Christian freedom?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE (VV. 1-3)

1. How does Paul begin this new topic in this chapter? Whom does he seem to be addressing in verses 1-3? Why do you think the eating (or not eating) of food sacrificed to idols was such a problem in the first-century church? (1-3)
2. What “knowledge” does Paul refer to in verses 1-3? (1-3)
3. What does he mean by “knowledge puffs up, but love builds up”? What does it mean to be “puffed up”? How does knowledge tend to do this to people? Why is this so harmful in the Body of Christ? (1)
4. What does “build up” mean? How does love build up? (1)
5. How would you answer someone who took this too far and asserted that all Christian knowledge is bad, since it tends to make people arrogant? How is knowledge plus love the right combination that Paul is teaching here? How would that be lived out in daily life? (1)
6. How should verse 2 humble every Christian on the face of the earth? What does it teach us about our level of knowledge? How should all true knowledge lead to a transformed (humbled, loving) character? (2)
7. What does verse 3 mean? What is the connection to verses 1-2? (3)

THE TRUTH ABOUT IDOLS (VV. 4-6)

8. How does Paul’s teaching about idols in verses 4-6 show that knowledge in and of itself is good and desirable? (4-6)
9. What does verse 4 say about idols? What is the relationship between idolatry and demons according to 1 Corinthians 10:20? How does that verse help us understand what Paul is saying in verse 5? What is the relationship between the “gods” of the pagans and demons? (4-5)
10. How does Paul differentiate between the “gods” of the idols and the God we worship? What does Paul teach about God and Christ in verse 6? (6)
11. If the idols are nothing but some physical block of wood or metal or stone, what should we conclude about meat which has been sacrificed to an idol? What effect does that act of worship by another person have on the meat itself?

THE PROBLEM OF A DEFILED CONSCIENCE (VV. 7-8)

12. Having unfolded the absolute truth about idols in verses 4-6, what topic does Paul bring up in verse 7-8? (7)
13. What is a weak or defiled conscience? How does this happen to a person? (7)
14. If an idol really doesn't truly exist (spiritually), and if meat is just meat why would it matter what a Christian believes about the meat as they're eating? How would Romans 14:23 help answer this question?
15. How can someone be healed from a weak or defiled conscience? How should other Christians treat a person with a weak or defiled conscience?
16. What limit does verse 8 put on the eating of meat? What point does verse 8 make in Paul's train of thought? (8)

THE LOVING LIMITS TO CHRISTIAN FREEDOM (VV. 9-13)

17. Who is directly addressed in verse 9? What does Paul warn them not to do? (9)
18. What is a "stumbling block"? How could someone who totally accepts Paul's argument about idols in verses 4-6 and eats whatever he chooses whenever he chooses do spiritual harm to a weaker brother or sister? (9)
19. What bad effect could that Christian's bold freedom have on someone with a weak/defiled conscience? If an idol really is nothing, then what is the harm if someone weak eats the meat sacrificed to an idol? (10)
20. Illustration: on Christmas a child sneaks down in the dark and steals candy from his brother's stocking, not knowing that his mother switched the stockings' positions and he is really eating his own candy. How is it still a sin?
21. Since (at least in America) physical idols like this aren't part of our religious scenery, what are some modern-day parallels that we are likely to see?
22. What possible damage does Paul imagine that a "free" bold Christian could do to a weak Christian if that "free" Christian eats meat in a temple? What does Paul mean by saying that the weaker brother is "destroyed" by that "free" brother's actions? (10-11)
23. What strong statement does Paul make in verse 12? (12)
24. What resolution does Paul come to in verse 13? Are there limits to this? How can we faithfully obey this, but at the same time not constantly live worrying about pleasing other people? How does Paul's resolution in verse 13 connect with his earlier statement in verse 8? (13)
25. What does all this teach us about genuine Christian love?

III. SUMMARY:

Paul teaches on meat sacrificed to idols, strongly urging that more mature Christians curtail their freedoms for the sake of weaker brothers and sisters.

THE RIGHTS OF A GOSPEL MINISTER

1 CORINTHIANS 9:1-14

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this passage teach us about the rights of a minister of the gospel? How should this chapter help churches faithfully support their pastors?
2. What does this passage teach you about Paul, that he did not make use of his “rights” to receive financial aid for his gospel ministry? How does the fact that he regularly declined to accept financial support show the authenticity of his testimony?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does this first section of 1 Corinthians 9 relate to the previous chapter, discussing Paul’s views on strong people not eating meat in the presence of weak people?
2. What does Paul assert about himself in verse 1? Why does he make these assertions here? (1)
3. How are the Corinthians themselves proof of the validity of Paul’s apostleship? (1-2)
4. What kind of evidence should gospel ministers seek to prove the validity of their own call?
5. What rights does Paul claim for himself as an apostle? (3-12)
6. What does verse 5 teach us about the Roman Catholic’s long-standing requirement that all their priests (ministers of the gospel) take a vow of celibacy? (5)
7. What does Paul mean by his seemingly sarcastic comment in verse 6? (6)
8. What issue is Paul specifically focusing on in verses 7-12? (7-12)
9. How would you compare Paul’s assertion that pastors make money from preaching the gospel with his personal example as a tentmaker in Corinth? See Acts 18:3.

Note: Paul in this chapter is saying he did not make use of his rights for financial support. In some ways he is saying to other pastors and their churches, “Do as I say, not as I do.”

10. Why is it vital for churches to support their pastors well, not so they will be rich, but so that they can live a normal life financially like other workers who are church members? Why do you think pastors have so often struggled badly to make ends meet? Why do so many churches fail to obey these principles?

11. Paul begins this defense with three examples: the soldier, the farmer, and the shepherd. What common point does he make from these three laborers? How does it relate to gospel ministers? (7)
12. What does Paul learn from the Law of Moses, and the command, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain”? What does Paul mean when he says “Is it for oxen that God is concerned”? (8-9)
13. What hope do the plowmen and thresher have? How does Paul use this in talking about financial support for pastors? (10-11)
14. How does Paul connect physical and spiritual things? (11)
15. Why does Paul claim to have a greater right to financial support than others have from this church? (12)
16. Why didn’t Paul make use of his right to financial support from the Corinthian church? Paul will return to this in a moment. (12)
17. What analogy does Paul turn to in verse 13? (13)
18. What clear command does Paul make in verse 14 concerning all this? How should verse 14 clearly settle the whole issue of pastors being paid for ministry? (14)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul teaches the rights and responsibilities of a gospel minister, specifically that Churches should be willing to pay their gospel ministers for their hard labor. Paul makes this point to show them how sacrificial he was toward them, because he refused to receive any support from them so as not to put up a stumbling block for believing the gospel.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A GOSPEL MINISTER

1 CORINTHIANS 9:15-27

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this chapter show of the responsibilities of a gospel minister? How does Paul's pattern of self-denial set a timeless example for pastors?
2. What does it mean to "become all things for all people so that by all possible means I might save some"? How does this teach us strategies for cross-cultural missionaries?
3. What does it mean to beat your body and make it your slave? How does this relate to personal holiness? Why is this level of commitment more and more necessary the more fruitful a minister of the gospel becomes?

PAUL'S SURRENDER OF HIS RIGHTS FOR A GREATER REWARD (VV. 15-18)

1. Paul returns to his surrender of his rights of support in verse 15. What reason does he give for surrendering this right? So why, if he surrendered this right, does he argue so vigorously for the right of support? (15)
2. What "boast" does Paul refer to in this section? See a similar boast in Acts 20:33-34. Similar to Samuel's claim in 1 Samuel 12:3-5.
3. What compulsion in preaching does Paul mention? What does Paul mean by saying "For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" How does it relate to Jeremiah 20:9? (16)
4. In what way is Paul both voluntarily and involuntarily preaching the gospel? (16-17)
5. What does Paul say his reward is for preaching the gospel? (18)

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A GOSPEL MINISTER (VV. 19-23)

6. How does this section teach us Paul's level of self-sacrifice to spread the gospel? (19-23)
7. How did Paul make himself a slave to every category of people to win the lost?
8. How did Paul become like a Jew to win the Jews? How did he do the same for the Gentiles? (19-21)
9. How does this section relate to the issue of meat sacrificed to idols?
10. How does this teach us missionary strategy for winning people from various cultures? (19-23)

11. How does this section connect with Martin Luther's seeming contradictory assertions, "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone."
- Martin Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian*.

THE DISCIPLINE REQUIRED OF A GOSPEL MINISTER (vv. 24-27)

12. What point does Paul make with this analogy of a running the race in order to obtain the winning a prize? (24-27)
13. How does he urge them to run so as to win the prize? (24)
14. What is the "self control" or "strict training" that Paul says is necessary for gospel success? (25)
15. What is the eternal crown that Paul is talking about? Is it salvation? Or reward for gospel fruitfulness? (25)
16. What does Paul mean by "I discipline my body and keep it under control"? How could this be taken too far or too literally? How could it, on the other hand, be disregarded and blown off by modern people who love the world and its pleasures too much? How is the body a danger in the Christian life and ministry? How do these verses teach us a healthy pattern of discipline needed?
17. What does Paul fear if he does not beat his body and make it his slave? What does it mean to be disqualified for the prize? (27)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul teaches the rights and responsibilities of a gospel minister, including financial support as a right and selfless sacrifice and self-discipline as responsibilities.

SEVERE WARNINGS FROM ISRAEL'S HISTORY

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Paul use the example of the Israelites to rebuke and exhort the Corinthian Christians?
2. How do serious warnings from the sins committed by others in the Bible help protect us in our Christian lives? Why do we need to heed these warnings and take them seriously?
3. What do we learn in this passage about Paul's approach to the Old Testament?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section connect with the previous one? Specifically, Paul begins verse 1 with the word "For," implying that there is a direct continuation from the end of chapter 9. What is that continuation? What does that teach us about our responsibility to "discipline our bodies and keep them under control" and running the race with endurance? (1)
2. What does Paul teach the Corinthians about in verses 1-5? (1-5)
3. Paul is clearly recounting the history of Israel in the Exodus, but he uses Christian symbolic language to do it. What are these symbols that he connects with? (2-3)
4. What basic point is Paul making about the Jews' national experience in this paragraph? (1-5)
5. What do you make of Paul calling Christ the "spiritual rock" as he recounts the story of the water from the rock? (4)
6. How does Paul mean verse 5 to be a shocking wake-up call for the Corinthians? (5)
7. What application does Paul make of this sad history lesson in verses 6-11?
8. What do verses 6 and 11 teach us about the connection between the history of Israel and Christians? How does this affect how you study the Old Testament? (6, 11)
9. What first lesson does Paul draw in verse 6? How did Israel set their hearts on evil things in the Exodus? (6)
10. What example of idolatry does Paul cite in verse 7? See Exodus 32:6. How did that occasion (the golden calf) serve as a warning to the Corinthians in their particular setting? (7)

11. What warning does Paul give in verse 8? How was Israel guilty of sexual immorality in the desert? See Numbers 25 and Revelation 2:14. (8)
12. What do you learn from the fact that God killed 23,000 Israelites in one day for sexual sin? How should this cause us to guard our hearts and ways from sexual sin in our present context? (8)
13. What does it mean to “test the Lord”? How did Israel test the Lord before they were killed by the snakes? See Numbers 21:5-6. What does that story teach you about how God feels about grumbling and complaining against him? (9-10)
14. Who was “the Destroyer” that killed the grumbling Israelites? (10)
15. What does verse 11 teach us about how we should read the Old Testament narratives about Israel’s history, especially their sins? (11)
16. If someone were to read these stories and minimize them, blow them off, what would you say to that person? (11)
17. What does it mean that we are those “on whom the end of the ages has come”? (11)
18. What key exhortation does Paul give in verse 12 to all Christians about sin, and about the proper way to receive warnings? How do we “take heed”? Why is overconfidence in the matter of sin and temptation so deadly? (12)
19. Why is it especially important for Christians to be vigilant in areas in which we have fallen in the past? (12)
20. What three encouragements does Paul give in verse 13 to Christians who face temptation? How can you use these encouragements in your life? (13)
21. How is it helpful for us to know that the temptations we face are common to all Christians everywhere? See 1 Pet. 5:9. (13)
22. What does it mean that God “will not let you be tempted beyond your ability”? How does God’s sovereign control over the world give us great confidence? How does this relate to Job 1:10-12? (13)
23. How does God offer a “way of escape” to us in temptation? Why is it vital to learn when to flee temptation? (13)
24. How does fleeing allow us to endure the temptation and survive it spiritually? (13)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul warns the Corinthian believers to flee from idolatry by recounting the idolatrous history of the Israelites and the subsequent consequences following the Exodus. Though they all saw God’s goodness in their rescue from Egypt, many perished because of disobedience.

IDOLATRY AND CHRISTIAN FREEDOM
1 CORINTHIANS 10:14-11:1

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the connection between false religions and demons? Why is it beneficial to understand the role demons play in the false religions of the world?
2. How does this section teach Christians to use their freedoms?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

IDOLATRY AND THE LORD'S SUPPER (VV. 14-22)

1. How does Paul connect the warning to flee idolatry with what he just said in verses 11-13? (14)
2. What analogy does Paul make in verses 15-22? What two things is he comparing? The key idea here is “spiritual participation.” (15-22)
3. How are we “participating” in the blood and body of Christ when we partake of the Lord’s Supper? What does Paul mean by that? (16)
4. What symbolism does Paul bring up with the “one loaf” in verse 17? (17)
5. What other example of “spiritual participation” does Paul mention in verse 18? (18)
6. What ultimate point is Paul making in verses 19-21? (19-21)
7. How are demons active in false religious ceremonies? How could Christians be spiritually harmed by “participating” in such ceremonies, even though idols themselves are nothing? (19-21)
8. Do you think pagans realize that their sacrifices (to Baal, Molech, Artemis, Jupiter, Allah, Krishna, Buddha, etc.) are actually being offered to demons?
9. Why can we not participate in both the Lord’s Supper and the pagan ceremonies? How is that like spiritual adultery? (21)
10. Scripture says that our God is a “jealous” God? See Exodus 20:5; 34:14. How does that play in here? What does Paul mean when he asks “Are we stronger than he”? How is that a warning? (22)

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM SHOULD SERVE OTHERS (VV. 23-11:1)

11. Why do you think Paul reverts to that “All things are lawful” theme from 6:12 at this point? How does Paul seek to address Christian freedoms in light of all his teaching on the “meat sacrificed to idols” topic that he’s been addressing basically from chapter 8 till now? (23-24)

12. How does verse 24 limit Christian freedom? If we were to expand verse 24 beyond meat sacrificed to idols, how is this an incredibly challenging standard to live up to? (24)
13. What specific command does Paul give about meat sold in the marketplace? How does he limit the freedom in the context of specific issues in verses 27-28? What situation is he describing? (27-28)
14. Why does it matter if the origin of the meat is brought up at the dinner table? How would it change things for a believer in that situation? (25-29)
15. How does Paul make it clear that the problem when the matter is raised at the dinner table is the other man's conscience, not his own? Why does he reject anyone's judgment of his conscience? (29-30)
16. What kinds of situations would come up in our lives (since we are not likely to face this specific issue) in which Paul's commands here would be helpful? (29-30)
17. How does verse 31 stand as a timeless command for all Christians in all circumstances? What does it mean to do something "for the glory of God"? How does the fact that something as mundane could be done for the glory of God give significance to every single moment in our lives, including washing dishes, doing our secular jobs, picking up the kids from a friend's house, etc.? (31)
18. What does it mean to cause someone to stumble? How does this line up with Paul's overall teaching on the limits of Christian freedom? (32)
19. How does Paul set himself up as an example of the proper and loving use of Christian freedom? (10:33-11:1)
20. What is the importance of role modelling in Christian leadership? (11:1)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul unfolds warnings and encouragements to the Corinthian church to keep them from exercising their freedoms in a way that harms others and perhaps leads themselves into sin.

GODLY ORDER IN THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH
1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-34

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think modern society is so hostile toward gender-based roles in the life of the church? Why is it so vital for the church to embrace what Paul teaches about male leadership, yet in a way that is not denigrating to women?
2. Why is a proper observance of the Lord's Supper so important for the church?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

HEADSHIP DEMONSTRATED THROUGH HEAD COVERINGS (VV. 2-16)

1. What does verse 2 teach you about the importance of obeying and adhering to the apostle's commands? (2)
2. What does Paul teach about male headship in marriage? What does "head" mean here? In Ephesians 5, Paul teaches that wives should submit to their own husbands as the church submits to Christ. How does that relate to verse 3? (3)
3. What do you think it means that the head of Christ is God? How does this show that there is nothing dishonoring about being under a head? (3)
4. It seems head coverings were a culturally symbolic practice to show wife's submission to her husband. Why then would it be dishonoring (akin to shaving the head) for a wife to throw off the symbol of authority? How could misinterpreting Galatians 3:28 lead to this errant thinking? Why is crucial for a godly vision of headship and submission to be displayed in the Church? (4-6)
5. Paul is teaching a timeless principle (the husband is the head of the wife) that will be lived out differently in various cultures. How do you think we can best obey this principal in our culture? Do we need head coverings, or are there more appropriate ways to obey these principals? (4-10)
6. What is the significance of the fact that Paul assumes that both men and women will pray and prophecy in public? (4-5)
7. What does Paul say about men and women and glory in verse 7? In what way is man the glory of God and woman the glory of man? (7)
8. What is Paul referring to in verse 8? How is the order of creation important to Paul in male-female roles in the life of the church, both here and in 1 Timothy 2:12-13? How does that point to a timeless principle in both those sections? (8)
9. What does Paul mean by saying that man was not created "for" woman, but woman was created "for" man? Why do many modern people have difficulty accepting this? See Genesis 2:18 as a possible support for this idea. (9)
10. What does Paul mean by referring to angels in verse 10? How does this show the difficulty of fully and decisively interpreting Paul's commands here? (10)

11. What beautiful interdependence between men and women does Paul teach as a counterbalance in verses 11-12? Why is this vital to keep in mind? (11-12)
12. How does Paul finish his teaching on this in verse 16? What would a contentious reaction to Paul's teaching show of that person's heart? (16)

DIRECTIONS FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER (VV. 17-34)

13. Why is Paul so critical of the Corinthians concerning their observance of the Lord's Supper? What was happening when they observed the Supper? (17-22)
14. What does verse 19 mean? How to you understand and reconcile verse 19 with 1:10? (19)
15. What did the fact that they weren't waiting for each other show about their disunity? What other sins were happening? (21)
16. What does Paul mean by reminding them that they had homes to eat and drink in? Why do you think Paul was so upset at them about all this? (22)
17. Verses 23-26 are timeless verses used in churches all over the world as the "words of institution" for the Lord's Supper. What do they teach us about this ordinance? (23-26)
18. What should we think about when we partake? How should we "look up" to God? "Look inward" to our sins? "Look around" to the Body of Christ (other Christians)? "Look back" to the death of Christ? "Look ahead" to the Second Coming and the eternal kingdom of Christ? Why would doing all this every time we partake be helpful?
19. What is the significance of Christ's statements, "this is my body, which is for you" and "this cup is the new covenant in my blood"? (24-25)
20. How do you "proclaim his death until he comes" in the Lord's Supper? (26)
21. What warnings do Paul give in verses 27-29? How can we heed these warnings? What does it mean to "discern the body" of Christ when we eat? (27-29)
22. What did Paul mean by saying that, because of these things, some among the Corinthians were sick, and even some had died? Was God judging people for how they were conducting themselves at the Lord's Supper? What does this teach you about the Supper? About God's holiness? (30)
23. Paul says we should "judge ourselves" and then we will not come under the Lord's judgment. What does this mean? How does judging ourselves keep us from being judged with the rest of the world? (31-32)
24. What final commands does Paul give about this? (33-34)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul gives instructions to the Corinthian church regarding the proper display of headship and submission, as well as the incredible importance of the Lord's supper.

VARIETY OF GIFTS, ONE SPIRIT
1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What are “spiritual gifts”? How do they function in a local church?
2. What does this chapter teach us about the different functions people play in the life of a healthy church?
3. By way of parallel context, read Ephesians 4:7-16. What do those verses teach about spiritual gifts? So also Romans 12:3-8. What do you learn there about spiritual gifts? Based on those passages and 1 Corinthians 12, how would you define “spiritual gifts”?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. According to Ephesians 4:13-16, what is the purpose of spiritual gifts?
2. Why do you think it is vital for each member of a local church to identify, develop, and use their spiritual gifts?
3. How does the use of spiritual gifts benefit both the individual Christian and the whole church?
4. According to verse 1, what is Paul’s reason for writing this chapter? (1)
5. How does verse 2 fit into Paul’s train of thought? Specifically, what is the connection between verses 2-3? (2-3)
6. What does verse 3 teach you about the power of the Holy Spirit? What does it teach about the inability of an unconverted person to come to Christ unaided by the Spirit? How does this cause you to be thankful to the Holy Spirit for your own conversion? (3)
7. What do verses 4-6 teach about the origin of each of the various spiritual gifts? How do you see each of the persons of the Trinity mentioned? What do these verses teach about the perfect unity of the Trinity in everything they do? (4-6)
8. What three different words does Paul use to describe spiritual gift ministries in verses 4-6? How do these words shed light on the different nature of gifts? (4-6)
9. How would meditating on the fact that the Triune God wisely apportions each spiritual gift cut off boasting, jealousy, false modesty, or shame at having lesser gifts? (4-6)
10. What is the significance of the statement “to each one”? Note that Ephesians 4:7 teaches the same doctrine, namely, that every single Christian has a spiritual gift. Why is that vital to know? (7)
11. What does Paul call spiritual gifts in verse 7? What is the significance of the fact that every spiritual gift is given “for the common good”? (7)

12. What is the main point Paul drills home in verses 7-11? (7-11)
13. What are the various spiritual gifts mentioned in these verses? (8-11)
14. What do you think is the “utterance of wisdom”? What is the “utterance of knowledge”? How do you think they might function in the Body of Christ? (8)
15. What do you think is the “gift” of faith? Obviously every Christian has to have faith in Christ. How would this spiritual gift differ from/relate to that? (9)
16. What is the gift of healing? How would this differ from people in a church gathering around a sick person’s bed, praying for that person, and the person being healed in one case? Do you think the gift of healing is still functioning in the church in this era? Why, or why not? (9)
17. What is “the working of miracles”? How would 2 Cor. 12:12 help us understand the role of miracles in the apostolic age? See also Hebrews 2:3-4. (10)
18. What is the gift of prophecy? How does it differ from teaching? If prophecy is the ability to say “thus says the Lord” and speak an immediate and new word from the Lord, and if prophecy also is vindicated by the ability to predict verifiable future events (Agabus’s prediction of a famine in the entire Roman world in Acts 11:28), do you see this functioning in the church today? (10)
19. What do you think is the ability to distinguish between spirits? See also 1 John 4:1. (10)
20. There has been a great deal of controversy in the modern church on tongues. What are “tongues”? What would be the interpretation of tongues? (10)
21. What final point does Paul make in verse 11? How does Paul celebrate the sovereignty of the Spirit in the giving of spiritual gifts? How do you relate it to Christ’s will in giving gifts as Paul says in Ephesians 4:7? (11)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul teaches the Corinthian church about spiritual gifts, specifically that there are a variety of gifts given to the church for building it up, but they all flow from the same Holy Spirit.

ONE BODY COMPOSED OF MANY PARTS

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-30

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What are two different wrong attitudes toward our individual importance in the life of the church that this chapter seeks to eliminate? See verses 15-16 on the one hand, and verse 21 on the other.
2. How should we understand the “sign gifts” (namely, the clearly supernatural gifts that some people associate with the “charismatic movement”—tongues, prophecy, miracles, healings)?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. Paul also uses the “one body, many diverse members” teaching in Romans 12:4-6. Read that passage, and comment on how this image helps us understand differing roles in the church?
2. What is Paul’s main idea in verses 12-13? Why is it vital to understand the complete unity we have in Christ? How would meditating on that unity help us to use our gifts properly? (12-13)
3. How do verses 12-13 relate to Ephesians 4:4-6? (12-13)
4. What does verse 13 teach us about baptism? How does this show that water baptism is an outward and visible sign of the baptism by the Spirit at conversion? (13)
5. What does it mean that we were all given the one Spirit “to drink”? See John 4:13-14, 7:37-39. (13)
6. Why do you think Paul is so desirous of teaching the diversity of gifts and roles in the Body of Christ in verse 14? How would understanding this diversity help us to serve better? (14)
7. What wrong attitude is Paul trying to correct in verses 15-20? Why is it harmful for someone to say “Because I do not preach or serve in some famous or visible way, I have little or nothing to contribute”? That seems humble; what’s wrong with it? (15-20)
8. What point does Paul make in verse 17 to counter this false humility? (17)
9. How do you see the amazing wisdom of God in arranging the parts of the physical human body? How do you also see this wisdom of diversity in the Body of Christ (the church) and its spiritual gifts? (18)
10. Though we would not say that the sense of smell is as important as eyesight, yet we understand how impoverished our world experience would be if we never caught the scent of a rose or the rich aromas of a Thanksgiving feast. How does that relate to the varying importance and significance of spiritual gift ministries? (19-20)

11. Verse 21 seems to be the exact opposite attitude of verses 15-16. How would you characterize the attitude of verse 21? How does it relate to Paul's command in Romans 12:3? (21)
12. Why is such arrogance among spiritually gifted members of the Body of Christ so repugnant to God? (21)
13. What answering point does Paul make in verses 22-26? How does the fact that the physical body's less presentable parts treated with special modesty an illustration of the way we honor weaker members of the Body of Christ? (22-26)
14. What is Paul's main concern in verses 25-26? Why is the idea of unity and humility and mutual honoring so vital to a proper understanding of spiritual gifts ministries? (25-26)
15. Verse 26 is pretty explosive and powerful when seen from an eternal perspective? How will all members of the Body of Christ be in some way honored when one individual "hero" from church history receives his or her eternal rewards? How would seeing that unity now free us from jealousy and help us to work together better? (26)
16. What point does Paul return to in verse 27? (27)
17. What do you make of the listing of gifted roles and the order of them in verse 28? How does he sequence some of them? Do you think there is a reason for this? Does he sequence all of them or only some? (28)
18. What point does he make in verses 29-30? How is that a renewal of earlier themes in this chapter? See verses 14-20. (29)
19. What final word does he give in verse 31? How do you understand this? Note: some translations have this as a command: "You should seek the greater gifts." Others say Paul is making an observation/criticism: "You are (pridefully) seeking the greater gifts... and you ought not to be." What is the difference between these two translations? How would they result in very different conclusions? Is it possible to seek greater gifts than we presently have without being prideful or unloving? If so, why would that be a beneficial thing? (31)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul teaches the Corinthian church about spiritual gifts, seeking to give them a balanced view of the value of all spiritual gifts in the Body of Christ, motivating them to delight in all the gifts and exercise them fully and humbly.

THE EXCELLENCE OF LOVE – PART 1

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-7

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does the “love chapter” fit into the flow of 1 Corinthians? How does it relate to the immediate context of spiritual gifts? How does it fit into the overall issues the church was having? Remember the divisions/factions in chapters 1-3.
2. What does this chapter teach us about the nature of Christian love?
3. How would you define love? How does it relate to both a heart state and a pattern of action? Jonathan Edwards says that true religion consists in the affections... the aspect of the heart that is attracted to or repulsed from whatever it studies and understands. Comment on that insight. Quote below:

“God has endued the soul with two faculties: one is that by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it discerns, and views, and judges of things; which is called the understanding. The other faculty is that by which the soul does not merely perceive and view things, but is some way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers; either is inclined to them, or is disinclined and averse from them; or is the faculty by which the soul does not behold things, as an indifferent unaffected spectator, but either as liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names; it is sometimes called the inclination: and, as it has respect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the will: and the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the heart. The exercise of this faculty are of two sorts; either those by which the soul is carried out towards the things that are in view, in approving of them, being pleased with them, and inclined to them; or those in which the soul opposes the things that are in view, in disapproving of them, and in being displeased with them, averse from them, and rejecting them.” [Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise on Religious Affections*]

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE INDISPENSABILITY OF CHRISTIAN LOVE (VV. 1-3)

1. What is Paul’s basic point in these first three verses of this great chapter? (1-3)
2. How does love relate in these verses to the spiritual gifts? What spiritual gift(s) does Paul focus on in verse 1? Verse 2? Verse 3? (1-3)
3. What does Paul say about love and speaking in tongues? Why would speaking in tongues with no love in your heart be like a noisy gong or cymbal? (1)
4. What grand statement does Paul make in verse 2? What point is he making with such exaggerated language? Why is it true that an overwhelmingly powerful gift of prophecy and teaching with no Christian love at all would mean that person is “nothing”? (2)
5. What grand, overwhelming statement does Paul make in verse 3? (3)
6. The Apostle John says in effect, “Love without deeds is worthless.” See 1 John 3:16-18. How does 1 Corinthians 13:3 teach the opposite truth, that deeds

without heart affection is worthless? What do these two verses teach you about love? How does it support a definition of love as “heart attraction that results in sacrificial action”? (3)

7. How does verse 3 give us an insight into what kinds of actions God will reward? How does it relate to 2 Corinthians 9:7? (3)

THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN LOVE (VV. 4-7)

8. What does this section teach you about the nature of love? How does it motivate you? (4-7)
9. What is the first attribute Paul ascribes to love? Why is patience (“long-suffering” in KJV) a vital part of every love relationship? How does God display patience toward us? (4)
10. What is the second attribute Paul ascribes to love? How would you define kindness? How would it relate to facial expressions, demeanor, tone of voice, and other forms of communication? (4)
11. The next seven assertions Paul makes are all negative... things that love does not do or is no part of love. Why are such negations helpful for us when learning about love? (4-6)
12. What is envy? What is boasting? Why does genuine love for another person rule out both? (4)
13. Some theologians (like Augustine) believe that pride is the root of all human sin. What is pride? How is it linked to many of the sins we struggle with day to day... such as anger, arguing, complaining, lust, greed, etc.? How does true Christian love destroy all pride? (4)
14. How would you define rudeness? What does rude behavior show about someone’s heart? How does Christian love drive rudeness out? (5)
15. How is sinful anger related to pride? What does the fact that someone is easily angered show about their heart? How can one with a habit of responding in anger put that sin to death? How does love conquer sinful anger? (5)
16. What motivates someone to “keep a record of wrongs” (NIV translation)? How does this affect relationships? How does this relate to forgiveness? Why would Christian love make it possible to cease remembering someone’s past sins? (5)
17. Paul says that love does not delight in evil but in the truth. What does it mean to delight in evil? What truth do you think Paul has in mind here? (6)
18. Verse 7 speaks four positive things about what love does in relationships. What verbs does he use? How do these words tend to address the challenges of loving sinners? Why would such a disposition (always believing the best about someone’s future, despite the current situation) be essential to a love relationship between sinners? (7)

THE EXCELLENCE OF LOVE – PART 2

1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-13

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus reduced the whole law of God to two great commandments: love God and love neighbor. Do you think 1 Corinthians 13 has more to do with the first of these or the second?
2. How does this chapter motivate you personally to excel in love?
3. How does the eternal nature of Christian love (the fact that it outlasts faith and hope) show its superiority to all Christian virtues?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE ETERNITY OF CHRISTIAN LOVE (VV. 8-16)

1. What does “love never fails” mean to you? Song of Solomon 8:6 says “Love is as strong as death.” What does the strength, the unbreakability of love teach you? (8)
2. The rest of verse 8 reveals what about the future of spiritual gifts? Why is it vital to understand the temporary nature of all spiritual gift ministries? Why are they all temporary? In other words, why will they be unnecessary in heaven? (8)
3. What does verse 9 teach you about the present limitations of spiritual gift ministries? For example, why do we only know “in part” and prophecy “in part” now? (9)
4. What perfection does Paul have in mind in verse 10? How does verse 12 help answer that question? (10, 12)
5. What analogy does Paul make in verse 11 to speak of the massive upgrade we will all receive when we graduate to heaven? How is our present preaching, speaking, prophesying, like a child’s mind, a child’s babbling, a child’s perspective? (11)
6. How does verse 12 make the same point as verse 11? What is the “dim” or “poor” reflection we are seeing now? What does that teach you about all present teaching/preaching/exhorting from the scripture compared to heavenly experience of God and of Christ? (11-12)
7. What will it be like to see “face to face”? According to Paul, what level of knowledge will we experience in seeing God and Christ face to face? How should that temper all expectations of present spiritual gift ministries? How should it humble us? (12)
8. Do you think when we see Jesus face to face, we will instantly know him fully as he knows us fully? Or do you think we will eternally be learning and growing in our knowledge of him in heaven? (12)

9. How does Paul end this chapter? What does he mean by singling out faith, hope, and love? How are faith and hope temporary? How is love eternal? (13)
10. Jonathan Edwards finished his extended treatment of 1 Corinthians 13, *Charity and its Fruits* with a marvelous chapter entitled “Heaven is a World of Love.” Read this quote and comment on it:

“In heaven there shall be no remaining enmity, or distaste, or coldness, or deadness of heart towards God and Christ. Not the least remainder of any principle of envy shall exist to be exercised toward angels or other beings who are superior in glory; nor shall there be aught like contempt or slighting of those who are inferiors. Those that have a lower station in glory than others, suffer no diminution of their own happiness by seeing others above them in glory. On the contrary, all the members of that blessed society rejoice in each other’s happiness, for the love of benevolence is perfect in them all. Everyone has not only a sincere, but a perfect goodwill to every other. ...

There is undoubtedly an inconceivably pure, sweet, and fervent love between the saints in glory; and that love is in proportion to the perfection and amiableness of the objects beloved, and therefore it must necessarily cause delight in them when they see that the happiness and glory of others are in proportion to their amiableness, and so in proportion to their love to them. Those that are highest in glory, are those that are highest in holiness, and therefore are those that are most beloved by all the saints; for they most love those that are most holy, and so they will all rejoice in their being the most happy. And it will not be a grief to any of the saints to see those that are higher than themselves in holiness and likeness to God, more loved also than themselves, for all shall have as much love as they desire, and as great manifestations of love as they can bear; and so all shall be fully satisfied; and where there is perfect satisfaction, there can be no reason for envy. And there will be no temptation for any to envy those that are above them in glory, on account of the latter being lifted up with pride; for there will be no pride in heaven. We are not to conceive that those who are more holy and happy than others in heaven, will be elated and lifted up in their spirit above others; for those who are above others in holiness, will be superior to them in humility. The saints that are highest in glory will be the lowest in humbleness of mind, for their superior humility is part of their superior holiness. Though all are perfectly free from pride, yet, as some will have greater degrees of divine knowledge than others, and larger capacities to see more of the divine perfections, so they will see more of their own comparative littleness and nothingness, and therefore will be lowest and most abased in humility.” [Jonathan Edwards, “Heaven a World of Love”]

III. SUMMARY:

In one of the greatest chapters in the Bible, Paul instructs us on the supremacy of love as the greatest virtue in every aspect of the Christian life.

PROPHECY, TONGUES, AND ORDER IN WORSHIP

1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-40

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How can Christians who do not experience the gifts of tongues and prophecy as described in this chapter learn from and apply these instructions?
2. What main argument does Paul make for the superiority of prophecy over tongues? What does this teach you about the importance of the ministry of the Word in the life of the church?
3. Why is Paul so concerned with gifts that build up the church (12)?
4. Paul concludes the chapter with instructions about managing these gifts in the public life of the church in such a way that everything is done “decently and in order.” What does this teach you about God? The church? Corporate worship? Submission to God-ordained authority in the church?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PROPERLY UNDERSTANDING GIFTS OF TONGUES AND PROPHECY (VV. 1-25)

1. How does this chapter (detailed instructions about the proper use/management of the gifts of tongues and prophecy, especially in corporate worship) fit into the context in 1 Corinthians, especially the flow from chapter 13 to 14?
2. How does verse 1 connect with 1 Corinthians 13? How does verse 1 also connect with 1 Corinthians 12:31? What role should our desires play in our spiritual gifts? Should we desire to attain gifts we do not have? (1)
3. How would you define the gift of prophecy? What purpose does Paul find in the gift of prophecy? (1, 3)
4. What shortcoming does Paul find in the gift of tongues, especially if they are not translated/interpreted for the hearers? (2)
5. Why does Paul want all the Corinthians to speak in tongues? Why does he wish even more that they would prophecy? How is prophecy superior to tongues according to verses 4 and 5? (4-5)
6. What is the problem with speaking in a foreign language in a public setting if that language is not translated for the hearers? (6-12)
7. What analogy does Paul employ in verses 7-8? What is the point he’s trying to make here in verses 6-8? Why is intelligible speech so important? (7-8)
8. What practice is Paul trying to get rid of in verses 7-9? What bad motive do you think would drive someone to speak in a tongue in public worship without having it translated? (7-9)
9. How does verse 10 help us understand what “tongues” means to Paul? (10)
10. What single concern is driving Paul in these commands? (12)

11. What remedy does Paul give to those who are speaking in tongues now with no interpretation? (13)
12. What is the problem with an unfruitful mind in prayer? Why does Paul argue it's far better to pray/speak with full understanding of what you're saying? (14-15)
13. What does Paul say about others who hear one speak in a tongue without understanding what he's saying? (16-17)
14. Paul continues this same argument through verse 19. How does Paul use his experience with both tongues and prophecy to drive home his point? (18-19)
15. What new point does Paul make about tongues in verses 20-25? How does the Old Testament quotation support that point? (20-25)
16. Why would uninterpreted tongues in public worship seem like insanity to an outsider? (23)
17. How does prophecy tend to strip people bare and expose their sin? How is it like the Word of God in Hebrews 4:12-13? (24-25)

ORDERLY CORPORATE WORSHIP (vv. 26-40)

18. No matter what the spiritual gift is, what should the motive and function be in the life of the church, according to verse 26? (26)
19. What rule does Paul lay down to address the use of tongues in a corporate setting? How does this solve the problem he's been arguing against since the beginning of the chapter? (27-28)
20. What similar rule does Paul give for the use of the gift of prophecy in public worship? (29)
21. What is the "weighing" of prophecy that Paul has in mind? Why is that vital for the protection of the church? See 1 John 4:1; 1 Thess. 5:20-21; see also Romans 12:6. (29)
22. How do verses 30-32 help to keep order in the public worship service? (30-32)
23. What do verses 33 and 40 teach you about God? How should public worship reflect that? (33, 40)
24. What restriction does Paul place on women in verses 34-35? Is this an absolute restriction or more narrowly defined? How would you harmonize this with 1 Corinthians 11:5? (34-35)
25. How does Paul seek to humble the proud congregation or individual in verses 36-38?

III. SUMMARY:

Paul gives clear instructions to the Corinthian Church for the use of the gifts of tongues and prophecy in public worship. Everything should be done in an orderly way, in love, and for the building up of the church.

RAISED FROM THE DEAD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCRIPTURES

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-34

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead the most important message the world has ever heard? How does it separate Christianity from every other world religion?
2. Why is it vital for us as Christians to think about the resurrection every day? How does it affect the way we live our lives?
3. How does 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 show the vital importance of history to Christianity? If Christ has not actually been raised from the dead, how does Christianity become worthless?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

OF FIRST IMPORTANCE: CHRIST DIED AND ROSE AGAIN (VV. 1-11)

1. 1 Corinthians is written as a series of pastoral topics that Paul feels need to be addressed for the health of the Corinthian church. What topic does this entire chapter address? How does verse 12 show the urgent pastoral need for Paul to address it in this specific church?
2. How do verses 1-8 begin the answer to those who questioned the resurrection from the dead? (1-8)
3. What does Paul say about the gospel and the Corinthians in verses 1-2? Why do Christians need to be reminded of the gospel regularly, even if they have been Christians for decades? (1-2)
4. What does Paul mean by “as of first importance”? What does that tell you about the content of verses 3-4? How are those concepts the most important facts in human history? (3-4)
5. What do the words “Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures” mean? What do they mean to you personally? (3)
6. Paul uses the phrase “according to the Scriptures” twice in verses 3-4. What is the significance of that phrase? How does that teach us the role of Scripture in our salvation? (3-4)
7. Why does Paul specifically mention the burial of Jesus, a step that many of us omit when recounting the basic facts of the gospel? Why is it so vital for Paul’s specific purpose in this chapter? What happened after the burial? (4)
8. What role do the eyewitnesses play in Paul’s argument here? Who specifically does he mention as eyewitnesses? (5-8)
9. Why is eyewitness testimony to the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ essential to our apologetic to an unbelieving world? What role do the apostles play in redemptive history for the rest of time? See 1 John 1:1-2. (5)

10. What is the significance of the statement that over five hundred brothers (believers) saw Jesus after his resurrection? Why is it important that, at that time, most were still alive? How should that be conclusive proof to skeptics? (6)
11. Since none of the eyewitnesses to Christ's resurrection are alive now, how does Scripture take their place in our experience? See John 20:9. (6)
12. How does Paul address his own case? What is the significance of the fact that Jesus actually did appear to Paul after his resurrection? How is that a vital part of his case here that there is such a thing as resurrection from the dead? (8)
13. What do you think Paul means by calling himself "untimely born"? What is the significance of him calling himself the "least" of the apostles? What reason does he give for calling himself that? (9)
14. What is the importance of Paul still calling himself one of the apostles? (9)
15. What is the power of Paul's statement, "But by the grace of God I am what I am"? What important statement does Paul make about the effect of God's grace in his life? How does verse 10 compare with Philipians 2:12-13? (10)
16. What does verse 11 mean? Why is their belief so important to Paul? (11)

WHAT IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RISEN? ALL IS LOST! (vv. 12-19)

17. What approach does Paul take to discussing the reality of the resurrection in verses 12-19? How does verse 12 reveal the problem that Paul says he is addressing in this chapter? (12-19)
18. What is the biggest problem with saying that there is no such thing as resurrection from the dead, according to verse 13? (13)
19. Why is it true that if Christ has not been raised, that Christian faith is worthless? What does that teach you about the importance of history to Christianity? (14)
20. How does verse 17 show the link between Christ's resurrection and the forgiveness of our sins? See Romans 4:25. (17)
21. What further grief comes in verse 18 from the teaching that there is no resurrection from the dead? This is very reason why the Thessalonians were grieving for the dead as if they had no hope. See 1 Thess. 4:13. (18)
22. Is Paul referring to himself alone in verse 19 or all Christians? How would it be especially true of Paul and others who have suffered extreme persecution for the cause of Christ, more than Christians who lead affluent lives in America and who suffer very little for Christ? (19)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul counters the false idea that a resurrection from the dead is impossible, showing that Christ's resurrection from the dead is both essential to Christian life and faith, and that it is factually true and historically verifiable. He also draws out the dreadful implications if there is no resurrection from the dead.

CHRIST IS RISEN! THE FIRSTFRUITS FROM THE DEAD
1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-34

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead the most important message the world has ever heard? How does it separate Christianity from every other world religion?
2. Why is it vital for us as Christians to think about the resurrection every day? How does it affect the way we live our lives?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

BUT CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED, THE FIRSTFRUITS! (VV. 20-28)

1. How does verse 20 ring like a triumphant bell over the sad refrain of verses 12-19? (20)
2. What is the significance of the term “firstfruits” in verses 20 and 23? (20, 23)
3. If there is a resurrection, how does the phrase “those who have fallen asleep” make perfect sense for those who die in Christ? (20)
4. What theological link does Paul make between Adam and Christ in these verses? (21-22)
5. What does verse 23 teach you about our future in Christ? What does it teach you about the timing of the resurrection? For those who believe in a literal millennium and the partial resurrection of those who are beheaded during the Tribulation, how could they harmonize the timing here given for the resurrection with that millennial timetable? (23)
6. What does Paul mean by “then the end will come” in verse 24? What does he say will happen after the Second Coming of Christ and the general resurrection? What does the phrase “delivers the kingdom to God the Father” mean? (24)
7. What does it mean that Christ will destroy all rule, authority, and power? (24)
8. How does verse 25 relate to Psalm 110:1 and Hebrews 1:13? (25)
9. Why do you think Paul calls death “the last enemy”? Why does God wait so long to destroy this enemy? (26)
10. What clarification does Paul make about what is put under Christ’s feet in verse 27? (27)
11. What is the final state of the redemptive plan according to Paul in verse 28? How does that relate to Ephesians 1:10? (28)

DENYING THE RESURRECTION LEADS TO A CORRUPT LIFE (vv. 29-34)

12. Verse 29 is a very difficult verse. How do you understand it? Why is it unwise to make too much of this verse, or build a theology around it? (29)
13. What further point of application does Paul make about the effect of the resurrection in verses 30-32? How is there no motivation for extreme Christian suffering if all debts are paid in this life?
14. How does the idea that all rewards come in this life directly opposed to what Christ teaches about rewards in Matthew 6? Jesus especially his repeated warnings, “I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full” contrasted with his repeated promise, “You Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you” and the final admonition, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...but store up for yourselves treasure in heaven...” See especially Matthew 6:19-20. (30-32)
15. What does Paul mean by fighting wild beasts in Ephesus? How does a belief in the resurrection enable someone to face death courageously? (32)
16. How does the ethic, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” sum up the pagan approach to life? Why does it make perfect sense to live like that if there is no resurrection from the dead? (32)
17. What does “Bad company ruins good morals” mean? How does that proverb fit into Paul’s warning about those who teach that there is no resurrection from the dead? How does denying the resurrection lead to a corrupt, immoral lifestyle? (33)
18. What final warning does Paul give in verse 34? (34)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul continues his teaching on the resurrection, explaining that Jesus Christ is the “firstfruits” of the resurrection. Paul says that in the same way that the entire human race is destined to die because of its lineage in Adam, so all who are in Christ are destined for the resurrection from the dead and eternal life. In the meantime, God is subjecting all things under his Son. Furthermore, the hope of the resurrection brings meaning and joy to the sufferings of this life. Without a resurrection, this life is the only thing to live for.

THE NATURE, GLORY, ENCOURAGEMENT OF OUR FUTURE RESURRECTION

1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-58

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach us about the nature of our resurrection body? How is knowing those details helpful to us now?
2. What is most encouraging to you about our future resurrection? How does it help you face the challenges of life in this present world?
3. How is the fact that we will be physically raised from the dead a strong motivation to hard work for the Kingdom of God now? See verse 58.

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION BODY (VV. 35-44)

1. What question does Paul raise that he will seek to answer in this section? (35)
2. Why do you think Paul says this question is “foolish”? Especially since he goes ahead and answers it! (36)
3. What point do verses 36-37 seek to make? How does it establish a strong break with the present body? (36-37)
4. How does the sowing/planting image help us understand the difference between our present bodies and our resurrection bodies? (36-37, 42-44)
5. What is Paul’s point in verses 38-41? How will resurrection bodies differ from one another? (38-41)
6. How does Paul use the fact that men, animals, birds, and fish have different kinds of flesh? What does that have to do with the resurrection body? (39)
7. What does Paul mean by “heavenly bodies” vs. “earthly bodies”? (40)
8. What is the significance of the statement “star differs from star in glory”? How could that tell us that the saints in heaven will not all be equally glorious? (41)
9. The four couplets in 42-44 teach us about the nature of the resurrection body. What four adjectives does he use to describe our present mortal bodies? What four adjectives does he use to describe our future resurrection bodies? (42-44)
10. What does it mean that our present body is perishable? What does it mean that our future body will be imperishable? (42)
11. How is the present body “sown in dishonor”? Does this refer to burial? If so, why is there dishonor in burying the body? (43)
12. What does it mean that it will be raised in glory? How does that relate to Jesus’ statement in Matthew 13:43?
13. How is the mortal body “sown in weakness”? What does “It is raised in power” mean? How does this give you encouragement for your future? How would Isaiah 40:30-31 be in some sense a description of our resurrection bodies? (43)

14. Paul says the body is “sown a natural body,” but we will be raised “a spiritual body.” What do you think this means? Why does he repeat himself? (44)

RECEIVED FROM ADAM VS TO BE RECEIVE FROM CHRIST (VV. 45-49)

15. What link does Paul make between Adam and Jesus here? How does it relate to the link he makes between Adam and Jesus in Romans 5:12-21? (45-49)
16. Why does Paul make so much about the order—natural, then spiritual; dust, then breath? (45-47)
17. What does Paul say we received from Adam? How are we like him? In resurrection, how will we be like Jesus? How will we “bear” his image? (45-49)

THE GLORIOUS TRIUMPH OF OUR BODILY RESURRECTION (VV. 50-57)

18. What powerful assertion does Paul make in verse 50? Given the constantly decaying nature of our present bodies, why does verse 50 make sense? (50)
19. What mystery does Paul tell us in verse 51? Who is he referring to when he says “We will not all sleep”? How does this relate to Hebrews 9:27? (51)
20. What is the change Paul has in mind that will prepare us for heaven? What does he teach us it will be like in verse 52? When does he say it will happen? (52)
21. How does verse 53 make sense when it comes to spending eternity in the New Heaven and New Earth? (53)
22. What is the power of the idea that death will be “swallowed up in victory”? What does it teach you about the feeling we will all have when we receive our resurrection bodies? What does it teach about the utterly crushing triumph Christ will give us over death? (54)
23. Verse 55 is like a taunt given over a vanquished foe. It is a quotation from Hosea 13:14. After reading it, why do you think Paul chose it? (55)
24. What does verse 56 teach about the link between the law, sin, and death? (56)

THE CHAPTER APPLIED: WORK HARD FOR JESUS! (VV. 58)

25. How does Paul apply this whole meditation? What link do you see between a strong sense of our future glory in resurrection and the ability to be steadfast and immovable in overcoming Satanic opposition to the gospel ministry? (58)
26. How does this answer the consistent lament of the Book of Ecclesiastes that life is “vanity of vanities... all is vanity!”? See Ecclesiastes. 1:3. How does resurrection of all the elect in glorious bodies make everything worthwhile? (58)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul teaches on the glory of the resurrection body, and it’s stark contrast with our current mortal bodies. Moreover, at the last trumpet, Christ will give death the final blow as he triumphs over it and brings all of his redeemed to resurrection glory.

THE COLLECTION FOR GOD'S PEOPLE; AND FINAL WORDS

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-24

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What practical insights does this section give on Christian giving?
2. What do the final instructions and greetings in this chapter teach you about Paul's approach to ministry?
3. What surprises you about first century church life? Is there anything in these verses that you would like to see happen in your local church?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE COLLECTION FOR GOD'S PEOPLE (VV. 1-4)

1. What is this collection that Paul is writing about here? To whom is the money going to go? See verse 3; also Rom. 15:25-27,31; 2 Cor. 8-9. (1)
2. 2 Corinthians 8-9 goes into much more detail about Christian giving. What insights do those chapters give in connection with this brief set of instructions?
3. What practical steps does Paul give them? How much does he tell them to set aside? When does he want them to do it? What is the significance of the words, "On the first day of every week"? (2)
4. How could it be beneficial for Christians to give every single week, even if someone gets paid monthly or quarterly? (2)
5. Some Christians are richer than others. How does Paul take that into account here? One fundraising expert once said, "There should be equal levels of sacrifice, not equal levels of giving." Comment on that. (2)
6. Why does Paul want them to do it all along, so that no collections will have to be made when he comes? Why would that result in various significant problems if he had to take up the offering when he comes? (2)
7. What is the purpose of the letters of introduction he mentions in verse 3? What role does Paul offer for himself in verse 4? How does this show you the challenges of transferring money in the first century? (3-4)

PAUL'S PERSONAL REQUESTS (VV. 5-18)

8. What personal plans does Paul go over in verses 5-7? Why does he not want to make only a passing visit to the Corinthian church at that time? What help does he hope to get from the Corinthians whenever he does come there? (5-7)
9. What does Paul say about his ministry in Ephesus? How does he describe the "open door" that he sees before him? What words does he use? (8-9)
10. How do these verses (8-9) relate to what Christ said to the church at Philadelphia in the Book of Revelation? See Revelation 3:8. (8-9)

11. How could Paul think that there is great door of effective ministry in Ephesus with the presence of “many adversaries”? How do these go together? (9)
12. What does verse 10 teach you about Timothy’s personality, especially when coupled with 2 Timothy 1:7-8? (10)
13. Why is it important for pastors like Timothy to have nothing to fear from their congregations? (10)
14. What concern does Paul have about how some might treat Timothy? (11)
15. What does verse 12 teach you about Paul’s relationship with Apollos? What does it teach you about the limits of apostolic (and pastoral) authority? (12)
16. How does verse 13 give you the sense of the challenges, and dangers, of the Christian life? One of the commands he gives here is, “Act like men.” How would our culture have a hard time accepting that translation or even knowing what it might mean? How do you think the Corinthians understood this? (13)
17. How does verse 14 hearken back to 1 Corinthians 13? (14)
18. What does Paul say about the household of Stephanas? Look back to 1:16. Why does he want them to honor and submit to people like Stephanas? (15-18)
19. What does Paul mean by verse 17? See also Philippians 4:10. (17)
20. Why is it important for churches to recognize and honor Christians who have labored hard in faithful service to the Lord? (15-18)

PAUL’S FINAL GREETINGS (VV. 19-24)

21. Whose greetings does Paul send on to the Corinthian church? Why is it important for local churches to have cordial relationships with other local churches? (19)
22. Who are Aquila and Priscilla? See Acts 18:2, 18, 19, 26; Romans 16:3; 2 Timothy 4:19. What do you learn about them in this verse? (19)
23. What do you think it means to greet one another with a holy kiss? (20)
24. What does verse 21 teach you about Paul’s usual way of writing a letter? See also Romans 16:22; also 2 Thess. 3:17; Galatians 6:11. (21)
25. How does verse 22 give you an insight on what we will think about people we loved on earth who in the end are damned to hell? (22)
26. What does “Our Lord, come!” mean to you? See also Revelation 22:20? (22)
27. How does Paul’s final greeting show the love that Paul has for this local Corinthian church? (24)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul concludes his letter to the Corinthian church with instructions about an offering for the saints, and many other instructions and greetings.

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Other Books By Dr. Andrew M. Davis

- An Infinite Journey: Growing Toward Christlikeness, 2014.
- Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church Come Alive Again, 2017.
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