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I Corinthians – A Study Guide by Steve Ingino

Introductory Matters

1 Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul, (1 Cor. 1:1), from Ephesus during his third missionary journey. Some scholars date the writing of this letter as early as 56 A.D. Paul had spent about a year and a half in Corinth according to Acts 18, during his second missionary journey. He then went to Ephesus and ministered there for three years. Paul had written an earlier letter to the Corinthians addressing problems with immorality (5:9). This letter has been lost. Paul also received a letter from them in which they asked his opinion on various matters.

Corinth was one of the leading Roman cities in Paul's day. It was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. It was just south of the narrow isthmus that joined the Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece. Paul strategically chose to minister in Corinth, because it was a gateway to Greece for trade (*ISBE*, p. 772). It had two great harbors and was an urban center for religion and commerce. In addition, the Isthmian Games were held in Corinth, which made it an athletic and entertainment center. The Acro-Corinth was the temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. This seaport city attracted many sailors looking for women (*ISBE*, 775). The Acro-Corinth temple is what attracted visitors and made Corinth a wealthy city. There were many prostitutes in this temple which contributed to the city's reputation of immorality. To be a "Corinthian girl" was a figure of speech used to describe a prostitute. To "Corinthianize" was to commit fornication and other sexual sins (*ISBE* 773; *BKC*, p. 505). The city was comprised of mostly Greeks, but there is evidence of a Jewish presence (a white piece of marble with the inscription, "Synagogue of the Hebrews" has been found by archaeologists in Corinth) (*ISBE*, p. 774).

Purpose of 1 Corinthians

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in response to the reports he heard about the Church at Corinth from his fellow workers (16:17), in response to the letter the Corinthians wrote, and to tell the Church of his plans to visit (16:5-9). Paul was concerned with divisions in the Church (chapter 1), "wisdom" (chapter 3), lax moral standards (chapter 5-6), marriage (chapter 7), public worship (chapter 11-14), the doctrine of the Resurrection (chapter 15), and Christian liberty and love (chapter 8-11). Paul was also concerned about the collection for the Church in Jerusalem (chapter 16). The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* states four main purposes for the letter. 1. To make positional sanctification practical. The Corinthian Church seemed more influenced by the world than the Spirit. Paul wants to correct this. 2. To bring about unity in perspective and practice, and to end contentions in the Church. 3. To answer questions raised by the Church regarding marital issues, liberty and responsibility, spiritual gifts, Church order, and money for the Church in Jerusalem. 4. To reaffirm and defend the doctrine of the Resurrection. Some believe that this crucial teaching affects all the other issues he previously wrote about in the letter, and thus, chapter 15 is the climax of the letter. I see a fifth reason being the fact that Paul needed to correct their false view of their identity in Christ. One final theme, which is linked with the latter, is that Paul wants to correct the Corinthian's perspective on spirituality. They focused too much on gifts of the Spirit and themselves, rather than on loving other people, and ethical behavior. Yet, the Church at Corinth, with all its problems, still stood as a testimony of the power of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ (*BKC*, p. 506).

Argument Development

V. Introduction (1:1-9)

This is one of Paul's standard greetings, but a few distinctions are apparent. First, in contrast to the typical Greco-Roman letters, Paul puts a Christian "spin" on his salutation. All letters in this time period had the name of the writer, the addressee, and greetings. In addition, there would be a thanksgiving and/or a prayer to the gods for the well-being of the addressee. Paul follows this form, but focuses on certain aspect of the Christian life, and ones that are in particular need for the Corinthians. His emphasis of the Corinthian's sanctified position will be developed later in the letter. He also tells them that they are "called to be holy" in verse two. In addition, they are not alone in their new life as the Church of God, for people "everywhere" (v. 2) are calling on the name of Jesus Christ. But, this Jesus has a title, a position: He is Lord (v. 2). This issue will arise again in 1 Cor. 12 (v. 3 specifically). Paul also affirms his calling as an Apostle by the will of God (v. 1) to assure his readers of his authority, and that the following instructions are worthy to be followed, since he is one authorized by God. There is a Christological emphasis in Paul's greeting, and his prayer to follow in verses 4-9, for Christ is the focus of Paul's ministry (1 Cor. 2:2, 15:24) and the centerpiece of history. In Paul's prayer he states, "that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge" (v. 5). For a letter that we know has some strong rebukes, it seems strange that Paul would compliment the Corinthians. Paul is simply stating that they do have certain gifts, but they are using them improperly (Fee, *NICNT*, p. 38). These (v. 6-7) seem to be gifts of the Spirit (utterance and knowledge, see chapter 12-14). Paul says these are legitimate gifts, but they are misusing them (Fee, p. 39-40). He will explain this later, but for now, he commends them on their progress in the faith. He then shifts their focus to God and His faithfulness. The Corinthians needed to remember that the goal of their salvation was that they would stand before the Lord blameless, and that this will be accomplished by God's faithfulness. This is positional blamelessness, but Paul touches on this here, because their destination should determine demeanor during the journey. Let us always remember, that regardless of the Corinthians immorality, Paul addresses them as saints (2) because one is set apart and holy in God's sight through the finished work of "Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 9), not through our own efforts or merit. It is this graceful God that motivates Paul to speak to these immature Christians with such love, gentleness, compassion, care, and grace (and even thanksgiving (v.4). Could I do that as a Pastor for a flock like this?). "Eventually, Paul must speak to the abuses; for now he is grateful. His concern here is to redirect their focus - from themselves to God and Christ and from an over-realized eschatology to a healthy awareness of the glory that is still future" (Fee, p. 46). Obviously Paul speaks about the Corinthians being called into fellowship with God's Son, Jesus Christ (v. 9), because of the divisions that he will now address.

VI. In Response to Reports (1:10-6:20)

A. Divisions in the Church (1:10-4:21)

There are four main issues that Paul addresses in 1:10-4:21. (1) There is quarrelling and divisiveness among the Church. (2) This quarrelling is being done in the name of "wisdom." (3) The Corinthians were boasting in this wisdom. (4) Paul is defending his past and present ministry. It seems some of the quarrelling is not only trying to place Paul and Apollos at odds with each other, but also some are trying to remove Paul's influence altogether (Fee, p. 47-49). How do all of these four issues give us a picture of what caused the divisions in the Church? It is possible that the Corinthians, who were used to itinerant preachers of wisdom, were comparing Paul's ministry to the above, or misunderstood Paul's ministry as an offshoot of

these preachers of wisdom. From this perspective, neither Paul in his weakness, nor the message of a crucified Messiah, was impressive to the “wise.” Paul saw these misunderstandings as fruit, and not the root of the problem. The root of the problem was bad theology, particularly, a misunderstanding of the Gospel. Anything that posed a threat to the Gospel, Paul always dealt with immediately (cf. Galatians, the only book where there is no full greeting or opening prayer, and Paul jumps in on a defense of the Gospel of Grace).

Paul wanted to clarify three things. (1) The Corinthians radical misunderstanding about the nature of the Gospel. (2) Their misguided perception of the nature of the Church and their teachers/leaders. (3) The reestablishing of his authority, yet in a way that did not undermine his teaching about the two issues above. Paul first addresses their misunderstood allegiances and divisions (1:10-17). He then explains the nature of the Gospel in 1:18-25. Paul then speaks of the Corinthians’ experience as the people of God (1:26-31) in light of their past. He then speaks about his preaching of the Gospel which brought this new way of life for the Corinthians (2:1-5). He wants them to see that his preaching and his message all stand in contradiction to their new stance that is based on mere human wisdom. In 2:6-3:4 Paul teaches that for those who have the Spirit, they would know that his preaching was divine wisdom, not because of his own intellect, but because it was a revelation of/from God through the Holy Spirit. However, he goes on to say that the Corinthians have been acting like those who do not have the Spirit. In 3:1-17, Paul addresses their misunderstanding of the Church and its leaders. Paul closes the chapter by stating that they are foolishly boasting in humans, and should focus on Christ (3:18-23). In 4:1-5, Paul speaks about their problem of rejecting him and his apostleship, and tells them that they are not to judge someone else’s servant. He then cuts at their pride by juxtaposing their pride against his humble apostolic ministry and the theology of the Cross. He concludes by stating that his authority is a loving one, as a father disciplines his children (4:14-21). (Fee, p. 47-50)

1. Division over leaders (1:10-17)

In this paragraph Paul is simply stating that there should not be divisions within the Church. There is no reason to “follow Paul” or “Apollos” in regard to a religious allegiance, because the message of the Cross, the Gospel, is about Jesus Christ alone, and accomplished by Him alone. The Corinthians were divided over leaders in the name of wisdom. Here, Paul wants to correct their mistake, and to point them to the Cross of Christ and its message, which has power not because of human wisdom, but because of its divine origin. Paul is concerned about unity being preserved in the Church, and having a correct theology of the Christian message. It is not one of elitism, or Greek wisdom, it is actually a message of humility and love, which excludes such boasting or parties. In this section Paul also tells the readers one of the reasons that he is writing: Chloe’s household informed Paul of the problems in the Church. The Corinthians viewed wisdom as being characterized by rhetoric, or reason, or logic (Fee, 64). Paul says he came “not with words of human wisdom” but with the message of the Cross.

2. The Gospel – contradicts wisdom (1:18-2:5)

Paul continues to contrast the wisdom of speech (v. 17) with the Cross. Paul wants the Corinthians to remember where they came from. This reminder would help them to stop boasting. The Cross is folly to human wisdom, but it is God’s folly. And since it is God’s folly, this has wisdom and power, not human wisdom. Paul wants the Corinthians to know that the Gospel is not another form of *sophia*, but it is God’s message, that is in utter contradiction with

the world's ways. The message is based on a crucified God that impacted not the wise and noble, but the foolish and poor. And, Paul's preaching was not a spectacular event. It was not rhetoric, but rather, simply proclaiming the truth of the Good News.

d. God's folly - a crucified Messiah (1:18-25)

God was pleased to save people through the seemingly foolish message of the Gospel. This message, "Christ crucified" not only is a stumbling block to the Jews, but it is foolishness to the Greeks, which sought wisdom. Who would believe in a crucified criminal? In reality, the Gospel is the power of God. It cannot be understood by the wise of this world, or the debater, or the scribe. God intended His message of salvation to nullify the prideful wisdom of creatures that turned from their Creator. God does not have to do what we think is reasonable. This is a form of idolatry: the demand for signs and the insistence of wisdom from our point of view (Fee, 75). But God "outsmarted" the world. His plan of salvation did not acquiesce to the desires of man. His plan was infinitely better than we could have ever imagined. But, it only makes sense to those "who are being saved." Sinful man would never have thought of a God that would take upon Himself the sin and guilt of mankind. This weakness is the ultimate power, for true power is shown in sacrificial love. Paul writes about the wisdom of God, the message of the Cross, the crucified Messiah to shame the Corinthians for their pride and divisions.

e. God's folly - the Corinthians (1:26-31)

Paul wants the Corinthians to know that the message was not only contradictory to man's wisdom, but the recipients of that message were intentionally weak, to shame the strong. God did not select the celebrities, the emperors, or the philosophers of the day. Most of the believers were from the dregs of society. Why? Because God's power is seen in transforming the weak, and therefore, confounding the wise. But, this was not to allow the Corinthians to boast in their new position. They should have remained humble and thankful for God's grace. After all, it was all of God's doing, not theirs. Paul makes clear that God chose the lowly so that "no one may boast before God" (v. 29, cf. Eph. 2:8-9). The Corinthians are doing just the opposite, so Paul skillfully corrects their mistakes and pride. The Corinthians thought that wisdom had to do with knowledge only. Paul says in effect, "You are so foolish, and this is so evident by the mere fact that you think this way. Wisdom is not about knowledge only. It is about God who has saved you from your sin, given you a new eternal destiny, and has given you a new relationship with Himself through His Son. The philosopher's wisdom leads to pride, but God's wisdom leads to sanctification. What are they teaching that changes people's lives, morals, and destiny in such a way?" Therefore, it is not that God cannot save the affluent, but the glory of the Gospel is that it produces transformed lives from even the most lowly, despised, and helpless people (Fee, 87).

f. God's folly - Paul's preaching (2:1-5)

The message of the Cross and the Corinthians' very existence as believers stand in contradiction to their present boasting. The kind of speech that this Church was so enamored with was not used by Paul, and yet God had done a mighty work in their midst. "Thus, not only the means (the Cross) and the people (the Church in Corinth), but also the preacher (Paul) declare that God is in the process of overturning the world's systems" (Fee, p. 89). In addition, there are some strong apologetic overtones, in which, Paul's ministry is justified before them. Paul's preaching was not like the wisdom preachers, it was simply about the crucified Messiah, in

content and presentation. He didn't need to use persuasive words, because the Spirit of God always backs up God's Word (cf. 1 Thess. 1:5; Rom. 1:16; Eph. 6:17), and this is so that their faith would not rest on man's wisdom, but on God. The Cross points us to trusting God, not men, or wisdom, or ourselves. This passage is not to be used to promote poor, unprepared preaching. But, form and content should never get in the way of the Gospel. The Gospel, "proclaimed through human weakness but accompanied by the powerful work of the Spirit so that lives are changed through a divine-human encounter," is what Paul is emphasizing here, as opposed to self-reliance (Fee, p. 96).

3. God's wisdom by the Spirit (2:6-16)

One of Paul's arguments in this paragraph is that the Corinthians need to understand their identity in Christ. They possess the Spirit, and yet they are acting and thinking as those who do not have the Spirit. Paul sets out to explain the nature of God's wisdom. It is a wisdom that is not perceived by unbelievers. Who would want their wisdom anyway? They "are passing away" (v. 6). True wisdom lies not in the mind, but in the soteriological work of God. "Paul transformed 'wisdom' from a philosophical, rhetorical term into a historical, soteriological one (1:24, 30) (Fee, p. 98). One who knows what Christ has accomplished for them is wise (v. 12). But this can only be known through the Spirit (v. 10). Paul wants them to know that the people of this age that think the Cross is foolish, are really the foolish ones. They crucified the Lord of glory. If they had known anything pertaining to God, they would not have done this (humanly speaking). Nevertheless, Paul asserts that they are to stop thinking as "natural" men, and to start living as those who have "the mind of Christ." So, Paul forces the Corinthians to choose between the Gospel, and the rhetorical "wisdom" of itinerant philosophers and those causing divisions in the Church. He argues well, that the Gospel is infinitely better; for in it, we are "predestined...to glory" (v. 7) and we have the Spirit whom reveals all the things "freely given to us by God" (v. 12).

4. Spirituality and Division (3:1-4)

Here is the hinge between (1) Paul explaining the nature of the Gospel and the meaning of true wisdom and (2) divisions in the name of leaders. The problem was that the Corinthians thought they were spiritual, and yet they were divided. For Paul, these are two mutually exclusive terms (Fee, p. 122). Paul first argues that the Corinthians are not spiritual, and Paul could not, and still cannot, give them anything but "milk" (basic doctrine or instructions). By now, they should be ready for "solid food" but their thinking and behavior proves otherwise. They are "fleshly." They are thinking as unbelievers who are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit. His first concern is to get the Corinthians to stop "*thinking* like the people of this present age," while his other concern is to get them to stop "*behaving* like the people of the present age" (Fee, p. 122). Paul's thesis: People who have the Spirit should walk in the Spirit (not walk like mere men, v. 3). The Corinthians are causing strife. It is time that they think and look like what they really are - saints (1:2).

5. Correcting a false view of Church and ministry (3:5-17)

d. *Leaders are servants* (3:5-9)

The Corinthians had a misguided perception of the Church and its leaders. They thought that they were elite by associating with certain teachers. Since Apollos and Paul are God's servants, working on God's farm, part of God's field, there is no reason for such quarrels. Paul wants the Corinthians to stop looking to men, and start looking to the Lord. Servanthood is the paradigm

for ministry, not “celebrity-hood.” The farm and the workers, and everything belong to God, and therefore everyone is accountable to Him. Paul here not only affirms the ministry of Apollos (even though it was different from his own ministry) but he also absolves himself of any personal role in the quarrels (Fee, p. 130).

e. The Church must be built with care (3:10-15)

f. Warning to those who would destroy God’s temple in Corinth (3:16-17) [b. and c. dealt with below]

In the passage from 3:1-23, Paul continues the theme of godly wisdom as the key to growth in the Christian faith. In 2:6-16, he spoke of godly wisdom in contrast with the wisdom of the world. He contrasts those with the Spirit with those without the Holy Spirit. In this section, he contrasts those controlled by the Spirit with those who are not controlled by the Spirit (NIVAC, Blomberg, p. 72). In addition, it seems that the Corinthians were focused on men rather than God. This is obvious in chapter one, with their allegiances to either Paul or Apollos, etc. They needed to understand that ministers were accountable to God, and to beware of seeking the praise of men. Paul wants them to focus on faithfully serving the Lord. We must all stand before His judgment seat and give an account for our lives. The Corinthians are encouraged to take their eyes off this world, and to look to the judgment and rewards in the next world. They are to keep their eyes on Jesus Christ, not Paul or Apollos. This is why in the previous verses to our segment (v. 5-8), Paul writes, “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.” The point of all this is that God alone should get the credit and glory. Paul and Apollos are just employees of God, and they are responsible to Him (BKC, p. 511). Paul forcefully states that the Church of Corinth belongs to God. “You are God’s field, God’s building...and you belong to Christ...” (v. 9, 23). Paul and Apollos are servants that belong to God, and the Church belongs to God, so the Corinthians need to stop focusing on men, and start looking towards God. Why would they want to “belong” to Apollos, when they already belong to God? At the heart of some of the strife in Corinth, was a spiritual immaturity that sought the fame or approval of men. Paul is arguing that if you belong to God, and God is the one who gives the growth, why are you fighting over petty things such as earthly ministers, or vain competition? In addition, Paul and Apollos are not in competition, but are God’s servants for the Church’s common good!

In the previous chapters Paul has shown the Corinthians that the Cross, which is God’s wisdom, rules out boasting, especially boasting in men. God’s wisdom is available to those who have the Spirit, yet the Corinthians are behaving as mere men, living in their old ways before the Cross. Paul wants to correct their misguided perception of the Church and its leadership. He uses images from agriculture and architecture, to address three closely related issues. With the farming metaphor, Paul explains that the Church should view their teachers as servants, each with their own task and reward, but everything belongs to God. The farm, the workers, and the crops, all belong to God. Paul then warns the Church (possibly the leaders of the Church), to build upon the foundation of Christ crucified with imperishable materials, materials that correspond to such a great foundation. Paul then explains what the building is on this foundation – it is the Church of God, God’s temple in Corinth, in contrast to the worldly temple in Corinth, the Acro-Corinth. God now has a place on the map in Corinth, and it’s

through you, the Church. Everyone at Corinth should live in such a way that lets the city know that God is in town, and the God and Father of our crucified Lord Jesus Christ has much more to offer than anything at the Acro-Corinth. But, if the Corinthians continue in their pride, folly, immorality, disorder, and disunity, how will Corinth distinguish between Corinth's temple, and God's Temple? Paul writes to insure that the ways of Corinth, do not seep into the Church. Since the Spirit of God dwells in you (plural), start thinking and living as spiritual men and not natural men (1 Cor. 3:16, cf. 2:10-3:4) (Fee, p. 128-129).

In summary, Paul continues to distinguish between "natural" wisdom, and spiritual wisdom. The natural man focuses on human effort. The spiritual man focuses on God and giving Him glory. Paul clears up misconceptions about the Church and ministry, and shows that servants should not be fought over. In light of the precious foundation already laid, namely Christ Jesus, the Church must build upon it with materials that are commensurate with the foundation. Since we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, we must build in such a way that our good works glorify God. Gold, silver, and precious stone probably refers to the work (v. 12), and the manner in which it was done. If Paul is addressing only the leaders, then their leadership must reflect the character of the crucified Savior, and not the straw of the world (Fee, p. 137). (Paul does say "each man" in verse 10, but there are strong arguments for him directing his comments to the leaders.) It may also refer to making sure that our works are in line with the teachings of Christ (humility, sacrifice, faithfulness), and God's wisdom, not the world's ways. The Church is not only God's dwelling place, but God will destroy anyone who tries to destroy His temple (It may be that to destroy the Temple was not only to cause divisions, but to persist in sin. The incestuous man spoken of in chapter five may be the one who was destroying the Church. Destroying the Church is not just a "Church-split" or some other issue, but it is also shaming the Church and its reputation with sinful behavior.). Since these Christians were causing division, Paul was almost stating, "You are all God's temple, if you are causing division and destroying God's temple, then aren't you destroying yourselves?" Paul uses a similar idea in regard to marriage in Eph. 5:28-29. God has made His dwelling place holy, and the Body of Christ should reflect this holiness since He is holy (v. 17). You are God's temple in Corinth, as opposed to the many other pagan temples! In short, the Cross is not only the paradigm of the Gospel (salvation, sanctification, etc.), but in contrast to the world's wisdom and ways, it is the model for ministry (Fee, p. 131). Gentile rulers "lord it over" people. Christian ministers are servants.

6. All are Christ's (3:18-23)

Paul now wants to tie up his two arguments, and conclude his answers for the first two problems. Quarrelling over leaders and doing so under the guise of wisdom is foolish. He tells the Corinthians that if they think they are wise by the standards of this age, they must become foolish, in order to become wise. That is, they must rely on God's wisdom, which may appear foolish, but is true wisdom. Instead of the Corinthians stating that they are "of Paul," Paul flips their reasoning on them and says, "you are of Christ" (Fee, 151-153). "For Paul the death and resurrection of Jesus marked the turning of the ages in such a way that nothing lies outside Christ's jurisdiction. In the form of a cross God has planted his flag on planet Earth and marked it off as his own possession; hence the "world" is his" (Fee, p. 154). Since we belong to Christ, and every facet of life belongs to Christ, the Corinthians showed their naivety by claiming to be "of Apollos." That is way too narrow. Again, they have failed to realize who they are in Christ.

Paul corrects them regarding their identity, so that they will cease from pride, divisions, and relying on false wisdom.

7. The Corinthians and the Apostle (4:1-21)

In this section, Paul is addressing a few issues. First, there are those at Corinth that are not only for Apollos or Peter, but they are anti-Paul (Fee, p. 156). Second, he wants the Corinthians to know that since he is God's servant, only God can judge Paul. God is Paul's boss, so the Corinthians should not judge him. Lastly, Paul must reassert his apostolic authority, but he does so with great skill. He wants to reassert his authority so that they will listen to him and so that they will obey what he says in regard to their understanding of the Gospel, the Church, and their divisions and immaturity. He tells the Church that he is their father and they are his children. There is a love relationship between them, but Paul is still in authority over them. If his fatherly "gentleness" won't change their minds, then the fatherly disciplinarian device of "the rod" will (v. 21).

e. Be a servant and don't judge (4:1-5)

This paragraph joins the two ideas from the preceding arguments: the apostles as servants (3:5-9) and the coming judgment (3:13-15) (Fee, p. 158). Paul tells the Corinthians to regard him and Apollos as servants. Faithfulness is required of servants, and masters alone judge this issue. Using the household analogy, Paul explains that they should cease judging unfairly, and that they too will be judged by the Lord. Paul has been faithful to the Gospel, which is what God judges (not our successes, etc.). He will go on to say in the following paragraphs that it is ironic that they are judging him, since he is weak, and they are prideful. In addition, children don't judge fathers, and Paul will go on to say he is their father "through the Gospel" (4:15). Where there is a judgmental spirit, there cannot be unity. This theme of preserving unity is crucial to Paul.

f. True apostleship (4:6-13)

This paragraph is full of irony. It contrasts the pride of the Corinthians and the servanthood of the Apostles. "Paul is here applying the theology of the Cross, set forth in 1:18-2:16, to the Christian life. For Paul....to be a servant means to be a servant of Christ Jesus. It means to go the way of the cross" (Fee, 166). It seems that Paul is using the very things that the Corinthians disliked about him, as an argument against them. They thought Paul was weak, a fool, homeless, hungry, and lacking many other things from their list of worldly status symbols. But, Paul boasts in these things. This section is necessary for Paul's argument not only to defend the Gospel and his ministry, but to teach the Corinthians that humility is found in knowing that whatever we have, we have received from God (v. 7). "This is an invitation to experience one of those rare, unguarded moments of total honesty, where in the presence of the eternal God one recognizes that everything, absolutely everything that one "has" is a gift. All is of grace; nothing is deserved, nothing earned" (Fee, p. 171). They have failed to see the humility in the crucified Messiah that Paul spoke of previously. They have failed to follow their Master. It is obvious that their wisdom has led them to pride, divisions and other problems, whereas Paul's obedience to Christ has made Him look more like Jesus, the Suffering Servant of the Gospels and Isaiah 53. This was more of "God's folly" (1:25).

g. *Appeal and exhortation (4:14-21)*

Paul does not want to shame the Corinthians; he wants to admonish them (4:14). He has dealt in depth with their divisions, but he still needs to establish his authority over them. He does so by establishing a father/child relationship with the Church (the mother/child relationship may have been established by Paul in 3:1-2, where he speaks of giving the Church milk.). He has already set an example (2:1-5, 3:5, 4:1-5), so that as children, the Corinthians will mimic their parent (v. 16). Although Paul can be gentle, he also tells them not to be arrogant, as if he were not coming to the Church and dealing with the problems at hand (v. 18). In his appeal for their imitation, Paul is teaching that right thinking as well as right behavior is important, which is a summary of the previous paragraphs. Paul includes this appeal so that the Corinthians know that even though Paul is correcting them, he is still on their side and is still related to them in Christ. The false teachers made Paul out to be the Corinthian's enemy. But Paul tells them that he is their "father."

B. Immorality and Injustice (5:1-6:20)

This section deals with the case of incest that is being either condoned or tolerated in the Church. This is a sharp turn from the previous argument, though there are some connections. For instance, the arrogance of some in 4:18-19, and the arrogance of the Church in 5:2 and 6 (Fee, p. 194) are connected in some way. The crisis of authority is also at stake in 5:1-6:20, as it was in 1:10-4:21. There were some who were leading the Church contrary to Paul's teaching and against Paul himself, and Paul continues to assert his teaching and authority in this section on immorality and injustice. There is also a link between the end of chapter five where Paul says the Church should not judge those outside of the Church and chapter six. They are to judge those inside the Church, and that includes the incestuous man (Fee, 195).

1. The Incestuous man (5:1-13)

a. *Paul's judgment (5:1-5)*

Paul simply judges the incestuous man here and commands that he be excommunicated from the community of faith. Paul also is appalled at the fact that the Corinthians are not only not ashamed about this sin (a kind that does not even occur among pagans, v.1), but that they are boasting about it (v.2)! The Church should be mourning over this sin, and should have removed the man from their midst (v. 2). Paul's judgment in verse three also reasserts his apostolic authority over the Church. His discipline is done with a view to redemption and not destruction (v. 5). This flows with the rest of the book in regard to Paul's urgency to correct their theology and practice. The culture of that day had seeped into the Church, and they also were governed by their passions, rather than the instructions Paul had previously left. Paul is always concerned with the reputation of the Church, and therefore he insists on this discipline. As stated in the "purpose" section of this paper: Paul wrote in order to make positional sanctification practical. The Corinthian Church seemed more influenced by the world than the Spirit. Paul wants to correct this. Paul is also responding to reports that he heard about the Church, which comprise the section in chapters 1-6.

b. *The Passover (5:6-8)*

Again, Paul corrects their theology. As I've stated earlier, the Christian's identity in Christ is crucial and often neglected. He says "Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, JUST AS YOU ARE IN FACT UNLEAVENED" (v. 7). I've read somewhere that the Christian

life is about becoming what we are. We must live up to our position in Christ, a position which is real in a sense, since God sees us in our resurrected body (Rom. 8), since He is the God who stands outside of time. Nevertheless, Paul gives his theological basis for his judgment from the previous paragraph. The Church failed to realize that this man's sin had infected the whole community. This is God's Temple in Corinth (3:16-17), and Paul is concerned with its welfare and reputation (Fee, p. 215). Paul tells them to get rid of the "old leaven," or the incestuous man, so that they might become who they really are, "a new lump." (Fee, p. 215). It was the sacrifice of God's Lamb, the Messiah that has made the Church new and holy. Because of this sacrifice the Church is to continue in holy living. In short, the Corinthians are the people of God, and they need to start acting like it. "The death of Christ makes them new; yet they must get rid of the old in order to be new, precisely because in Christ they are already new!" (Fee, p. 215). Truth is sometimes confusing! If Christ crucified was Paul's message, and the paradigm for Christian living, why are the Corinthians looking more like the world around them, than the Christ who died for them (2:2)? Paul's basis for judgment and discipline, and his ethics, are rooted in Christ crucified.

c. Correcting a misunderstanding (5:9-13)

Here Paul not only corrects their misunderstanding of his previous instructions (from his previous letter) but he is continuing his argument from 5:1-8. They were boasting rather than disciplining the incestuous man. They were associating with this believer (or professing believer) who was in sin, rather than following his instruction to expel the wicked man from among them (v. 13). It is not only their action that Paul is concerned with, but their attitude. Some commentators feel that the Corinthians intentionally disregarded Paul's clear instruction because of their pride and their misunderstanding of spirituality (Fee, p. 221). He clearly explains that he meant for the Church to stay away from immoral Christians, not immoral people (or else they would have to leave the world) (v. 10). He then instructs them to judge the Church, not outsiders, and to remove the wicked man from fellowship (v. 12-13). This section is here in order to correct their false theology, maintain purity in the Church, rebuke their arrogance, and clarify the Church's relationship to the world. This paragraph deals "with persistent wrongdoing of a kind wherein someone wants to have it both ways, to belong to the Christian community without leaving his/her former behavior behind. Such persistence demands discipline for the sake of both the person involved and the community" (Fee, p. 228). This summary not only clues us in to what Paul has been concerned with all along - purity, and becoming the people of God in practice, but it also leads to future arguments regarding the issues of unity and diversity. The members of the Body are connected, so if one sins, he affects the whole Body (12:26). Paul is constantly trying to help the Corinthians become community-minded, rather than selfish individuals.

2. Church and courts? (6:1-6)

Paul now takes up another problem in the Church. It appears that there is some financial dispute among two brothers in the Lord, and they took this matter to the civil court. Here, Paul's aggravation comes from two factors, "(1) that they have so little self-understanding as to who they are in Christ (vv. 2-4) and (2) that this action so totally destroys the community before the world (v. 6)" (Fee, p. 229). In the latter paragraph, Paul stated that the Church is not to judge those outside of the Church. In this paragraph Paul asserts that the Church should judge matters regarding the Church, and the world should not be involved in this. Again, Paul is concerned with the reputation of the Church in Corinth. Fee argues that the

problem with many Churches, not just the one in Corinth, is that we do not live in light of who we are in Christ. There is a general lack of “biblical self-understanding, especially in terms of the essential eschatological framework of our existence as the people of the future who are to be totally conditioned by that future as we live in the present. Therefore, our priorities tend to be warped toward the values of this age rather than of the age to come” (Fee, p. 238). Paul argues that our relationship with the crucified and risen Messiah, must affect every area of our lives. Once again, Paul must correct their bad theology, worldly values, and sinful pride. In addition, he is concerned with unity in the Church, and this area needs to be addressed.

3. Giving up the right to be right (6:7-11)

Paul has a reason that he is astonished by the Corinthian’s behavior. Haven’t they learned from the Cross that giving grace may mean that we incur a penalty that we don’t deserve? Paul states that they have already “lost” in a sense because they have brought shame upon the Church and themselves, by going to the world for litigation. Paul also argues strongly that this deed is not only shameful, but it is preposterous in light of the fact that these two men are “brothers” (v. 8). Paul uses the familial motif to express his disgust in their actions. He also states that these people should not be acting like nonbelievers, because they have “been washed...sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (Fee, p. 239). This is not a warning of loss of salvation. Paul states that these sinners were what the Corinthians used to be. This is an example of Paul applying the Gospel to real life, and wanting his readers to know in no uncertain terms that as one who names the name of Jesus Christ, we are to walk in a manner worthy of this name. “For Paul there is to be the closest possible relationship between the experience of grace and one’s behavior that evidences that experience of grace” (Fee, p. 248) In addition, Paul speaks of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. This is a theme throughout almost all of Paul’s letters. The work of the Spirit occurs in almost every chapter of this epistle. The transforming work of the Spirit “is rather predicated on the Spirit’s coming into the world, signifying the turning of the ages, so that the realities of the future are already at work in power in the present age” (Fee, 248). This is crucial for the following arguments (6:12-20; 12-14), for the Corinthians did not have a problem of experiencing the work of the Spirit, but they misunderstood what it meant to be people of the Spirit. In summary, as the family of God, and as those who have the crucified God as our pattern for life, we are to follow the nonretaliation ethic of the Christian faith, in light of our new position in Christ by the Spirit.

4. Church and prostitutes? (6:12-20)

Here Paul turns to another problem. He has just addressed the failure of two people taking their problems to the courts, and now he addresses their immorality. In short, his argument is that “the body is not for immorality” (v. 13). It appears that men in the Church thought that they were so high up in the realm of the Spirit that whatever they did with their bodies had no affect on them spiritually. Again Paul addresses their identity in Christ: “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?” (v. 15). Rather than addressing the fruit alone, Paul addresses the root. Sexual sins are a problem, but the root of the problem is their misunderstanding of their new relationship with God and their union with Jesus Christ. The Gospel is at stake once again, because of their false view of freedom (“all things are lawful for me”), and their false view of the body. Paul argues against their dualistic view – that only the soul matters. Since Christ has been raised and we too will be raised (v. 14), obviously the body

is of importance to God. What Paul has done before, he does again: He teaches the Corinthians to think and live in light of their destiny. The future resurrection of believers impacts their ethics today.

VII. In Response to the Corinthian's Letter (7:1-16:12)

In this section of the letter, Paul is responding to the Corinthian's previous letter. Paul probably wrote them once, they responded with their questions and answers, and 1 Corinthians is a response to their letter. It seems that the Corinthians not only misunderstood his previous instructions, but they opposed his position on some items (Fee, p. 267). Most of the responses to their questions are begun with "*peri de*" ("now about"; 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12). This section covers the topics of marriage, divorce, food sacrificed to idols, women and men in the Church, the Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts, love, the Resurrection, and the collection of money for the Church in Jerusalem. Many of the issues spoken of in this section are alluded to or have been discussed in previous sections. Obviously Paul's writings on marriage are related to some things he wrote in chapter six, etc. This section also continues the theme of keeping the Church above reproach in their doctrine and behavior, in order to defend the Gospel. Who will believe the Good News from a disorderly, prideful, and immoral group of people? Paul also wants the Corinthians to know what true spirituality is (1 Cor. 13) and what the truth is about the resurrection of believers. This will help them in their identity in Christ and in their role as God's Temple in Corinth. "Rather than a friendly exchange, in which the new believers in Corinth are asking spiritual advice of their mentor in the Lord, their letter was probably a response to Paul's Previous Letter mentioned in 5:9, in which they were taking exception to his position on point after point. In light of their own theology of spirit, with heavy emphasis on 'wisdom' and 'knowledge,' they have answered Paul with a kind of 'Why can't we?' attitude, in which they are looking for his response" (Fee, p. 266-267).

A. Marriage and Divorce (7:1-40)

Paul discusses sexual relations, divorce, remarriage, and marriage itself in this section. Throughout this chapter, Paul states "remain as you are." To the married, to the unmarried and widows, to the one married to an unbeliever, and to virgins, Paul tells them to remain as they are. There are exceptions, qualifications, and guidelines, but this is an overriding theme. It seems that verses 1-16 deal primarily with those who are married and verses 25-38 deal with those who are unmarried. It appears that the Corinthians thought that sex was inappropriate or unnecessary for those who were so spiritual and who were so close to the end times (a "spiritualized eschatology" as Fee states) (This may also explain why some were going to prostitutes...Fee, p. 266-271). If this is the case, it explains why there would be questions and problems regarding marriage (should marriage be dissolved if sexual relations are wrong or unnecessary?), as well as questions for the single Christians. Paul may agree with their result, but he does not agree with their reasons. In other words, he thinks it is wiser to remain single, but not because sexual relationships are sinful, nor because God's people of the Spirit are in some way already resurrected (see Fee, p. 269), but because this brings about greater devotion to the Lord (7:35).

1. Married or formerly married – stay as you are (7:1-16)

This section addresses one issue with three applications. It seems that the Corinthians have stated “It is good for a man not to have relations with a woman” (v. 1). Paul corrects their misunderstanding or misapplication by stating three things: 1. Married couples are not to deprive each other of sex (1v. 2-7). 2. You cannot separate from your spouse in order to eliminate the “problem” of sexual relations (v. 10-11). 3. Those who have an unbelieving spouse should remain married (vv. 12-16)

a. No abstinence in marriage (7:1-7)

Paul responds to their statement about abstaining from sexual relations. He states that marriage is good and because of the immorality that exists, it is obviously preferred that the married couples do not abstain (v. 2). The only reason to do so would be by mutual consent for spiritual devotion. If one has the gift to remain single, Paul states that is good. If not, marriage is fine, and there is no reason to abstain from sex in marriage. Paul may have previously written a similar statement about “it is good for a man...” but they misunderstood it. He was probably referring to single men, not married couples (watch out for the NIV translation of this 7:1. It is terrible).

b. Single or married for unmarried and widows (7:8-9)

Here Paul addresses the principle stated in verse two, but focuses on the unmarried (and widows). He probably brings this up here because he has just spoken about those who have the gift of singleness and wants to address those who do not have this gift (and therefore, this is probably why they “burn” with sexual desires). The widows are told to remain in their unmarried state if they can, which will be addressed again in vv. 39-40. This section is not saying that marriage is to be entered into as a “concession” for those who have no self-control. Paul says in other places that marriage is good (1 Tim. 4:3), but it seems that he is speaking about “burning” because they were sinning (immorality/fornication, possibly at the temple, which is why he wrote what he did in chapter 6).

c. No divorce for Christian partners (7:10-11)

Paul continues to address those who would divorce for ascetic reasons. He states that a wife must not separate from her husband, and a husband must not divorce his wife. But, if a woman does disobey this command, or already has disobeyed this command, she must not remarry. She can be reconciled to her husband, but remarriage is out of the question.

d. No divorce for mixed marriages (7:12-16)

If the circumstance arises where an unbelieving spouse wishes to stay married, the believer must not divorce. This maintains spiritual protection for the children as well as provides a possibility that the unbeliever will come to faith through the believing spouse. If the unbelieving spouse leaves, the believer is not “bound” to them maintain the marriage. It seems that Paul is addressing specific questions or situations at Corinth, so our application should be cautious.

2. Overall principle – stay as you were called (7:17-24)

In order to reinforce Paul’s previous arguments regarding “staying as one was called” he uses two examples to fortify his prior paragraphs. He talks about one who is circumcised and one

who is a slave. Regardless of one's religious or social background, it is good to remain in the state that one was called/saved in. For instance, if you were called as one who was uncircumcised, there is no need to be circumcised (v1. 18-19). We are responsible to God to live out our Christian life from our heritage (v. 24), not in spite of it.

3. Concerning virgins (7:25-40)

Paul seems to be addressing virgins who are betrothed. If they are to "remain as they are" are they to remain single, or to follow through with the betrothal to marriage? Paul favors celibacy, but not asceticism (Fee, p. 323). In this larger section, Paul addresses the confusion regarding marriage, stating that it is not a sin, but because the time is short, marriage is not preferable for one who can remain single.

a. Singleness is preferred but not required (7:25-28)

Paul simply states that it is good to remain as one has been called. If you are bound to a woman (betrothed), do not seek to be released. If you are free, do not look for a wife. "But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a (betrothed) virgin marries she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this." Paul argues that his concern for singleness is not predicated on spiritual grounds, but on pastoral concerns. Thus, he maintains his celibacy view, but rejects their ascetic (spiritualized) claims (Fee, p. 334).

b. Paul's reason for singleness (7:29-35)

Paul explains that in light of Christ's return marriage may not be the most desirable option. Celibacy leads to undistracted devotion to Christ. In addition he writes that although celibacy is preferable, it is natural that the married one should care for his spouse. Verse 35 is not about "undistracted devotion to the Lord" for the celibate, but it is also written for the married. The married can have this devotion, knowing that it is not a sin to marry or be married, or to practice sexual relations in marriage (this is why Paul states "This I say for your own benefit" in v. 35, which is applied to the whole paragraph, not just celibacy). Paul wants the Corinthians to know that since we are heavenly citizens we are to be free from the grip of the world and its values (vv. 29-31) (Fee, p. 348). Whether celibate or married, whichever one is called to will allow one to be devoted to the Lord.

c. Marriage is not sin (7:36-40)

For Paul, this section is about an amoral decision. It is not good or bad to marry, nor is it good or bad to follow through with the betrothal. He gives his opinion why singleness is preferred in the previous paragraph, but states here that it is a matter of one's own conviction in the present decision (vv. 36-38). In summary, it is best to remain in the state in which one was saved. If this cannot be so, due to certain circumstances, it is not a sin to change, as long as no qualifications are broken (i.e., a widow is to remarry "in the Lord," that is, a Christian).

B. Food sacrificed to idols (8:1-11:1)

In this section, Paul deals with food sacrificed to idols. He prohibits the eating of food sacrificed to idols in the pagan temples in 10:1-22. In 10:23-11:1 he deals with the same food, but that which is sold in the market. This food should cause no problem for one's conscience (though he will address what happens if a brother is offended – the rule of not causing a brother to stumble). In chapter 9, Paul defends his apostolic authority and liberty. Paul also states that they should not eat idol-sacrificed meat in the presence of an unbeliever who points out the

origin of the food (10:23-30). Paul encourages the Corinthians to limit their liberty out of love for the “weak” (8:9). The Corinthians may have felt that they had the right to continue their pagan practice of eating meals in the temples. They seem to think that they are so mature that they won’t stumble. In addition, they seem to have had a “magical” view of the sacraments, and thought baptism and the Lord’s Table would free them from failure. Fee states that the analogies from Israel in chapter 10 serve to teach that the sacraments are no sure protection from disobedience (Fee, p. 363). Paul was also concerned with their attitude. They thought that their knowledge made them exempt from certain behavior, or from loving their brother. Here again, Paul is in line with his purpose to answer their questions, but also, to make positional sanctification practical.

1. Christian conduct characterized by love, not knowledge (8:1-13)

The Corinthians think that Christian conduct is based on knowledge, and that this knowledge gives them the right to act as they want in this matter of eating certain foods (Fee, p. 363). Paul, in this chapter, writes to correct their poor attitude. Knowledge is important, but it is not the basis of our behavior; love is. “In Christian ethics, knowledge must always lead to love...In the Christian faith knowledge or insight is never an end in itself; it is only a means to a greater end, the building up of others” (Fee, p. 369). Knowledge apart from love is not knowledge, but foolishness.

a. Love and knowledge contrast (8:1-3)

The aim of our faith is not knowledge, but love (cf., 1 Tim. 1:5). Paul first argues that the effects of love and knowledge differ. Love builds up, knowledge puffs up, or makes one arrogant. Also, knowledge and love not only have different effects on others, but on the one who has knowledge or love. Paul will return to this theme later when discussing spiritual gifts and the edification of the Body. Since Paul is concerned about the unity in the Church, this theme of love, giving up one’s right, and looking out for one another runs throughout the book. For Paul, the absence of contentions does not mean the presence of unity. Unity can only be attained through sacrifice and love.

b. Way of knowledge (8:4-6)

In this paragraph Paul grounds Christian ethics with proper Christian theology (Fee, p. 376). The unity of God and the Lordship of Christ serve as the foundation for all of Paul’s teachings. From this one God, all things came, and thus, by virtue of creation, God is supreme, and Christians are to submit to His ways. Paul proves that idols are nothing, and that God is supreme. (Later, in chapter 10, he will show that demonic activity is involved with idols, but the idols themselves, are dead).

c. Care for a brother (8:7-13)

Even though “all have knowledge” (v. 1), not all believers share this in an experiential way, nor do all believers have the same degree of knowledge. If a Corinthian goes to the temple, it may lead to the destruction of a brother for whom Christ died. In verse 8, Paul is probably agreeing with something the Corinthians wrote, that food is a matter of indifference to God. But it is because of this that they must not use food to insist on their “rights” or “freedom” (Fee, p. 378). They must not allow their rights to cause a brother to stumble in his conscience or behavior. Paul will later prohibit the attendance in the temple on grounds of having fellowship with

demons (10:19-22). Here, Paul uses this circumstance to teach the Corinthians about the need for limiting their liberty in order to love the brethren.

2. Paul defends his apostleship (9:1-27)

Paul must defend his apostleship because it appears that the Corinthians doubted his authority. This inevitably led to division, and debates over what teaching to follow from Paul (i.e., whether to go eat at the temple or not). The Church seems to have questioned his authority because Paul refused to accept material support and because he seemed to vacillate in regard to certain eating policies. With the Jews he would eat one thing, and with the Gentiles, he would refuse marketplace food (Fee, p. 393). It is quite ironic that they held his conviction to not be a burden to the Church against him. Nevertheless, the false apostles or the traveling philosophers, probably tried to validate their ministry by claiming how much money they were owed (cf. 2 Cor. 12:13). Paul must have looked silly as a “great Apostle” who also had to work as a tent-maker in order to earn a living.

a. In defense of his apostleship and rights (9:1-14)

Since almost everything written in this letter hangs on Paul’s apostleship, he defends it right away. This paragraph was designed to convince the Corinthian readers that this apostleship not only makes Paul free to give up his right to their support, but also to eat or reject any kind of food that he so wishes (Fee, p. 394). The Corinthians saw Paul as one who lacked the right to do certain things. They saw him as inferior. Paul sets forth in this paragraph to prove that it is not that he lacks certain rights, but that he has chosen to renounce the rights that he has. He does so by speaking about religious practices in general (v. 9-10, 13), social practices (vv. 7-8, 10) and the teachings of Jesus in particular (v. 14). Paul looked different than Apollos, Peter, and the couple he ministered with, Priscilla and Aquila. But, these differences were there for a reason, partially because of Paul’s choices, and he explains that although he may not look like other Apostles, he surely is one. His chief concern, however, is that nothing would be done that would hinder the Gospel (v. 12).

b. Paul’s apostolic restraint (9:15-18)

Paul asserts that he has not used or misused his rights as an Apostle. He is under compulsion to preach the Gospel. His reward is to preach the gospel free of charge. He says this to explain that he did not accept pay from the Corinthian Church while he ministered there so that they would see his passion for the gospel, and it was his pleasure to renounce this right. The Corinthians have rejected his prohibition against going to the pagan temple on the basis of the fact that he seems to be a struggling preacher. Paul argues that he lives in such a way that he may not hinder the Gospel, and his “free ministry” was given to them as one who held back his authority, not one who had none. Paul needs to make this point clear in order for them to understand his role as an Apostle.

c. Paul’s freedom (9:19-23)

Paul has argued that as an Apostle he has certain rights, and he has argued for why he has chosen not to use those rights. Now he explains why his behavior may be confusing, or may even look hypocritical to the Church. This is important for Paul, for he is still defending his apostolic calling. He goes on to explain that he does everything for the sake of sharing the Gospel with other people. Since Paul is Christ’s slave, he is free from all people. He is even free from others because he does not owe anyone from their prior support, so he is now even more

free to be a slave to others (Fee, p. 423). "...Paul intends to clarify his own conduct as a matter of freedom - he "freely" made himself a "slave" for the sake of others-not of obligation. The difference, therefore, between his own behavior and that of his social companions is not in the behavior itself, which will be identical to the observer, but in the reasons for it [his motives]. The latter [the Jews or those under the Law] abstain because they are "under the law"; it is a matter of religious obligation. Paul abstains because he loves those under the law and wants to win them to Christ. Despite appearances, the differences are as night and day" (Fee, p. 429). Paul successfully argues that he has used his freedom not for himself, but to serve all others (v. 22), that they may come to know His Savior.

d. Exhortation and Example (9:24-27)

This paragraph closes Paul's prior arguments concerning his apostleship and is also transitional for the next chapter. He argues using the metaphor of the Isthmian Games, which was well known to the Corinthians, that Corinthians are to exercise self-control (v. 25). He encourages them to run in such a way that they may receive a reward in heaven. He defends himself, stating that he does not run or box aimlessly. Paul has goals in life - to share the Gospel and to receive rewards. Why is this here? Because he is telling the Church to exercise self-control, by not going to the pagan temples. He also gives a warning - that one can be disqualified from the prize (v. 27, i.e., probably earthly blessings for obedience and rewards in heaven). Paul summarizes that he has at the same time, exercised self-control in regard to his rights, but he has also exercised freedom when it was necessary for the sake of the Gospel. He brilliantly explains this balance, and does so to teach the Corinthians that the greater law of love must control the law of liberty in Christ.

3. Do not go to the temples (10:1-22)

a. The example of Israel (10:1-5)

b. Warning against idolatry (10:6-13)

Paul warns the Corinthians twice about idolatry. In verse 7 he states "Do not be idolaters..." and in verse 14 he writes "...flee from idolatry." Those Corinthians who have insisted on attending the cultic meals in the pagan temples are warned that to do so is idolatry. He gives Old Testament examples of judgment in order to warn the Corinthians of how God deals with His people who turn to idolatry. The Rock that was in the desert with the Jews is the same Christ whom the Corinthians worship, and this same Christ will deal with the "new people of God" as He has done with the His people during the Old Testament times. He states this to show the continuity between the God who acted (in judgment) in the Old Testament and the God who the Corinthians are testing. We deceive ourselves if we think that God will tolerate idolatry (v. 1). (cf. Fee, 441-450) In addition, Paul addresses immorality, and shows how God deals with this. Paul also sites examples of complaining (testing the Lord) and grumbling (probably referring to division over leaders, just as the Israelites had done to Moses, so the Corinthians have done to Paul) (vv. 6-10). All four of these sins are occurring in Corinth, and Paul warns them about the consequences of such sins. In all of this Paul offers hope by showing God's faithfulness and provision in temptation (v. 13).

c. Prohibition (10:14-22)

Paul now explicitly prohibits the Corinthians from having fellowship in the pagan temples. He is bringing to a close the argument he began in chapter eight. Paul prohibits idolatry, and explains that participating in the pagan meals is having fellowship with demons. Just as we

who celebrate the Lord's supper have fellowship with Him, those who wish to eat in the temple, are joining in the worship of demons. For God, and for Paul, these two arenas are mutually exclusive. "Without returning to law, meaning law as a means to right standing with God, the Christian faith has inherent within it something so radical that it absolutizes certain behavior. Being members of one body in Christ makes it quite impossible to be involved in idolatrous practices. Fundamental allegiance is at stake. One cannot serve God and mammon or demons....Sitting at the Table and experiencing its benefits of grace and freedom does not give one license for religious or moral licentiousness. Rather, it binds us to one another in common fellowship around Christ and the new covenant in such a way that our behavior in the new age is radicalized toward 'the law of Christ' (9:21)" (Fee, p. 475). The law of Christ, is the law of love and sacrifice (cf. Gal. 6:2, John 13:34). This is also written to preserve unity, since they all eat of one loaf and are one Body.

4. Eating marketplace food (10:23-11:1)

Paul has finished his argument against temple attendance, but now he addresses marketplace idol food (which Paul has eaten and has been judged for cf. 9:3, 19-23, 10:29). Paul is teaching the Corinthians the difference between nonessentials and absolutes. The Corinthians think that Christian behavior is based on knowledge and rights. Paul has already explained that Christian behavior is based on love and freedom. The former is selfish, and benefits self only (I can do what I want when I want to...). The latter leads to building up others (Fee, p. 477-478). And for Paul, his love and freedom is used to benefit someone, namely in leading someone to Jesus Christ (v. 33). Paul addresses this issue of food in two possible settings. He addresses what one should do if they have purchased idol sacrificed food from the market to eat at home, and what to do if they are invited to eat such food in a neighbor's home. Paul argues that one is free in matters of nonessentials (such as food). He also argues that personal freedom is not the ultimate aspect of Christian life. Seeking the good of others (love) and glorifying God is far more superior (cf. 1 Cor. 12:31 and following). Paul continues a familiar theme, to teach the Corinthians about unity, which cannot be maintained without love, grace, and sacrifice (giving up one's rights). "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (11:1), means following the way of the Cross (For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." Rom. 15:3).

C. Women and men in Church (11:2-16)

There seem to have been some women in the Church at Corinth who had an overrealized eschatology. They thought that they were so spiritual that they did not have to show the proper distinctions between the sexes. They thought they were like angels, among whom no sexual distinctions exist (Fee, p. 497-498).

1. An argument from culture and honor (11:2-6)

Paul argues that God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of every man, and that man is the head of woman. Paul is concerned with proper order and not dishonoring the proper authority. The woman can enjoy participation in public worship, but they are to do so in a way that recognizes their submission to male leadership. Paul argues that a woman's head should be covered in the Church. Here again, Paul is concerned with unity (which cannot exist without order), the reputation of Christians for the sake of the Gospel and the unsaved, and divisions in the Church (it seems that people were divided over these issues cf., v. 16).

2. Argument from creation (11:7-12)

Paul defends his prior argument using creation as a case for his position. A woman should be under authority because she was created for man (and Eve came from Adam) and she is the glory of man. But, Paul also recognizes that men are now born through women. Nevertheless, though Christ has removed certain earthly distinctions, male and female distinctions must be maintained. Paul leaves no room for a cultural argument on this matter, for he argues from creation, a timeless principle (though, head coverings are a cultural issue, and therefore unnecessary, submission is still necessary).

3. Argument from conformity (11:13-16)

Paul basically reinforces the above paragraph with arguments from shame, propriety, and custom. He states that nature should teach us woman have long hair and should know they need to be covered in respect towards men. Paul gives no commandment here, but continues to argue that the distinctions between the sexes is to be maintained, and the covering for women should remain on in the Church (Fee, p. 530).

D. Problems in the Lord's Supper (11:17-34)

Paul now takes up the second abuse of Christian worship, "divisions" (v. 18) at the Lord's Supper (Fee, p. 531). These divisions seem to be along sociological lines, the rich and the poor. Here Paul wants them to remember why they are gathered and the significance, namely to remember the Lord who's death has unified the Christian community.

1. Abuse of the poor (11:17-22)

People were getting drunk during this Christian sacrament (and communal feast) and were displaying selfish behavior (v. 19). Paul writes to remind them that Lord's Supper is for unity, not division. It seems that they had been going through the motions, and the Supper had lost its meaning. How could they act so selfishly in light of the great sacrifice which they celebrate? Paul writes to answer this question.

2. Abuse of the Lord (11:23-26)

Paul here retells what we know from the Gospels, the upper room Passover meal. For Paul, the Lord's Supper was not a memorial only, it was an ongoing symbol and experience of the power of Christ's death. His death has brought life. Since we all share in this life, we are all one Body. The Lord's Supper was intended to make them one, not be divided. Christ's death has created a new community. Since this new community bears the name of Christ, they are to act in such a way that honors, glorifies, and exemplifies Him. Their divisions, selfishness, and abuses are a shame to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Paul corrects the Corinthians and continues to defend the Gospel for which he lived, the Lord he served, the Messiah who was crucified to save us, and to give us a paradigm for sacrificial love.

3. Examine self (11:27-32)

Although the text does say that we are to judge ourselves (v. 31), the thrust of this passage is about recognizing the body (v. 29), that is, the Body of Christ (See the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 531-532). Paul wants the Corinthians to make sure that this time of worship is done with love and in consideration for other believers. They were using this time for selfish indulgence. Paul tells them to partake of the elements in a worthy manner, which means there

must be inner peace (v. 31, cf. Rom. 5:1) and peace with others. Paul is concerned with the vertical and horizontal aspects of the Cross, and he writes to ensure that the Corinthians will not only stop their foolish behavior, but they will think soberly, as to avoid the Lord's discipline. Paul again argues for unity, love, and an outworking of the Good News of Christ crucified. A lesson to be learned is that the Lord's Supper is a place where sinners may find Christ, and at the same time, it is a place where Christians must not forget that grace received must translate into grace given (Fee, p. 566-567).

4. Wait for one another (11:33-34)

Paul now ties together some of his theological ideas with some practical advice. He simply states that the Corinthians should wait for each other so that they participate in the Lord's Supper in the spirit in which it was meant to be. The focus should be on the Lord, not on disputes regarding the meal accompanying the sacrament. In addition, the meal is meant to promote unity in the Body, not division. The unity will prevent them from being judged by the Lord (v. 34). It is from this point that Paul turns to spiritual gifts and unity in the Body.

E. Spiritual Gifts and True Spirituality (12:1-14:40)

The key to this section is that Paul is addressing the Corinthian's abuse of the gift of tongues. Paul has already been dealing with issues concerning worship, from women's role in the Church to the proper function of the Lord's Table. He now moves on to correct their abuse of tongues. For Paul, being spiritual means edifying the community of believers. The Corinthians cared only for themselves, and wanted to display their gifts with pride. Paul argues that tongues are good, but they do not edify the believer in public worship unless they are interpreted. Paul emphasizes the need for diversity of gifts and manifestations in the unity of the Spirit in chapter twelve. He then moves on to talk about love (chapter 13), for the Corinthian's passion for tongues in the Church was another indication of their failure to love one another (Fee, p. 569-572). Tongues and love are not contrastive, but love is a necessary ingredient for the use of all spiritual gifts. Their heightened individualistic spirituality, was not only a false spirituality, but they failed to "cultivate loving, responsible relationships in the body of Christ" as well as forgetting that their times of public worship were for mutual edification (Fee, p. 573). Chapter fourteen argues that this edification can only occur when spiritual gifts are used with intelligible speech (tongues and interpretation, and prophecy). This is not only profitable for believer (vv. 1-19) but also nonbelievers (vv. 20-25). The abuse of tongues is what has prompted Paul to argue these points, and he again clarifies what spirituality is, and what it is not.

1. The Lordship of Christ (12:1-3)

Paul establishes here the criterion for spiritual gifts: the Lordship of Jesus Christ. They may recognize the genuine work of the Holy Spirit by the intelligible utterance that is in line with the Risen and exalted crucified Messiah. Spiritual activity is not an end in itself. Power and spiritual gifts that do come through the Spirit are not an end in themselves. The real evidence of the proper relationship between the Spirit's presence and the believer is the exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord (Fee, p. 582).

2. Unity and Diversity patterned in Trinity (12:4-31)

Paul begins this discussion by showing that diversity and unity are present in God Himself, the Triune God. Unity and diversity is essential in a human body, and it is essential in the Church.

He states their common experience, that of their conversion in verse 13. But goes on to illustrate in 14-26 that a true body has many parts. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit (v. 4). "Diversity, not uniformity, is essential for a healthy Church...The one God who is himself characterized by diversity in unity has decreed the same for His Church" (Fee, p. 583). Paul also wants to place spiritual gifts and the Church in its proper place. "Everything, absolutely everything, gifts, persons, Church, owes its origin to the one God who works all things in all of His people (v.6)" (Fee, p. 583).

a. Trinity and gifts (12:4-11)

Paul shows how the Spirit, the Lord, and God the Father are all involved in the working of spiritual gifts, ministries, and manifestations. There are a variety of gifts of the Spirit given to different people for the common good of the Church. Diversity is not only desired it is necessary. There fascination with tongues seems to be in view here, and therefore Paul must urge them to understand the superiority of diversity in unity.

b. The body - diversity in unity (12:12-14)

Paul simply argues that the one body is not one member but many members. Diversity is a part of unity, it is not "in spite of" unity. Unity is not the absence of differences; it is the presence of diversity with a common cause, or in this cause, a common reality, namely, being born again (v. 13) by the Holy Spirit.

c. Twofold application of the metaphor (12:15-26)

Paul continues to speak about unity and diversity. He uses the body as a metaphor to show that if there is to be a body, and not some kind of "alien creature," that many members are necessary to make up one body. He uses this metaphor to bolster what he has just said: the whole Body is not to assemble and only speak in tongues (Fee, p. 609). Many gifts are to be exercised, just as in one body, there are many members. So, he uses the body as an analogy for the various gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Next, Paul argues that the apparently weaker organs are more necessary, and the apparently less presentable members are given more honor. Here, Paul is arguing for the need for unity and mutual concern. He is probably thinking of some of the strife, factions, and abuses that were occurring in the Church in general and at the Lord's Table (the rich and poor, cf. 11:17-22). Thus Paul is arguing for the need for a diversity of spiritual gifts (cf., 12:4-11) and for unity and mutual respect among God's people.

d. The fact of diversity (12:27-31)

Paul directly applies what he has just been saying about unity and diversity to the Church. Here he argues for the need for diversity, not uniformity, in gifts and ministries (Fee, p. 617). He commands the Church to pursue the greater gifts (v. 31). Paul is about to launch into his next argument in chapter fourteen. That chapter is about the need for intelligibility in the community; and in the Church all the intelligible gifts are "greater" than uninterpreted tongues, because that which is understood may edify. But, before he gets to that point, "Paul interrupts himself to give the proper framework in which the 'greater gifts' are to function - love... 'Pursue love,' he commands, ' and in that context eagerly desire the things of the Spirit, especially those gifts that are intelligible and will thus edify the community'" is one way we could paraphrase Paul's last words in this paragraph (Fee, p. 625). The more excellent way that Paul wants to show the Church is the way of edification. To seek the common good is the excellent way, in contrast with the way they are heading - a way of division and destruction. Thus, Paul is

concerned about their motives for spiritual gifts. If they are seeking earnestly the things of the Spirit (14:1), but so that others will be edified, then they will all grow. Chapter 13, is showing that love is the only and best context for gifts. Paul calls them to love, to seek the good of others before oneself. This is the framework for spiritual gifts, and this is why the “chapter of love” is sandwiched between two chapters about the exercising of spiritual gifts.

3. Love is the more excellent way (13:1-13)

Paul needs to address the issue of love, because the Corinthians have defined spirituality without including concern for others. They have knowledge and spiritual gifts, but have failed to seek the good of others. The supremacy of Christian ethics is love (Fee, 627). I feel that since most of the Corinthians have come from a pagan background and not a Jewish background, that Paul is giving the Corinthians “the A-B-C’s” of spirituality. Love for God and love for other people were core to Judaism and were sealed in the Jewish mind since childhood. The Corinthians had not had this foundation. Paul needs to place their understanding of spirituality in a proper perspective, namely one that is in accord with the God of Israel, the God and Father of the crucified Messiah. First, Paul states the need for love, even in light of great religious activity. Next, Paul describes what love is. Then he explains why it is great: it is for both now and forever (Fee, p. 628). Two points need to be highlighted. Love is primary for Paul because it has already been given concrete expression in the coming of Jesus Christ to die for the sins of the world (cf., Rom. 5, 8; Eph. 2, 5, Gal. 2). “Love is not an idea for Paul, not even a ‘motivating factor’ for behavior. It *is* behavior. To love is to act; anything short of action is not love at all [(i.e., John 3:16)]. Second, love is not set over against the gifts...For Paul it is not ‘gifts to be sure, but better yet love’; rather, love is the way in which the gifts are to function. To desire earnestly expressions of the Spirit that will build up the community is how love acts in this context” (Fee, p. 628).

a. The necessity of love (13:1-3)

Paul has argued previously that the Corinthians have not understood the Gospel fully, its implications, or Christian ethics. Here Paul explains the need for love. It is the atmosphere in which spiritual gifts should operate. Jesus has said, “Without me you can *do* nothing” (John 15). Paul says here, “Without love I *am* nothing.” He brings up terms he has used before, in regard to tongues, knowledge, and prophecy. These are all issues he has addressed in prior chapters. Now, he argues that though these are important, they alone do not constitute spirituality. Whatever one does is not spiritually significant without love.

b. The character of love (13:4-7)

If one examines this section closely, they will see that Paul is describing love in almost negative terms in comparison to their behavior. They have not been kind, they have been envious, they have been selfish, they have been boasting (1 Cor. 5:6 “Your boasting is not good”). In verse 5 he says that love does not act “unbecomingly” but in 7:36, he spoke of a man who acts unbecomingly. In verse 5 he also states that love does not take into account a wrong suffered. This is surely linked indirectly to: “Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?” (1 Cor. 6:7). Be wronged, because love doesn’t keep an account of those things. Why? Because love seeks to maintain unity and it seeks the good of others. The comparisons can go on and on. Paul’s definition of love is in direct (opposite) correspondence with the Corinthian’s behavior and attitudes. Love is an action, and it is chiefly one that seeks to help others. The Corinthians

need to understand this in light of the many problems in the Church, not only over leadership, over nonessential matters (food), nor legal matters, not only in worship services (abuses at the Lord's Supper), but also in their practice of spiritual gifts (chapter 12).

c. The permanence of love (13:8-13)

Paul contrasts love and gifts in terms of their lasting value. The irony is that the one ingredient that lasts forever, and that is to be the foundation for spiritual gifts, the Corinthians have lacked. Yet, they have thought that they were truly spiritual because of their spiritual gifts. Paul shows that there is no spirituality without love. They have prioritized that which will pass away over that which lasts forever. Such is the state of man after the fall. We all, even redeemed humanity, tend to value our treasures on earth, and forget that Jesus said to store up treasures in Heaven. Paul has two purposes here: 1. to redirect the Corinthian's thinking on the nature of true spirituality, and 2. to place their emphasis on spiritual gifts in the framework of the primacy of love (Fee, p. 641). Paul wants their earnestness for spiritual gifts to be directed toward the edification of the community of faith. After all, after Christ returns, love will continue, but there will be no need for prophecy or tongues then.

4. The need for understanding and edification in the Church (14:1-25)

In chapter 12, Paul argued for diversity, that tongues are only one of the many manifestations of the Spirit. In chapter 13, Paul argued that no amount of spiritual giftedness matters unless it is used as a "gift" to give to others. To love, to seek the common good, to meet the need of someone else, to build up the Church, is not only truly spiritual, but it is why the Spirit manifests such gifts (I see the gifts of the Spirit in complement with the fruit of the Spirit, and therefore they work hand in hand, simultaneously). In this section, chapter 14, Paul addresses two issues: intelligibility and order (we'll address order in detail in part 5 below). The manifestation of the Spirit must be understood in order for it to edify the believer (vv. 1-19). Likewise, unbelievers can be converted from hearing a message they understand (vv. 20-25).

a. The greater gift of prophecy (14:1-5)

Paul makes four points here. First, love and spiritual gifts need to be married to one another at all times (v. 1). Second, uninterpreted tongues do not edify (v. 2). Third, prophecy does edify, therefore seek the intelligible gifts (prophecy, interpreted tongues, etc.) (v. 4-5). Finally, edifying oneself is not a bad thing; it simply is not the point of communal worship (v. 4) (Fee, p. 653).

b. Analogies for intelligibility (14:6-12)

Paul continues his argument from the previous paragraph about the need for the listener to understand the message. Hearers do not benefit at all from what is not understandable. He uses analogies from musical instruments as well as foreign languages to illustrate his point (Fee, p. 661). Paul concludes with the thrust of his argument: So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the Church (v. 12).

c. Application for the believers (14:13-19)

Paul continues to check the unbridled usage of uninterpreted tongues in the Church. Paul continues his thought from the previous sections, but applies it directly to the worship services. His conclusion is that the tongues needs to be interpreted for the sake of the community.

d. Application for the unbelievers (14:20-25)

Paul's main concern here is how prophecy and tongues relate to unbelievers. Even though he speaks of the affect of prophecy on the believer (v. 22), he moves on from this point and deals with prophecy and unbelievers, for he has already addressed this issue regarding believers in the previous sections. His main concern here is how tongues and prophecy affect unbelievers. Paul states that tongues (in fulfillment of Isa. 28:11) do not lead sinners to repentance. Just as unintelligible speech was helpless for the Church, it is helpless for the unbeliever. The unbeliever will think the one speaking in tongues is mad! (v. 23). Paul's argument remains: the gifts that are understandable not only edify believers (vv. 1-19), but they also may lead to the conversion of an unbeliever (vv. 20-25). Therefore, the intelligible gifts are to have their proper place (and priority) in the worship service, namely, that they may edify the Church and convict the unchurched.

5. Order in gifts and gender (14:26-40)

Paul now concludes his previous argument. He instructs the members of the Church to each contribute something, and it must be done for the building up of others (v. 26). He then speaks about tongues and interpretation (vv. 27-28), and then prophecy and discernment (vv. 29-31). He ends that paragraph stating that God is a God of order or peace. He speaks of women in the Church to ensure proper order, and then closes with a word about authority (vv. 36-38). Paul has been defending his position, and here he argues for his teaching and backs it up by pointing to other Churches. This section is necessary due to the Corinthians single-faceted view of worship (emphasis on tongues), as well as their lack of self-control, and the disorder that the confusion in the Church was probably causing.

a. The ordering of tongues and prophecy (14:26-33)

Paul exhorts the Corinthians to each contribute something different in the worship service. The Body has many members. He places some regulations on tongues and prophecy, and ends with an admonition regarding self-control and order. It seems that the Corinthians undue fascination with spiritual gifts and their lack of love has caused many problems in public worship. Paul continues to emphasize unity and diversity (v. 26), and as before, is trying to establish order and peace in the Church. As some themes were stated earlier, this section, as well as many discussed before, addresses their concept of true spirituality, as well as hopes to bring about unity (for guidelines and correction can help everyone remain on "the same page."). In short, edification cannot occur where there is no order. How can all learn and be encouraged in an atmosphere of disorder (as well as there being too much focus on tongues, and not adding to that a hymn, a word of instruction, etc.)? If worship reflects the character of God (God is a God of peace, v. 32), things will be done properly.

b. The order of women (14:34-35)

It seems that there were women in the congregation who were engaging in the weighing of prophecies (See Piper and Grudem's *Rediscovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* for excellent discussions on these issues). Paul is not calling for their complete silence (cf. v. 11:5). He is making sure that the order he just spoke about is maintained in regard to male/female relationships in the Church. The issue in this passage is about women usurping the authority of males in the Church, not the authority of their husbands. This fits in with the flow of the thought in 1 Cor. 11-14. This paragraph is not forbidding women to speak, which would violate chapter eleven. It is simply telling women not to weigh the prophecies (which Paul just wrote

about in 14:26-33), since the authority of males in the Church would be jeopardized. Men, as the head (1 Cor. 11), are to sustain the roles of leadership. Women are to keep silent on this issue, because the weighing of prophecies would be equal to setting doctrine. This is reserved for the men in the Church, which is made plain by comparing other texts such as 1 Timothy 2.

c. Conclusion (14:36-40)

Paul has been arguing that they have misunderstood what it means to be spiritual. Speaking in tongues is good he says, but it is not the only thing that should go on in the Church. In addition, Paul rebukes the Corinthians for wanting to do things their way, and acting selfishly. Are they the only people that the Word of God has reached? Surely not. Then why are they doing things differently in comparison to “all the Churches of the saints” (v. 34)? Paul shows them their foolishness and corrects them. Paul states here that if one is truly a “person of the Spirit” he will recognize that what he has been writing is from the Lord. He sums up by saying that they should be eager to prophesy, to not forbid speaking in tongues, and that everything should be done in an orderly manner.

F. The Resurrection of Christ and Believers (15:1-58)

As stated earlier, the Corinthians seem to have had an “overrealized eschatology.” “In their view, by the reception of the Spirit, and especially the gift of tongues, they had already entered the true “spirituality” that is to be (4:8); already they had begun a form of angelic existence (13:1; cf. 4:9; 7:1-7) in which the body was unnecessary and unwanted, and would finally be destroyed. Thus for them life in the Spirit meant a final ridding of oneself of the body, not because it was evil but because it was inferior and beneath them; the idea that the body would be raised would have been anathema” (Fee, p. 715). It is for this reason that Paul sets out to defend the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and teaches the Corinthians about their own future resurrection. Paul wonders how they can believe in the Resurrection and yet deny the bodily resurrection of believers. It seems that they had a “spiritualized” view of the resurrection, much like some from the Jesus Seminar movement believe today (i.e., Marcus Borg). Paul first reestablishes their commonly held belief, that Jesus was raised from the dead (they are at odds, though they hold this common view, because they don’t agree on the nature of the Resurrection). This is presented in such a way as to emphasize the objective reality of Christ’s bodily death and resurrection (Fee, p. 714). Next, Paul takes up their absurd position, and shows the logical outcome of such a view. He proves that if there is no resurrection from the dead, and if Christ has not been raised, then their faith is in vain. Christ’s Resurrection is the first fruits of the full harvest, having set in motion the defeat of death, and the inevitability of a resurrection of believers from the dead. Lastly, he explains how the dead are raised, that is, in what form there are raised. He explains that we are given a spiritual body, that is different from our present earthly body, which is adapted for future, heavenly conditions. There is a continuity and a discontinuity in this body. It is not subject to the limitations of time and space as we are now, but it still is a physical body in some sense. He also ties all of this together to correct their behavior. The Resurrection is foundational to all that Paul has written, and all that Paul does in his life. He states that the resurrection should cause them to be sober-minded, to stay away from bad company, and to stop sinning (vv. 33-34). In addition, Paul states that the resurrection should encourage them to persevere, continually abounding in the work of the Lord (v. 58). As always, Paul’s theology does not remain in the classroom, but it moves one out of it.

1. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ (15:1-11)

Here Paul does not set out to prove the Resurrections so much as to reassert the commonly held ground about Christ in order to disprove the Corinthian's idea that there is no resurrection of the dead. First, Paul argues that Christ died, was buried, and was raised, and this was the message that many have believed (vv. 1-2, 11). If this is not true, they have believed in vain (v. 2). Paul explains this tradition, probably a creed (to which he builds upon) to emphasize the corporeal aspects of Christ's work. His death, burial, Resurrection, and His witnesses after the resurrection all point to a bodily resurrection. The catalogue of witnesses serves to point out the reality of Christ's work and the corporeal aspect of it. Paul finally makes some comments about himself, probably to reassert his calling and role as an Apostle (vv. 9-11). This is necessary since Paul is grounding his argument regarding his experience with the Resurrected Christ, his preaching, in this authority from the Savior (Fee, 713-716).

2. Certainty of the Resurrection (15:12-34)

Paul now moves to refute those who deny the resurrection. He argues that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ was not raised, which not only contradicts the common faith that he just spoke of (vv. 1-11), but logically means that he and they cease to exist as believers (Fee, p. 737). He continues in vv. 20-28 to show that on the other hand, since Christ has been raised from the dead, this means that God has "set in motion two irreversibles: the resurrection of all who are "in Christ" (vv. 20-22) and thus the final destruction of death itself (vv. 23-28)" (Fee, p. 738). He concludes by stating that if there is no resurrection from the dead than their religious activities and his own ministry are pointless. His conclusion in this section contains a command for them to stop sinning, placing the resurrection of Christ in a category that cannot be separated from other aspects of life.

a. If Christ is not raised (15:12-19)

Paul argues from the Corinthian's standpoint, and shows how if this hypothetical situation is true, that Christ has not been raised, and the dead are not raised, then his preaching and their believing are hopeless. To deny this is to be a liar about God (v. 15). He simply argues the absurdity of their misunderstanding in order to present the truth which follows.

b. But Christ is raised (15:20-28)

Since Christ has been raised from the dead, the implications are staggering. For one, the death and resurrection of Christ and the subsequent gift of the Spirit mean for Paul that God has set in motion events of the End that by divine necessity must be brought to consummation. If Christ was resurrected, all who are in Christ will be resurrected (vv. 22-23). In addition, Christ now rules by virtue of the Resurrection, and because of this authority and power which has been given to Him, there needs to be a final overthrow of God's last enemy, death itself. The resurrection of believers is how this will be accomplished. If this occurs then God may be "all in all" (v. 28). This is in accord with God's sovereign purposes in history. All of this is to prove to the Corinthians that they have no idea what they are stating nor the implications that follow. They have failed to realize that to be "in Christ" means that we join Him in His death and Resurrection, as opposed to those who are in Adam (v. 22). Paul corrects their bad theology, their poorly realized identity in Christ, and their false view of spirituality, which saw no need for the body.

c. More arguments for the resurrection (15:29-34)

Paul first argues that if the dead are not raised then the dead who are baptized are baptized for no reason. He then moves from the Corinthian's experience to his own. He points out that the dangers he has faced are pointless if there is no resurrection. Lastly, he commands the Corinthians to stop being misled, to stop having fellowship with bad company, to think sensibly, and to stop sinning. From this we can infer that Paul understood a connection between their poor theology and the sins, which he has addressed previously. Probably, their deficient view of the body was used as a license for immorality as discussed in chapters five and six. Simply put, there is a direct relationship between what one believes about the future and how one behaves in the present (Fee, p. 770-775).

3. The Resurrection Body (15:35-58)

Paul now defends the body. A few things are at stake here. The doctrine of creation and God's pronouncement of it being good is at stake. The Corinthians saw the body as a hindrance to their new life in Christ, when in reality, although we are fallen, the body is still a part of God's created order and will remain so even into the ages to come. The Fall is also at stake, since transformation must occur since the body that God pronounced good has been corrupt through man's disobedience. Paul first argues for a spiritual body. This body is imperishable, and has a continuity to the natural body, as a seed and flower have continuity (vv. 35-38). He also argues that different bodies with different degrees of glory already exist, whether they be of birds and fish, or sun and stars (vv. 39-41). Next, Paul shows that the body to be received is imperishable and follows Christ as the example of the resurrection. A transformation must occur, and we will go from bearing the image of Adam to bearing the image of Christ. Finally, this transformation must occur so that we may enter Heaven, and so that death will be swallowed up in victory (vv. 50-58). This argument is crucial to the whole letter because the Corinthians are convinced that they are spiritual because they think they have entered into a heavenly existence. They have denied the use of the body in the present and the future. But Paul argues "as with Christ, so with us."

a. Analogies of seeds and bodies (15:35-44)

The analogy of the seed illustrates that one living thing, through death, can have two modes of existence. The seed is sown (in death) one way, and is raised another (vv. 36-38). God has also created bodies adapted for various forms of existence (birds, fish, etc.) (vv. 39-41). The first analogy, that of the seeds, stresses both continuity and transformation; the second analogy, that of the kinds of bodies, is intended to illustrate the phenomenon of bodies being adapted to their existence. Both are applied to the resurrection (vv. 42-44) (Fee, p. 779).

b. Application of analogies (15:45-49)

Paul continues to argue for a spiritual body. Paul argues that just as the Resurrection of Christ is the basis for our resurrection, it is also the basis for the resurrection body. Paul contrasts Adam and Christ to show that one is earthly, and one is heavenly. Those who have believed in Christ will not remain in Adam, (of the earth), but they will bear the image of the risen Christ, in a heavenly body. The Corinthian's theology had discounted the physical body and proper behavior that is associated with the body. Paul argues that they are still in the earthly body because they will die, and they are in need of a transformed body.

c. Future triumph through the resurrection (15:50-58)

Paul has already argued for the logic of the Resurrection and its certainty. He now emphasizes the necessity for the transformation of the body in order for one to enter a heavenly mode of existence. Paul also argues that the dead and the living must be changed. This must have been a shock to the Corinthians who may have already thought that “they had arrived.” (Fee, p. 797). He informs the Corinthians that this transformation will take place at the Coming of Christ. This new body will be imperishable and immortal. This concludes his teaching on the resurrection, and concludes his argument against the Corinthian’s belief that this is unnecessary. He leaves them with a word of encouragement to remain steadfast in the work of the Lord, knowing that the guarantee of the resurrection is a sure hope, one that should be the foundation for all that we do in our lives. Our present victory is predicated on Christ’s past Resurrection and our future resurrection, when we can proclaim, “death is swallowed up in victory!”

G. The Collection and Apollos (16:1-12)

1. Arrangements for the collection (16:1-4)

Paul seems to be addressing some other questions that the Corinthians had. They wondered about their part in the collection for the poor in Jerusalem and how it would get there. Paul tells them how to set aside money, and then says that he will send those whom the Corinthians approve of to Jerusalem (and he may go along with them). This offering is not only important for Paul who cares for the poor (cf. Gal. 2:9-10), but it was his attempt to bring unity between Gentile and Jewish Christians (Fee, p. 811). It was a matter of reciprocity as he states in 1 Cor. 9:10-12.

2. Paul and Timothy’s travel plans (16:5-11)

Here Paul gives some proposed plans for visiting the Church. He also wants to make sure that Timothy is treated properly. Given the abuse Paul had incurred, he probably wants to make sure that Timothy does not have a similar experience.

3. Apollos’ visit (16:12)

The Corinthians had asked for Apollos to return in their last letter. Paul tells them that he asked Apollos to go but Apollos did not want to go at that moment. This shows that Paul and Apollos were not at odds with each other, and that they had a loving relationship. It also shows that Paul really lived what he wrote. He did not stake any claim on the Church in Corinth, it is God’s Church (chapter 3). Though the return of Apollos may have caused some problems, Paul did not fear what would happen. He was confident in his Apostleship (and humble), regardless of what the Corinthians thought. Paul cared more about the Church than himself, and he truly wanted the Church to grow, regardless of who got the credit. His words reveal his heart, that Apollos and he are merely servants of God, and that all things belong to God.

VIII. Conclusion (16:13-24)

A. Concluding exhortations (16:13-18)

Paul closes with some final commands and exhortations. He tells them to be on guard, probably from corrosive influences (cf., Acts 20:31). He wants them to stand firm in the faith, that is in the Gospel that he preaches (chapter 15). He then tells them to be strong, probably meaning to hope in the Lord. In verse 14, he commands, “Do everything in love.” This echoes chapter 13. “All things’ would include the quarrels in the name of leaders in chapters 1-3, their

attitude toward him in chapters 4 and 9, the lawsuits in 6:1-11, husband and wife relationships in chapter 7, the abuse of the weak by those with 'knowledge' in 8:1-10:22, the abuse of the 'have-nots' at the Lord's Supper, and failure to edify the Church in worship in chapters 12-14. If they were to 'do all things in love' then these other things would not be happening" (Fee, p. 828) In these few verses, Paul summarizes much of his preceding argument. He also urges them to submit to other leaders in the Church, and states that they have supplied to Paul, as representatives of the Church, that which those in Corinth could not supply being so far away (Fee, p. 832).

B. Final greetings (16:19-24)

To this point, Paul's final words have been typical compared to his other letters. Here he adds a few new components. First, he states that if anyone does not love the Lord, they are to be accursed (v. 22). This is similar to his words in Galatians chapter one, and probably has the same meaning. He is warning those who would deviate from the Gospel which he preached, that they are in danger of punishment from the Lord. In addition, his words "Come O Lord," or "Maranatha" are unique to Paul. But, in light of their misunderstanding of the end times, this may be a useful prayer, so that the Corinthians will understand that they are still awaiting the final consummation. He also affirms his love to the Church (v. 24), not only to soften the blow of some of the harsh (but necessary) words he has spoken, but probably to show that he follows what he teaches. He does all things in love (v. 14), and in spite of the wrong that he has suffered from the Church, he is still able to love them. Paul's words:

"Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails..." (1 Cor. 13:4-8) are not only his words, but they are his way of life. His letter is an overflow of his heart, and despite all the problems with these people (and many directed toward him), Paul still loves the Corinthians. May God help us to love like this, and to live to build up His Church.

Summary

Paul has written a powerful letter. It is the Word of God, but it is also written skillfully by a man full of love, humility, passion for the lost, and a zeal to build up the Church. He has dealt with the divisions in the Church and has done so by showing the Jesus Christ, and Him crucified is the paradigm for ministry. The servant-heart of the Savior should be found in His followers, and Paul is no exception. His apostolic ministry was done in such a way as to model this sacrifice and humility. The Corinthians were so worldly, that they couldn't see that Paul's sacrifices did not make him weak, but were a sign of his strength (and authority) and trust in the Lord. Paul shows that the wisdom of God is greater than the wisdom of men, and that the Corinthians need to be taught by the Spirit in order to not be conformed to this world and its values. Since the leaders of the Church are to be servants, they must build the Church with care. The Church is God's Temple in Corinth, and His name is at stake. The Corinthians are to live in such a way that brings honor to their foundation, Jesus Christ. All the while, Paul defends his right to give such instruction. He has seen the Risen Christ and has been commissioned by him. But he does so as a loving father, proving that he is a true Apostle, for the false teachers have selfish motives. Paul loved the Church, sacrificed for the Church, and always looked out for their best interests, that which would help them grow in the Lord. As a father, he must discipline the incestuous man, and other sins in the Church, but always with a

view to building up and encouraging, not tearing down. Paul corrects their misunderstanding of spirituality and the End Times. There is still a resurrection to come, and true spirituality does not take away ethics or moral behavior. The body is given by God and is for the Lord. The Corinthians tried to compartmentalize their life in Christ. Christ is for Sunday, but we can do what we want on Friday. Paul tells them that they are to glorify God in everything that they do. It was pride and deception that led them to think that their spirituality and the magical sacraments could free them up to indulge in the flesh. Paul powerfully refutes these errors and shows them the more excellent way.

Paul has put the Church at ease in regard to their questions. He has answered their questions about marriage, divorce, widows, betrothals, and various other concerns. He also makes sure that they understand that Christian conduct must be characterized by love and not knowledge or license. It is time for the Corinthians to grow up and to start caring about other people and stop being so selfish. Paul shows them how to do this. Paul carefully articulates the balance between liberty and love. He shows that freedom in Christ is not so that we can maintain our rights, but so that we can build up other people. He warns them of disobeying the Lord and to learn from Israel and her mistakes. In matters of non-essentials, we should not place a stumbling block in someone's life because of our love for people, believers and non-believers. Paul helps the Church in their worship experiences. He teaches them to maintain order and peace. Order is necessary in relationships and in the exercising of spiritual gifts. His main concern is for their unity, which can exist with diversity in ministries and expressions of the Spirit. In everything, they must seek to edify one another, be it in treating the poor properly at the Lord's Supper, or by using intelligible gifts during worship. The Resurrection of Christ is their hope and it is their assurance of their own resurrection. This reality should impact their present behavior. We are assured of victory, and since death has no hold on Christ or his followers, we should be always engaged in the work of the Lord. Paul closes by taking care of some arrangements, but always assures the Corinthians of his concern, love, and care for them. He has answered their questions, he has tried to help them become more unified, and he has taught them about what matters most: love (placing someone before yourself, meeting a need, building up someone else), because it is one of the most powerful things in this life and in the life to come. Paul is assured that they will grow up because "God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

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