

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS
1 CORINTHIANS



Building Foundations 1 Corinthians

Study Guide

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Progression Toward Maturity

Phase 1: Relationship with God (Revelation 4:11; 1 Corinthians 1:9)

- The Call of God Is First to Himself.
- Foundation for Salvation (“Creation to Christ”)

Phase 2: Position with Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30a)

- We Become a New Creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Foundation for Salvation (“Positioned in Christ” and “New Birth Explained”)

Phase 3: Dependence upon the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13-14)
- Church Is the Pillar and Foundation of Truth (1 Timothy 3:15)
- Acts/Building Foundations

Phase 4: Practical Sanctification–Identification with Christ, Co-crucified with Christ, Conformed to Image of Christ (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:28-29)

- Romans to Revelation/Building Foundations
- Principles of Spiritual Growth
- God’s Masterpiece–The Cross
- Looking unto Jesus Lessons

Conclusion: Recommended Order of Study

Detailed Explanation of Each Phase

Phase 1: Foundation for Salvation (“Creation to Christ”)

The Christian life is a relationship; therefore, our desire is to lead our readers into a deep and intimate relationship with God. In order to grow into that level of relationship with

God, there are foundational truths that must be clearly taught and understood. These foundational truths include the following:

- The attributes of God – His love, power, grace, omniscience, omnipotence, justice, immutability, hatred of sin, faithfulness.
- The sinfulness of man, his helplessness to save himself, and his need for a Savior.
- Only God can provide a way of salvation.
- The Gospel

Phase 2: Foundation for Sanctification (“Positioned in Christ” and “The New Birth Explained”)

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

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

Phase 3: Dependence upon the Spirit and Introduction of the Church (“Acts/Building Foundations”)

The position change that takes place in every believer's life at salvation is immediate and complete. The daily "living out" of that position, on the other hand, is a growth process.

It is the progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is working all believers through in His process of conforming us to the image of Christ.

In order for believers to move on to maturity, we must learn to walk and depend upon the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our purpose in Phase 3 teaching is to reveal the Holy Spirit's ministry and His faithfulness to lead, guide, feed, and protect God's children, as well as to introduce the church. Some of the important foundational truths that should be emphasized include the following:

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

Phase 4: Practical Sanctification–Identification with Christ; Conformed to the image of Christ (“Romans to Revelation/Building Foundations”), “Principles of Spiritual Growth,” God’s Masterpiece the Cross of Christ,” and “Looking Unto Jesus” lessons)

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

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

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

- The believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (crucified with Him and raised to newness of life)
- Sanctification is the process of walking less and less in the flesh and more and more in the Spirit.
- Our part in the process is faith in the finished work of Christ and our identification with it.
- What it means to truly walk in the Spirit
- Putting off the old and putting on the new
- Manifesting the life of Christ/fruit of the Spirit

Conclusion: Recommended Order of Study

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

- ***God's Eternal Plan***
- ***Building Foundations Order of Study:***

Acts	2 Corinthians
Romans	Philippians
Ephesians	Philemon
1 Corinthians	2 Timothy
1 Timothy	1 and 2 Peter
Titus	1, 2 and 3 John
1 and 2 Thessalonians	Hebrews
Revelation	James
Galatians	Jude
Colossians	
- ***Knowing God*** before the ***Digging Deeper*** studies
- ***Digging Deeper*** studies in any order

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 1

A. Introduction

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

B. Paul's Reason For Writing to the Corinthians

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

C. An Apostle By the Will of God

Read 1 Corinthians 1:1.

- Paul begins by reminding the Corinthians that he is an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God; Paul did not choose this position for himself.
- It was God who chose Paul to be an apostle (“*sent one*”); his message, therefore, was from God and was not his own.
- Sosthenes was a man who traveled with and helped Paul while he was in Ephesus—possibly the same Sosthenes who was beaten in **Acts 18:17**.
- As we have previously studied through Acts, Romans, and Ephesians, we have seen that Paul would most often have someone traveling with him. Why? So that others would have an opportunity to learn from Paul and could assist him in the work.
- When we go out from the church to teach in other places, it would be good to take another believer along.

D. Set Apart in Christ

Read 1 Corinthians 1:2-3.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 1:4.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 1:5-7.

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

E. Blameless Before God

Read 1 Corinthians 1:8-9.

- Because of our position in Christ, we are blameless before God. When Christ returns, He will establish us before the Father as blameless and holy in our condition.
- It is God Who has called us into this relationship with His Son and, therefore, we can be confident that it will happen because God is faithful.
- At the time of Paul's writing this letter, the Corinthians were experiencing divisions and other fleshly sin.
- Their position and acceptance before God was secure and not based on their faithfulness to live the "Christian" life but on the faithfulness of God Who called them into the relationship (**Romans 8:1, 28, 29**).
- It was God Who loved the world.
- It was God Who sent His Son to die.

- It was God Who showed us that we needed a Savior and that we could trust in the death of His Son.
- It is God Who now totally accepts us in the righteousness of His own Son.
- It is God Who has given us the Holy Spirit to reveal these things so that we can experience them now.
- Just as it was the faithfulness of God that brought all of this about, so we can rest assured that His faithfulness will see us through to the end when we will stand in His presence, totally accepted as His beloved child.

F. God Always Finishes What He Starts.

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

G. Divisions in the Church

- Paul first assured the people of their standing and position before God. This was important for two reasons:
 1. It reconfirmed to the Corinthian believers that their acceptance before God was not based on their performance; even though they were having

problems, it did not change their standing before God.

2. It helped put into perspective the “pettiness” of their arguing and divisions. When we realize all that is ours before a holy and righteous God, how could anything else matter?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-12.

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

H. Ridiculous Divisions

Read 1 Corinthians 1:13.

- Paul begins to ask them questions to expose the ridiculousness of their divisions and to show them the depravity of their flesh.
- “Was Christ divided?”

Read Ephesians 4:4-6.

- All believers have been unified in Christ, but remember what Paul said in Ephesians 4:3. Unity can only be preserved through peace, which is part of the fruit of the Spirit. Only when we walk in the Spirit will our unity be preserved.
- Divisions in the church come when the people walk in the flesh—hence the Corinthian dilemma.
- Was Paul crucified for you? Of course not.
- Were you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not.
- Paul is asking these questions to reveal to the Corinthians their earthly minded “carnality.”

Read 1 Corinthians 1:14-16.

- Paul’s comments about baptism were intended to show that the act of baptism, in and of itself, accomplishes nothing in our lives.
- What is important is that water baptism symbolizes our identification into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
- Our positional placement into Christ and ultimately into His death, burial, and resurrection, happens whether we ever get baptized in water or not. The act of water baptism only symbolizes that “spiritual” baptism (placement into Christ).

I. Paul Walked in the Spirit.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 1:17-18.

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

Read Romans 1:16.

- When the Holy Spirit reveals the truth of the gospel to a heart, only then can that person believe and be saved.
- When we are walking in the Spirit, our dependence for the salvation of others will be on the Holy Spirit, but when we are walking in the flesh our dependence will be in our efforts and worldly wisdom to convince, convict, and convert people.
- When Paul writes, “*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing*,” he was again bringing the Corinthians back to the foolishness of their divisions.
- What enabled them to become saved and to grow in Christ was the Holy Spirit using the truth of the cross in their lives, not the wisdom and illustrations of those whose teaching they may have received.
- The deeper truth regarding the cross is often unknown in Christian circles. Christ went to the cross alone to pay the penalty for our sin (**Romans 5:8**); we went to the cross with Christ to be set free from the power of sin (**Romans 6:6-14**).

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 2

A. The Wisdom of the Wise Is Foolishness to God.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:19-20.

- Paul continues with the thought that he only preached the gospel, not his opinions and not with the wisdom of the world.
- God said in **Isaiah 29:13** that He destroys the wisdom of the wise.
- We can see many examples of God destroying man's wisdom:
 1. When Cain brought his own sacrifice, he thought he could come to God in his own way.
 2. The Tower of Babel: God commanded man to spread out and fill the earth. They rejected God's command and leaning on their own understanding decided to gather themselves together and make a name for themselves.
 3. Joseph's brothers thought they were wise in their plan to get Joseph out of their lives. They sold him as a slave; but God raised him to be the second in command over all of Egypt, and his brothers bowed down.
 4. Pharaoh: planned to destroy God's people; but God destroyed his land, killed his first-born son, and drowned his army in the sea.
 5. The greatest example of God destroying man's wisdom is through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. When Jesus was on earth, the Pharisees and Sadducees were considered to be very wise men who knew the ways of God. They rejected Jesus' teaching, for they were wise in their own eyes. They saw Jesus as a liar and a blasphemer; therefore, they were convinced that

their plan to kill Him was the will of God. They arrested Jesus, turned Him over to the Romans where he was beaten, spit upon, mocked, and finally crucified on a cross. After He died, in their wisdom, they put a guard and a seal over His tomb so that the body could not be stolen. So man carried out his plan to destroy Jesus, but God used His death to pay for our sins. God raised Him back to life, took Him to heaven and seated Him at His very own right hand, demonstrating to the world His acceptance of His payment for sin.

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

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

Read 1 Corinthians 1:21.

- The Jews were God's chosen people. During the time of Paul, the Jews became very proud.
- God had given them the law, the prophets, and the Old Testament, and they really believed that they knew God.
- Even though they had all these advantages and considered themselves to be wise in knowing God, they still missed the truth regarding salvation through Christ.
- The Greeks and Romans were in a similar situation. They had their wise men and also claimed to know the truth.
- None of them, through their wise men, ever came to know God or ever came to establish a right relationship with Him.

- God in His wisdom has never permitted man to know Him through man's own wisdom.
- However, God has made Himself known through the preaching of His Word.
- From the beginning of the world, God has simply required people to believe His Word if they are to know Him.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:22-23.

- God has not chosen to use signs or miracles in these days to persuade people to believe in Him. He saves by bringing us to believe in the simple preaching of the gospel.
- However, to the Jews, the gospel was an offense because they saw Jesus as a liar and a blasphemer.
- In their minds they thought, "How could salvation come through someone who has blasphemed God?"
- On the other hand, to the Greeks seeking worldly wisdom, the gospel was simply foolishness. In their minds, Jesus was a poor Jewish carpenter's son who was rejected and crucified by His own people. "How could salvation come through such a One as this?"
- Therefore, for the most part, neither the Jews nor the Greeks were willing to take the gospel at face value, believe it, and be saved.
- Remember Noah: God did not give him any special signs or miracles to perform, just preach the truth.
- Only Noah and his family believed and were saved. The rest of the world rejected it and were destroyed.
- Paul said that the "**Jews require a sign.**" It is interesting to consider that the Jews had already seen Jesus perform many miracles, but they continued to ask for more signs and wonders so that they would believe that He really was the Deliverer.

- The Jews knew that God was going to send a Deliverer, but they thought He would deliver them from Roman rule, not their sin.
- In their eyes, Jesus was a poor carpenter, the leader of a band of uneducated fishermen, who didn't even have the power to keep Himself from being crucified as a criminal. How could He be the Deliverer?
- There are still people today who desire to see a sign in order to believe the truth.
- God isn't in the habit of giving signs; He has given His Word and people must believe it.
- Paul said that the **"Greeks look for wisdom."**
- The Greeks were looking for some wise human plan that would save the world from all its troubles.
- The thought that the answer to all the world's problems would be found through trusting in a poor Jew called Jesus, who had been rejected by His own people and crucified by the Romans, was ridiculous.
- There are still people all over the world who continue to think that they are wiser than God.
- God says that if they believe the gospel, they will be saved; but they continue to depend upon other things for their acceptance before God.
- They have their own ideas about how the world began and how they can make peace with God and where they will go when they die.
- No one in their own wisdom can come to know God. God and His Truth can only be known through the teaching of His Word as the Holy Spirit reveals it to our hearts.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:24.

- Unbelieving Jews and Gentiles saw Jesus as a deceiver who was crucified.
- But to those who have been chosen by God to believe His message by faith, know that through the Lord

Jesus' death, God has worked His all-wise and powerful plan to save us from the power of Satan, sin, and death.

C. God's Plans Are Wise.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:25.

- God's plans, which unbelievers call foolishness, are far wiser than the wisest of man's plans.
- The thought that God would permit His Son's enemies to crucify Him seemed extremely foolish.
- But in the end, this was God's wise plan through which man could receive eternal salvation.
- Then Paul commented, **"The weakness of God is stronger than men."**
- When Jesus was hanging on the cross, it appeared that He was beaten and helpless and that God couldn't save Him.

Read Mark 15:29-32.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

- God could have chosen some mighty and beautiful angels to proclaim the gospel.
- Had He done that, the focus would have been on the greatness of the messenger and not the greatness of the message.
- Therefore, God has chosen to use ordinary people.

- When Jesus was on earth, the majority of His followers were not people who had great authority in the community nor were there many who were rich and well educated.
- For the most part, the apostles of Jesus were not influential or well-educated men. Most of them had been poor fishermen when they were called to follow Him (**Acts 4:13**).
- The educated rulers of their time would have considered them to be unimportant, but Jesus used them to proclaim His message of grace to an unbelieving world.
- Natural man is born into this world with a self-sufficient and independent mindset. The wiser and stronger he considers himself to be, the more blind he becomes to his need for a savior.
- Therefore, it makes sense that God would choose those, who in the world's eyes, are foolish, weak, and ignorant to proclaim His message. Then the acceptance of the message will not be because of human wisdom, strength, or knowledge in communicating it, but because of the Holy Spirit's work in the heart of man.
- Therefore, as Paul wrote in verse 29, there is no reason for man to boast; his boasting will be in God.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 1:30-31.

- Notice the first few words in this verse 30. God took us and He placed us into Christ.
- Now it is interesting to consider that Paul tells us Jesus is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption.
- Wisdom can only be called wisdom if it is in line with truth.
- Because God is God, He has and knows all truth. Therefore, He is "all-wise." Anything that is not in

accordance with His perspective cannot be called wisdom but rather is foolishness.

- In John 14:6: “***Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’***” Jesus is the TRUTH, and we are positioned in Him.
- Therefore, as we walk in the Spirit and the Spirit produces the life of Christ in us, His life will be our enablement to see and agree with all that God says is truth. Therefore, JESUS IS OUR WISDOM.
- Next, Paul said Jesus is our righteousness.
- Romans 6 teaches that we have been baptized into Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.
- In His death, our flesh was co-crucified with Christ, thereby freeing us from the reign of “daily” sin in our lives.
- As His death to sin is also our death to sin, so His new life has also become our new life.
- Therefore, God sees Jesus as being righteous before His sight, so we have received that same righteousness.
- Paul also said Jesus is our sanctification or holiness.
- Jesus is our holiness because we are positioned in Him and have been given His very life which includes His holiness.
- Right now positionally before God we are declared to be holy and blameless children of God (**Ephesians 1:4**).
- As we walk in the Spirit and the life of Christ is reproduced in us and lived out through us, the result will be a holy lifestyle. His holy life can only produce holiness.
- Furthermore, Paul wrote Jesus is our redemption, which means set free by the payment of a ransom.
- Because we have been set free from hell, Satan, the penalty of sin, judgment, and the daily reign of sin over our lives and have been positioned in Christ and given His wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, there is only one thing that we can boast in—**GOD AND HIS GRACE TO SINFUL MAN.**

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 3

A. Paul's Manner of Preaching in Corinth

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

- Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that they had originally trusted in Christ, not because of Paul's wisdom or great ability to speak, for he was weak, fearful, and unimpressive; but rather they came to Christ because of the Holy Spirit's work and the power of the gospel (**Romans 1:16**).
- The Holy Spirit demonstrated power and communicated the truth of Christ and His crucifixion to their hearts so that the Corinthian's faith was resting on the power of God and not the wisdom of men.
- In **Galatians 5:20**, Paul writes that part of the works of the flesh are "*dissensions [and] heresies*," which could be translated as opinions that are different from the truth.
- In the flesh, the desire to teach our "views" of truth or opinions is very strong, and our dependence will be on our own wisdom and persuasive speech rather than on the power of the Spirit.
- In the Spirit, we realize this is God's work and it is solely dependent upon the Holy Spirit to communicate truth to hearts and not upon what we say or how we say it.
- We will simply share the truth with people, trusting the Holy Spirit to use it in lives as He sees fit.
- In verse 3 Paul said he was fearful and weak when he was with them proclaiming the gospel.
- This is where God wants all of us to live life: recognizing how weak and insufficient we are without Him.

- To the degree that we think we are wise, strong, and good, we will trust in ourselves.

B. Paul's Reason for Preaching as He Did

Read 1 Corinthians 2:5.

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

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

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6.

- The preaching of the Word of God that the world calls foolish is actually the wisdom of God.
- It is a wisdom that is different from worldly wisdom, and only those to whom the Holy Spirit reveals it are able to understand. God's wisdom can only be understood spiritually.
- For example, read **John 6:47-52, 66-69.**
- When Jesus said He was the Bread of Life, the majority of the people did not understand and left. Notice how different Peter's words are because the Holy Spirit had revealed to him the truth.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:7-10.

- The wisdom of God that we preach is a wisdom that God established even before the creation of the world.
- It is a wisdom the rulers (those considered to be the wisest and most important) of this world don't understand.
- Had the rulers of Jesus' day understood it, they would have trusted in Christ and not rejected and murdered Him.
- This wisdom contains truths that are so wonderful and amazing in regard to God's children that no man has ever seen, heard, or ever thought of such things.
- Verse 10 tells us we know and understand this wisdom because the Holy Spirit, who knows the deep things of God, has revealed them to us.
- That same Spirit, who fully comprehends and knows God and knows His wisdom, has been given to us so that we can know His wisdom also (**John 16:12-14**).
- It is the Spirit, fully knowing the depths of God, who will lead us into truth. Therefore, there is no limit to the amount of truth that we can know.
- The flesh is the only hindrance to our growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:11-13.

- Just as only a man's spirit can know the hidden, secret things in his life, so only the Holy Spirit knows the hidden, secret wisdom of God.
- Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the only One who can reveal these things to us.
- The human intellect CANNOT understand or comprehend the things which God has freely given to us; therefore, the Spirit of God must communicate truth to our spirits.

D. The Natural Man and the Spiritual Man

Read 1 Corinthians 2:14-16.

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

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 4

A. The Corinthian Believers Were Still Carnal.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-4.

- In Chapter 1, Paul told the Corinthians he had heard they were having divisions.
- Now in Chapter 3, Paul tells them why they are having the problems.
- Notice verse 1—Paul writes that he was not able to talk to them as spiritual men or men who are being led by the Spirit because they were walking in the flesh.
- Remember what Paul had said about receiving the truth in **1 Corinthians 2:13-14**.
- Spiritual truth can only be spiritually understood. That means in order for us to understand, it has to be communicated to our human spirit by the Holy Spirit.
- Since these believers were walking in the flesh, there was no communion or fellowship with the Holy Spirit, and spiritual truth could not be communicated to their hearts.
- Paul had to continue teaching fundamental truths that they should have known long ago.
- Positionally, the Corinthian believers were spiritual because they had already received salvation.
- But conditionally, they were not spiritual. They were born again believers with an indwelling Holy Spirit but were walking in the flesh.
- Therefore, Paul was not able to teach them as spiritual people.
- In verse 3, Paul said he had given them milk to drink rather than meat to eat.
- Babies can only drink milk.

- Paul writes that these believers were spiritual babies in regard to the type of truth they could receive and understand.
- Their divisions were proof of their carnality and fleshly-mindedness (**Galatians 5:19-21**).
- At the time of Paul's writing to the Corinthians, they had been believers for six years. They should have been well into the appropriation of the identification truths, those deeper truths that can only be spiritually understood.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-8.

- These verses are proof of Paul's comments regarding the immaturity of the Corinthians.
- Paul was forced to spend time telling them things they should have known, understood, and walked in long ago.
- Had the Corinthian believers been walking in the Spirit, there would have been no division problem among them.
- It is interesting to consider that the fruit of the Spirit is peace. Peace promotes unity, not division.
- Because they were carnal, Paul was forced to point out their wrong in order to expose their fleshly condition.
- Every mature Christian knows it is not right to exalt men, that man without God is nothing, knows nothing, and can do nothing.
- But Paul had to point out this very elementary truth to the Corinthians as though they were babes in Christ who had never been taught.
- Paul explains in this passage that the work of evangelization and the discipleship of God's children is God's work.

- In God's work, He uses His servants. He uses some to do the planting and others to do the watering; but ultimately, it is God who produces the growth.
- When it is the growing season, the ground is prepared and seeds are planted. In order for there to be a crop, both of these jobs are important; but only God can cause the crop to grow.
- It will be the same for us. God is using some of us to plant (evangelize) and others to water (disciple). Ultimately, we're all working together for the same goal and it will be God who produces the growth.
- Therefore, it is He in whom our trust should be and not ourselves.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:8-15.

- Paul writes that each of God's servants must be careful how he is "building" (teaching or discipling) in this work of God (evangelism and discipleship).
- Is it according to fleshly human wisdom and ways or according to the truth that only the Spirit can communicate?
- Paul makes some rather interesting comments in **Romans 8:5-6**.
- The flesh promotes "death" or separation from God.
- The Spirit produces life and peace.
- In 1 Corinthians 3:11, Paul writes there is only one true foundation which can be laid and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- There are two ways in which we can build upon the foundation of the finished work of Christ: according to the flesh or according to the Spirit.
- Whichever one is the source of the building will become evident.
- If we are building in the flesh, our focus will be earthly, depending upon human wisdom to communicate truth rather than the Holy Spirit.

- If we are indeed earthly-minded, we will not be able to receive spiritual truth from the Spirit and will be unable to pass it on to our disciples.
- We may be able to imitate spiritual growth and teach others to imitate it, but it will be a false growth, one in which our flesh is the source, making it unacceptable to God, regardless of how “good” it may appear.
- If we are building in the Spirit, our focus will be heavenly and the fruit of the Spirit will characterize our life and teaching (**Galatians 5:22-24**).
- According to **1 Corinthians 2:12-13**, we receive spiritual truth from the Spirit. Therefore, our growth will be genuinely spiritual, in which the Spirit is the source, thereby making it acceptable to God.

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 5

A. The Second Evidence of Walking in the Flesh

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-2.

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

B. Paul’s Command to Minister to the Immoral Brother

Read 1 Corinthians 5:3-4.

- Paul makes it clear that the whole church, not just the leadership, was to gather as one body in order to minister to this brother.
- Secondly, their ministry to this brother was to be done in Jesus’ name and under His authority.
- In order for something to be done in Jesus’ name and under His authority, it stands to reason that Jesus would have to be in agreement with it.

- As believers, we have been given the mind of Christ; however, unless we walk in the Spirit, we will not daily be of the same mind with Christ.
- In the flesh, we can only be one mind with the flesh, seeing things according to our flesh.
- In the Spirit, they will be of the same mind as Christ and therefore will know what His will is, thereby enabling them to minister to him in Jesus' name and under His authority.
- Notice Paul's strong words to the Galatians regarding ministering to those who have fallen into sin. Read **Galatians 6:1**.
- When a brother or sister falls into sin, the goal is to see them restored, not judged and condemned.
- Notice Paul said it is those who are walking in the Spirit who can do the restoring.
- How could a man who is walking in the flesh with his own fellowship broken with God restore another to fellowship?
- In the flesh, our dealing with a sinning brother will be critical, judgmental, and the motivation will not be love, but rather a desire to exalt oneself by making others look bad.
- In the Spirit, the love of Christ compels/controls us (**2 Corinthians 5:14**) and our desire will be to see our brothers and sisters restored to fellowship with God.

Read 1 Corinthians 5:5.

- What Paul writes here seems to contradict what he wrote in Galatians 6:1.
- But notice his purpose for turning this person over to Satan.
- Apparently, this man's heart was so hard that he was not willing to accept the ministry of the church in his life.

- Therefore, Paul wrote that the Lord would have them excommunicate this person from the church and that God would use Satan to bring about “destruction” in his physical life.
- The goal in this destruction would be for this brother to see the wretchedness of his flesh and to bring about his restoration and fellowship with the Lord.
- The Amplified Version actually translates this verse in this way: ***“You are to deliver this man over to Satan for physical discipline (to destroy carnal lusts which prompted him to incest) that his spirit may yet be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”***

C. The Purpose of Church Discipline

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

D. Judging the Sin of Believers and Unbelievers

Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13.

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

E. Conclusion

- Our part in all this is to walk by faith and in the Spirit, presenting ourselves to God for His possession and use. God loves every believer and intimately knows their heart and He knows what each one needs. As we walk in the Spirit presenting ourselves to Him, He will orchestrate what is needed in the lives of those with whom we come in contact. It is not our job to scrutinize every believer or to convict and convince them of their wrongdoing. Rather, we are to walk in the Spirit. God will enable us to do whatever it is that He desires to accomplish in and through us.

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 6

A. Lawsuits Between Believers

Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-8.

- Paul now addresses the problem of believers taking believers to court.
- Please keep in mind that the reason this church was having so many problems was because they were carnal and could not receive the meat of the Word.
- Therefore, Paul continually was forced to point out their sin, so as to expose the carnality.
- In verses 1-3, Paul points out that it does not make sense for the Corinthian believers, who are accepted as righteous before God, to go to those who are not accepted as righteous before God to have their disputes settled.
- One day all believers will return with Christ to judge the world and the angels.
- How much more should we be able to judge the little petty issues that we have on this earth?
- In this scripture, Paul wants to show the Corinthians how ridiculous their actions are, thereby revealing their carnality and the kind of lives they are leading as a result.
- In verses 4-6, Paul continues addressing them on an earthly level to reveal their foolishness.
- He asks the question in verse 5 of all the Christians in the Corinthian church, “Is there not one who would be wise enough to decide on these earthly matters so you would not have to go to the unbelievers?”
- Read verse 7 again. Just the fact that they even had these lawsuits against one another was a defeat for them as a sanctified body.
- It is proof of their carnality.

- The lawsuits aside, just the fact that they were walking in the flesh was already a loss for them, regardless of what actions it produced.
- Then Paul asks, “*Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?*”
- Here is another revelation of the wretchedness of their flesh, for in the flesh, we can only be self-centered and seek revenge or fight for our rights.
- In the flesh, we will not consider allowing ourselves to be wronged.
- Had these believers been walking in the Spirit, there would not have been these lawsuits among the brethren.
- They would have been dead to self, thereby willingly accepting the wrong (**2 Corinthians 12:15**).

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

- Having spent the first 8 verses speaking on an earthly level, Paul begins to refocus on the spiritual, drawing all attention above the earthly circumstances to our heavenly position.
- Paul points out that the unbelievers who they are depending on to solve their problems are not saved and have not received eternal life.
- He reminds them that they themselves were once in that position before God, but now they have been washed, sanctified, and justified before the eyes of God.
 - Washed: Through the blood of Christ, all of their sins have been forgiven.
 - Sanctified: They were set apart for God’s possession and use.
 - Justified: They have been declared righteous and therefore are acceptable to God.

- By God's grace they were washed, sanctified, and justified; they no longer had to go on living in the flesh like the unsaved. Because of their new position, they could now rise above all of that.

B. Misunderstanding Christian Liberty

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

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

our bodies while on this earth. Once we go to heaven and receive a new body, our body will no longer be sustained by food; therefore, that will be done away with.

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

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 7

A. Taking the Lord's Supper Lightly

Read 1 Corinthians 11:20-22.

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

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

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

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

- Paul reminds the Corinthians what the Lord had revealed to him regarding the Lord's Supper.
- The bread symbolizes His body that was broken. We are to eat the bread remembering that all of this was for us.
- The wine was to symbolize His blood that was shed for the payment of our sins.
- Verse 26 clearly states this is something the Church of Jesus Christ will do in remembrance of Him until He returns.
- As the Church is continually kept in remembrance of His death for us, we will also be kept in remembrance of our death with Him (**Romans 6:6**).
- It's interesting to consider Paul's comment in verse 23. This teaching on communion had already been delivered to the church at Corinth. Apparently, he had to remind them.
- The reason for this is what Paul wrote previously; because of their carnality, he had to continue teaching fundamental truths that should have already been settled in their hearts.
- Keep in mind that the root problem at hand wasn't the Corinthians' sins but their carnality.

- Therefore, in order to open their eyes to see the fleshliness, Paul pointed out their sin so that they could return to reckoning their flesh as dead. This would enable them to walk in the Spirit, which in turn would manifest itself by partaking of the Lord's Supper in true remembrance of Him, His body, and His blood.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-32.

- In verse 27, Paul clearly states that anyone who partakes of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner is an offense to the body and blood of the Lord.
- He explains the phrase "unworthy manner." First, the believer (in partaking of communion) is told to examine himself. This word "examine" has the idea of "deeming worthy." In other words, before partaking of communion, Paul is saying to "declare ourselves worthy." Let's not lose sight of the context of this passage. The Corinthians were taking the Lord's supper with wrong motives. They were hungry and getting drunk. Communion is a time of remembering the Lord's death. In so doing, we are also aware of our death with Him and all that is ours in Him. By remembering His death and what it entails on our behalf, we will have right motives and be made worthy.
- Paul then explains that to partake in communion with a wrong motive is to partake in an "unworthy manner." In partaking in an "unworthy manner," we are not "discerning" the Lord's body. The word "discerning" means "to determine or give judgment." It can also mean "to withdraw from." To partake of communion in an unworthy manner is basically to

partake in “unbelief.” To “not discern the Lord’s body” then, is to NOT determine its effects on us, thereby causing us to “conditionally” walk in separation from it.

- Paul goes on to say in verses 30-32 that by partaking of communion in an “unworthy manner,” God may use sickness and even death in our lives as a means to reveal to us our flesh and ultimately bring about growth in the Spirit which will produce right motives.
- Basically, Paul is saying that the Lord’s Supper is to be partaken in the “determination” of (knowing and believing of) the effects that Christ’s death (and we could add our death with Him) has in our lives.
- Paul’s last comment in verse 34 is rather interesting. “And if any man hungers, let him eat at home that you come not together unto condemnation.” He brings it all back to the original problem of coming to the communion table with wrong motives.

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 8

A. Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-2.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 12:3.

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

B. Different Spiritual Gifts

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

- As we study through this lesson, it is important to remember what Paul’s goal has been through all we have studied in 1 Corinthians thus far: to reveal to the

Corinthians their carnality for the purpose of seeing them walk by faith.

- All throughout this letter, Paul has been endeavoring to expose the Corinthians' sin in order to show them they were carnal; now Paul begins pointing out to them another manifestation of the flesh.
- Although they knew the Holy Spirit had given many different gifts, because of their carnality their focus and understanding of the truth was askew.
- In regard to these gifts from the Spirit, rather than their focus being on the good of others, their focus was on themselves and desiring the gift that would glorify themselves the most.
- Because the Corinthians were carnal, Paul was forced to go back to the basics, teaching what they should have already known.
- The same Spirit has given many gifts, and no gift should be viewed as more important than another.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:7.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 12:8.

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

- In John 16, Jesus promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would lead them into truth.
- At that time, there was no written Word of God, so the Holy Spirit gave these gifts to certain individuals so that they could pass on truth to the rest of the Body.
- Now that truth which was passed on through certain individuals has been written down in the Word of God.
- Today, we no longer depend upon people in the church with these gifts so that we can know truth, but our dependence is upon the Holy Spirit Who now uses the written Word of God to teach us.
- Please understand that God uses pastors and Bible teachers in our churches to teach the Word of God, but it is only the Holy Spirit who can open our hearts and minds to truth and lead us into God's wisdom and knowledge (**Ephesians 4:11-15**).

Read 1 Corinthians 12:9-10.

- Faith and healing were also gifts that were given only to the early church and for the Jews.
- At the time of Pentecost, just after Jesus was crucified and had ascended to heaven and before the Word of God was written, neither the Jews nor the Gentiles believed that Jesus was Deliverer.
- Therefore, in the early church the Holy Spirit bestowed the gift of faith upon certain individuals so there would be those who were totally convinced of the truth that Jesus is the Messiah.
- The Holy Spirit used the conviction and faith that those individuals had regarding the truth to encourage others.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:9-10.

- The Holy Spirit bestowed these gifts upon the early church before the Word of God was completed to prove that the teaching was truly THE message from God.
- It was similar to what God did when He sent Moses to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt. **Read Exodus 4:1-9.**
- In a similar way, God gave the gifts of faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, and tongues. In **1 Corinthians 1:22** we read, ***“For Jews request a sign.”***
- God gave “signs” to Moses to prove that he was chosen by God to deliver His people and likewise, the Lord gave “sign gifts” to the early church to prove that the message given to the apostles was from Him and not a deception of men.
- It’s interesting to look at some of the things that God enabled the Apostles to do. **Read Acts 4:29-31; 19:11-12.**
- When we were told God’s message, did those who told it do great miracles or healings to prove that it was the truth?
- No. We were pointed to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit revealed the truth of His Word to us in our hearts.
- Today, this is how God reveals truth to people; but before the Word of God was written, the Holy Spirit used miracles to prove that the message was the truth.
- In this verse, Paul mentions the gift of prophecy. This gift was given to the early church before the Word of God was written so that the church could know God’s message.
- Today, we have all of the truth written down in the Word of God. There is no longer a need for this gift as it was known in the early Church.
- The next gift Paul mentions in verse 10 is the gift of “discerning of spirits.” Again, this gift was given to

the early Church. At that time believers did not have the written Word of God to compare against a man's teaching in order to see if it lined up with the truth. Therefore, the Holy Spirit gifted certain men with the ability to make that discernment.

- Today, if someone we don't know comes into our church and teaches, we do not depend upon someone in our church with this gift in order to know if his teaching is the truth.
- Instead, we compare his teaching with the Word.
- Paul also mentions the gift of tongues. This gift we saw bestowed on the disciples in **Acts 2:1-12** on the Day of Pentecost.
- The Holy Spirit enabled them to teach the gospel in known languages that they had never learned before.
- Again, this was a gift given to the early church and is no longer in effect today. We will learn more about this gift when we study Chapter 14.
- The last gift that Paul mentions in verse 10 is the gift of interpreting tongues.
- In the early church, after the Holy Spirit enabled someone to speak in another language for the benefit of "visitors," He would also enable someone else to interpret for the others who did not know that language so they, too, could benefit from it.
- This is another gift that the Holy Spirit no longer gives to the Church, for the gift of tongues is no longer in effect.
- Paul was listing many different gifts in order to show the Corinthians that all of the gifts are important because all are from the Holy Spirit.
- Therefore, their self-exaltation regarding the ability to speak in tongues was foolish and proof of their carnality.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:11.

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

C. Many Members, All One Body in Christ

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13.

- Just as our physical bodies have many parts but still remains one body, so too there are many different members in the Church all joined together in Christ as one body (**Ephesians 4:4-6**).
- How were all believers joined to Christ to become one body? When we trusted Christ as our Savior, the Holy Spirit baptized us all into Christ (**Romans 6:3-4**).

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

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-26.

- Because the Corinthians were walking in the flesh, they saw certain gifts as being more important than others.
- They didn't understand that it is the Holy Spirit who bestows gifts according to His will. Because they are from the Holy Spirit, they are all necessary and important.
- If every part of our body was the same part, we wouldn't have a body and couldn't do all that a body can do.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 12:27-28.

- Just as God designed our physical bodies, assigning to each member its own work, so He has delegated to each member of His body the work He has chosen for each individual to do.
- Because the Corinthians were carnal, their focus was not on what God intended for them but on what they wanted for themselves. Therefore, because they saw the gift of tongues as being more important, they all were striving for it.
- You will also notice in these verses two more gifts that Paul has not previously mentioned: helps and administrations.
- Those with the gift of helps have a God-given burden to serve and help others.
- The gift of administration is the ability which the Holy Spirit gives to some for the purpose of managing, or guiding and directing the church in an orderly fashion.
- We saw through creation how God did everything orderly and appropriately.
- This also is how God desires His body to function (**1 Corinthians 14:40**). God has bestowed this gift of administration upon some of its members.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:29-30.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 12:31.

- Paul writes that there are even greater gifts we should desire rather than those he has listed.
- He tells us what those greater gifts are in Chapter 14.
- Paul also mentions something that is even greater than all the very best gifts, and we will see what he means by that in Chapter 13. We will see what Paul meant by "...a more excellent way."

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 9

A. Introduction

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

B. Without God’s Love, Works Are Worthless

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1.

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

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

Read 1 Corinthians 13:2-3.

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

C. God’s Love

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

- Now Paul gives the characteristics of true Biblical love.
- Biblical love is vastly different from the fleshly love of man. Biblical love is not a feeling but an action.
- We often say we love someone; but when we are offended by that person, quite often our fleshly love turns into anger, hatred, and vengeance.
- Biblical love, flowing in and through us, will cause us to overlook and forgive people’s offenses. When we walk in the Spirit, God’s love will cover over all sin (**Ephesians 4:31-32**).

- God's love is unconditional and does not love people because they love Him, like the fleshly love of man.
- God freely and unconditionally gives His love to people even though no one deserves it.
- Jesus is our greatest example of agape love (**Romans 5:6-8**).
- Our flesh can only act naturally and do what is according to its nature.
- Therefore, God's love will not naturally flow from our flesh, only fleshly conditional love.
- We have been given a new nature—the nature of Christ.
- Therefore, in the Spirit, Christ's love will be natural and will flow freely.

D. The Characteristics of God's Love

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4.

- **True biblical love is patient.** Fleshly love quickly turns to resentment, but God's love patiently endures insults and does not retaliate. We can see many examples of God's love being manifested through the life of Christ. **Read Mark 15:3-5.**
- **God's love flowing through us is kind.** God's love is kind even when the other person does not deserve our kindness. As we walk in the Spirit, kindness will characterize our lives regardless of how we are treated.
- **God's love being lived out in our lives does not envy.** In the Spirit, our concern will be for the wellbeing of others, and therefore our desire will be to see them prosper rather than being jealous because life is going well for them.
- **God's love vaunts not itself.** In the Spirit, our focus will be on who we are in Christ and not "who we are to men." It is when we are in the flesh that we need

to be praised and exalted. Love is not inflated with self-importance.

- **God's love in us is not puffed up.** In the Spirit, our focus is on He who is everything and not on we who are nothing.
- **God's love does not behave itself unseemly.** In the Spirit, we will be sensitive to the needs of others, and not be offensive. Love does not act unbecomingly.
- **God's love seeks not its own.** In the Spirit, we will be "self-sacrificing." The true essence of Christianity is not to have either high or low thoughts of oneself but rather not to think of self at all.
- **God's love thinks no evil.** In the Spirit, there is no plan of retaliation for wrongs incurred but only forgiveness, kindness, and peace.
- **God's love rejoices not in iniquity.** In the Spirit, we will not enjoy seeing others falling into sin, but we'll desire to see all walk in the Spirit.
- **God's love rejoices in the truth.** In the Spirit, our desire will be for the true spiritual growth of God's children.
- **God's love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.** In the Spirit, we will kindly, sweetly, and quietly endure all troubles and annoyances, riding out the storms of life with great faith and hope in our loving, heavenly Father.
- As we follow the Lord Jesus' life through the gospels, we see these characteristics of love in His life.
- We have been given the life of Christ. To the extent we walk in the Spirit, what is characteristic of His life will also be manifested in our lives, naturally and without effort.

E. Faith, Hope, and Love Will Continue

Read 1 Corinthians 13:8.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 13:9-10.

- Paul is speaking here of truth. In John 16, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would come and lead the disciples into truth. Beginning at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit did come to lead believers into truth.
- At the time of Paul's writing of 1 Corinthians, the Holy Spirit was still revealing truth to the Church.
- When the truth was fully revealed through the Bible, those gifts that the Spirit was using to reveal it would be done away with.
- Today, the Holy Spirit has revealed all of God's truth to the Church, and it has become the Word of God.
- Today, the Holy Spirit is not revealing new truth to the Church but is revealing to us the truth that has already been written down in the bible.
- Therefore, those gifts that He once used to reveal truth are no longer necessary.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:11-12.

- Paul is giving two illustrations of the church's standing in regard to "revealed" truth.
- First, he compares it to the knowledge of a child and the knowledge of a man.

- When God was revealing His truth to the Church, He used the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge.
- Once truth had been revealed, the Church put away those things that were needed while it was still “immature” (without God’s revealed truth).
- Secondly, Paul compared the Church’s possession of revealed truth to a person looking into a mirror.
- In Paul’s day, mirrors were made of polished metal. A person looking at himself only saw a dim reflection of himself.
- Paul said that this is what it was like for the Church before the Spirit had revealed all of God’s truth.
- However, the time was coming when all truth would be revealed and made clear through the Word of God.
- The limited understanding that people received from the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge are like the limited reflection of their mirrors.
- Once all of God’s truth was revealed, that which provided a limited understanding was done away with.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:13.

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

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 10

A. Introduction

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

Read 1 Corinthians 14:1.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 14:2-5.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 14:20-22.

- In verse 22, Paul writes that the gift of tongues is meant for unbelievers and that prophecy was for believers.
- Because the Corinthians walked in the flesh, they were taking what was meant for unbelievers and using it in the church.
- What was used to edify, teach, and encourage the church was not being sought after.
- Because they were carnal and self-focused, they were not able to have God's perspective on the truth.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:26.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 14:40.

- The Corinthians were walking in the flesh and their church services were chaotic, as was their partaking of communion (Chapter 11).
- In the worship services, they were seeking to draw attention to themselves and were blind to the direction and leading of the Spirit. Things got out of line with God's purposes and quickly became chaotic.
- Paul writes that all things should be done decently and in an orderly manner. This can only be done through the direction and leading of the Spirit.

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 11

A. The Gospel That Paul Preached

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:5-7.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:8-11.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:20.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:21-22.

- Through our first father Adam, we were all born spiritually dead and separated from God, living in cursed bodies that are subject to physical death (**Romans 5:12**).
- But now all who have trusted in Christ as Savior have been taken out of Adam and placed into Christ.
- The moment we believed, the Holy Spirit placed us into Christ, and we became one with Him, sharing everything with Him. **Read Ephesians 5:30-32.**
- In Adam we received his death, but now in Christ we have received His life.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:23.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:24-26.

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

B. Conclusion

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

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 12

A. Our Bodies Changed in the Resurrection

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:36.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:37.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:38.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:39.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:40.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:41.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:42-43.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:44.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:45-49.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:50.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:51.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:52-53.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 15:54-57.

- Paul writes that when our bodies have been resurrected and changed, then the victory over death will be complete.
- Sin is like death's weapon that causes pain and separation in our lives, and through the law, sin receives its power, for without the law there is no sin.

- But when we receive our new resurrection bodies, two things will change. We will have received a new body that has not been corrupted by sin, and we will be in heaven, separated from sin for all time.
- Paul writes that all of this was accomplished for us through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Romans 6 teaches that through our identification with Christ, this victory is already ours positionally, but we have not received conditionally all that Jesus' death provides for us (we have not yet physically entered heaven with our new bodies).

Read 1 Corinthians 15:58.

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

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 13

A. Tithing

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-3.

- Before ending his letter to the Corinthians, Paul addresses the financial need of the Jerusalem church.
- Possibly the believers in Jerusalem were poor because of the persecution they had endured.
- Paul had already visited the churches in Galatia and was presently in Ephesus.
- Upon leaving Ephesus, he planned to go to Corinth.
- Therefore, he asked the Corinthian believers to collect an offering for the Jerusalem church, and then he gave them some guidelines for “giving”:
 - a. “collection for the saints” (purpose for giving)
 - b. “on the first day of the week” (periodic)
 - c. “let each one of you” (personal)
 - d. “lay something aside” (private)
 - e. “storing up as he may prosper” (proportionately)
 - f. “that there be no collections when I come” (pressure-less)
- How does this apply to us?
- All believers are brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Just as in our physical families, we have concern for one another. In our spiritual family, we will have concern for our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- As we walk in the Spirit, the Spirit will reveal to us those in the body of Christ who are in need.
- Just as Paul was asking the other churches to help the Jerusalem church, so we too will help our needy brothers and sisters in Christ.

B. Timothy

Read 1 Corinthians 16:10-11.

- During this period of time, there were many believers in different places who were meeting together in churches.
- They all were in need of encouragement and good, sound teaching and leadership.
- There was too much teaching needed in the churches for Paul to do it all.
- So he disciplined other men to help with the teaching and leadership development.
- Timothy was one of those men whom Paul had disciplined and prepared for ministry. **Read Acts 16:1-3.**
- When Paul was unable to go to help another needy church, he would send someone whom he knew was walking in the Spirit.
- Timothy was one of those men who Paul had disciplined and had confidence in his spiritual condition.
- Because Timothy was walking in the Spirit, Paul knew that if he were to send Timothy in his place, people would be shepherded and cared for.
- Paul knew that the Corinthians were carnal and he wanted them to know how much he thought of Timothy, hoping that they, too, would respect him.
- Often when we are in the flesh, we tend to be critical of those who are spiritual and desire to help us; we refuse their ministry.
- Paul wanted the Corinthians to accept what the Lord had to share with them through Timothy.

C. Conclusion

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

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 14

A. Paul's Final Instructions

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

Read 1 Corinthians 16:13.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 16:14.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 16:15-16.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 16:17-18.

- It would be good to take note of why Paul was exalting these men. Was it because of their teaching or other great things that they had done? No.
- It was because of their willingness to serve others. Paul commented that he was refreshed by them.
- God has given many different gifts and abilities to His children.
- No matter what gift we have been given, if we walk in the Spirit, He will use this gift in us to minister to His children as He sees fit (**1 Corinthians 12:12-27**).

Read 1 Corinthians 16:19-10.

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

Read 1 Corinthians 16:21-24.

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

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 15

THE CHARISMATIC QUESTION

A. Introduction

- What about the baptism by the Holy Spirit? What about the gift of tongues? What about healings? What about casting out demons?
- The main reason why so many Christians are caught up in this teaching today is because of carnality.
- Remember Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 2:12-14**: *“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual [words].”*
- The Bible was written by the Holy Spirit, and therefore cannot be understood through man’s intellect; it can only be spiritually understood.
- Biblical truth can only be understood through the Holy Spirit communicating it to our spirit.
- If a man is not walking in the Spirit, he is unable to understand the deeper truths of God’s Word.
- Even if he fervently studies the Word, in the flesh, he will not understand the deeper truths of God’s Word.
- Paul said that the “natural man” does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. That phrase, “natural man” definitely refers to unsaved man; however, it also could apply to a carnal Christian.
- Note this warning in **Colossians 2:8**: *“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”*

- The word, “philosophy” actually means “the highest form of intellect.”
- We need to make sure that the teaching we are hearing is according to biblical truth, not worldly wisdom.
- How will we know if someone’s teaching is according to the truth?
- We can only know truth as we walk in the Spirit. As we walk in the Spirit, He will communicate the meaning of the scriptures to our hearts. We can then compare it to what we are hearing.

B. Tongues

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

- Speaking in tongues is mentioned only between Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians. In fact, there are only five times when tongues are mentioned (**Mark 16, Acts 2, Acts 10, Acts 19, and 1 Corinthians**).
- Outside of that time period, tongues is not mentioned at all.
- Consider this: Peter, James, John, and Jude were all church leaders who were present at Pentecost. Between them they wrote seven books of the Bible.
- They all mention the Holy Spirit and His work, but not one of them mentions speaking in tongues.
- Paul wrote thirteen books of the New Testament, but only mentions tongues in 1 Corinthians. He was not teaching tongues as a doctrine but was correcting the Corinthians' misuse of the gift.
- In writing about it, Paul was not telling anyone to do it but was only correcting the Corinthians' misunderstanding of it.

Read Mark 16:15-18.

- Here Jesus promised His disciples that those who would believe their message would be able to do many things.
- In Acts, we see those things being done just like Jesus said.
- But notice that none of these signs and wonders are mentioned anywhere in the epistles after 1 Corinthians.
- Here in Mark 16, we hear Jesus tell His disciples that they would be able to heal the sick and they did (**Acts 9:11-12**).
- However, consider the following scriptures as we work our way through the New Testament:

Read 2 Corinthians 12:8-9.

Read Galatians 4:12-14.

Read Philippians 2:25-30.

Read 1 Timothy 5:23.

Read 2 Timothy 4:20.

- It happened just like Paul said it would in **1 Corinthians 13:8**.
- Paul clearly stated that tongues would cease, and it did.
- Some groups of Christians continue to try to produce it today because they are deceived by the flesh.
- God promised the Jews in the Old Testament that the truth about the Messiah would come with signs (**1 Corinthians 1:22**).
- Therefore, when Jesus promised His disciples in Mark 16 that they would do miracles, it was for the purpose of proving to the Jews that their message was the one God had promised in the Old Testament.
- In Acts 2 when the Jews heard the gospel and believed it for the very first time, they spoke in tongues.
- The next time we see people speaking in tongues is in Acts 10 when the first Gentiles were converted.
- The Jews always looked down on the Gentiles, so in order for God to make it clear to the Jews that He also accepted the Gentiles the same as the Jews, He gave them the gift of tongues at the beginning (**Acts 11:15**).
- The last time we read of anyone actually speaking in tongues is in **Acts 19:1-7**. Twelve men said they had heard of John the Baptist's teaching, being baptized with a baptism of repentance.
- They said that they did not know anything about Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

- Upon hearing and believing the gospel, they, too, spoke in tongues to show that they had definitely received salvation.
- Here is something to consider: in each of the three mentions of people speaking in tongues in Acts, it is always people who were just saved; we only read of them speaking in tongues at that time.
- Another thought to ponder is that in each of these situations, their tongue speaking was a known language. It was not noises and sounds that no one could understand.
- Lastly, in each instance, those who spoke in tongues were not seeking the gift, but it actually seemed to catch them by surprise.



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