



YEAR IN THE BIBLE

1 Corinthians Bible Studies
for Personal or Small Group Study



1 Corinthians 1:1-3

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,
2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people,
together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:
3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

On what authority does Paul write this letter to the Corinthians?

1 Corinthians 1:4-9

4 I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. **5** For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— **6** God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. **7** Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. **8** He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul often writes in lengthy sentences. Look at verses 4-8 and break it down into smaller parts. Write it in your own words if that helps.

For what does Paul give thanks? What impact does Christ have on this community?

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

10 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. **11** My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. **12** What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."
13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? **14** I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, **15** so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. **16** (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) **17** For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

What problem do you think the church in Corinth was dealing with?

What divides the church today?

Do we wrestle with a celebrity culture, even within the church, that can take attention away from Jesus Christ?

There are many things that can divide the church. What can unite it?

Ephesians 2:11-21

11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— **12** remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, **15** by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, **16** and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. **17** He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. **18** For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. **21** In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. **22** And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

What divisions are highlighted in this passage?

What is able to overcome such a divide?

*God is able to unite humans with God and divided peoples with each other. He has **reconciled** us in Jesus Christ. Why do you still think we struggle with being united and are tempted to make so many distinctions and separations in this life?*

How can you apply this Scripture to your life?

While the reading for this week is from 1:18-31, this study will take in a broader context from 1:17-2:2.

1 Corinthians 1:17-19

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. **19** For it is written,
"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

What is Paul describing as the core message of his preaching?

Why would the message of the cross seem to be foolishness to some?

Why is the cross so central to we who are being saved?

1 Corinthians 1:20-25

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? **21** For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. **22** For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, **23** but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, **24** but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Do we tend to idolize education? Do we assume that those people with the most degrees are the most deserving of our trust?

When judged by the world's standards, Christ's crucifixion appears weak and foolish. But it is the wisdom and power of God. How difficult is it to see things how God does, not following the ways and standards of the world? What are examples of when it has been hard to trust God's wisdom rather than follow "conventional wisdom" or do what everyone else does?

1 Corinthians 1:26-2:2

26 For consider your calling, brothers:¹ not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **27** But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; **28** God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, **29** so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. **30** And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, **31** so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

2:1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. **2** For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

How easy is it to be prideful? If all we have is from God, on what basis could we be proud?

Paul wants us to boast, just not in ourselves. What are some ways that we can "boast in the Lord"?

Do you ever feel as though you don't know the right words to say to someone when talking about your faith? What can we learn from Paul's example, in which he stops caring about eloquence or seeming wise by human standards, and instead he focuses on Jesus Christ and him crucified?

What are the qualifications for those God calls? If we are in Christ (verse 30), is that enough for God to use us in his plans?

Read the following for more context on this week's Bible text.

Galatians 1:10

10 Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

In the opening (1:17), middle (1:22-23), and closing (2:1-2) of this section of 1 Corinthians, Paul notes how he did not come with the world's wisdom or lofty speech, rather he preached the cross of Jesus. He was committed to this message regardless of how it was received. Are we more concerned with pleasing people or God? What would look different if pleasing God was our number one goal?

How can you apply this Scripture to your life?

¹ or brothers and sisters



1 Corinthians 2:1-5

1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. **2** For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. **3** And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, **4** and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Do we often picture Paul, such a bold servant in the early church, with fear and much trembling? Why do you think he felt this way?

When we rest our faith in men and women, rather than in God, what may happen? How can that be dangerous?

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

6 Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. **7** But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. **8** None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. **9** But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—**10** these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

*What is the wisdom of God and how is it different from the wisdom of this world? (Go back to **1 Cor 1:30-31** for a refresher on what Paul has already written.)*

How do we come to understand the wisdom of God? Is it something that we could do on our own?

*Some versions of verse 7 talk about the secret wisdom of God as a "mystery." What was this mystery? Read **Colossians 1:26-2:3** and discuss Christ's role in it.*

1 Corinthians 2:11-16

11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. **12** Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. **15** The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. **16** "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

What does it mean to have the Spirit of God? What the Spirit help us to do in verse 12?

Paul says the "natural person" doesn't accept the things of the Spirit. What do we do "naturally" or instinctively, or according to human nature, that would hinder our acceptance of the Spirit?

What do you think it means to have the mind of Christ?

Galatians 3:1-6

1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. **2** Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? **3** Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? **4** Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? **5** Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— **6** just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?

*Paul says in **1 Cor 2:12-13** that we have received the Spirit, by whom we can understand the wisdom of God, and then we impart such wisdom still with words taught by the Spirit. Here in Galatians people are being led astray to move on from the Spirit. What did they incorrectly think came next?*

What are we most tempted to do on our own? How can we best remind ourselves to continue to rely on the Holy Spirit in absolutely all that we do?

How can you apply this Scripture to your life?



1 Corinthians 3:1-4

1 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. **2** I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, **3** for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? **4** For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

Paul now returns to an earlier problem of chapter one. Divisions within the church are symptomatic of what?

What does Paul mean when he says, "merely human"? What is he implying that Christians can be?

1 Corinthians 3:5-9

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. **6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. **7** So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. **8** He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. **9** For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

Paul is not about drawing further attention to himself, or any other teacher. Who should get the credit for the work that is done in the church?

If God is the one who truly gives the growth and makes things happen, do we do anything? How can we balance being open to God's work and leading while still finding ways to "plant" and "water"? How can we be receptive without being passive?

Do you see it as a privilege to be God's fellow worker?

How do you react to hearing that you are God's field and God's building?

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. **11** For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. **12** Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— **13** each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. **14** If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. **15** If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Christ is the one sure foundation. What is he the foundation of?

*Read and discuss these passages that relate to Christ as the foundation: **Ephesians 2:18-22** and **Luke 6:47-49**.*

What of this world will last that is not built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ?

1 Corinthians 3:16-23

16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? **17** If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. **18** Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. **19** For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," **20** and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." **21** So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, **22** whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, **23** and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

In the Old Testament, the temple represented the dwelling place of God. What then does it mean for you to be God's temple?

*The people had been boasting about their associations with Paul or Apollos or Cephas, while they should have been boasting in their association with God. God dwells in us and we "are Christ's, and Christ's is God." Read and discuss **Deuteronomy 7:6-8**, to see the way we are prized by God.*

How can you apply this Scripture to your life?



1 Corinthians 4:1-5

1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. **2** Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. **3** But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. **4** For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. **5** Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

What does it mean to be a steward?

Being a steward conveys the humility that Paul keeps lifting up and it also communicates having a certain responsibility. Who is Paul ultimately responsible to? (v. 3-4)

*We are not to judge "before the Lord comes." What does that mean? Are we to make any judgments? What about latter in 1 Corinthians with a passage like **1 Corinthians 5:13-14**?*

1 Corinthians 4:6-7

6 I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. **7** For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

How can we keep ourselves from going beyond what is written (v. 6)? Are there issues about which you wish the Bible was more specific? How can we humbly accept that what God has given us in his Word is enough?

Paul frequently references boasting. How is he making his point this time?

1 Corinthians 4:8-21

8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! **9** For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. **10** We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. **11** To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, **12** and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; **13** when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. **15** For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. **16** I urge you, then, be imitators of me. **17** That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. **18** Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. **19** But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. **20** For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. **21** What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

What does it mean to be a fool for Christ's sake? How can we live like that?

*Paul has often times looked like a fool. Read **Acts 26**, in which Paul makes his defense before a Roman ruler. Why does Paul seem foolish here? Why would he risk appearing like a fool?*

In his mission to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul faces great persecution. What does he teach in this passage about how we should react to persecution?

1 Peter 3:9-17

9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. **10** For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; **11** let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. **12** For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

13 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? **14** But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, **15** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, **16** having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. **17** For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

What more do we learn here about how to react to persecution? How should we prepare ourselves?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 5:1-5

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. **2** And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

3 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. **4** When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, **5** you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

Why do you think this church would be arrogant in regards to the sexual sin that is being committed in their midst?

Why do you think Paul instructs them to remove this man, who has been sinning in this way, from the body?

In casting this man out of the body, what is Paul's hope? (v. 5)

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? **7** Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. **8** Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

What does leaven do to a lump of dough?

Do we think that our sins are unrelated to other parts of our life and the lives of others? Based on this passage, what is Paul saying about the effects of sin in the life of the church?

Paul encourages the church to see themselves as a remade people who really are "unleavened." What has occurred to remake us in this way?

Read Exodus 12:1-13 to learn more about the Passover and the way the lamb was the sacrifice.

Exodus 12:1-13

1 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, **2** "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. **3** Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. **4** And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. **5** Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, **6** and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. **7** "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. **8** They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. **9** Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. **10** And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. **11** In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. **12** For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. **13** The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

Christ is called here the Passover Lamb. How is Christ like the sacrificial lambs of the Old Testament?

If we really are made new because of the sacrificial death of Christ, how should we come together in worship?

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— **10** not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. **11** But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. **12** For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? **13** God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."

In terms of the company we keep, should we be more discerning inside or outside the church?

Why would Paul want the church to associate with the immoral of the world?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 6:1-8

1 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? **2** Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? **3** Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! **4** So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? **5** I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, **6** but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? **7** To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? **8** But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers!

Why doesn't Paul want the church to take their grievances to the courts? Do you ever hear of court cases involving people within the church? What can result from contentious court cases?

What is the witness to the world when the church defrauds one another (v 8)?

Who should be able to judge matters within the church? What is ours to judge in the future?

1 Corinthians 6:9-12

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, **10** nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. **12** "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything.

Do you think you'd have a hard time being in a church with those who were once described by the terms of verse 10, even though that was something in the past and now they are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of Jesus? Why?

The freedom of Christ is being interpreted in this church to mean "all things are lawful for me." How does Paul respond to this without returning to legalism? How is freedom understood and limited?

1 Corinthians 6:13-20

13 "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. **14** And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. **15** Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! **16** Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." **17** But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. **18** Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. **19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, **20** for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

When you think of your body as a member of Christ, does that change the way you view sin in your own life?

We are warned not to join our bodies in sexual sin to a prostitute. Instead we should be joined to whom and for what purpose?

What does it mean to be a temple of the Holy Spirit? What happens at the temple? How can what used to be the practices of a temple be practices of our own life?

*What is the price that has been paid for us? Read and discuss **Hebrews 9:11-14**.*

Ephesians 4:25-32

25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. **26** Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, **27** and give no opportunity to the devil. **28** Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. **29** Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. **32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Similarly to 1 Corinthians 5-6, Paul in Ephesians 4 is instructing the church in how we should now act as a people renewed by God. What guidelines does he give for speech within the body of Christ?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 7:1-9

1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." **2** But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. **3** The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. **4** For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. **5** Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

6 Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. **7** I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. **9** But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Do you think the Church treats singleness or marriage as a holier condition than the other? What makes you think so?

Sex in marriage is not only presented as a guard against temptation. How else is sex in this context to be understood?

As we read in verse four, in a partnership, who has authority over the other?

1 Corinthians 7:10-16

10 To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband

11 (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

12 To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. **13** If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. **14** For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. **15** But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. **16** For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

*In Jewish thought the clean is defiled by the unclean. Here Paul reverses this notion and teaches that the believer (the clean) can have a positive affect on the unbelieving spouse. **Read Mark 5:21-43** in which Jesus encounters two unclean things, death and disease. What does he do? Does Jesus have the power to make clean that which is unclean?*

Even though spouses may have a positive influence upon a spouse, and the family at large, should a spouse feel complete responsibility for saving their husband or wife? Who ultimately is in control?

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

17 Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. **18** Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. **19** For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. **20** Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. **21** Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) **22** For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. **23** You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men. **24** So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

Go back and read 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 to refresh yourself on the assignments Paul and Apollos were given. What other assignments have we been called to? What do you think God has gifted you to do?

Paul, a Jew, is making a bold statement when he says that circumcision no longer counts for anything. What does matter? Does God have a "call" (emphasized in vv. 17, 20, 24) for all people regardless of their ethnicity or social standing? Can God still use us regardless of where we are--even in slavery?

1 Corinthians 7:25-40

25 Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. **26** I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. **27** Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. **28** But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. **29** This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, **30** and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, **31** and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. **33** But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, **34** and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. **35** I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

36 If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. **37** But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. **38** So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.

39 A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. **40** Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

Paul has written at length on marriage and non-marriage. Looking back on it, what warning does Paul give in regards to being single or married? What is his recommendation? Is either wrong?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 8:1-3

1 Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. **2** If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. **3** But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

What do you think Paul means when he says, “This ‘knowledge’ puffs up, but love builds up”?

How do you react to people who are puffed up with knowledge? Are you tempted to be prideful about what you know? Is it hard to admit when you don’t have the answer? Why?

What does Paul argue is more important, aspiring to know all things or to be known by God?

1 Corinthians 8:4-6

4 Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” **5** For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—**6** yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Food that has been offered to idols is not common in our own culture, but it was in Paul’s day and in the life of the Corinthian church. What do you think would be the concern in eating a steak you knew was offered up to an idol? Would you go to a restaurant that dedicated its food to idols?

This question about food offered to idols is just one example of the difficulty the church is having in balancing out living in the world. How much do you think a Christian can act like unbelievers and how much should a Christian stand apart? How can we know what to do when?

Jesus Christ is the one “through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” What does this say about Jesus?

1 Corinthians 8:7-13

7 However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. **8** Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. **9** But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. **10** For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? **11** And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. **12** Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. **13** Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

The Corinthians who possessed the knowledge about the non-existence of idols were in danger of doing what to those who did not know?

The Corinthians could use their knowledge to act upon their "right" to eat anything, but in so doing could hurt their fellow believers. Paul therefore encourages them to do what?

Do we value our freedom (here seen in eating whatever they want) more than we value our responsibility to care for others who may not know as much (here seen in sacrificing their right)?

Ephesians 3:14-19

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, **16** that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Paul is praying that the church in Ephesus gain understanding and knowledge, but more than that what is his prayer?

As in Corinth, knowledge alone can be a dangerous thing and we must have love as well. How can we show love to those who may not "know" as much in the church?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 9:1-2

1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? **2** If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Paul opens by defending his being an apostle. On what does he ground his defense?

*What is Paul referring to when he says he has seen Jesus? **Read Acts 9:1-19** to learn of when Saul/Paul met Jesus.*

Why does Paul say, "at least to you" he is an apostle? What proof is he pointing to?

1 Corinthians 9:3-12a

3 This is my defense to those who would examine me. **4** Do we not have the right to eat and drink? **5** Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? **6** Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? **7** Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?

8 Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? **9** For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned?

10 Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. **11** If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? **12** If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?

Which of his rights is Paul defending? How does he argue for it?

Do you think it is a good thing for preachers to support themselves financially by means of another job, or is it better to be supported by a church? Are there pros and cons for each view?

1 Corinthians 9:12b-18

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. **13** Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? **14** In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

15 But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. **16** For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! **17** For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. **18** What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

*In the preceding verses Paul lays out an argument for why it is his right to be paid, yet he says that he has "not made use of this right." Look back one chapter in 1 Corinthians for another example of sacrificing your right. What is the situation in **1 Corinthians 8**?*

What is a reason laid out here as to why he would lay aside his right to collect a wage?

What does it mean that preaching the gospel is a "necessity" to Paul? Do we feel a conviction that there is a necessity to do what we are called to do?

Philippians 2:12-18

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, **13** for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, **15** that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, **16** holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. **17** Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. **18** Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

In 1 Corinthians we have heard Paul deride boasting and pride in several occasions, but he uses it positively in chapter 8. What sort of boasting can be good? What is a source of pride in Philippians 2?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 9:19-23

19 For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. **20** To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. **21** To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. **22** To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. **23** I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

What has Paul used his freedom to do?

In our own lives, how can we seek to better identify with those God may be calling us to serve?

How can we balance out a good desire to identify with a group for the sake of the gospel with the dangers of identifying with worldly and sinful ways that are associated with some groups?

Philippians 2:1-11

1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, **2** complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **3** Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. **4** Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. **5** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, **6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **9** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, **10** so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In what way did Jesus Christ become weak so that he might win the weak?

Go back and read 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5. How is weakness a part of Paul's message and ministry?



1 Corinthians 9:24-27

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. **25** Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. **26** So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. **27** But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Every two years Corinth held athletic competitions and Paul's audience likely had its share of sports enthusiasts. In his sports illustrations, what is Paul trying to say?

What happens to athletes that do not exhibit neither self-control nor discipline? Can you think of any examples?

Being a "disciple" is a life with certain "disciplines." What disciplines and practices are part of your Christian life? What disciplines do you wish were a part of your life?

It is key to remember that these disciplines are not aimless (or pointless). Like an athlete, we discipline ourselves with a goal. What goal is God setting before us? What happens when we forget the goal and only focus on the discipline?



Hebrews 12:1-2

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

If we only focus on the disciplines or practices of Christianity and not the goal, we forget the reason for our actions and they seem like an empty set of rules. Where should our focus be, and why? As we run this race, where can we find encouragement?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 10:1-5

1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, **2** and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, **3** and all ate the same spiritual food, **4** and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. **5** Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

*Paul writes, "I do not want you to be unaware" or in the NIV translation, "I do not want you to be ignorant." What does he want the church to know? For one of his references, **read Exodus 17:1-7.***

We are told not to be ignorant, but a common saying is "Ignorance is bliss." Why do people believe this? What do you think about such a view?

Jesus is not mentioned in the events Paul is referring to, but clearly Paul states, "the Rock was Christ." How can he make such an assertion about Jesus Christ being in the Old Testament? What does that say about how we are to view Jesus?

1 Corinthians 10:6-13

6 Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. **7** Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." **8** We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. **9** We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, **10** nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. **11** Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. **12** Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. **13** No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

The stories of the Old Testament can point us to Christ and "took place as examples for us." We can learn from them and from their mistakes, or we will make those mistakes ourselves. What stories of the OT have been especially helpful to you?

Jesus, in becoming flesh, lived a human life like ours. The temptations that are "common to man" tempted Jesus, too. Is it encouraging to know that God is familiar with our temptations and that he promises to be faithful to us, seeing us through? How can God provide escape from temptation?

1 Corinthians 10:14-22

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. **15** I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. **16** The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? **17** Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. **18** Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? **19** What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? **20** No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. **21** You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. **22** Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

*When Paul writes about a cup and the bread, to what is he referring? If you want to find out more, **read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.***

When we take of the cup and the bread in communion, what happens? What does Paul say that it signifies?

1 Kings 12:1-11

1 Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. **2** And as soon as Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), then Jeroboam returned from Egypt. **3** And they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and said to Rehoboam, **4** "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you." **5** He said to them, "Go away for three days, then come again to me." So the people went away. **6** Then King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying, "How do you advise me to answer this people?" **7** And they said to him, "If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever." **8** But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him. **9** And he said to them, "What do you advise that we answer this people who have said to me, 'Lighten the yoke that your father put on us?'" **10** And the young men who had grown up with him said to him, "Thus shall you speak to this people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you lighten it for us,' thus shall you say to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's thighs. **11** And now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.'"

*When King Rehoboam was confronted with a problem, he had the chance to learn from the mistakes of his father before him. Does he learn from history? Why do you think it is so easy for us to repeat the mistakes of others? **Read on into 1 Kings 12** to see how it ends.*

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 10:23-26

23 "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. **24** Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. **25** Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. **26** For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

Learning from Paul, how should we respond to those who say that all things are lawful? What is more important?

Paul says to raise the question about where the meat is from on the "ground of conscience." Whose conscience is he referring to? If the previous verse is about seeking the good of the neighbor, could it be that we are trying to, with our witness, protect our neighbor's conscience?

*Paul quotes from the psalms when he says, "the earth is the Lord's..." **Read Psalm 24:1-6** and discuss your reactions to it.*

1 Corinthians 10:27-30

27 If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. **28** But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— **29** I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? **30** If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

Having laid out some principles about what is lawful and meat sacrificed to idols, we see a very practical example in verse 27. How does Paul advise a Christian to behave at a dinner party?

This advice is only practical if non-Christians actually are inviting you over to their homes. Is this something that happens to you? Are you putting yourself in positions to have relationships with unbelievers, and in so doing, have an impact upon them?

How can we better build relationships with non-Christians?



1 Corinthians 10:31-33

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. **32** Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, **33** just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

When Paul writes, "whatever you do," what does 'whatever' mean? Is it really everything, and if so, how can we do everything for the glory of God? Are there parts of your life that often are left out of everything? Which parts are the hardest to give over to God?

Paul tries to please Jews, Greeks, and the church of God, but is there a limit to when we ought to please people? Is that the most important thing?

*Pleasing people is not the most important thing. Go back and **read 1 Corinthians 4:1-4**. What is more important than pleasing people?*



Romans 15:1-7

1 We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. **2** Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. **3** For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." **4** For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. **5** May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, **6** that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **7** Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Here is another passage about seeking to help the "weak." Where can we find guidance, examples, and encouragement in seeking to do so?

If we hope to live in harmony with one another, what do we need?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 11:1-2

1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

2 Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.

Why ought we to imitate Paul? In what ways should we imitate him? It may help to review previous chapters to understand.

*Paul did not create the early church or Christianity. There were already traditions being built and he received them and then passed them on. What traditions has he passed along? For one example, **read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.***

1 Corinthians 11:3-10

3 But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband,¹ and the head of Christ is God. **4** Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, **5** but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. **6** For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. **7** For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. **8** For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. **9** Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. **10** That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

Have you heard these verses discussed before? What has been your exposure to or understanding of this passage?

Here Paul is discussing proper conduct within worship. Who is praying and prophesying in these settings?

If we understand that both men and women are prophesying, a public practice, how does that affect the way we might read the rest of this passage (and similar passages in the New Testament)?

¹ Or ...*woman is man*. Each instance of “wife” may be read as “woman,” as is in most other English translations.

A concern of Paul's is that the genders remain distinct, thus his emphasis on dress and hairstyle, but some had taken the idea that, "all things are lawful for me" (1 Cor 6:12) as a basis to adopt new practices. If the women dressed or wore styles typical of temple prostitutes of their time (ie. uncovered hair), or made their appearance like men, what problems do you think might arise in that culture?

1 Corinthians 11:11-16

11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; **12** for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. **13** Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? **14** Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, **15** but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. **16** If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

Although he lifts up the distinctions between men and women, what does he follow with in these verses? What is the significance of verses 11-12?

This passage has perplexed many in the church, and still does so today. What questions do you still have concerning 1 Corinthians 11:1-16? What can you do to answer these questions?

Acts 16:35-40

35 But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." **36** And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace." **37** But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." **38** The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. **39** So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. **40** So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

On his way out of Philippi after being freed from jail, Paul stops to see the some fellow believers. In doing so whose house does he go to? What does this probably say about her standing in the church?

*For another example of female leadership, read **Acts 18** to learn about Corinth's own Priscilla. How did she help Paul? Whom did she teach?*

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 11:17-22

17 But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. **18** For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, **19** for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. **20** When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. **21** For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. **22** What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

The way the church celebrates communion has not always looked the same. This church in Corinth is not ravenously eating tiny wafers and getting drunk off of thimbles of wine. What do you think the Lord's Supper looked like in the early church?

What is the problem in this church that is hindering their celebration of the sacrament?

What factions may be present in the church today? In what ways do those who have nothing or who have less get left out? How can we fight against that tendency?

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." **25** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

If you frequently attend church, you would have heard these words countless times. In reading them, does anything new stand out?

Does knowing that this was done on the very night Jesus was betrayed, with the one who betrayed him in their midst, add anything to your appreciation of Jesus' act?

In taking the Lord's Supper, what is it that we "remember" and "proclaim"?

1 Corinthians 11:27-34

27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. **28** Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. **30** That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. **31** But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. **32** But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

33 So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— **34** if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

If the church celebrates the Lord's Supper, but does so in a way that stands against what the meal represents (like in verses 18-21 and 33), what happens to the "proclaim" part of the sacrament? What happens to our witness?

How can we best prepare ourselves to take the Lord's Supper?

John 13:1-9, 12-14

1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. **2** During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, **3** Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, **4** rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. **5** Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. **6** He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" **7** Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." **8** Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." **9** Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

12 When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? **13** You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. **14** If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

The Gospel of John records something else Jesus does with his disciples before his betrayal. Is it surprising that Jesus would do such a thing to his own disciples?

If Jesus came and served us, sinners that we are, in this way, what does that mean for how we should now live?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 12:1-11

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. **2** You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. **3** Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; **5** and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; **6** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. **8** For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, **10** to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. **11** All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

What is the difference between the old life the church lived as pagans, following idols, and the new life lived in the power of the Spirit?

Why is it that "no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says 'Jesus is accursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit?"

*Faith is a gift of God and a great work of the Spirit within us. We can't come to God without God working upon us. **Read Matthew 16:13-20.** How do you see that at play out in Matthew?*

Why is the church given a variety of gifts from the Spirit? What is the reason God equips us in such a way? What are these gifts to be used for?

If the Spirit has given us all the different gifts that we see in the church for the common good, what is being missed out on if we do not use our gifts?

Over and over Paul mentions that these gifts come by the same Spirit. Why do you think he emphasizes this so much? Do you think the church in Corinth had some reason to doubt this or think otherwise?

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. **13** For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. **15** If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. **16** And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. **17** If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? **18** But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. **19** If all were a single member, where would the body be? **20** As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." **22** On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, **23** and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, **24** which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, **25** that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. **26** If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. **28** And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. **29** Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? **30** Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? **31** But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Paul, in the previous chapter, also deals with divisions in the church. What divisions are developing here that he wants to address? Why are some acting as though they are either better than others or worse?

*To take teaching as an example, to be gifted as a teacher doesn't mean that you are immediately skilled to teach as well as the best teachers you've known. The Spirit gifts you in certain ways and intends to use you, but that doesn't mean there isn't practice and improvement. Go back and **read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27**. Does Paul work hard in using his gifts for God's glory?*

Does knowing that the Spirit will gift you and continue to work upon you make you more willing to step out in faith and use those gifts?

*What do you think God has gifted you to do for the common good and for his glory? If you aren't sure what gifts you may have, how can you seek to find out? How will you intend to cultivate the talents he has given you? **Read Matthew 25:14-30** and discuss the importance of being good stewards of our gifts and talents, using them and not neglecting them.*

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 13:1-3

1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. **3** If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

*Paul has just finished a list of gifts of the Spirit in the previous chapter. **Reread 1 Corinthians 12:4-11** to review. How does Paul connect the teachings on gifts to love?*

Are the gifts that the Spirit blesses us with simply made better with love? Are they still of some use? How vital is love to the life of a Christian?

Without looking ahead and referring to the following verses, how would you define love? What does it look like? What does it do?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant **5** or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; **6** it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. **7** Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Is love the same thing as kindness or patience? How is love different? How can we better understand love as greater than any one of these attributes?

What does it look like when in love we don't insist on our own way? What does it look like to rejoice in the truth?

What do you think is the hardest part of this list to live out? What makes truly loving others the most difficult?

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. **9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part, **10** but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. **11** When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. **12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. **13** So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

What gifts will pass away? What gifts are permanent?

When will we all see clearly and know fully? What will bring about that change?

*God's love for us never ends. It is not like the "love" that comes and goes in this world. **Read Romans 8:31-39** and discuss his everlasting love.*

1 John 3:11-18

11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. **13** Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. **14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. **15** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. **17** But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? **18** Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Why do you think the John writes, "Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you."?

What clear example of love is given in this passage?

*Were we deserving of Christ's love when he laid down his life for us? **Read Romans 5:7-8** for an answer. Should we only love those whom we think "deserve" it?*

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 14:1-5

1 Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. **2** For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. **3** On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. **4** The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. **5** Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

What do you think it means to pursue love, or as another version translates, "follow the way of love"? How can we actively pursue it on a daily basis?

Why does Paul want people to especially desire the gift of prophesy? Are we using our gifts to build up others or only ourselves?

1 Corinthians 14:6-12

6 Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? **7** If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? **8** And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? **9** So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. **10** There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, **11** but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. **12** So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

Paul wrote last chapter, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." Here his illustrations are instruments. What point is he trying to make in comparing speaking in tongues to these things that make noise? How can they both be useful?

The theme Paul is repeating is "building up the church." When we pray and desire the Spirit to respond to our prayers, do we frequently pray for the church, or are we more inclined to pray for ourselves? How can we better pray (and do so in specific ways) for the upbuilding of the church?

1 Corinthians 14:13-25

13 Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. **14** For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. **15** What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. **16** Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? **17** For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. **18** I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

19 Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

20 Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. **21** In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." **22** Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. **23** If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? **24** But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, **25** the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

Based off of a passage like this one, would you say coming together in worship is simply an individual experience or is it something to be done in and for the community?

What does it mean to be "infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature"?

1 Kings 3:5-14

5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." **6** And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. **7** And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. **8** And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. **9** Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"

10 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. **11** And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, **12** behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. **13** I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. **14** And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

What did Solomon ask for and why? Was it for his own benefit or was it to "build up" those around him? Like Solomon seeking to receive a gift for the good of others, what can we pray for?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 14:26-33a

26 What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. **27** If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. **28** But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. **29** Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. **30** If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. **31** For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, **32** and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. **33** For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

Try to picture the busy scene that Paul describes in worship. How many people are getting up speaking (in tongues or prophecy)? How would you follow what was going on and learn with all the commotion? What is Paul's solution?

1 Corinthians 14:33b-35

As in all the churches of the saints, **34** the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. **35** If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

*Paul writes, "women should keep silent," but what would give you reason to think twice about what he means here? What did Paul say about women speaking in church already? **Read 1 Corinthians 11:4-5.***

If Paul expects there to be women prophets leading in worship, how does that influence your reading of this passage??

In chapter 14 Paul has been writing about speaking in church and not speaking in church, trying to maintain order in the church's worship service. He has told both those speaking in tongues and speaking prophecy to be silent. He tells them to be silent to protect worship and encourage peace and the building up of the body. He doesn't tell them to be silent because they have no place in worship-- Paul lifts up their value in these chapters. In that context, it is not unlikely that he is telling women now to be silent because of disruptions in worship that may have occurred as women, in that time usually less educated and separated from the men in worship, were talking with each other or speaking to their husbands asking questions in order to better understand what was being said. Paul would rather that take place elsewhere and he values peace over confusion and commotion when the church gathers.

How have other interpretations of this passage shaped the role of women in the church and elsewhere?

1 Corinthians 14:36-40

36 Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? **37** If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. **38** If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. **39** So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. **40** But all things should be done decently and in order.

Perhaps sensing some opposition or knowing there are those in the church in Corinth who would do things very differently from what he has described in this chapter, Paul strengthens what he has said by arguing that it is a command of the Lord. If someone didn't agree to act in this way, what would happen?

How else can we value decency and order in worship? How can we do so in a way that remembers the purpose behind it is to build up the body, not just to keep things neat and tidy?

1 Kings 19:9-13

9 There [Elijah] came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10 He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." 11 And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12 And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. 13 And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Try to visualize this scene. Picture all that passed Elijah by. Imagine the smells and the heat. What stands out to you in Elijah's encounter with God?

God didn't speak in the commotion--the wind, earthquake, nor the fire. But he did speak in the peaceful whisper. What can we do to find peaceful times to not only speak to God, but to be intentional about listening for his voice, his low whisper?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 15:1-11

1 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, **2** and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, **4** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, **5** and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. **6** Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. **8** Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. **9** For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. **11** Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

This passage is often used as a corporate statement of faith in churches and is therefore a more familiar passage. Is there a part that stands out to you? Anything in this summary that you often overlook?

Having read through fourteen chapters of Paul's letter, we now have the opportunity to remember who he had been before the grace of God. Paul was a persecutor of the church. Does remembering that fact change the way you read his letter? If God can use Paul (Saul), is there a reason God couldn't use you?

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. **14** And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. **15** We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. **16** For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. **17** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. **19** If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

There are issues about which faithful Christians may disagree. Would Paul allow disagreement about the resurrection? Why?

What do you believe about the resurrection of the dead? When it comes to what happens after our bodies die, you think in terms of "going off to heaven" or awaiting a resurrection of the body?

1 Corinthians 15:20-34

20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. **23** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. **24** Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. **25** For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death. **27** For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. **28** When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. **29** Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? **30** Why are we in danger every hour? **31** I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! **32** What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." **33** Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." **34** Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

What does it mean to have something under your feet? How does that phrase apply to Jesus Christ?

One way to understand "baptized on behalf of the dead" is to see it as "for the sake of." In other words, some put their trust in Jesus Christ for the sake of a believer who has passed, and in hopes of seeing them again at the resurrection. Paul here is saying that if you hope to see someone again, but there is no resurrection, then you do so in vain. What else is in vain if Christ is not raised? If there is no resurrection, what does Paul say we should do? Why?

Romans 6:1-8

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? **2** By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? **3** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. **6** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. **7** For one who has died has been set free from sin. **8** Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Paul is illustrating how we have, in a sense, hitched out wagon to Jesus Christ. Besides the resurrection, how else will our lives follow Jesus? What can we expect to encounter in life if we experience what he went through?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 15:35-49

35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" **36** You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. **37** And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. **38** But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. **39** For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. **40** There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. **41** There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. **44** It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. **45** Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. **46** But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. **47** The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. **48** As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. **49** Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Have you thought about what "kind of body" we will have? When you think about a resurrected body, what comes to mind? What leads you to think that way?

How does Paul describe the resurrected body? Is it completely alike or completely different from the bodies we have now?

*Paul uses the analogy of a seed. A seed has continuity with the tree that is created, but there is clearly a grand transformation that takes place. Thinking back to **1 Corinthians 3:6-7**, who receives credit for this transformation?*

Although we see the resurrection in Jesus Christ, there is still mystery for us in what to expect. What does Paul compare and contrast to give us a better understanding of what is to come?

*The resurrected body is the finished product of the new creation God has begun in us. **Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 5:16-29**. Because of whom do we have this hope of new creation and new life?*

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **51** Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. **53** For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. **54** When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

55 "O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?"

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

58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Christians confess a faith in a life after death. We believe in a resurrection. Think for a moment what affect it would have if you thought that death was truly the end. What would that change? How would we see death differently?

The resurrection isn't just a reanimation of the dead for even those still living when Christ returns must be changed. Why does Paul say this must be?

What does it mean for death to lose its sting? Does it mean that death won't cause us grief any longer? Or does it mean that death no longer has the victory? How can we use this passage for strength and comfort when we do experience grief?

Does Paul intend for our hope of eternal life to cause us to neglect the life we are already living? What does he say in his closing line of this section in this regard?

Isaiah 25:6-9

6 On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. **7** And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. **8** He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. **9** It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

How is the victory we have through Jesus Christ described here? What good news do you see? With whom can you share this good news?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?



1 Corinthians 16:1-11

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. **2** On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. **3** And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. **4** If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

5 I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, **6** and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. **7** For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.

8 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, **9** for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

10 When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. **11** So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers.

Paul asks the church in Corinth to help three groups: the churches in Jerusalem, Timothy, and himself. In what ways could the church help those groups? Are you seeking out ways to help others beyond your own church community? If so, how?

Paul mentions that there are many adversaries in Ephesus and what does that cause him to do? When faced with adversity are we more likely to stick it out to leave? Why do you think Paul stays?

1 Corinthians 16:12-17

12 Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.

13 Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. **14** Let all that you do be done in love.

15 Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints— **16** be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer. **17** I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence, **18** for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such people.

What sort of people does Paul say the church should be subject to?

In his letters, Paul mentions other church leaders and church groups around the Mediterranean world, indicating that the church in Corinth was aware of the larger church. In what ways can you foster your connection to and relationships with other churches and leaders?

1 Corinthians 16:19-24

19 The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. **20** All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. **22** If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! **23** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. **24** My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Have you ever had a pen-pal or someone with whom you wrote letters? How does it feel to receive greetings from them or a friend?

How does remembering that 1 Corinthians is a letter affect how you read it?

If you have been reading through the whole letter and have now reached the end, what was one thing that really stood out to you about 1 Corinthians? What is one thing you've learned and how will it affect your life?

Numbers 14:1-9

1 Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. **2** And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! **3** Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" **4** And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. **6** And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes **7** and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. **8** If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. **9** Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them."

Having seen their adversaries in the promised land, the come back spies and give a frightful report to God's people. How do the people respond to adversity? What is the result of it (read on if you need to find out)? What may have come about if they had trusted in God's provision?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?